

10 June 2019

Our ref: 193172/ARB

Mr & Mrs D Austin
Top Floor
42 Elsworthy Road
London
NW3 3DL

Dear Mr & Mrs Austin

42 ELSWORTHY ROAD, LONDON

Introduction

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out an ecological survey of the above site on Wednesday 15 May 2019. The purpose of the survey was to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to record any evidence of protected species, in particular bats. This information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The proposals are to demolish the existing side extensions and erection of a new two-storey side extension, new basement and infill side extension in conjunction with the reconfiguration of the existing building to provide 1 x 5bed house and 1 x 2bed house. It is anticipated that the majority of the garden area will remain unaffected by the works.

Legislation

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Methodology

Baseline Data

As certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or habitats within a 2 km study area have been statutorily or otherwise designated and whether any bat licences granted within 1 km of the site have been provided. A review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was also completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹. A thorough internal and external examination of the existing building was carried out, with any potential access

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces were accessed, where possible, to check for any evidence of bats.

In addition, a careful inspection of each tree on the site was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground.

Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Negligible** – negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
- **Low** – a tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
- **Moderate** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
- **High** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Visual Optics VO36-10ww endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also used during the inspection to record any bat calls.

Other Species

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

Results

Baseline Data

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no ecological statutory designated sites located on or directly adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Adelaide Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 0.3 km to the north-east of the site. Other statutory designated sites located within the 2 km search area included St. John's Wood Church Grounds LNR, located 1 km to the south-west and Belsize Wood LNR, located 1.1 km to the north-north-east of the site. There are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site, with the nearest being an area of Deciduous Woodland and National Forest Inventory Broadleaved Woodland, located approximately 50 m to the west of the site. Other HPI located within the 2 km search area included Woodpasture and Parkland, Lowland Heathland and Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland.

Three records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) granted within 1 km of the site were recorded. The closest granted EPSL is located 0.5 km to the south-east, allowing the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bats, under the reference EPSM2012-4961. Full details of EPSL's granted within the 1 km search area are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: European Protected Species Licences (within 1 km)

Licence Ref.	Bat Species	Action Permitted	Distance/Direction
EPSM2012-4961	C.pip, S.pip	Destruction of resting place	0.5 km to the SE
2015-9230-EPS-MIT	C.pip, S.pip	Destruction of resting place	0.8 km to the SW
2015-10291-EPS-MIT	C.pip	Destruction of resting place	0.9 km to the SW

C.pip = Common pipistrelle; S.pip = Soprano pipistrelle

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained unchanged since at least 1999, being dominated by the existing property with associated hardstanding and garden areas.

Site Description (Photographs 1-4)

The site is located off Elsworthy Road in the London Borough of Camden, centred at National Grid Reference: TQ 273840 and covers approximately 0.1 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing property, with existing hardstanding set within a well-maintained garden. It is bordered by Elsworthy Road to the south, Lower Merton Rise to the west, with residential properties beyond and on all other sides.

The property was of masonry construction, comprising four and a half storeys, with a pitched and slate tiled roof. The majority of the roof space had been converted into accommodation, with a restricted attic space used as a plant room. Several additions to the property included both single storey and two storey extensions to the south-west elevation and a two storey extension to the north-eastern elevation, all of which were of a similar construction type as the main property. A conservatory was also recorded at the south-western elevation. The attic was well-lit by a number of windows, including a single dormer window to the front of the property and several Velux windows to the rear and sides. Lead flashing was also recorded on the property, which appeared well-sealed and in good condition. The overhanging eaves were tightly sealed by timber soffits and fascias, which were well maintained and sealed. The main entrance to the property was an enclosed porch of masonry construction, with an ornamental, single pitched roof of stone construction and an ornamental stone pillar on either side.

Lawns dominated the garden with some areas of ornamental planting and individual trees also present. Species recorded in the lawns were typical of amenity grassland and included perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and daisy (*Bellis perennis*). Ornamental species recorded included wisteria (*Wisteria sp.*), Aunt-Eliza (*Crocosmia paniculata*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*), camellia (*Camellia sp.*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), fatsia (*Fatsia japonica*), roses (*Rosa spp.*), box (*Buxus sempervirens*), bay (*Laurus nobilis*), hebe (*Veronica sp.*) and a yew (*Taxus baccata*) hedge. Tree species recorded on site included false-acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) and yew.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during a careful internal and external inspection of the property. The restricted attic space was well lit with light cobwebbing throughout. Timber sarking was present but there was no roof membrane (the undersides of the tiles were visible) facilitating the visual inspection for any evidence of bats. The roofs of the main house and side extensions were well sealed and maintained in good condition, with the slate roof tiles tightly fitted as were the timber soffits/fascias and lead flashing. The property lacked any obvious access points for bats.

The majority of the trees in the garden were considered to have **negligible** bat roosting potential due to their age, size and lack of any obvious PRFs. A single mature London plane and false acacia were considered to be of **low** potential due to their age and size, although no visible PRFs were recorded. The site being located in a residential area of London provides only limited foraging opportunities for common species of bats. It should be noted that the majority of the property and garden area will remain unaffected by the proposals. There are only a few trees scheduled to be felled all of which have been assessed to be of **negligible** potential for roosting bats.

Other Wildlife

Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposals are to demolish the existing side extensions and erection of a new two-storey side extension, new basement and infill side extension in conjunction with the reconfiguration of the existing building to provide 1 x 5bed house and 1 x 2bed house. It is anticipated that the majority of the garden area will remain unaffected by the works.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded.

Although there are considered to be no ecological constraints to the proposals, a series of specific and generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019².

Although no evidence of bats was recorded with much of the property to remain unaffected by the works, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Therefore, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect the established vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'.

As the works are limited to modifications to the existing property, with the majority of the garden area to remain unaffected, enhancement measures that could be delivered are restricted. In order to provide new nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats a series of boxes could be installed, with any boxes positioned in accordance with good practice.

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. Although the site currently experiences some light spillage from on-site sources and neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution and not directed onto any bird/bat boxes installed.

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

The recommendations provided above try to pre-empt any issues that may arise as well as provide some mitigation and enhancement measures.

I trust this is of interest to you and provides the Local Planning Authority with enough information to determine the application but let me know if further clarification is required.

Yours sincerely



Alan Beaumont
MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM
Class Licences CL08 and CL18

Encl. Photograph Record Sheet (Drg. No. 193172/01)

cc Mr P Brown, MWA



Photograph 1: Showing the front of the property.



Photograph 2: Showing the single and two storey extensions and conservatory on the south-western elevation, scheduled to be demolished.



Photograph 3: Showing the well-lit, restricted attic space.



Photograph 4: Showing the well-maintained garden.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT			
42 Elsworthy Road London			
TITLE			
Photograph Record Sheet			
<div>  <div> AAe Environmental Consultants </div> </div> <div> AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: 01235 536042 F: 01235 523849 info@aae-llp.com www.aae-llp.com </div>			
Scale	Date	Drg No.	Rev.
NTS	10.06.19	193172/01	
	Drawn HRS	Chkd. ARB	