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Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited

86/86a WEST STREET, HAVANT, HAMPSHIRE

PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

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Appendix 1 Protected Species Legislation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A Phase 1 ecological survey was undertaken on 1st March 2010 at 86/86a West Street, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1LN. The site is subject to a planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of two residential dwellings (86 and 86A West Street, Havant).

- The Phase 1 ecological survey involved a field survey to assess the potential for protected habitats and species to be present on the site.

- The site comprises a moderately-sized garden within an urban setting, containing predominantly disturbed ground and scattered ornamental plantings.

- The site is considered unsuitable for supporting badger, dormouse, common reptiles, great-crested newt and breeding birds but is considered to offer potential for roosting bats.

- It is recommended that the removal of the existing roof tiles will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist. Following their removal the under-surface of these tiles, and the areas covered by them, will be inspected for the presence of bats and their field signs (droppings, prey remains etc).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been contracted by Mr and Mrs Willetts to undertake a Phase 1 ecological survey at 86 West Street, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1LN located at National Grid Reference (NGR): SU 714 063.

This report presents the findings of the Phase 1 ecological survey carried out by ECOSA on 1st March 2010.

1.2 Aims and Scope of Report

This report is based on a Phase 1 field survey which was primarily aimed at determining the suitability of the site to support protected habitats and/or species. This information allows an initial assessment of the biodiversity value of the site to be made.

1.3 Site Setting and Description

The site is located on the northern side of West Street within the town of Havant, approximately 13 kilometres (km) north-north-east of Portsmouth city centre. The site is set in a largely urban setting approximately 70 metres to the west of the main B2149 Park Road. Large industrial estates are located to the north and south. The only notable areas of green open space in the vicinity of the site are located 90 *metres(m) to the south west and 170m to the north-east.*

The site comprises a two-storey brick built structure with a traditional clay tiled roof. The southern part of the building is formed by the main part of the building which is constructed in a pitched design. Two apparently extended sections extend in a northerly direction from the main section, these are constructed *with clay tiled roof* sections in a pitched and hipped design. The grounds of the site comprise largely of disturbed ground due to buildings works, however the adjacent buildings have gardens which comprise managed grassland and ornamental shrubbery.

1.4 Site Proposals

The proposals for the site involve the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new building on exactly the same footprint. The existing building is considered to be structurally unsafe and therefore it is not possible to renovate it, as was previously planned.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 *Introduction*

This section details the methods used during the Phase 1 field survey carried out at 86 West Street, Havant, Hampshire.

2.2 Phase 1 Field Survey

The Phase 1 ecological survey was carried out on 1st March 2010. The survey involved a walkover of the site to identify the habitat types present and to record evidence of any protected species such as badger *Meles meles*, dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, bats, breeding birds, reptiles and great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. Details of the species-specific survey methods for these species are provided below.

Based on the habitat features present at the site, it is considered that there is the possibility of bats and breeding birds to be present, however, the site and surrounding area is unsuitable for badger, dormouse, reptiles and great-crested newt due to the sites urban location and the lack of semi-natural vegetation in close proximity. Therefore, these species are not considered further.

2.2.1 *Vegetation*

An assessment was made of all areas of vegetation within the site. This involved a walkover survey to identify broad vegetation types present.

2.2.2 *Bats*

The building was investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas, such as gaps or holes in roof tiles, fascias and soffits, to record direct evidence of bat presence such as droppings and urine staining. A detailed investigation of the internal roof void of the residential property was carried out to record roosting bats and evidence of bat roosting activity such as live animals, corpses, droppings, feeding remains, urine staining and fur staining. The building was assessed as to its suitability for supporting roosting bats.

An assessment was made of the suitability of any trees on the site to support roosting bats based on the presence of suitable bat roosting features such as holes, cracks, splits, loose bark and a covering of ivy.

The surveys of both the buildings and the trees on the site conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines[1].

2.2.3 Breeding Birds

The assessment of breeding birds on the site was based on the suitability of habitat present, evidence of nesting such as old or currently active nests and the presence of bird species that may potentially nest within the available habitat.

2.3 Personnel and Timing

The Phase 1 ecological survey was carried out by a suitably experienced ECOSA surveyor on 1st March 2010.

2.4 Survey Limitations

Not all potential bat roosting features are accessible to the surveyor, e.g. holes or cracks in brickwork, and therefore assessments are based upon the potential for these features to provide suitable roosting opportunities.

The survey was undertaken at a time of year when it is not possible to provide definitive assessments of a species' presence/likely absence at a site e.g. breeding birds, and so assessments are based on the presence of suitable habitat within/adjacent to a site. Therefore, in the absence of direct evidence, assessments are based upon the potential for the site to support the protected species considered.

2.5 Initial Protected Species Assessment

Details of the assessment criteria used to determine the ecological value of on-site attributes is outlined below. During the Phase 1 survey the assessment criteria is based on the potential for the site to support the species considered, this is usually based on the on-site habitat features and their suitability for the species considered (Paragraph 2.6.1, 2.6.2 and 2.6.3). Where a species has been confirmed as present during the Phase 1 survey then the ecological value of that species at the site is assessed (Paragraph 2.6.4). However, in many cases Phase 2 surveys will be required to assess the status of species and hence the importance of a population at the site, therefore the assessment of value should be considered a provisional assessment.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2007). *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

2.5.1 *Bats – Building Assessment*[2]

An assessment was made of the building on site. The building has been graded for its potential to support bats based upon the following criteria:

- ***High Potential*** - High potential buildings are those that have many features that may be utilised by roosting bats, often these include gaps around soffits, hanging tiles, extensive roof spaces etc. High potential buildings are often, but not always, buildings of more historic construction. Bats are confirmed as present. Buildings where bat roosts are more significant, either frequently used or utilised for breeding or hibernation, are classified as being of high bat interest.

- ***Medium Potential*** – Medium potential buildings have a moderate number of features that may be utilised by bats for roosting, these may include loose fascias, roof spaces etc. Generally, medium potential buildings are of more recent construction. Evidence of bats may be present; however, field signs would indicate that these are low status roosts (such roosts are still protected under current legislation (see Appendix 1)).

- ***Low Potential*** – Low potential buildings are those that provide limited bat roosting potential although some features that may be utilised by bats may be present.

- ***No/Negligible Potential*** – Negligible potential buildings are those that provide very few, superficial features with bat roosting potential and for which further survey works are considered unnecessary. Some buildings, especially those of modern construction, offer no suitable features and are classed as having no potential.

2.5.2 *Breeding Birds*

The potential for the site to support protected species is based on the results of the field survey assessment. The potential for on-site habitat to support badger, dormouse, breeding birds, reptiles and great-crested newt is based upon the following criteria:

[2] The criteria detailed in Paragraphs 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 are an attempt to qualify the potential for a given building or tree to support roosting bats and are to a degree subjective. Naturally, bats may make use of a single feature on an otherwise unsuitable building or tree and therefore an assessment of bat potential cannot solely be based on the quantity of potential roost features present.

- ***High Potential*** - Species confirmed as present during the field survey and/or on site or local records confirmed from the desk top study. The on-site habitat is of high quality for a given species/species group. The site is located within or adjacent to a national or regional stronghold. Good quality surrounding habitat and good connectivity.

- ***Medium Potential*** - The on-site habitat is of moderate quality, providing most or all of the known key requirements of a given species/species group. Factors limiting the potential of occurrence may include small habitat area, habitat severance and disturbance.

- ***Low Potential*** - On-site habitat is of poor to moderate quality for a given species/species group. Presence cannot be discounted on the basis of national distribution, nature of surrounding habitats, habitat fragmentation, recent on site disturbance etc.

- ***Negligible Potential*** - Although presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site includes very limited or poor quality habitat for a particular species/species group. The surrounding habitat is considered unlikely to support wider populations of a species/species group. The site may also be outside or peripheral to known the national range for a species.

2.5.3 Assessment of Ecological Value

Where a species or habitat has been confirmed as occurring on the site during the Phase 1 survey the ecological value of this feature has been assessed. The assessment of ecological value is based on a geographical frame of reference and includes consideration of designated sites and features, biodiversity value, potential value, secondary or supporting value, social and economic value and multi-functional features. The determination of ecological value used in this ecological assessment is based on the criteria provided in the Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance[3] and repeated in this document as **Table 1**.

[3] Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG Unit 3.3.10, 2004)

Table 1 Nature Conservation Value of Features/Attributes

Value	Criteria	Examples
Very High	High importance and rarity, international scale and limited potential for substitution.	Internationally designated sites.
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, or regional scale with limited potential for substitution.	Nationally designated sites. Regionally important sites with limited potential for substitution.
Medium	High or medium importance and rarity, local or regional scale, and limited potential for substitution.	Regionally important sites with limited potential for substitution. Locally designated sites.
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale.	Undesignated sites of some local biodiversity and earth heritage interest.
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale.	Other sites with little or no local biodiversity and earth heritage interest.

3.0 RESULTS AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

This section details the results of the Phase 1 field survey carried out at 86/86a West Street, Havant, Hampshire, on 1st March 2010 and provides an initial assessment of the ecological value of the site.

3.2 Phase 1 Field Survey

3.2.1 Vegetation

The vegetation on site comprises largely disturbed ground with a few isolated ornamental tree and shrub species. The species recorded include cleavers *Galium aparine*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica* and a small buddleja *Buddleja davidii*.



Figure 1 Garden to North of Residential Property

Given the lack of any structured vegetation within the site it is considered to be of **negligible ecological value** for the vegetation present.

3.2.2 Bats – Building Assessment

External Description

The building comprises a two-storey residential property with brick elevations and a clay tiled roof in a pitched design (**Figure 2**). The building forms part of a terrace with the main roof ridge running from west to east, two hipped roof sections extend from the northern elevation (**Figure 3**). The building has three chimneys, one is attached to the rear of the building (northern elevation), the other two extend through the roof at the eastern and western elevations. A wooden fascia is located along the wall plate on the northern elevation.

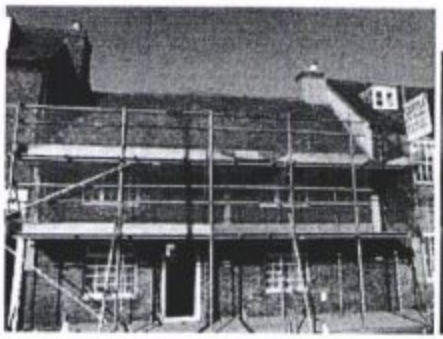


Figure 2 Southern Elevation of Building



Figure 3 Northern Elevation of Building

Internal Description

Internally, the building has been fully stripped of all fixtures and fittings (**Figure 4**), but was formerly designed to provide and ground and first floor area, with a third floor created but the conversion of a section of roof (**Figure 5**). The first floor ceilings have been removed thereby exposing the underside of the roof, subsequently no roof voids are now present.





Figure 4 Internal View of Ground Floor **Figure 5** Internal View of Converted Roof Area

The roof is constructed with peg tiles, which are unlined internally, subsequently it is possible to view into gaps within the ridge tiles (**Figure 6**), and hip joints located within timbers on the underside of the roof. The valley between the two hip sections is leaking, thereby making the roof area in this vicinity wet and draughty.



Figure 6 Gaps within Ridge Tiles

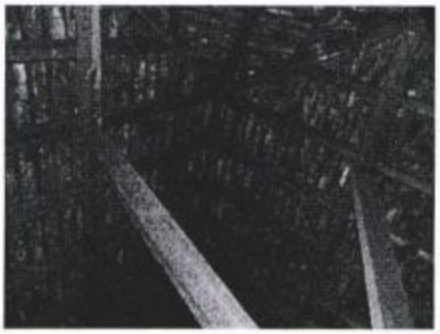


Figure 7 Hip Joints located on Underside of Roof

The internal stripping works have exposed large cracks within the structure and subsequently led to the need to demolish and rebuild the building, since it has been declared structurally unsafe.

Potential Bat Access/egress Points

Given the design of the building and its roof construction with traditional peg tiles, there are numerous potential bat access/egress locations. The most notable potential roosting locations are detailed below;

- Small voids are present within the ridge tiles. These could be accessed by bats from outside, where mortar is missing and from internally where obvious gaps are present (**Figure 6**);
- Sheltered areas are present around the hip joints of the roof (**Figure 7**);
- A large crack is present where the chimney breast butts against the wall of the adjacent building, at the western elevation (**Figure 8**); and
- Gaps are present beneath the wooded fascia located on the northern elevation (**Figure 9**).



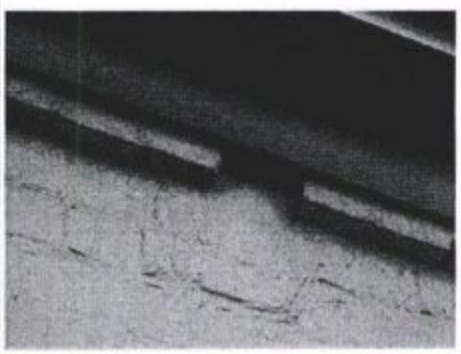


Figure 8 Gap behind Chimney Breast on Western Elevation **Figure 9** Gap behind Wooden Fascia

Since the internal partitions and ceilings within the building have been removed, it is now possible for bats to enter the interior of the building and roost within any suitable crevice within. Additionally, hanging slates are attached to the eastern elevation of the adjacent property and therefore above the roof of 86/86a West Street. Whilst these are not part of this buildings ownership, they are considered suitable for roosting bats.

Recorded Bat Evidence

During the Phase 1 survey the building was fully investigated, however no evidence of bat activity was recorded. The internal elevations of the building have been extensively modified and the floors had been swept. However, the upper faces of beams, which were formerly enclosed within roof voids, were investigated and no evidence of bat activity was recorded. Given the number of potential bat access/egress locations, but the lack of recorded evidence the building is assessed of being of **low ecological value** for bats.

3.2.3 Bats – Tree Assessment

The site does not contain any mature trees exhibiting any features with bat roosting potential. Therefore, the site is considered to offer **negligible potential** for supporting tree-roosting bats.

3.2.4 Foraging and Commuting Habitat

Since the site is located within a largely urban landscape, and the grounds located to the north of the site are small. It is considered that the site of **negligible value** as a foraging or commuting site for bats.

3.3.5 Bird Survey Results

Formerly, the site may have provided suitable breeding habitat for some of the common bird species. However, since only limited vegetation still exists within the grounds, it is now considered to be of **negligible value** for breeding birds. During the Phase 1 survey a European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* was recorded from the site.

3.3.6 Overall Site Assessment

Overall, the site lacks any structured vegetation which is considered suitable for breeding birds and foraging bats. However, there is a limited potential within the building for occasionally roosting bats. It is therefore considered that the site is of **low ecological value**.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the conclusions of the Phase 1 ecological survey and provides an initial assessment of the likely ecological constraints to the proposed development and recommendations for any further survey work considered necessary. An outline of protected species legislation relevant to the findings of this report is provided in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Conclusions

4.2.1 Vegetation

The site contains predominantly bare ground with isolated shrubs and as such is considered to be of **negligible ecological value**.

4.2.2 Bats

The building on the site exhibits features which are readily used by bats for roosting. However during the Phase 1 survey no evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, was recorded. The condition of the building is open and drafty, and leaking rain water in places, and therefore it is considered that any bat roosts which may be present are likely to be temporary. There are no trees exhibiting features with bat roosting potential. As a result, it is considered that there is a **low potential** for bats to roost within the building.

4.2.3 Breeding Birds

Given the lack of any structured vegetation on the site, it is considered that there is a negligible potential for breeding birds.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Bats

The Phase 1 survey has identified several features on the building which are readily used by bats for roosting. However, no evidence of bat activity was recorded during the survey. Additionally, the building is located within a largely urban setting which is illuminated during the hours of darkness. Whilst many of the adjacent buildings comprise modern industrial units, buildings of a similar age and structure and in a better condition are located nearby. Therefore it is considered that these buildings would offer a more stable environment for bats.

Given the fact that it is considered to be structurally unsafe, there will be no requirement to carry out detailed Phase 2 bat surveys. However, it is recommended that on the evening prior to the demolition works commencing, a single dusk emergence survey is carried out. Providing no bats are recorded during this survey, the removal of roof and ridge tiles and fascias from the building should proceed under the supervision of a licenced bat ecologist. This is to ensure that, should any bats be recorded roosting within the building, they are removed safely. If bats are recorded either during the emergence survey or during the destructive search then a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence may be required, however, given the condition of the building it is considered that this is an unlikely event.

Following the completion of the redevelopment works, the roof of the new building will be constructed using the same peg tiles that were stripped from the old building. These peg tiles, being naturally bowed, will provide numerous opportunities for bats to colonise the building in the future.

The approach outlined above is, we believe, a pragmatic approach to the site development proposals which allows the commencement of the construction of the buildings and minimises disturbance to bats.

Appendix 1 Protected Species Legislation

European Protected Animals[4] - Bats

In England, all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion in Schedule 5. In addition, bats are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 which implements the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom.

Taken together, these legislative instruments make it illegal to carry out the following activities:

1. deliberately or recklessly capture or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
2. deliberately or recklessly disturb any such animal;
3. deliberately or recklessly take or destroy eggs of any such wild animal;
4. damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal; and
5. keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal of a European protected species, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal.

Any activity that would result in a contravention of the above legislation would require a licence to avoid committing an offence. Natural England has powers to grant a licence for the following purposes:

- preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; or
- preventing the spread of disease; or
- preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property or to fisheries.

In addition, Natural England can only issue a licence if it is satisfied that the activity meets one of the above purposes and is also satisfied of the following;

- that there is no satisfactory alternative; and

[4] Summarised from www.defra.gov.uk

- that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

In order to determine whether an activity requires a licence, Natural England advises that the guidance of a consultant ecologist is sought. However, Natural England offer the following advice as a guide:

- A licence is needed if the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under regulation 39; or

- If the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence under regulation 39 then no licence is required. However, in these circumstances Natural England would urge that reasonable precautions be taken to minimise the effect on European protected species should they be found during the course of the activity. If they are found then work should cease and an application be made to the Wildlife Licensing Unit at Natural England, Bristol.