

401 Harlington Road
Uxbridge

Report for:
Mrs M Bhatia
401 Harlington Road
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB8 3JG

INTRODUCTION

AA Environmental Limited (AAe) was commissioned by Mrs Bhatia to carry out an ecological survey of the above site. The purpose of the survey was to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to record any evidence of protected species. This information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The redevelopment proposals are to construct an apartment block with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing dwelling and clearance of some vegetation. The majority of the boundary vegetation will be retained and protected during the works.

METHODOLOGY

Baseline Data

As certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated and a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

The ecological walk-over survey was completed on Thursday 31 October 2024. During the walk-over survey, particular attention was paid to record the presence of/or suitable habitat for badgers, bats and herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) that may be using the site or present in adjacent habitats, in accordance with the following survey methodology.

Badgers

Badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts are protected by the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*, under which it is an offence to harm badgers or their setts. A sett is defined as “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger”. Natural England has provided the following guidance on the interpretation of current use:

A sett is defined as such (and thus protected) as long as signs indicative of ‘current use’ are present. Thus, a sett remains protected by the Act until such times as the signs (i.e. ‘field signs’) have deteriorated or decayed to such an extent that they indicate that the sett is no longer in ‘current use’.

A thorough survey of the whole site and adjacent habitats, where access was available, was carried out. Particular attention was paid to dense areas of vegetation to check for any evidence of badger activity, which is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- presence of holes with evidence of badger, such as footprints, discarded hair, etc;
- presence of dung pits and latrines;
- presence of well-used runs with subsidiary evidence of badger activity; and
- presence of other indications of badger activity, such as signs of foraging and footprints.

Bats

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats, or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹ and by an experienced ecologist². A thorough internal and external examination of any on site buildings was carried out, with any potential access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces, where present, were accessed to check for any evidence of bats.

In addition, a careful inspection of the trees within the vicinity of the works was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground. Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **NONE** – Either no Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
- **FAR** – Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
- **PRF** – A tree with at least one PRF present.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual surveys were facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope.

Herpetofauna

Amphibians

All amphibian species have some level of protection under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking, and intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a 'place used for shelter or protection' is prohibited, as is the destruction of these places.

Reptiles

All reptile species are protected at some level under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The more common species of reptiles, which include slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca*

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² The lead surveyor was Alan Beaumont BSc (Hons), MSc. MCIEEM.

vivipara), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are protected by the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* by part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). This means that they are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injuring (but not 'taking') and against sale and transporting for sale.

An assessment of the site was carried out to determine its suitability for herpetofauna by recording the habitats present. In addition, any natural/artificial refugia present on the site was lifted to check for any sheltering animals or evidence of animals, such as sloughs (shed skins)³.

Other Wildlife

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

RESULTS

Baseline Data

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no statutory ecological designated sites located directly on, adjacent to or within the 2 km study area. The nearest site is Yeading Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 2.09 km to the north-east of the site. There are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest HPI is an area of Deciduous Woodland, also noted in the National Forest Inventory, located approximately 0.02 km to the south-west of the site.

Google Earth imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 1999 with the site dominated by the existing buildings with associated hardstanding and garden area.

Site Description (Photographs 1-4)

The site is located off Harlington Road in Uxbridge, centred at National Grid Reference: TQ 081811 and covers less than 0.1 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing property and outbuildings with associated hardstanding and garden area. The site is bordered by Harlington Road to the south-west with residential dwellings with associated gardens to all other sides.

The property was a masonry constructed bungalow which was rendered and painted white with mock Tudor frame timbers. The bungalow had a pitched and hipped engineered pantiled roof. Overhanging eaves were present, with timber barge boards on the gable ends. There were two metal framed shelters with corrugated plastic roofs attached to the rear and side of the property. Internally, the roof space was lined with bitumen-based felt and insulated with mineral wool. There were three outbuildings in the garden area, comprising two storage sheds and a timber shed. The two storage sheds were of prefabricated construction, with a pitched Cement Bonded Corrugated Sheet (CBCS) roof and no separate roof spaces. The timber shed was of timber construction with a pitched bitumen-based felt roof and no separate roof space.

The garden area was dominated by lawns, with some ornamental planting and a few individual trees also present. Species recorded within the lawns included perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), clovers (*Trifolium spp.*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), white dead-nettle (*Lamium album*) and daisy (*Bellis perennis*). Species recorded within the ornamental planting included elder (*Sambucus nigra*), jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*) and geraniums (*Geranium spp.*).

Individual trees recorded on site included a Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and leyland cypress (*Cuprocyparis x leylandii*).

³ Although considered 'out of season' when herpetofauna will not be fully active, certain species can still be found sheltering/hibernating under refugia.

Badgers

No evidence of badgers or their setts were recorded on or adjacent to the site.

Bats

No evidence of bats was found during the careful internal and external inspection of the buildings recorded on the site. The masonry and mortar of the bungalow were in good condition and the roof tiles well-aligned and tightly sealed, with no obvious access points recorded. The roof space was fully accessed and found to be well sealed, heavily cobwebbed with some rodent (mouse) droppings recorded. The outbuildings due to their construction type and lack of potential roosting features were assessed to provide **negligible** roosting potential for bats.

The site, being a residential plot, provides only limited foraging opportunities for bats. All of the trees within the vicinity of the works were assessed under the category **NONE**, due to the lack of PRF's.

Herpetofauna

There were no ponds on the site and therefore, no breeding opportunities for any species of amphibians. The site, being a residential plot located in a built-up area, does not provide suitable terrestrial habitat for any species of herpetofauna. In addition, despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna was seen or recorded sheltering under any refugia lifted during the survey.

Other Wildlife

Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The redevelopment proposals are to construct an apartment block with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing dwelling and clearance of some vegetation. The majority of the boundary vegetation will be retained and protected during the works.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded.

Although there are considered to be no ecological constraints to the proposals, a series of specific and generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the re-development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024⁴.

A thorough examination of the existing buildings was completed, with all potential access points and/or roosting opportunities fully inspected for evidence of bats. The roof space of the bungalow was fully accessed and not complex allowing a thorough inspection, therefore, there are considered to be no constraints to the survey findings. Although no evidence of bats was recorded and no further surveys are considered necessary, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Therefore, in order to avoid contravention of current legislation, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect any vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 'Tree Work - Recommendations'. The retention and protection of the existing boundary vegetation will help to maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by wildlife.

Any new boundary treatment should be designed to promote permeability of the site to minimise fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site, for example by strengthening/enhancing the existing boundary vegetation, planting up a series of new hedgerows and/or installing post and rail fences. These measures will strengthen habitat connectivity and provide additional foraging habitat, cover and nesting opportunities. If close boarded fences are required for security reasons these should be minimised and raised slightly off the ground (c. 150-200 mm) to allow animals to pass underneath.

As part of the proposals, soft landscaping will be carried out. Where any new planting is proposed it should aim to use native species, but where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife can be used. In particular, flowering plants will be of benefit to invertebrate species and shrubs and trees may provide nesting opportunities for birds once they become established.

The site could be further enhanced by installing some bird nest boxes to provide nesting and sheltering opportunities for birds.

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. Although the site is located in a well-lit area and currently experiences light spillage from on-site sources and neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution.

Overall the findings of this ecological survey would indicate that there are no ecological constraints to the development proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted, subject to appropriately worded conditions. A range of standard controls are available and deliverable to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on local wildlife that are using the site with a series of controls to be implemented to avoid contravention of current legislation.

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Photograph Record Sheet



Photograph 1: Showing the front of the bungalow and the driveway.



Photograph 2: Showing the rear of the bungalow and patio area.



Photograph 3: Showing the roof space recorded within the bungalow.



Photograph 4: Showing the rear garden and the three outbuildings.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT			
401 Harlington Road Uxbridge			
TITLE			
Photograph Record Sheet			
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