

Bat Survey of 16 King Street, Barwell, Leicestershire



North and west elevations of western building

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**Carried out on behalf of
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16 King Street, Barwell Bat Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat survey was carried out of 16 King Street, Barwell, which is subject to a planning application for the conversion of the two commercial buildings into dwellings. The survey involved carrying out an inspection of the buildings for evidence of and potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds, and an evening emergence survey using bat detectors and night vision video cameras.

No evidence of bats was found in the buildings and none were recorded emerging from them, confirming that they are not used by roosting bats. A licence from Natural England would not be required for the proposed development, though as the presence of bats can never be discounted entirely, a schedule of precautionary measures should be adopted during initial building work as outlined in the mitigation section at the end of the report.

No foraging bats were recorded during the emergence survey, with the well-lit urban location of the property providing poor foraging habitat for bats.

No evidence of nesting birds was found, though as nesting birds are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, a check for nesting birds will need to be undertaken prior to building work commencing. If nesting birds are identified, works in the area of the nest will be delayed until the birds have left the nest.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Surveyor Experience and Competence

The survey was led by Philip Irving MCIEEM, who has worked for over twenty years as a Senior Ecologist for a Countryside Management Trust based in Bedfordshire, providing ecological advice on the management of Trust sites and writing management plans etc.

He also undertakes consultancy work including surveys for bats, great crested newts and other protected species, and holds a Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (licence registration no: 2015-12411-CLS-CLS), and a great crested newt class licence CL08 (licence registration no: 2015-17174-CLS-CLS).

1.2 Site Description

The property is located on the east side of King Street in the centre of Barwell centred at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SP445969, with the two commercial buildings occupying most of the 0.025ha property, and a small yard to the south of them.

The property is in an urban location and surrounded by dense housing and commercial properties with mixed farmland on the edge of the village c. 300m to the southeast.

1.3 Proposed Works

The property is subject to a planning application for the conversion of the two commercial buildings into dwellings. Given that the presence of protected species such as bats is a material consideration in the planning process (NPPF), a survey is required to provide information to the local planning authority (Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council) on any impact the proposal is likely to have on any species present. Any impact identified on protected species will need mitigation proposals to be put

forward to the planning authority to ensure any populations in the area are maintained at a favourable conservation status.

1.4 Aims of Survey

The aims of the survey are to:

- Confirm the use of the buildings by bats.
- Determine the impact of the proposed development on any bats using the buildings.
- Produce a mitigation plan for any impact on the bats to ensure the population is maintained at a favourable conservation status in the local area.

2. LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO BATS

Throughout Europe in the last 30 years there has been an awareness that bat populations are declining considerably. This decline combined with their special roosting requirements has led to them being given special protection by law. All bats and their roosts are protected by law under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), through inclusion in schedule 5, section 9. From 1st April 2010, a new version of the Habitats Regulations came into force in England and Wales to become the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. This version of the legislation updates and consolidates all the amendments to the Regulations since they were first made in 1994 and effectively makes any disturbance of bats an offence. In summary, taken together the legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or capture bats;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a structure used for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to areas used by bats for shelter or protection.

Structures used by bats for shelter are commonly known as bat roosts. Because bats tend to re-use the same roosts, legal opinion is that, the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. The appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) must be consulted of any work that may affect bats, or their roosts. In England, the appropriate SNCO is Natural England who will advise as to whether work can be carried out, and if so, the methods to be used.

Developments that would contravene the protection afforded to bats under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 require a Habitat Regulations Licence issued by Natural England before any works can commence. Three tests must be satisfied before Natural England can issue a licence or permit otherwise prohibited acts. The Local Planning Authority will need to ensure that tests 1 and 2 have been satisfied and Natural England will need to be consulted regarding test 3. The three tests are:

1. That the development is 'in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment' (Regulation 44 (2) (e)).
2. That there is no satisfactory alternative (Regulation 44 (3) (a)).
3. That 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 (Regulation 44 (3) (b)).

The legislation means that the developer will need to have a clearly documented compensation strategy to maintain the numbers of bats in the local area.

3. METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted to comply with the 4th edition of Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, September 2023).

An internal and external inspection of the buildings was made on the 22nd July 2026 by Philip Irving MCIEEM, and evidence of use by bats and nesting birds was looked for, for example droppings, urine streaks, nesting/roosting sites, feeding remains or live animals.

Bats may roost in a variety of situations including within the hollows of timbers, within gaps in brickwork, or below the ridge beam inside buildings. Buildings can be considered as potential roosts if cracks or holes in excess of 8mm x 12mm are present. Such gaps are large enough to allow the smallest species of bats to gain access. It is usual for bats to select roosting areas that are sheltered and warm, avoiding exposed draughty conditions.

An evening emergence survey of the western building was carried out at dusk (starting 15 minutes before sunset – 9.14pm) on the same day with two surveyors (Philip Irving MCIEEM – licence no. 2015-12411-CLS-CLS, and John Creasey –16 years bat survey experience) using Echo Meter Touch units attached to mini iPads, with the surveyors positioned to the north and south of the building as shown on the plan at the end of the report. In addition, two Pixfra A613 night vision video cameras were set up as shown on the plan at the end of the report, with the recordings reviewed after the survey was completed.

The weather at the start of the emergence survey was partly cloudy with a light north-easterly breeze and a temperature of 20°C.

Constraints - Bat roosts are of a transient nature and bats may move from roost to roost. A single bat may use a large number and wide variety of roosts during the year. This behaviour may result in some roosting sites not being encountered during the dates of the survey.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Desk Study

The few bat records within 1km of the property include common and soprano pipistrelles and noctule, all from c. 400m to the east of the property.

4.2 Description

The two storey commercial buildings occupy most of the property, the western roadside building constructed of brick with a pitched slate roof lined internally with wooden boarding, with a brick chimney at the north end, and the upper floor vaulted. The eastern building is constructed of breeze block with a pitched tiled roof lined internally with modern plastic membrane. The upper floor of this building is also vaulted but contains frequent constructional timbers. Attached to the south elevation of this building is a low one storey brick extension with a flat slate roof.

The interior of the buildings has been subject to building work with some of the ground floor areas consisting of bare earth, and the internal walls of the ground floor rooms either exposed brick or breeze block, though the internal walls of the upper floor rooms are mostly plastered.

The buildings are generally in good structural condition with well-pointed external walls, though the roof of the western building has a number of slipped and raised roof slates, especially along the north and south eaves, and there are gaps in the damaged brickwork of the chimney, which result could provide potential bat access points, and this building was assessed as having low potential to

support bats. The eastern building and one storey extension have sealed eaves and undamaged roofs and were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.

The yard to the south of the buildings contained piles of brick, timber and other materials with a breeze block wall and metal gates on the west boundary, another breeze block wall on the east boundary, and the brick wall of a building on the adjacent property on the south boundary.

4.3 Field Survey

No evidence of bats was found during the inspection of the buildings.

No bats were recorded emerging from the buildings and no foraging bats were recorded.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 Bats

No evidence of bats was found in the buildings and none were recorded emerging from them, confirming that they are not used by roosting bats. In spite of the results of the survey, the presence of bats can never be entirely dismissed, and there is still the potential for direct disturbance of any hidden roosting bats that may be present during building work.

No foraging bats were recorded during the emergence survey, with the well-lit urban location of the property providing poor foraging habitat for bats.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

6.1 Bats

Bats and their roosts are protected by law under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and a Protected Species license to derogate from this protection would be required to allow building work to be undertaken if a roost was present and the proposed activity is likely to result in an offence, such as significant alterations to or loss of bat roosts.

As there is no evidence of roosting bats in the buildings, an EPS licence would not be required for the development, though it would be wise to proceed with work in a way that will enable any bats that may be hidden to be detected and dealt with appropriately. The following measures will be implemented to reduce the impact of disturbance to bats as a result of the proposed work:

- Preliminary building work will be undertaken with care, with any roof slates and tiles to be removed, particularly those along the ridge and verge, lifted as carefully as possible, by hand and in an upwards direction to minimise any possible impact on any bats which may be present. If any bats or evidence of them is discovered, work will stop and an ecologist or Natural England consulted, and if necessary, a licence will be obtained before work proceeds.
- All contractors working on the site will be made aware of the potential presence of bats, the protection afforded them and the methods of working required to avoid harm to bats.

6.2 Nesting Birds

As nesting birds are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, a check for nesting birds will need to be undertaken prior to building work commencing. If nesting birds are identified, works in the area of the nest will be delayed until the birds have left the nest.

16 King Street, Barwell Bat Survey



- Key**
- Buildings subject to survey
 - Position of surveyors during emergence survey of western building
 - Position of night vision video cameras during emergence survey



APPENDIX

Photographs



South and west elevations of western building



South elevation of eastern building and extension



North and east elevations of eastern building



Upper floor of western building



Upper floor of eastern building



Ground floor of western building



Ground floor of eastern building



Damage to chimney and north eaves of western building



Gaps in south eaves of western building



Sealed eaves of eastern building