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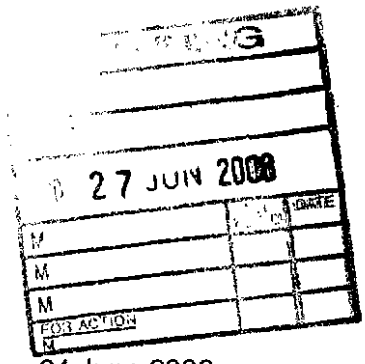
120 Wilton Road, Crumspall, Manchester

Inspection and Assessment in Relation to Bats



Prepared for:

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 As part of a proposed Planning Application at 120 Wilton Road, Crumpsall an inspection and assessment was undertaken in relation to bats. The aim of the survey was to ascertain if potential existed for bat roosts and if evidence of use was present. DK Architects on behalf of their client commissioned the inspection and report.

1.2 Where a European protected species (All UK bat species) or their roosts may be affected by development then a licence to derogate from the Habitats Directive, 1994 Regulations could be required. Licence applications are processed and issued by Natural England subject to three tests being met one of which is that the action proposed *'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status within their natural range'.*

1.3 The optimum time to investigate buildings for evidence of a bat roost is May – August, however that is not to say they cannot be inspected and assessed outside of that time and frequently the results can be conclusive which can save time and expense for Planning Applicants but it should be borne in mind that equally the inspection can be inconclusive. If potential was found to be high or the results of the survey were inconclusive then recommendations would indicate the requirement for nocturnal observations to be undertaken at the site during the breeding season of bats. (May – August)

2.0 Bats and their Requirements

2.1 All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive as in need of protection. When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of regulation 6 of the Habitats Directive, and therefore has a statutory duty under regulation 3(4) to have due regard to the requirements of the Habitats Regulation in the exercise of its functions. Therefore the Directive's provisions are clearly relevant in reaching planning decisions and these should be made in a manner which takes them fully into account.

2.2 Guidance is contained in Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) on the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. Furthermore PPS9 paragraphs 5.34 & 5.35 identifies that bats are highly dependant upon built structures and new developments/conversions can take account of this by incorporating roosts into such structures.

2.3 Use of Buildings by Bats

a) Summer breeding roost.
b) Hibernation.
c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

3.0 Survey Methodology

3.1 The survey was conducted on 9th June 2008 when the property at 120 Wilton Road was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats and if evidence of use was present. The loft was inspected for signs of use, which mainly includes droppings, remains of prey items or staining on roof timber caused by regular roosting. Additionally any gaps that may be used to access the loft were investigated for stains, which can be present when regular use of an ingress point is made. Exterior elevations were inspected for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.

3.2 The survey was undertaken at a time when bats are within their breeding season which is the optimum time to inspect buildings for evidence of use. If evidence of use was found to be absent the results, conclusions and recommendations are based upon surveyor experience and knowledge of bat ecology.

3.3 During the survey the surrounding area was assessed in relation to suitable habitat that may be of value to bats.

4.0 Findings

4.1 120 Wilton Road is an unoccupied residential detached bungalow; it is situated in an urban environment and foraging places for bats are limited. The bungalow is brick built with a pitched slate roof and during the investigation of the loft it was noted that underfelt or sarking boards are absent which will reduce opportunities for crevice dwelling bats such as Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus*) whereby they often roost between the two materials. A loft space is present but evidence of bats was absent and all roof timber heavily cobwebbed with no signs of disturbance over many years, furthermore the immediate and surrounding habitat is not productive for loft dwelling bats; typically Brown Long Eared. (*Plecotus auritus*)

4.2 During the external investigation no evidence of droppings was found which would indicate that bats have been present and the value of the bungalow in relation to breeding roost potential is considered to below but as with many buildings single or small numbers of bats could be present at anytime of the year and can remain undetected.

4.2 The surrounding area is not particularly suitable for foraging bats and as such will reduce the percentage use of the building as a roost.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 From the inspection and assessment of the property it can be concluded that on the day of the survey no evidence of bats was found and that breeding roost potential is considered to be low. It can also be concluded that the re-development of the site would not result in the loss of high value bat roost potential and nocturnal observations will not be required.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Although no evidence of bats was found and roost potential is low contractors should adopt a standard awareness of the possible presence of undetected singular or small numbers of bats which often use buildings at anytime of the year. If bats are found **or suspected** of being present then, as a legal requirement work should cease and further advice sought from a bat consultant or Natural England.

Stan Irwin: Natural England Bat Scientific/Education and Conservation Licence.
Natural England Licence to disturb and observe Barn Owls