ECOLOCATION

Protected Species Surveys for Development

The Old Dairy 25 Brookside Stretton-on-Dunsmore Rugby Warwickshire CV23 9NH 02476 541776 george.burton@sky.com

# ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

# AT

# WINDHOVER HOUSE

# 69 MAIN STREET

# CARLTON

# NUNEATON

# WARWICKSHIRE

# FOR

# MR. D. & MRS. N. HANCOCK

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## 1.0 Instructions

Ecolocation were instructed by Mr & Mrs Hancock to prepare an Ecological Survey of the above site in May 2008

## 2.0 Purpose

The survey was to seek to confirm the suitability and/or presence of European protected species within the area of the site likely to be affected by a proposed development and to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation

## 3.0 Scope

The extent of the study was to cover the front garden area of 69 Main Street site, including a group of trees in the south-western corner, partly protected by a tree preservation order, and to include sections of the existing buildings affected by way of demolition or extension by the proposed development

## 4.0 The Site

The site comprised the front garden of an existing one and two storey brick and 'hardrow slate' c.1970-built dwelling, together with the adjoining elements of the main dwelling and detached garages which were proposed to be extended and replaced, respectively

The garden area fronted Main Street and was separated therefrom by a brick wall circa 1.3m high. It was largely laid to lawn but also comprised a tarmacadam driveway and some raised planting beds adjacent to the north-eastern boundary (see site plan at Appendix A)

In the southern corner of the site stood a number of young, largely ornamental, trees some of which fell within the protection of a tree preservation order (see Appendix B).

The south-western end of the dwelling comprised a single-storey swimming pool with associated changing and plant rooms which would adjoin a proposed future garage extension

At the north-eastern end of the frontage area stood detached garaging which was proposed to be rebuilt on a different 'footprint'

## 5.0 Walk-over Survey

An initial walk-over survey of the site and relevant buildings established that the bat potential would be limited to the areas of buildings affected by the development as the trees concerned were relatively young and thus did not display the kind of access features sought by bats such as fissures, loose bark, rot holes, crevices, etc

The buildings themselves showed some potential for bat occupation with some ill-fitting roof tiles at eaves, gaps between eaves soffits and masonry, occasional loose brickwork, crumbling ridge tile pointing, etc. (see Appendix B)

Overall the initial indication of likelihood of bat presence was considered medium

Breeding bird potential of the trees was considered low as the trees were not long-established mature specimens, indeed some were only a few feet high (see Appendices A & B for tree plan and photographs) and the trees were largely ornamental varieties with thin crowns

unsuited to nesting except for species such as woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) and possibly chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Bird potential within the effected buildings was considered low with little in the way of sufficiently large access points evident

Potential for other protected species was also considered low at the walk-over stage; with no badger (*Meles meles*) setts present within 30m of the development site and although there was a garden pond within the adjoining garden to the east this was well stocked with fish and thus unsuitable for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) occupation

No other protected species were considered relevant in terms of detailed surveying at the walk-over stage

**6.0 Survey and Results**

An intrusive survey of all areas of buildings was undertaken using Petzl 'micro' head-torches, Nightsearcher 0.5 and 1 million candle power lamps and, where appropriate, V-scope VOXX-10WW endoscope

No evidence of bat occupation was found in the garages including search for individual bats, carcasses, droppings, urine staining, polished surfaces, build-up of insect remains, etc.

A single bat dropping possibly of a *myotis spp.* was found in the roof space of the swimming pool plant/changing rooms, the temperature and humidity of which was particularly high

No active birds nest were evident within the intrusive search area

Emergence surveying for bats commenced at 21.15hrs (air temperature 15.3 deg C) with sunset due at 21.21hrs using Pettersson D-230 ultrasound bat detector on heterodyne setting at the western end of the site and mini-3 heterodyne detector at the eastern end:

The first evidence of bat activity occurred with a single bat 'pass' at 21.49hrs at the western end of the search area, probably that of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).
Activity at the western end of the search area continued until 22.34hrs and included 22 passes including 4no. *Myotis spp.* passes at between 22.03hrs and 22.09hrs with a probable serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*) passing high overhead at 22.21hrs

Bat activity at the eastern end of the site comprised five common pipistrelle passes between 22.20hrs and 22.41hrs (see Appendix C).

Air temperature upon completion was 13.6 deg C at 22.45hrs

No bats were seen or detected emerging from any of the buildings on the application site

During bat emergence surveying at the eastern end of the site a single female great crested newt was observed traversing the footpath adjacent to the north-west elevation of the existing detached garage, engaging in some forgaging and seeking refuge under paving slabs

No other protected species activity was encountered

## 7.0 Survey Conclusions

The site offers some nesting opportunities for certain species of bird but no active nests were evident at the time of surveying

The areas to the west and north of the site are used for foraging by bats, and bats also commute through the site freely, particularly to the west of the swimming pool annex. No evidence of use of the buildings or trees as places of rest or shelter were evident and the single dropping in the roof space of the swimming pool plant room is considered to be that of a passing bat which may have entered the roof space but may then have been discouraged from settling or returning by the intense heat caused by the pool heater

The presence of a single great crested newt within the application site area suggested that further investigation may be necessary. Anecdotally the applicant was able to explain that a number of newts had been seen in the north-facing garden of the dwelling to the immediate east of the site during recent pond-building works

No other protected species were considered relevant to the planning proposal

## 8.0 Obligations and Recommendations

The majority of breeding birds are protected by law, it is essential therefore that, before any works commence, a search by a person competent to do so should be undertaken of the development site to ensure that no active nests are present which might be disturbed by the construction process. Due vigilance should also then be maintained throughout the development period to ensure that birds are not disturbed should they commence nesting within the site during this period

All species of British bat and their roosts ('places of shelter or rest') are protected by law from intentional and *reckless* disturbance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 [The 'Habitats Reg's'], as amended 2007 to incorporate the European Habitats Directive

Bats are highly mobile and when not in hibernation can occupy a building in increased numbers over night. It is essential therefore that due vigilance be maintained before and during any works to ensure their protection. The lack of evidence of roosting at this stage does not guarantee that this is not taking place intermittently or may not take place in the future

Great crested newts are also 'fully protected' European protected species consequently like bats not only are the animals themselves protected but also their habitat. All elements of section 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 apply together with Regulation 39 of the Habitats Regulations 1994

The presence of at least one great crested newt on the site gives rise to the obligation to enhance the species' habitat as part of the development. It is suggested therefore, by way of mitigation, that a suitable pond be created on or close to the site, prior to commencement of the development, to enhance the newts breeding facilities and that the site should be 'newt-fenced' prior to development commencing for a specified period to ensure that any newts present are trapped and removed by a suitably licensed individual. The fencing should then stay insitu until such time as the development is complete at which time it could be removed

**Recommendations:**

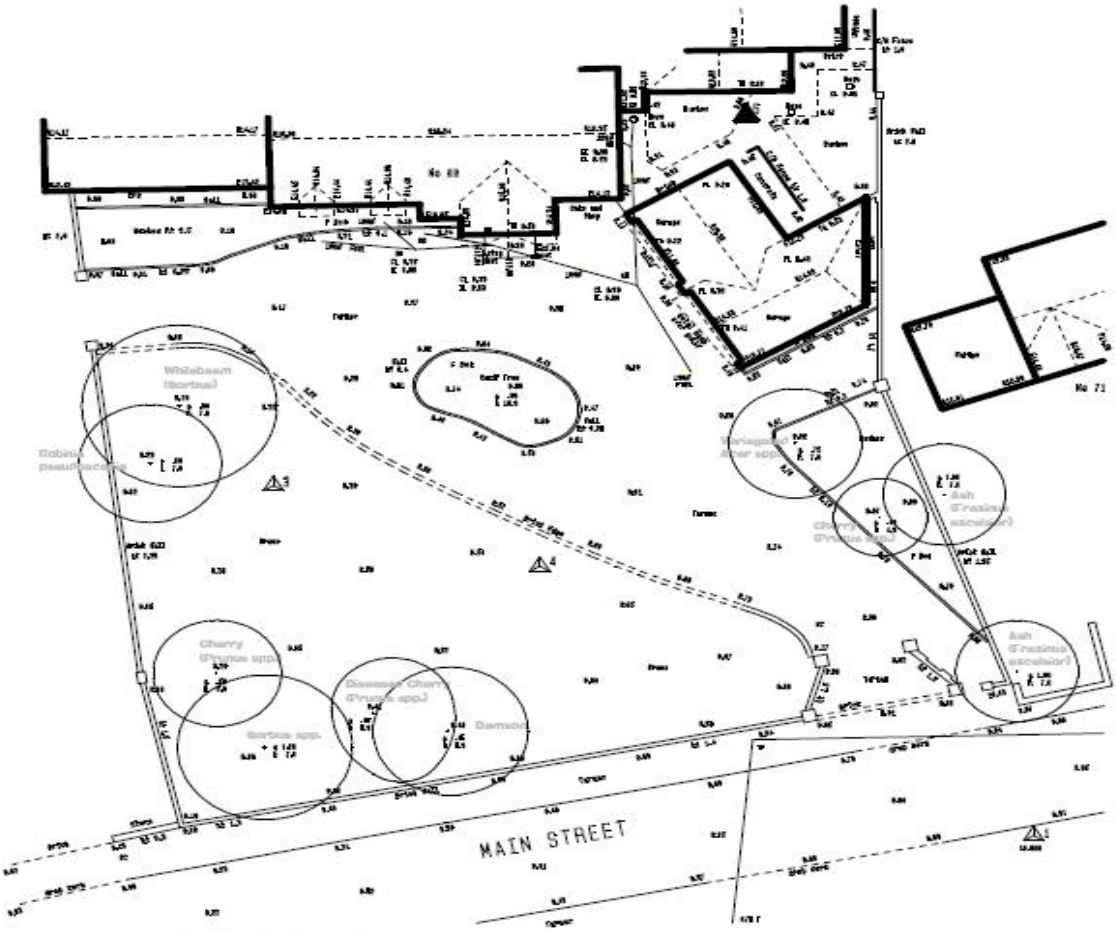
Many species of bird and bats appear to be in steep decline. Any measures therefore which can be put in place to enhance their breeding possibilities post-completion of the development are to be welcomed. The planting of native species in carefully considered landscaping schemes will also enhance foraging opportunities by building a greater density and biodiversity of invertebrates which will benefit organisms higher up the food-chain. If any further information is required in respect, for instance, of bat access and bird nesting facilities within the development Ecolocation would be pleased to offer advice in this respect

## 10.0 References


Which Bat is it?, Mammal Society 2007
Bat Workers Manual, JNCC
Bat Survey Guidelines, Bat Conservation Trust 2007
A Guide to British Bats, FSC/AIDGAP
Herpetofauna Workers Manual, JNCC
Collins Bird Guide, Collins
The Handbook of Nature Trees & Shrubs, Woodland Trust 2004
The Tree & Shrub Expert, Expert Books, 1997

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Site Plan & Tree Survey




TREE SURVEY

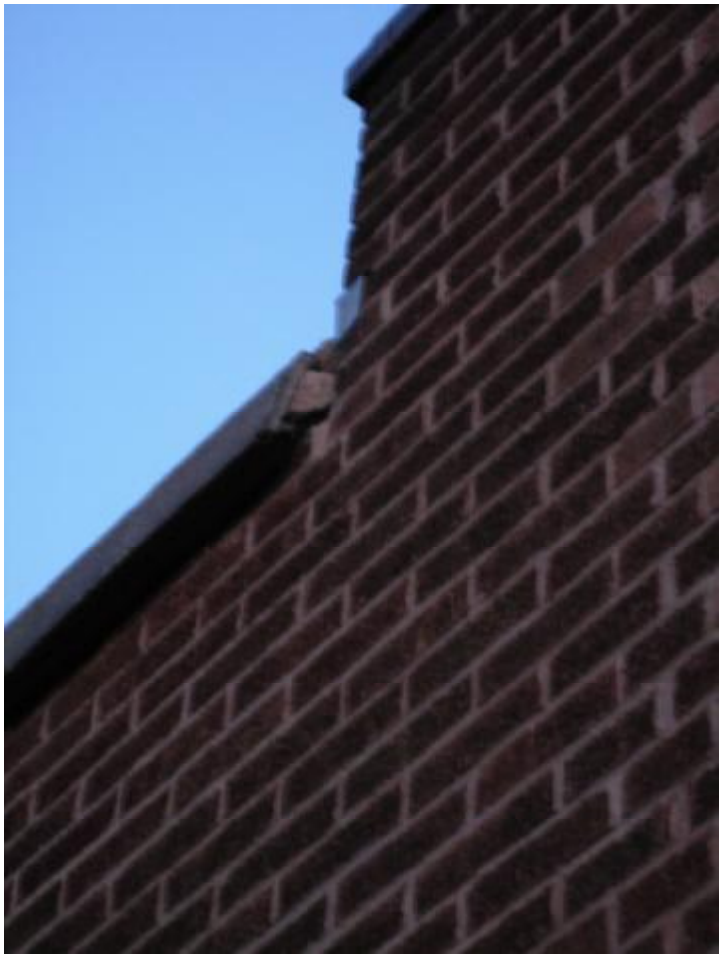
Appendix B: Photographs



Eastern boundary planting viewed from north-west



South-west corner planting viewed from north-east

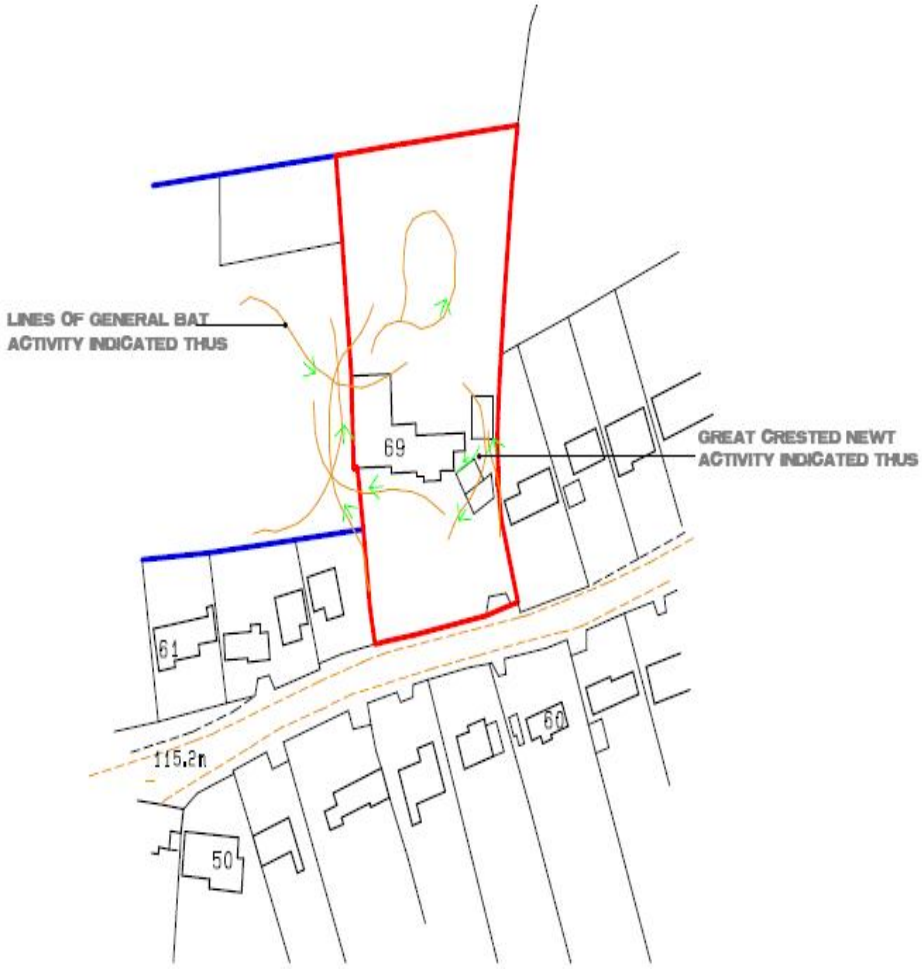


Potential bat access (junction of swimming pool ridge and chimney)



Potential bat access (swimming pool plant room ridge)

Appendix C: Protected Species Activity Plan




TYPICAL PROTECTED SPECIES ACTIVITY

1 : 1250