



BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

**PROTECTED SPECIES (BAT) SURVEY
OF
65 CHURCH WALK
SHACKERSTONE
NUNEATON
LEICESTERSHIRE
CV13 6NP**

A report to:

Ms E Hilton and Mr M Baller

65 Church Walk
Shackerstone
Nuneaton
Leicestershire
CV13 6NP

By:

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Report to:	Ms E Hilton and Mr M Baller
Report Title:	Protected Species (Bat) Survey of 65 Church Walk, Shackerstone

Survey Site/Job:	65 Church Walk, Shackerstone, Nuneaton, Leicestershire, CV13 6NP
OS Grid Reference:	SK 37431 06784

Survey Date(s):	16 th May 2023
Surveyed by:	Mr Alan Roe BSc (hons)

Architect/Agent:	David Granger Architectural Technologist Ltd
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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited on behalf of the owners. The report provides the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) of 65 Church Walk, Shackerstone, Nuneaton, Leicestershire, CV13 6NP. The survey site is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SK 37431 06784.

The survey was carried out to inform the proposed extension of the dwelling, that will break into the existing roof covering.

The survey found scattered bat droppings and feeding remains within the roof void of the main two-storey dwelling. Furthermore, the fabric of both the main building and attached outbuilding contained multiple suitable access points/features for bats including raised tiles, gaps associated with lead flashing, gaps under ridge and hip tiles, gaps between doorframes and purlins and gaps behind fascia boards.

DNA analysis identified the bat droppings within the attic space as being from the Whiskered bat.

The habitats in close proximity to the property are suitable for foraging and commuting bats and the immediate landscape is considered to be of moderate value, with good levels of connectivity.

Therefore, when considering the scattered bat droppings identified within the main two-storey building, in combination with the local landscape and suitable bat roosting features identified within the fabric of the building, the PBRA survey determined that the dwelling should be categorised as “**moderate bat roost potential**” in accordance with National Best Practice Guidelines.

To determine presence/absence (and to remain in compliance with the ‘Guidelines’) a minimum of a two emergence surveys are required during the bat survey season (May to September), in order to provide confidence in the absence of roosting bats and ensure works remained lawful.

If no bat is found at this point, then the works can proceed without delay, albeit potentially under a precautionary approach in the first instance.

However, should the survey record a bat roost which will be impacted by the proposal, then for the development to remain lawful works will need to be carried out under a European protected species derogation licence. Depending upon the level of licensing and status of roost, combined with the results of the initial surveys, there may be a requirement for further emergence and activity surveys.

No evidence of breeding birds or other protected species was found associated with the building during the survey. As no breeding bird evidence is present there is no seasonal constraint, however, to ensure all eventualities are covered if works proceed within the bird breeding season of March to September, then in advance the building should be checked to ensure there are no nesting birds present.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited for David Granger architectural design Up Ltd on behalf of the site owners, Ms E Hilton and Mr M Baller.

The report provides the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment of 65 Church Walk, Shackerstone, Nuneaton, Leicestershire, CV13 6NP. The survey site is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SK 37431 06784.

The development proposal includes an extension to the north side of the dwelling breaking into the existing attic space, as indicated by the drawing in figure 1 below.

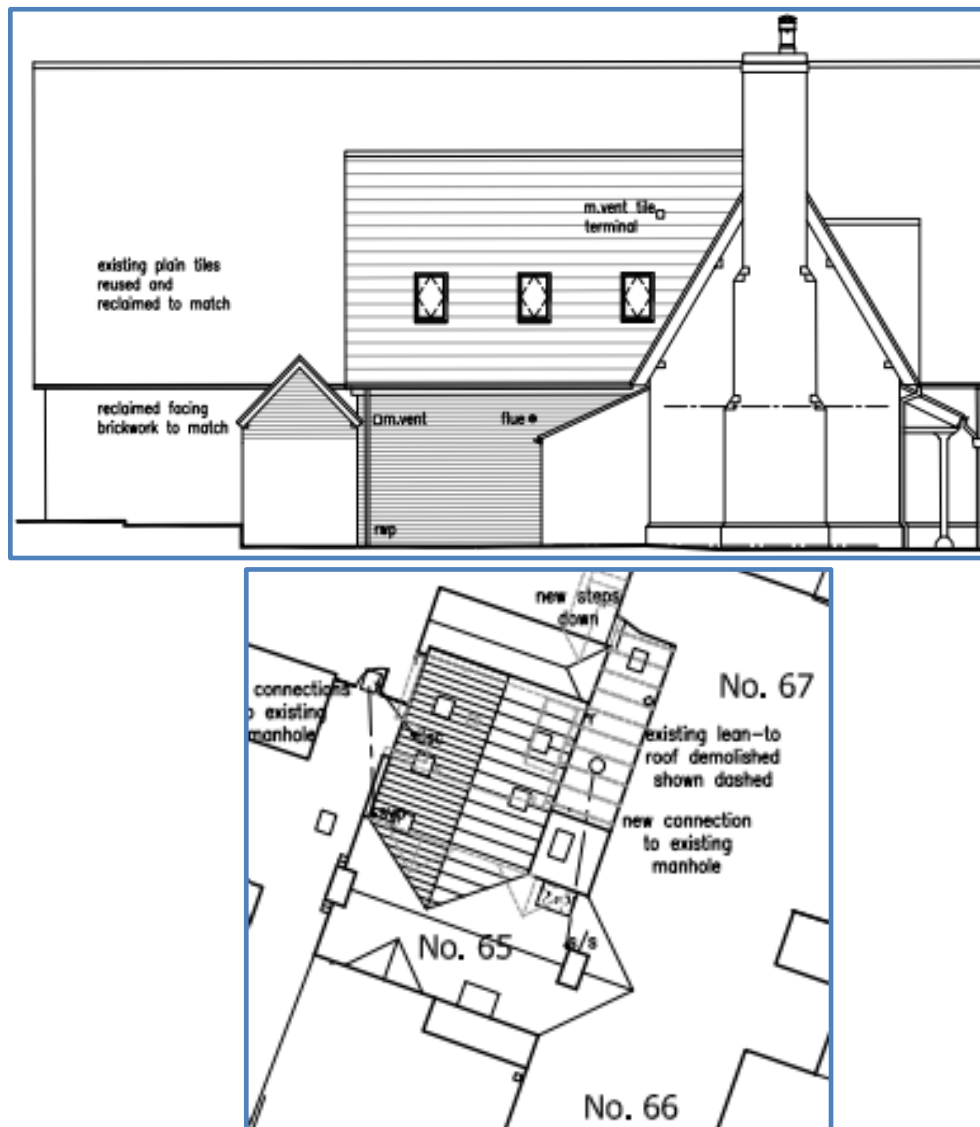


Figure 1 - extract from the proposed extension plans for the dwelling

The legislation with regard to bats (*Chiroptera*) is listed below.

1.1 Legislation applicable to bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations'). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat. It is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, to reproduce, to nurture their young, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate. Under this legislation development work that could affect a bat or bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural England.

Licences in respect of European Protected Species affected by development can be granted under Section 55(2) (e) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019), for the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Under section 55(9) of the Regulations licences can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative to the work specification
- and the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural England aim to process EPS licence applications within 35 working days of receipt and Low Impact Class licenses are typically registered within 14 working days of receipt.

1.2 Legislation applicable to breeding birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all native birds and their nests, whilst in use, are protected from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season. To avoid conflict, development work that could affect breeding birds should be timed to take place outside of the breeding season, variable between March and September. Note that a nest is protected from the beginning of its construction until the young have fledged and have left the nest.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location of the survey site



Figure 1: The situation of the site, encircled in red, in relation to the surrounding landscape, courtesy of Google Earth.

65 Church Walk is a residential property located in the village of Shackerstone, towards the western edge of Leicestershire. The immediate surrounding landscape includes further residential properties and associated gardens to the east, south and west. A small amenity grassland field is located just north of the property, bounded by a dense hedgerow which runs parallel to Station Road to the north. The Ashby de la Zouch Canal is also located close to the survey site, running from north to south, approximately 190m east of the property. Two large ponds are also located just west of this section of the canal, 130m north of the survey building, located within a further area of amenity grassland to the north of Station Road. The wider surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural farmland with largely arable fields that are bounded by intact hedgerow interspersed with tree species. Occasional small plantations are also located throughout the wider environment.

2.2 Description of the survey building

65 Church Walk is a two-storey T-shaped residential property constructed from solid brick, with brick-built chimneys and a plain clay tiled roof underlined with mortar torching. The building is fitted with uPVC windows and doors, with timber-built fascia boards located on all aspects of the property. The internal roof structure of the property consists of an open couple roof, with no trusses or collar beams present. Thick fibre-glass insulation is also present on the floor of this internal roof space.

A small brick-built outbuilding is attached to the rear of this main two-storey dwelling, located within the small yard area. This outbuilding contains timber-built windows and doors, with a plain clay tiled roof which is underlined with Tyvek. This outbuilding is attached to the main building by a small brick-built extension, covered by a polycarbonate sheet roof. An internal dividing wall is present within this outbuilding, in addition to a vaulted chipboard ceiling.



Photograph 1: Front view of the main two-storey dwelling taken from the south showing the plain clay tiled roof



Photograph 2: Rear view of the main two-storey dwelling taken from the north, showing the uPVC windows and doors



Photograph 3: Internal view of the main two-storey dwelling showing the open couple roof structure with mortar torching and fibre-glass insulation covering the floor



Photograph 4: Front view of the attached brick-built outbuilding taken from the south



Photograph 5: Rear view of the attached brick-built outbuilding taken from the north



Photograph 6: Internal view of the attached brick-built outbuilding showing the vaulted chipboard ceiling

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop study

The desktop study involved interrogating web-based resources. The following resources were examined:

- MAGIC - Multi-Agency Geographic Information website for maps of statutory designated nature conservation sites within 2.5km of the survey area (www.magic.gov.uk) and previously Granted European Protected Species Applications for Bats.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken to the buildings on site. This survey was completed in accordance with the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016), comprising a visual inspection of the building (formerly referred to as a bat scoping survey) as part of the ecological assessment of the area requiring renovation.

The methodology included examining the building for potential roost features and assessing the likelihood of these features being used by bats. This included searching for evidence of bat roosting in the form of feeding remains, droppings, staining, worn surfaces and the bats themselves (alive or dead).

Equipment used included a powerful torch, collapsible ladders, camera, and binoculars.

3.3 DNA Analysis of Bat Droppings.

A sample of bat droppings were collected from under the *Myotis* bat identified. This was isolated using targeted quantitative PCR (qPCR) analyses to identify all UK bat species. The main advantage of using qPCR is that it enables the identification of multiple bat species within one sample. It is also quicker, more sensitive and more precise than traditional sequencing methods.

3.4 Survey constraints

The survey was undertaken within the bat survey season of May to September inclusive. In addition, all external and internal features were accessible during the survey, therefore no constraints were encountered during the preliminary assessment of the buildings.

3.5 Personnel

The ecology walkover and the preliminary bat roost assessment were undertaken by B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited on the 16th May 2023. The survey was carried out by Mr Alan Roe BSc (hons) (Natural England Class Licence: 2015-12980-CLS).

3.6 Breeding birds scoping survey

Features that had potential to support nesting birds were recorded along with any breeding bird activity observed during the visual inspection.

3.7 Other protected species

An ecological walkover of the area immediately surrounding the building was carried out to assess the habitat for other protected species.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results

4.1.1 Fabric of the building

Scattered bat droppings were identified throughout the internal roof void of the main two-storey dwelling. The droppings appeared to be approximately one year old. No fresh droppings were identified at the time of survey. In addition, feeding remains were also identified within this same roof void, comprising of multiple tortoiseshell wing fragments scattered on top of the thick fibre-glass insulation.

No further evidence of roosting bats was identified during the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.

Access points into the main two-storey building included: raised roof tiles on all aspects, gaps associated with lead flashing on all aspects, a gap under the lead cladding on the southern dormer, a gap at the intersection of the ridge and main roof on the southern aspect, a gap between the end of purlin and brickwork on the southern aspect, gaps at the end of roofing battens behind fascia on southern and western aspects, missing brickwork mortar on western aspect, gap under ridge tile on northern aspect, gap under timber fascia board on northern aspect and gap between door frame and brickwork on northern aspect.

Occasional access points were also identified on the attached brick-built outbuilding to the rear of the main property. This included a gap under the hip tile due to missing mortar, raised roof tiles and a gap between the fascia and brickwork.

These features were deemed suitable for crevice dwelling bats such as *Pipistrelle* species.



Photograph 9: Gaps under lead flashing surrounding chimney on southern aspect



Photograph 10: Gaps under lead flashing surrounding chimney on southern aspect



Photograph 11: Gap under lead cladding on dormer on southern aspect



Photograph 12: Gap between end of purlin and brickwork on southern aspect



Photograph 14: Gap under hip tile and raised roof tiles on southern aspect of outbuilding



Photograph 16: Gap under fascia board on western aspect of outbuilding

4.2 DNA Analysis Results

The results of the DNA analysis of the droppings collected from the attic space is included below and confirmed the droppings within the attic were from Whiskered bat:

RESULTS

Date sample received at Laboratory: 27/06/2023
Date Reported: 04/07/2023
Matters Affecting Results: None

Lab Sample ID.	Site Name	O/S Reference	Genetic Sequence	Common Name	Result	
B1970	Shackerstone, 65 Church Walk	SP2702 7756	TTATATCGGAGGCTTTGGGA TTGACTAGTGCCCTGATGA TTGGGCTCCTGATATAGCC TTCCTCCGGATAAATAATAT AAGTTCTGACTACTTCCOC CATCTTCTTATTACTACTGG CCTGCTCTATAGTTGAAGCA GGGGAGGAACTGGTTGAAC AGTTTATCCTCTAGCAG GAAACCTTGACATGCAGGA GAG	Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	98.43%

Table 1 – DNA Analysis results on droppings s from the attic space

4.2.1 Data search

A search of the Magic Map application for previously granted European Protected Species Derogation Licences within a 2 km radius of the site identified two previous granted EPS licences from 2013 and 2020. Species included common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*).

4.2.2 Connectivity and water bodies

The immediate area around the survey building consists of residential properties and associated garden landscapes located within the village of Shackerstone. Two amenity grassland fields bounded by hedgerows, with associated trees are located just north of the property. Beyond this, the landscape is predominantly arable, with further adjoining hedgerows and occasional small woodland plantations. Two moderate sized ponds are located within 150m of the survey building, both located in one of the amenity grassland fields to the north of the property. These local terrestrial and aquatic habitats could all provide some level of cover and connectivity for commuting and foraging bats within the local area. In addition, the Ashby de la Zouch Canal is located approximately 190m east of the property which would provide further commuting and foraging habitat for more specialised species of bat within the local environment.

A 2-kilometre search from the site identified two statutory sites, both classified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This included Ashby Canal, 190m east and Newton Burgoland Marshes, 16km north east of the property. No non-statutory sites were identified within this 2km proximity.

4.3 Scoping survey results: breeding birds

There was no evidence that building associated bird species have utilised the structure for nesting.

4.4 Scoping survey results: other protected species

No evidence of other protected species was found during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape.

4.5 Findings and summary

In summary, there was a scattering of droppings within the attic space suggesting the potential for an individual or small number of Whiskered bats to be in residence.



Photograph 7: Scattered Whiskered bat droppings identified on top of the fibre-glass floor covering within the internal roof void of the main two-storey building

The immediate landscape is of moderate value for foraging bats as it provides suitable foraging/commuting habitat, in addition to connectivity to the wider landscape area for several species of bats within the local range such as Pipistrelles

5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation

Scattered Whiskered bat droppings were identified throughout the internal roof void of the main two-storey dwelling. In addition, feeding remains were also identified within this same roof void, comprising of multiple tortoiseshell wing fragments scattered on top of the thick fibre-glass insulation. No further evidence of roosting bats was identified during the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.

In addition, multiple suitable bat roosting features and access points were identified throughout the survey associated with the main two-storey dwelling. This included gaps within the fabric of the building, raised tiles and gaps associated with lead flashing, gaps associated with ridge and hip tiles, gaps between doorframes and purlins and gaps behind fascia boards. Occasional access points were also identified on the small outbuilding to the rear of the main property. This included a gap under the hip tile due to missing mortar, raised roof tiles and a gap between the fascia and brickwork. These features were deemed suitable for crevice dwelling bats such as *Pipistrelle* species.

Furthermore, habitats in close proximity to the property, including fields, hedgerows, plantations, ponds and nearby canal are likely to be used for both foraging and commuting purposes by bat species within the local area.

Therefore, when considering the scattered Whiskered bat droppings identified within the main two-storey dwelling in combination with the surrounding landscape and suitable bat roosting features identified within the fabric of the building, the survey determined that the dwelling should be categorised as at least “**moderate bat roost potential**” in accordance with National Best Practice Guidelines.

5.2 Recommendations

Therefore, in line with the national guidelines, at least two further surveys are required of 65 Church Walk in the bat activity season (May – September) and in the form of emergence and activity surveys, in order to provide confidence in the absence of roosting bats.

If this survey determines that there are no bats roosting within the building and there is no activity by bats associating with the structure, then works can proceed, albeit with a limited precautionary approach.

However, if an actual bat roost is recorded or there is activity by bats around the building such as to suggest the potential for future roosting than the ‘guidelines’ specifies that further surveys will be required to arrive at a reasonable presence/absence determination.

Note that if a bat roost is found within the building, then the proposed works would have to be carried out under a European Protected Species Derogation Licence, in order for the works to proceed lawfully.

To that end, no work should be undertaken on the building until these further nocturnal surveys have been undertaken.

5.3 Breeding birds

No evidence of nesting birds was located within the building during the survey. However, certain features identified on the dwelling could potentially be utilised by breeding birds in the future and therefore some caution is required.

All breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) that protects nests, whilst in use, from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season.

As no breeding bird evidence is present there is no seasonal constraint, however, to ensure all eventualities are covered if works proceed within the bird breeding season of March to September, then in advance the building should be checked to ensure there are no nesting birds present.

In the event that an active bird nest is found during the planned works, it must be retained in situ undisturbed until the nest is no longer in active use. A nest is classed as active when it contains eggs or chicks and when it is being built.

6. REFERENCES

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