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Biodiversity Report for

White Gables Farm, Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire

Protected Species Survey

Date of Report – 31st May 2010

Proprietors

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Protected Species Survey at White Gables Farm, Fenny Drayton

Name of Client: Mr B. Davidson

Address of Client: White Gables Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BJ

Name of Agent: Savage Hayward, contact Lee Ward

Address Of Agent: 19 Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1AW

Date of Survey: 23rd April 2010

Weather Conditions: 10% cloud, breezy, dry, warm, 15^0C

Address of survey site: White Gables Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BJ

Planning Application Number: 09/00910/FUL

Grid Reference of survey site: SP 3655 9762

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

Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt 20093452 & Bat 20093453 issued by Natural England

1) Background

1.1 Reason for survey

It is proposed to extend the existing house, which includes joining the extension roof into the existing roof. A protected species (particularly bats and great crested newts) survey was requested as part of the Planning Permission application to carry on the development.

1.2 Description of site

The site was in a rural setting and was a two-storey detached house surrounded by garden. The garden was mainly closely mown lawn, with fruit trees and bare ground that had been prepared for laying hardstanding. There was one field pond within 100m of the proposed site at about 90m to the north. There were no other ponds within 100m of the proposed site, but there were two ponds at about 150m distance to the north-east. None of the ponds are affected by the proposals. There were no trees on the proposed site, or within the vicinity of the proposed site, but there were several trees about 50m away. The boundary of the site was a mix of wall and fencing. There was a hedge to the front of the house bordering the road, but this is unaffected by the proposals.
Surrounding the proposed site was agricultural buildings and a barn that had been converted to residential use, plus other stabling facilities, such as ménage etc.
Other nearby land included a residential property and agricultural land (mostly permanent grass).

1.3 Building description



Photo 1: House, showing area to be extended

The building was a modern detached two-storey house, with rendered brick walls and a tile roof (flat clay tiles).
The roof was in sections, with gable ends to each section and tiled valleys between the various sections. Timber trussed rafters supported the roof, and the tiles had waterproof membrane backing throughout. The roof was at more than one height with equal pitches. There was a loft space, which was fully accessible for survey. It was insulated, and there were grills over the air vents in the eaves, blocking any access into the loft void. There were many webs in the loft space, particularly on the ridge board and between the rafters, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There was no light entering the loft space. There were no gaps between the tiles. The ridge tiles were all in place and there were no gaps under or between them. The pointing was all in place on the gable ends and there was no gaps or cavities present. Expanding foam had been used to block any gaps within the roof space.
There were wooden soffits and fascias supporting the guttering, and there were no gaps between the wall and the soffits, as the gap had been sealed with the render. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were no gaps under the lead flashing around the chimney or on the ground floor lean-to roof. The windows and doors had wooden frames, and there were no gaps around these.



Photo 2: Front view of house

2) Survey Methods

Bats: The buildings were 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). A bat detector was on at all appropriate times to check whether bats were disturbed in the roof spaces when the light was shone into them. 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, ridge tiles, and between the tiles). All cavities were checked using an endoscope to establish if anything was within them. Bats are likely to be active at this time of year so would be likely to be present at any potential roosts.

Birds: Signs of birds were also noted, particularly old nest sites, throughout the whole site. Birds (in the main) are building nests, brooding eggs or feeding young, and so if any nests were found, it would be possible to establish if they were active ones.

Great Crested Newts: The grounds were searched for signs of Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*), by searching under logs, rocks, slabs and any other appropriate refuges, and a note was made of any appropriate newt habitat types.

An assessment was made of the suitability for great crested newt, of the pond and associated terrestrial habitat that was within 100m of the site.

Great Crested Newts Presence/Absence survey: Three methods of detection were carried out on 4 separate occasions, to detect their presence or absence;

Torch survey – a 1 000 000 candlepower torch was shone into the pond to search for adult or juvenile newts. This search was carried out around the entire margin area of the pond.

Egg Search – suitable live and dead vegetation was searched for newt eggs. This search was carried out around the entire area of the pond.

Bottle Traps – Bottle traps were set at approximately 2m intervals around the pond. These were set at dusk and checked at first light the following morning.

All surveys were carried out under suitable weather conditions, where the minimum temperature did not fall below 5^0C.

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.

Other Protected Species: 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, gaps and cavities were covered in spiders' webs. The buildings appeared to be too well sealed for bats to gain entry, to use them as a roost site.

3.2 Birds – There was no suitable nesting sites for birds on the proposed site. It was mainly bare earth, and there was no shrubs or trees present, or any vegetation to be removed from the building or the proposed site. There were no old nests on the building.

3.3 Great Crested Newt – There was no evidence of any amphibians found, when the searches under refugiae were undertaken, as there were very few suitable refugiae on the proposed site.

3.4 Pond surveys – The pond, which was about 90m north of the site, appeared to be suitable for great crested newts with a suitability index score of 0.66 (see Appendix, table 1). This indicates an average likelihood of great crested newts breeding in the pond.

3.5 Presence/absence survey – No great crested newts were found in the pond (see Appendix, table 2), but there was a healthy population of smooth newts *Triturus vulgaris* breeding in the pond.

3.6 Badgers – There was no evidence of badgers or their setts found on or within 30m of the proposed site.

3.7 There was no evidence of any other protected species on the site.

4) Conclusions

4.1 The site was of 'limited wildlife value', with bare ground, being the only habitat present. (England Field Unit 2007).

4.2 The existing building was unsuitable as a bat roost, as there did not appear to be any access points for bats to gain entry into the building or roof.

4.3 There were no suitable nest sites for birds on the site.

4.4 The pond at about 90m from the proposed site would be suitable as a breeding pond for great crested newts, as it had a Suitability Index value within the range that has been used as breeding pond by great crested newts. A presence/absence survey was undertaken to establish if great crested newts are present. No great crested newts were identified in the pond during this survey. However there was a colony of breeding smooth newts present in the pond.

4.5 There was no evidence of any other protected species found during the survey.

5) Recommendations and Mitigations

5.1 The proposed development will only affect an area, which would be classed as of limited wildlife value, i.e. bare ground being the habitat present. (England Field Unit 2007).

5.2 No protected species are likely to be affected by the proposed development.

References and Bibliography

Gent,T. & Gibson,S. [Eds] (2003) *Herpetofauna's Workers' Manual* JNCC

English Nature (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

Oldman, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S., & Jeffcote, M. (2000) *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt* (*Triturus cristatus*) Herpetological Journal Vol 10, No. 4 pg. 143-157

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Betts, C.J. (2008) *Checklist of Protected British Species* (third edition) Christopher Betts Environmental Biology

England Field Unit (2007) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey – a technique for environmental audit* JNCC

Report Produced by

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Appendix: Other photos



Photo 3- Pond at 90m north of site

Appendix: Table 1. Habitat evaluation of waterbodies for great crested newt (Oldman *et al* 2000)

Survey Criteria	**Optimal characteristics**	**Suitabilty Index (SI) of ponds. From tables etc in Herp. Journal**				
		Pond				
Location	(from map in Herp. Journal)	1				
Pond Area	Measured in m^2	0.9				
Pond Drying	Years out of ten that pond dries	0.9				
Water quality	Ranges from good, clear (SI value 1) to bad, turbid (SI value 0.01)	1				
Shade	Estimate of % of perimeter of pond shaded	1				
Fowl	Number of waterfowl per pond per $1000m^2$	0.67				
Fish	Fish may predate and consume eggs and larvae. Estimate	0.33				
Number of ponds	Within 1km of target site	0.5				
Terrestrial	From maps	0.33				
Macrophyte %	Estimate of pond vegetation	0.5				
Habitat Suitability Index per pond		**0.66**				

S.I.		Pond suitability
<0.5	=	poor
0.5 – 0.59	=	below average
0.6 – 0.69	=	average
0.7 - 0.79	=	good
>0.8	=	excellent

Appendix: Table 2- Results of Great Crested Newt Presence/ Absence Survey (SN= Smooth Newt)

Date	Weather	Water Clarity	Torch survey	Egg Search	Bottle Trap
3/5/10	30% cloud, dry, Min Temp 7^0C, still	Clear	0	0	0
13/5/10	100% cloud, dry, Min Temp 7^0C, still	Clear	7 SN	SN	0
24/5/10	80% cloud, dry, min temp 15^0C, still	Clear	11 SN	SN	24 SN, 15m & 9f
30/5/10	100% cloud, dry, min temp 9^0C, slight breeze	Clear	4 SN	SN	7SN, 2m 5f