

SOUTH AREA COMMITTEE MEETING – 9th May 2013

Pre-Committee Amendment Sheet

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 13/0409/FUL

Location: **EF Language School, 221 Hills Road**

Target Date: 17.05.2013

To Note: I have received the email below from the applicants' agents regarding bats.

'Further to your request of the 25th April for a bat survey, we have attached below the initial report, received late last week. The report shows that a transitional roost has been present in the existing Victorian Villa at some point (referred to as building 1 in the report). In line with the recommendations in the report's conclusion, we have already commissioned an emergence bat survey to check whether the roost found is in regular use, and whether there are any more on site. As the report concludes: If the further surveys positively identify bats roosting at the site, the results will enable the design team to provide appropriate mitigation and if necessary, apply for a European protected species licence - in accordance with current legislation and best practice.'

The relevant sections of the survey report are attached to this amendment sheet.

The relevant emergence surveys have already been commissioned and will be carried out over a period of 15 days. To avoid this work causing an eight-week delay to the application, I have recommended an amendment to the recommendation, as shown below.

Amendments To Text: None

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation:

Amend recommendation to read:

- (i) GRANT DELEGATED AUTHORITY to officers to approve the application subject to:
- the conditions listed in the report;
 - the Nature Conservation Officer and the Planning Case Officer being satisfied that the necessary additional bat emergence surveys have taken place and that any proposed mitigating measures are acceptable; and
 - officers drafting and attaching to the permission any additional conditions

which, in the officers' opinion, are necessary to address the protection of bats including to secure any required mitigating measures.

- (ii) If Officers are not satisfied that the additional bat emergence surveys have taken place, or they are not satisfied that the proposed mitigating measures are acceptable, the application is to be brought back to the next meeting of South Area Committee.

DECISION:

Initial Assessment Bat Survey

Summary of Recommendations

If bats, evidence of their activity and suitable locations for roosting bats, are all absent from the site, then no further visits are normally required. Otherwise, a single, daytime initial assessment, in which no bats were found, is not normally considered sufficient (Hundt 2012).

Taking into consideration the desk study and site survey findings, this report concludes that it is not possible to adequately manage or exclude the risk of harm to bats without the need for further survey effort.

Therefore, in order to provide adequate support for this planning application, bat emergence surveys should be undertaken, compliant to industry best practice, such as are set out in the Bat Conservation Trust publication, *Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines* (Hundt 2012).

A full specification for bat emergence surveys that is appropriate to the scale and scope of the proposed development can be found in the ‘Conclusions’ and ‘Recommendations’ sections of this report.

Table 4: The Site Survey Results

Buildings and trees are referred to by number, in accordance with the sketch plan at Appendix I.

Reference Number	Habitat Value Table 2 Refers	Description of Roosting Features Access to Roosting Features	Confirmation of Bat Presence
B1	Confirmed Bat Roost	The original building is believed to be constructed in the 1900's and an additional extension was added approximately 15 years ago (B2). The building is of stone brick construction and is roofed with concrete tiles. The main entrance to the building faces north and the building itself is divided up into a number of classrooms with interconnecting corridors. There is access to two loft areas (see plan) in room 10 on the second floor and room 12b in the third room. No evidence of bats was found in these loft areas, however many sections were inaccessible. Areas that were accessed showed the presence of under felt and loft insulation. There were also many areas of the roof that were boarded out (see photographs). On the outside of the building, there are three dormer windows to the front with hanging tiles to each side. There are also dormer windows to the rear elevation, again, with hanging tiles. The building had a double roof ridge with access via a fire escape door in the centre of the ridge. There is also a fire escape staircase running down the middle of the southern elevation. This can be accessed via the roof area. Lead flashing is present and appears to be in a reasonable condition, along with the main roof tiles. B1 has a cellar that is accessible via a small staircase by the reception/entrance. The cellar houses a large boiler and is divided up into a number of rooms. There are a number of open windows; however access to the outside is sealed via a wire mesh, making it unlikely for bats to utilise.	Droppings were located in a small store cupboard on the third floor which intrudes into one of the many small roof spaces. The droppings were concentrated at the end of the cupboard to the right hand side and were approximately 30-50 in numbers. It appeared they had come from the upper section of the ceiling of the cupboard which had been boarded out, leaving a gap between the ceiling and the brick wall. (See plan/photographs).
B2	Moderate Habitat Value	The construction is an 'L' shaped addition to the main building, constructed approximately 15 years ago and faces west. The building is in good condition with brick walls and a slate roof that is also in a good state of repair. The building is segregated into classrooms and the rear elevation backs onto a private road. The second floor of the rear and northern side elevation is covered in hanging tiles along the entire length of the building. The building does not have access to any loft space with the second floor build into the	No evidence of bats was found during this survey.

		roof of the building. The interior of B2 was not accessed during this survey.	
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Any additional notes:

A sample of droppings has been taken from the third floor and can be used for DNA analysis if required.

Conclusions

Table 5: Summary of Conclusions

Reference	Habitat Value [Table 2 refers]	Are emergence survey works necessary? ¹	Best Estimate of Roost Type
B1	Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Negligible <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes. The evidence gathered during this initial assessment implies that there is an <u>unacceptable</u> probability (risk) of harm to bats if the development is allowed to progress without further surveys.	Transitional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Hibernation <input type="checkbox"/> Check boxes are left blank if Habitat Value is 'negligible'.
B2	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Significant <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Negligible <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes. The evidence gathered during this initial assessment implies that there is an <u>unacceptable</u> probability (risk) of harm to bats if the development is allowed to progress without further surveys.	Transitional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Hibernation <input type="checkbox"/> Check boxes are left blank if Habitat Value is 'negligible'.

¹ Hundt (2012) states that "If a building or built structure is considered to have a moderate or high likelihood of use by bats, the preliminary roost assessment, even if negative for bats, should be followed by several presence/absence surveys."

Recommendations

The surveyor has used the industry best practice publication Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines (Hundt 2012) to guide the following conclusions and recommendations of this report.

Table 6: Specification for Further Surveys

Reference	Specification for Surveys ²	Seasonality for Emergence Surveys
B1	This is a confirmed transitional roost. 3 further dusk emergence surveys should be undertaken. 6 surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building.	Optimal: Mid May to August inclusive. Sub-optimal: May to September inclusive - will require a greater survey effort and justification.
B2	This is a suspected transitional roost. 3 further dusk emergence surveys should be undertaken. 6 surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building.	Optimal: Mid May to August inclusive. Sub-optimal: May to September inclusive - will require a greater survey effort and justification.

The purpose of further surveys is to determine the species of bats, their population and the type of roost - or to confirm a negative result beyond doubt.

If the further surveys positively identify bats roosting at the site, the results will enable the client to design appropriate mitigation and if necessary, apply for a European protected species licence.

² If bats are discovered emerging from any of the buildings during surveys, the survey effort may need to be appropriately increased pursuant to table 8.5, Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines (Hundt 2012).

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