The Martlets
Sea Road
East Preston
West Sussex
BN161HS

Bat Assessment Report



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A Executive Summary

The 2014 report documents the results of a daytime bat assessment at The Martlets, Sea Road, East Preston, West Sussex BN161HS.

The survey concentrated on the bungalow and outbuilding situated at central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TQ 07113 02245.

There are proposals to redevelop the plot of land comprising the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of 5 new residential dwellings.

At the request of the owner of the site, an ecologist (holder of Natural England Bat Survey licences) from Jones and Sons Environmental Sciences Ltd undertook the daytime inspection on the 3rd June 2014.

The relatively urban habitats within the area are assessed as being of moderate value for flying and foraging bats with some suitable trees (although patchy distribution) providing potential flight connectivity to the wider area.

The assessment of the bungalow and flint outbuilding found them to support limited suitability for roosting bats. Although some suitable roosting features are present such as timber-framed lofts and bitumastic roof linings, the roof of both buildings appeared to be well sealed and no bats or any signs of any bat use were found during the exterior and interior inspections that included detailed searches inside the lofts. A hole in the flint wall at the west gable of the outbuilding was identified but no signs of any bat use were found around the hole.

With the current information available, the development will not impact on a known bat roosting site and any presence of roosting bats is assessed as unlikely. Since there will be no impact on a roosting site, there are no restrictions to the development with regard to bats

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B Introduction

A daytime assessment for bat roosting suitability and search for any signs of bat use was undertaken at The Martlets, Sea Road, East Preston, West Sussex BN161HS. The survey concentrated on the bungalow and outbuilding situated at central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TQ 07113 02245.

Jones and Sons Environmental Sciences Ltd undertook the survey on the 3rd June 2014 at the request of the owner of the site Mr Moss. There are redevelopment proposals to demolish the existing buildings and erect 5 new residential dwellings within the plot of land.

Since the presence of protected species is a material consideration in the planning process (National Planning Policy Framework), an assessment is required to provide information to the owner and Local Planning Authority on any impact the proposals may have on any bats within the area.

Any impact identified on bats will need mitigation to be put forward to the Local Planning Authority and Natural England to ensure that the species populations are maintained at a favourable conservation status.

The main objectives of the survey on the 3rd June 2014 at The Martlets were to:

- Survey the buildings for any signs of bat use and assess any use/potential use of the buildings by roosting bats;

- Determine any potential impact of the proposed works on the bat populations within the local area;

- If any potential impact is identified provide recommendations to ensure that bat populations are maintained at a favourable status within the local area and the building works comply with the legislation protecting bats.

The report describes: the methodology used, results of the daytime inspection and includes an evaluation of the findings with recommendations to ensure that the bat populations within the local area are maintained at a favourable conservation status. The relevant legislation and plans are included within the Appendix.

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C Methodology

Mr Adam Jones from Jones and Sons Environmental Sciences Ltd undertook the survey on the 3rd June 2014. Mr Jones has considerable experience of bat surveys and has held a licence for 10 years. The survey followed the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Hundt 2012).

Photographs were taken of the buildings and habitats to aid visual interpretation. A walk over of the site was undertaken to provide a broad-brush habitat survey of the area to assess the potential of the habitats to support a range of insects suitable for foraging bats and to identify features on the site that could be important as flyways for bats travelling to and from their roosts and to their foraging grounds.

The buildings were inspected for any bats or signs of bat use, facilitated by the use of binoculars, powerful torches (using red filters where appropriate) and ladders. Bats may roost in a variety of situations including within roof voids, behind wooden boarding, within gaps between bricks, within wooden beams or under roof tiles. The inspection included looking for free hanging bats and any signs of any bat use such as bat droppings, fur staining, urine splashes or feeding remains (insect wings).

In addition to searching for bat signs, the buildings were examined externally and internally, to assess the potential of the building to provide roosting sites for bats. Suitability criteria for the building include the following features: construction details, stability of the temperature regime, protection from the elements, light levels, cobwebs, level of disturbance, potential/confirmed roosting locations and potential/confirmed bat access points. Together with the suitability of the surrounding habitat and any signs of bats found, plus using the extensive experience of the bat ecologists, an assessment was made of the building's suitability for bats divided into: confirmed bat roost, high potential to provide roosting sites for bats, moderate potential (roosting possible), low potential (presence of roosting bats cannot be completely discounted but considered unlikely) and unsuitable/very limited potential (roosting highly unlikely).

Constraints

There were no major constraints regarding the daytime inspections since all elevations could be observed and full access to the buildings was available.

It should however generally be recognised that bat requirements change throughout the year. Buildings may change over time and bats may move from roost to roost. The survey therefore represents a 'snap shot' in time.

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D Results of the Bat Assessment

The Martlets is located within an urban, mainly residential area, in the village of East Preston. The redevelopment site is situated on the southern corner of the junction of Fairlands and Sea Road. The location is shown in Plan 1 and the surrounding habitats are illustrated within the aerial photograph (Plan 2).

The residential area comprises mainly roads, car parks, shops, houses and gardens with the tree bordered Warren Recreation ground 50 metres to the south. The survey site was formerly used as care facilities but has been vacant for a while and the vegetation, particularly ivy, has grown up around the buildings.

Habitats within the survey site include a driveway, amenity grassland, shrubs, scattered trees and bordering hedgerows that include some tall trees. The habitats are assessed as supporting moderate suitability for bats with some, although patchy, tree cover that provides potential bat flight connectivity across the area.

Photograph 1-2: Road junction view towards survey site and north





Photograph 3: Hedgerow along south border



Photograph 4: west end of site



There are two buildings within the plot of land: a relatively modern bungalow to the east and a flint outbuilding in the southwest corner.

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Bungalow

The single storey bungalow has brick walls supporting a shallow pitched roof with gables to the east and west. The roof is clad with concrete tiles and concrete ridge cap and has wide timber soffits along the eaves. There is a brick chimney projecting from the roof with lead flashing around the base. Vegetation surrounds the building providing suitable cover and there is some ivy growth (mainly dead) that covers the east gable end.

Photograph 5: Bungalow south elevation



Photograph 6: Bungalow east elevation



Photograph 7: Bungalow west elevation



Photograph 8: west/ north elevation



Internally there is a relatively low level loft. The trussed timber frame and water tank creates a cluttered void less suitable for roosting bats. The timbers are modern with no joints suitable for roosting bats.

Photograph 9-10: Bungalow loft





The tiles are lined internally with traditional bitumastic felt that could potentially provide crevices for bats between the tiles and felt. However the roof is sealed with no obvious access points for bats identified and the detailed search found no signs of any current or past use by bats.

The exterior inspection of the bungalow found the roof to be in good condition with tightly fitted concrete tiles preventing bats from entering the building from the outside. The soffit boards around the eaves are also tightly fitted against the walls similarly preventing bat access.

No signs of any bat use were found during both the exterior and interior inspection and it is considered unlikely that the bungalow is a bat roost mainly due to the lack of bat access opportunities.

Flint Outbuilding

The outbuilding in the southwest corner is surrounded by vegetation including ivy growth over the walls and roof of the building. The walls are constructed of brick and flint and support a pitched timber-framed roof with gables to the east and west. There is a slightly lower section to the east and lean-to with double timber doors attached to the north side. The roof is clad with slates with lead flashing at the joins.

Photograph 11: south and east elevation



Photograph 12: east and north elevation



Photograph 13: Interior



Internally there is a ceiling with a roof void above. At the west end is a window that would create light internal conditions less suitable for roosting bats. Under light conditions bats would seek out darker crevices for roosting.

The roof timbers include a ridgeboard, rafters and collar beams but the timber surfaces are covered with cobwebs reducing their suitability for roosting. No timber joints suitable for roosting bats were identified. Cobwebs also cover the stonewall interior.

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Photograph 14-16: Interior outbuilding roof void







The slates are lined with traditional bitumastic felt creating potential roosting crevices between the slates and felt but only in the event of bats being able to access these crevices from the outside.

The detailed search of the loft found no signs of any current or past use by bats.

The exterior inspection found the roof to be in good condition with tightly fitted slates and ridge cap preventing any bat access to the crevices between the slates and felt or into the roof void. There are also no suitable openings at the eaves enabling bat access. There is a hole at the west gable apex where some flints have fallen out but the hole does not go through to the interior of the building and is of an exposed nature that would create draughty conditions reducing the suitability for bats to roost within the exterior crevices of the wall. The hole was inspected closely but no bats or any signs of bat use were found.

Photograph 17-18: Hole at west gable





The outbuilding is assessed as supporting limited suitability for roosting bats due to the presence of only a few suitable roosting opportunities and the lack of opportunities for bats to access the building. Roosting is considered to be unlikely.

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E Evaluation and Recommendations

The buildings surveyed at The Martlets, Sea Road, East Preston are located within an urban, mainly residential area, with surrounding habitats assessed as being of moderate value to bats. Tree cover is patchy but is capable of providing potential flight connectivity to the wider area.

The bat suitability assessment of the buildings (bungalow and flint outbuilding) on the 3rd June 2014 found them to support limited potential for roosting bats. Although some suitable roosting features are present such as the timber-framed lofts and bitumastic roof linings, the lofts are not considered to be highly suitable for roosting bats due to the limited opportunities for bats to enter the loft from the outside (tightly fitted concrete tiles/soffits of bungalow and tightly fitted slates of outbuilding). An exterior hole in the flint wall at the west gable of the outbuilding was identified but no signs of any bat use were found around the hole and the draughty exposed nature of the feature would reduce its suitability for bats.

No bats or any signs of any bat use were found during the detailed interior and exterior inspection and it is considered unlikely that bats roost in the buildings.

With the current information available, the development will not impact on a known bat roosting site and any presence of roosting bats is assessed as unlikely. Since there will be no impact on a roosting site, there are no restrictions to the development with regard to bats

The conclusions above are relevant to the current survey but if there is any significant delay in the development there is always a chance that conditions may change. The roofs may deteriorate over time creating bat access opportunities and, although no signs of any bat use were found, any bats potentially flying within the area are always investigating. Therefore, although currently considered unlikely, in the event of bats or signs of bats being discovered at a future time, all building works must stop immediately and Natural England consulted for advice.

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F References

Department for Communities & Local Government (March 2012) National Planning Policy Framework.

HMSO (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Stationary Office Ltd, Norwich.

HMSO (2010) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The Stationary Office Ltd, Norwich.

HMSO (2006) The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act

Hundt L (2012) Bat Survey: Good Practice Guidelines, Bat Conservation Trust

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & A.P. McLeish (2004) The bat workers' manual. JNCC.

Natural England Licensing section www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licensing/default.htm

ODPM (2005) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation- Statutory Obligations and their impact within the Planning System. Circular 06/05, ODPM, London

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G Appendix

Legislation and Policy Relevant to Bats

All bats and their roost sites are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through inclusion in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Amendments to the legislation means that legal protection for a European Protected Species 'EPS' falls mostly under the Habitats and Species Regulations (2010).

In England the legislation makes it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed, rear young or hibernate or significantly affect their local distribution or abundance,
- Incidentally or deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

Resting places used by bats are known as bat roosts. Because bats tend to reuse the same roosts, the roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time. Deliberately is interpreted as someone who, although not intending for example to harm a bat, performs the relevant action being sufficiently aware of the possible presence of bats. The Wildlife and Countryside Act additionally makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost.

Building works that would contravene the protection afforded to bats under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 require an EPS Licence prior to the commencement of works. Natural England, under powers conferred by the Secretary of State, has authority to issue licences but only for certain purposes.

The criteria that need to be satisfied prior to the granting of both planning permission for the development and a Natural England Licence 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 53(2)(e)).

In this situation it would need to be demonstrated that there were imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

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2 That there is no satisfactory alternative (Regulation 53(9)(a)) to the 'do nothing' option.

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 53(9) (b)).

A clearly documented mitigation strategy will be required to satisfy this regulation.

Following on from a recent court cases, local authorities must consider all planning applications where European Protected Species are likely to be affected and an EPS licence is required. Regulation 9(3) of the of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) states that LPAs must have regard to European Protected Species when granting planning permission. The ruling refers to the three tests given above

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012, replacing the previous nature conservation planning policy (PPS 9), has a presumption in favour of sustainable development that in an environmental context means developments should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

The circular "Biodiversity and Geological Conservation published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 remains active and should be used in conjunction with NPPF. Section 99 of the ODPM Circular 06/2005 also states that:

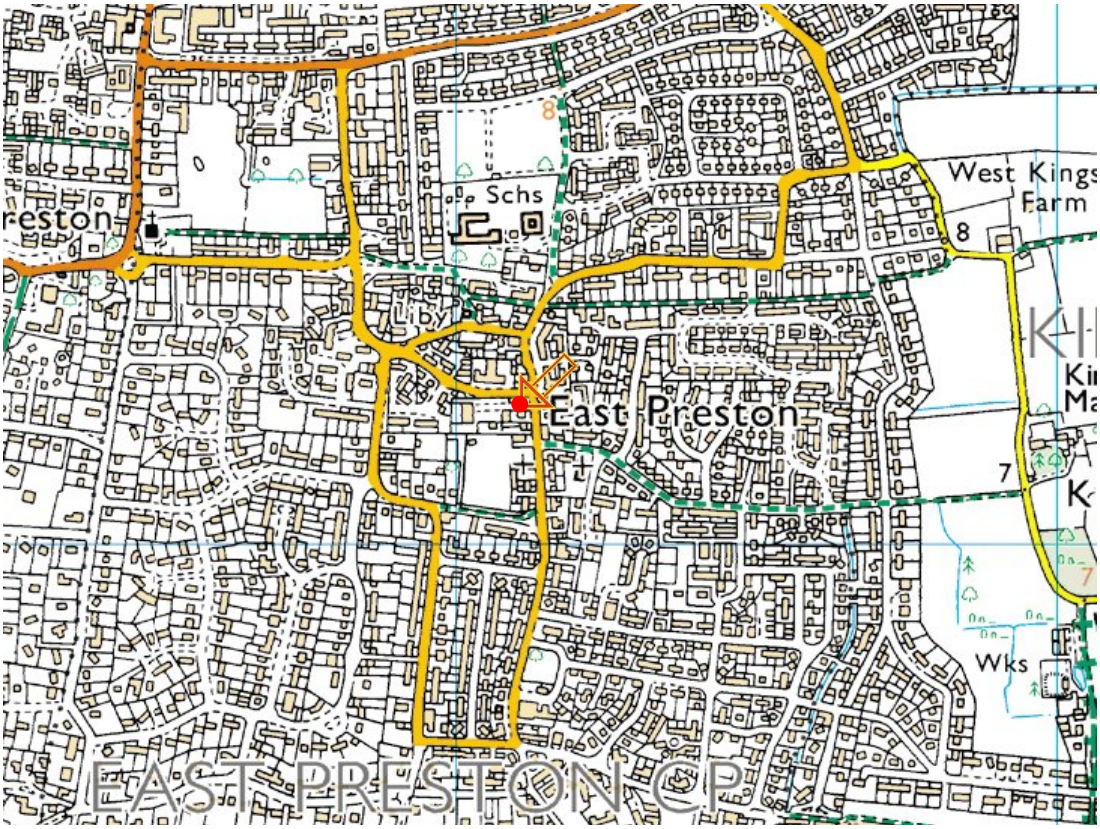
'It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision'.

In addition, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a duty on all public bodies to promote and enhance biodiversity in all its functions. Section 40 of the Act states "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". Special attention is paid to species included on the Government's list of species of principal importance that includes bat species.

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Plans

Plan 1: Site Location



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Plan 2: aerial photograph of survey site and surrounding habitats.

