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Bat Survey – Building Check

61 Ramsgreave Road, Ramsgreave, Blackburn, BB1 9BH

2nd October2019

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Bat Survey (Building Check) on:

61 Ramsgreave Road

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Blackburn

Lancashire

BB1 9BH

Commissioned by:

Mr. Ian Ferguson

Client:

As Above

Survey & Report Author

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a Preliminary ecological appraisal (fieldwork building check) at the home address of the client in support of a planning application.

In summary, the outcome of this preliminary ecological appraisal covering an external and internal check of the survey site (an attached garage with flat roof) concluded that that the potential of the site to provide suitable roosting, commuting and foraging habitat features for bats was negligible, and that there would be no detrimental effect on the species by the progressing of any proposed renovation and development, during construction and operation.

No further surveys are required.

However, a *precautionary approach* is recommended and considered a sensible and appropriate way forward. In order to ensure that any proposed renovation and/or development works comply with wildlife legislation and policy at all times, it is recommended that *precautionary actions* are implemented by the client, in respect of bats, and that any and all work should stop immediately should any presence of bats be encountered.

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Survey brief

ADK Environmental Management Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary ecological appraisal comprising an internal and external examination of the building, namely a flat roofed garage attached to a detached bungalow.

'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, Collins, J. (ed) (2016) states in Chapter 4.3.1 *"A preliminary ecological appraisal for bats is a walkover of the proposed development site to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute and forage both on site and in the surrounding area (it is important that connectivity within the landscape is also considered at this stage). The aim is to determine the suitability of a site for bats, to assess whether further bat surveys will be needed and how those surveys should safely be carried out"*. Reference to Chapter 4.3.5 further confirms that such surveys can be undertaken at any time of the year.

The survey therefore was to inspect the building both externally and internally to assess the value of the building for bats in accordance with Table 4.1 on page 35 of the 'Good Practice Guidelines' and prepare a report to the client to accompany a formal planning application in support of any proposed work.

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PART 2: INFORMATION

The importance of a thorough site survey prior to considering development cannot be over-emphasised. Without a sound survey that includes an assessment of all available evidence, it is difficult to predict the likely impact of development.

From the developer's perspective, the primary objective of the survey for protected species is to ensure that any development can proceed without breaking the law. The consequences of not carrying out a survey on sites that subsequently prove to have a significant protected species interest can be severe and can include delays, additional costs and, in exceptional cases, the cancellation or curtailment of projects.

As a minimum, any survey should normally cover any land or structures which are proposed for development. For phased developments, the entire site should be surveyed, not just the areas of the first phase, and consider as a whole unit when assessing impacts and possible mitigation.

Outlining the Planning Context

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, ODPM, August 2005 states *'In moving towards this vision, the Government's objectives for planning are:*

- ***To promote sustainable development*** *by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development, so that policies and decisions about the development and use of land integrate biodiversity and geological diversity with other considerations.*

- ***To conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology*** *by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites; the natural physical processes on which they depend; and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support.*

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- ***To contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance by:***
  - *enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people's sense of well- being; and*
  - ensuring *that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high-quality environment.*

The planning system has a significant part to play in meeting the Government's international commitments and domestic policies for habitats, species and ecosystems.

Paragraphs 15 and 16 **'SPECIES PROTECTION'** outline specific requirements of Planning Authorities.

In addition, *Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their impact within the planning system (ODPM 06/2005. Defra 01/2005)* offers detailed guidance in *Part IV – Conservation of Species Protected by Law, paragraphs (96 -124).*

Bats

In England, Scotland and Wales all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) through inclusion in Schedule 5.

In England and Wales, this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CroW), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, which defines European Protected Species of animals.

Taken together, the Act, Order and Regulations make it illegal to:

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- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;
- deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;
- damage or destroy bat roosts;
- possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as *"a structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, whether or not bats are present at the time"*.

It should be noted that the laws are not designed to prevent work, but to minimise its impact on the long-term survival of bats.

An application for a 'Licence' should be made to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) where bats are likely to be affected by the works. This application should be made well before the works are due to be undertaken to allow for any necessary (further) survey work and/or mitigation.

Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bats are regarded as the most frequently encountered and widespread species in the area. Brown long-eared bats are typically associated with rural locations whereas pipistrelle are encountered in both rural and urban settings.

Ecology and Behaviour

Bats are colonial animals that roost in groups or singly in trees, buildings, caves and other structures. Many different sites are used at different times of the year.

Bats are not only found in old buildings, but they regularly roost in new structures in urban areas.

All roosts are important, and disturbance to bats in their winter roost is particularly devastating to the population. In addition, they select linear features in the landscape.

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British bats show a preference for habitats associated with broad leaved woodland and water, not only for commuting but for also for foraging. This is particularly true for pipistrelles.

Roosts used by a small number of bats, as opposed to maternity sites, can be particularly difficult to detect and may require extensive searching backed up (in summer) by bat detector surveys and/or emergence counts.

Bats roost within a wide variety of sites within buildings, so the ease with which the bats can be seen is very variable. The horseshoe bats are probably the easiest to identify because they generally hang in accessible locations and are readily distinguished by size difference. Log-Eared bats hang in obvious locations, often clinging onto timbers near the apex of the roof. However, many of the vespertilionid bats tend to roost in cracks and crevices often using narrow spaces under soffits or between roofing felt and slates and weatherboarding, and so can be difficult to see.

Buildings

The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others.

However, a visit during the summer or autumn has the advantage that bats may be seen or heard. Transitional roosts may be detected in surveys carried out between April – Sept/Oct.

Buildings (which for this definition exclude cellars and other underground structures) are rarely used only for hibernation, so droppings deposited by active bats provide the best clues. Roosts of species that habitually enter roof voids are probably the easiest to detect as the droppings would normally be readily visible.

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Roosts of crevice-dwelling species may require careful searching and, in some situations, the opening up of otherwise inaccessible areas. If this is not possible, best judgement might have to be used or caveats put in the report with recommended contingency measures should bats be found during development.

PART 3: SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The survey site consists of an end of row detached bungalow with attached flat roofed garage located on Ramsgreave road in Ramsgreave, a civil parish in the Ribble Valley district of Lancashire on the northern edge of Blackburn. Whilst being a small tight-knit community, it could be described as rural in character. The Post Code for the survey site is BB1 9BM.

PART 4: SURVEY METHODOLOGIES

All the surveys undertaken were in accordance with *Collins, J. (ed) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) BCT.*
The purpose of the **Preliminary ecological appraisal fieldwork survey outlined in (Section 4.3), page 35 of the Guidelines,** was to physically check, where possible, both the exterior and interior of the buildings to look for evidence that the building affords (or has afforded) the opportunity for bats (either at present or in the past) to utilise the buildings for hibernation. Such evidence of use, past or present included the following:

- Deterioration of the external fabric of the building to allow access for bats
- Presence of live or dead bats
- Bat droppings
- Moth or insect wings and remains on the floor and window ledges
- Grease staining marks on roof timbers and joists
- Scratch marks on roof timbers

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PART 5: SURVEY RESULTS

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The 'walkover survey (building check)' was undertaken on 2nd October 2019. Weather conditions at the time of the survey were bright, sunny and dry with a temperature of 13° C.

Building

External examination of the premises confirmed both the garage and the garage roof were in sound condition. Reference to the photographs will confirm that all soffits and barge boards were very tight having been sealed by the installation of wide plastic strips which allowed no access areas for bats. There were no constraints identified.

Internal examination confirmed no evidence of the presence of bats (past or present), as outlined at 'Part 4' on page 11 of this report.

PART 6: EVALUATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

In relation to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal results above (both external and internal examination), it is concluded that based on criteria outlined in '*Table 4.1*', page 35 of the *'Good Practice Guidelines'* cited earlier, it is considered that the potential suitability of the proposed development site for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, together with the results of the external and internal examinations is negligible in the authors' professional judgement.

Similarly, it is also considered that there are negligible features on site likely to be used by roosting bats, and negligible habitat features on site to be used by commuting or foraging bats.

It is finally concluded that there would be no deleterious impact on any EPS (European Protected Species), or their habitat (either potential or actual) including bats, should any proposed development work be approved by the LPA.

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The author has been advised by the client they would have no objection to incorporating bat friendly features in any approved development.

PART 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

No further surveys are required or recommended.

However, a *precautionary approach* is recommended and considered a sensible and appropriate way forward. In order to ensure that any proposed renovation and/or development works comply with wildlife legislation and policy at all times, it is recommended that *precautionary actions* are implemented by the client, in respect of bats, and that any and all work should stop immediately should any presence of bats be encountered.

Caveats

The unpredictable nature of animals (or plants) to change or adopt new sites (habitat) within a season limits the time that reports remain valid.

We recommend that a further survey should be undertaken for legally protected species prior to works starting on site if more than 24 months have elapsed since the date of this report or any subsequent protected species survey reports.

Absence of protected species is not inferred by a negative record and therefore if a suspected protected species is found, work should stop immediately, and an appropriate qualified ecologist should be contacted for instruction of how to proceed.

Adopting the 'Precautionary Approach', It is also recommended that any 3rd party contractors carrying out works within or adjacent to the boundary site/area, should be made aware of the possibility of encountering legally protected species.

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PART 8: REFERENCES & INFORMATION SOURCES

Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust. (ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1)*

CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. (2006). *Developing Best Practice in Survey and Reporting.*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) H.M.S.O., London

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, ODPM, August 2005.

Google Earth

Magic.gov.uk

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APPENDICES

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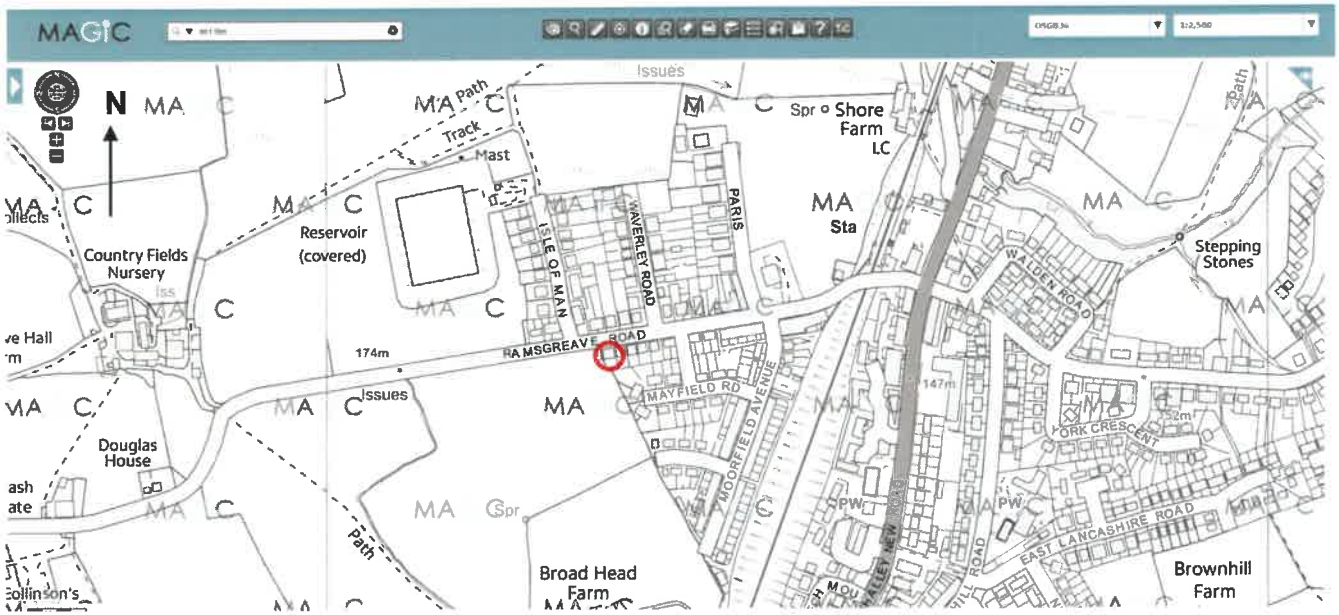
Appendix 1 – Site location map of surveyed building (outlined in red)



Source: Magic.gov.uk (accessed October 2019)

Scale: 1: 2,500

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Appendix 2 – Aerial site location map of surveyed building (outlined in red)

Source: Google Earth (accessed October 2019)

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Appendix 3i - Site Photographs: External (all photographs taken by author on 2nd October 2019)

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Appendix 3ii– Site Photographs (cont.): External





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Appendix 4 – Qualifications and experience of Author, Andrew King (Principal Ecologist)

Andrew King obtained a BSc (Hons) Environmental Management in June 2003 and has been employed as the full time Principal Ecologist and Managing Director of ADK Environmental Management Ltd. for the past fifteen years. He is a full member of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and an associate member of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (AIEMA). In addition, he is a full member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB) and a full member of the Association of Environmental & Ecological Clerk of Works (MEECoW).

He is a full Member of the Institute of Clerks of Works and Construction Inspectorate GB (Environmental) (MICWCI). In addition to his ecological qualifications, he is a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership and Management (FInstLM), a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (FCMI) and a Graduate Member of the City & Guilds Institution of London (GCGI). He is also a full member of the Royal Entomological Society Mem.R.E.S and the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB). He is an experienced and well qualified ecologist having undertaken numerous Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA's), (formerly known as Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys), including species specific surveys (Bats) for European Protected Species (EPS). He is registered to use Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 2).

As a member of these professional institutions he is obliged to follow strict Codes of Practice and demonstrate a standard of knowledge and experience monitored annually through peer review and documentary confirmation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). In relation to bats specifically, he has attended training courses at both intermediate and advanced levels sponsored and organised by CIEEM.

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A full compendium of site photos is available to view on CDROM by written request to ADK Environmental Management

SIGNED .....

For and on behalf of ADK Environmental Management Limited

PRINT NAME: Andrew King

DESIGNATION: Principal Ecologist & Environmental Advisor

DATED: 2nd October 2019

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