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Report for

Oakwood Lodge, Markfield, Leicestershire
Biodiversity & Protected Species Survey

Date of Report – 31st July 2009

Proprietors

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Protected Species Survey at Oakwood Lodge, Markfield

Name of Client: Mr & Mrs Aspinall

Address of Client: 30 Barry Drive, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester, LE9 2HH

Name of Agent: Brian Dearlove Partnership, contact Chris Parker

Address of Agent: Unit C Edward House, Grange Business Park, Enderby Road, Whetstone, Leicester LE8 6EP

Date of Survey: 30th July 2009

Weather Conditions: 70% cloud, slight breeze, and showers 16^0C

Address of survey site: Oakwood Lodge, Markfield, Leicestershire, LE67 9RP

Planning Application Number:

Grid Reference of survey site: SK 4866 0859

Name of Surveyor: A.B.Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM

Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt 20082993 & Bat 20083261 issued by Natural England

1) Background

1.1 Reason for survey

It is proposed to extend the existing bungalow, which includes joining the extension roof into the existing roof. A protected species (particularly bats & breeding birds) survey was requested as part of the Planning Permission to carry on the development.

1.2 Description of site

The site was on the edge of a village, in a rural setting, and consisted of a detached single-storey bungalow, surrounded by garden. The garden was a mix of hardstanding (slabs, tarmac, gravel and decking), shrub borders and lawn. The garden was overgrown. The site had a hedge on the southwestern boundary, which was mainly hawthorn *Cretaegus monogyna.* This is unaffected by the proposals. There were no large trees that would have cavities suitable as bat roost sites in the near vicinity. There were no ponds on the site.
The surrounding area consisted of a few domestic residences, but mostly agricultural land (arable and permanent grass), and the site was close to the M1 motorway, which was situated in a cutting to the south of the site.

1.3 The Building

The building was a detached single-storey bungalow. It had brick walls and a tile roofs (large interlocking flat tiles).

The roof to the bungalow was at one height with equal pitches, and had gable ends. It was supported by timber trussed rafters, and the tiles had felt backing throughout. There was a loft space, which was fully accessible for survey. It was insulated, and the insulation was pushed down into the eaves, blocking any access for birds or bats into the loft space. There were many webs in the loft space, particularly on the ridge and spanning the gap between the rafters and trusses, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There was no light entering the loft space. There were no gaps between or under the tiles. The ridge tiles were all in place and there were no gaps under or between them. The pointing in the gable ends was all in place, and there were no cavities or gaps. All the windows (plastic frames) were tightly fitted with no cavities or gaps that would allow access for bats. There was a plastic framed conservatory attached to the bungalow, which was in good repair with no gaps or cavities.

There were plastic soffits and bargeboards supporting the guttering, but there was no gap between the wall and the soffits. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were no gaps under the lead flashing around the chimney.

2) Survey Methods

The building was searched in a systematic pattern, all available spaces were searched, looking for signs of bats, in particular droppings, insect remains (where bats have fed), lack of spiders' webs (where bats have roosted), the bats themselves and body oils stains (where bats have squeezed through gaps). Particular attention was paid to undisturbed surfaces, walls (where bat droppings sometimes stick) and window sills (both inside and outside the buildings). The search was carried out with a high power torch inside the building and binoculars on the outside (particularly searching under eaves and ridge tiles). All cavities were checked using an endoscope to establish if anything was within them. Bats would be active at this time of year and a detector was on all the time that the survey was taking place, in case the light from the torch disturbed bats.

Signs of birds were also noted, particularly old nests. Birds would be nesting at the time of the year when the survey was undertaken.

Badgers- The area was searched for badger field signs. In particular grassland areas were searched for footprints, dung pits, snuffle holes and runways through the vegetation. Boundary hedges, walls and fences were searched for latrines. Runways under boundary fences were searched for stray hairs. Hedgerows and earth banks were searched for signs of sett building activity, including dung pits and hairs close to the sett entrance, footprints, discarded bedding and recent spoil heaps.

A note was made of any signs of other protected species, or whether there was any appropriate habitat for other protected species.

3) Results

3.1 Bats – There was no evidence of bats found during the survey, there were no droppings or other signs, all surfaces and cavities were covered in spiders' webs. The bat detector remained silent throughout the survey, and there did not appear to be any access points for bats to gain entry into the building or roof.

3.2 Birds – There were no old nests found on or in the bungalow. The vegetation in the garden would be ideal for nesting birds, but none were located during the survey.

3.3 Badgers – There was no evidence of badgers found during the survey.

3.4 There was no evidence of any other protected species on the site, and there did not appear to be any habitat suitable for other protected species.

4) Conclusions

4.1 The bungalow had not been used by bats as a roost site.

4.2 The building had not been used for birds to nest, and there were no old nests on the building. The garden vegetation would be suitable for birds to nest.

4.3 There were no indications of any other protected species on the site.

5) Legislation

Nesting Birds: Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while they are nest building or, at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

6) Recommendations and Mitigations

- Birds – It is recommended that any works to remove vegetation are scheduled outside the bird-nesting season (normally considered to be March-August, although this can be extended with certain species and due to climate change factors). However if works are carried out in the bird-nesting season, care should be taken that active birds nests are not disturbed. If there is any doubt as to whether birds are nesting, it is advised to get the area checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should an active nest be found, the nest must remain undisturbed until the young birds have fledged, which may cause a delay in the proposed works.

References and Bibliography

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Hill, D., Fasham, M., Tucker, G., Shewry, M. & Shaw, P. (Eds) (2006) *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods: Survey, Evaluation & Monitoring* Cambridge

Heaton, A. (1998) *Rare Wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland* Kairos Press

Betts, C.J. (2001) *Checklist of Protected British Species* Christopher Betts Environmental Biology

Report Produced by

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Appendix 1: Photograph of Site



Photo 1- Front view of bungalow



Photo 2- Side view of bungalow