

27 November 2020

Dan Stiff
c/o Boughton Butler Ltd
Worcester Norton Sports Cub
Brockhill Lane
Norton Barracks
Worcester
WR5 2PP

Dear Dan,

**Preliminary Roost Assessment – Worcester Norton Sports Club, Brockhill Lane,
Norton Barracks, Worcester, WR5 2PP**

I am writing to provide you with a written report of my survey findings at the above site on 18 November 2020. The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SO 86846 51912. I am a licensed bat surveyor (Natural England licence: 2015-13354-CLS-CLS). I used the following equipment during the survey: telescopic ladder, high-powered torch with red filter, flexible endoscope and binoculars.

No inspection of the loft of the Club House due to health and safety reasons. However, the loft will not be affected by the proposed development. Weather conditions on the date of survey were overcast with light rain and maximum daytime temperature of 13°C.

I understand the development proposals are for internal refurbishment of the 'Club House' including loft cleaning, minor redecorating of the exterior and demolition of the 'changing rooms'.

Results:

Area / Feature	Observations
Club House	<u>External Description:</u>

	Club House is a single-storey building with cross-hipped roof covered with composite slates. The exterior of the building is rendered white and has red brick lower sections and corners. Single-storey extensions adjoin the north-western and north-eastern sections of the building and two dormers are located along the southern elevation. A small, single storey outbuilding with a hipped roof is located to the north-west of the Club House. The roof cover and exterior of the outbuilding matches the construction of the main building. The general condition of the Club House is good. However, the building has not been renovated and has fallen into disrepair. The walls of the structures are in good condition and there are no gaps for bats to exploit. Two boarded-up windows were noted along the northern elevation, limiting access for wildlife to the building interior. Timber cladding is present at the gable of the north-western extension. There are no potential crevices for bats to exploit between the timber cladding. The panels are fairly new and tightly-fitted. The mixture of old (sash windows) and new windows (PVC) are well-sealed and there were no gaps around the frames for bats to exploit. The roof is covered with synthetic slate tiles with patches of bryophytes around the slope and ridge tiles. The roof has sealed edges without access under the ridge tiles and therefore does not offer opportunities for roosting bats. A single rot hole was noted within the south-eastern corner of the boxed eave. The gap is located in close proximity to the flood light and therefore unlikely to be used by bats.
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Plate 1: showing a typical view of the Club House. Photograph looking at south eastern elevation.



Plate 2: showing a typical view of the Club House. Photograph looking at northern elevation.



Plate 3: showing a typical view of the Club House roof cover.



Plate 4: photograph showing a rotted crevice in the soffit located next to the flood light.

Internal Description:

Internally, the building has high rooms with false ceilings with one remaining enclosed roof void that runs the length of the roof space.

The roof void height from floor to the ridge is approximately 1.4m. The loft is not insulated and lined with timber sarking. However, the false ceiling incorporates a layer of insulation.

No evidence of roosting bats was found. However, the entirety of the loft could not be inspected due to the height and impassable access.

	Plate 5: showing a typical view of the space above the false ceiling. Plate 6: photograph showing the loft void of the Club House.
Changing rooms	<u>External Description:</u> A single-storey detached building is located to the east of the Club House and linked via a joint structure between two buildings. A single storey addition with pitched roof connects to the north-eastern side of the building and a single-storey extension with flat roof is located to the east of the structure. A veranda is located along the southern elevation of the building. The building is in a poor state of repair. The brick walls are painted white. The northern elevation is heavily overgrown with ivy. Pitched roofs of the changing rooms are covered with corrugated asbestos/cement fibre sheeting and heavily-covered with bryophytes. The pitched roofs of the building and flat roof of the extension do not offer opportunities for roosting bats. Plate 7: typical view of the changing rooms building. Photograph looking at south-eastern elevation. Plate 8: typical view of the changing rooms building. Photograph looking at northern elevation.

	<u>Internal Description:</u> There is a small loft located along the eastern side of the building and false ceilings to the west of the structure with rooms open to the apex of the building. The roof void above the false ceiling is approximately 1.6m in height from ceiling tiles to the roof apex. The loft space on the eastern end of the building is not insulated and lined with wood-fibre boards. The entire loft space was heavily covered with cobwebs with signs of mould. No evidence of roosting bats was found.  Plate 9: typical view of the space above the false ceiling.  Plate 10: loft void of the changing rooms.
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Foraging / Commuting Habitat Potential			
High quality semi-natural habitats	Within immediate vicinity (<250m)	Within wider landscape (<2km)	Comments
Broadleaved/mixed woodland	☐	☒	n/a
Waterbodies	☐	☒	
Tree lines/stands	☒	☒	
Mature hedgerows	☒	☒	
General Landscape Character	Suburban (mixed use)		
Negative Characters		Positive Characters	
Highly urbanised environment ☐ Night lighting (significant) ☐ Isolated from high-value habitat ☐ Modern building construction ☒ Human disturbance (significant) ☒ High exposure (altitude, prevailing winds etc.) ☒ Nearby buildings modern or isolated ☐		Rural environment ☒ Absence of night lighting ☐ Good connectivity to high-value habitat ☐ Building construction suitable for bats ☐ Absence/Minimal human disturbance ☐ Low exposure (altitude, prevailing winds etc.) ☐ Cluster of suitable old buildings ☒	
Other ☐ specify		Other ☐ specify	
Conclusion: (Collins 2016)	Moderate - Continuous habitat connected to wider landscape that could be used by commuting/foraging bats.		

Conclusion:

Conclusion – Building Suitability for Bats (see Collins 2016)	
Building 1	Low - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically.
Building 2	Negligible - structure is unsuitable for bats.

After a detailed internal and external inspection of the Club House and ‘changing rooms’ buildings at Worcester Norton Sports Club, there is no evidence to suggest that the buildings support roosting bats.

The general structural condition of the ‘Club House’ is good, although a crevice within the wooden soffit was noted. The gap is located at the end of the soffit and close to the security flood light. A detailed inspection of the small loft above the main section of the Club House building was not possible due to limited access. The proposal includes the cleaning of the loft void.

Taking into consideration that only internal refurbishment of the building is being proposed and a single suitable roosting feature for bats was observed (located close to the external source of light), the likelihood of bats roosting within the building is considered to be **negligible – very low** (with reference to Collins, 2016).

On this basis, provided precautionary measures are implemented during the works, the likelihood of the development proposals having any significant impact on bats is considered to be **negligible**, and it would appear unreasonable to request any additional survey effort at this juncture in line with published planning advice (see ODPM Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System).

*“...bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species **being present and affected** [my emphasis] by the development.” (p.33 Paragraph 99).*

There is no evidence to suggest that the ‘changing rooms’ building supports roosting bats. No signs of bat roosting activity (e.g. bat droppings, feeding remains, urine stains etc.) were

observed during the survey within the loft and areas above the false ceiling of the building and the exterior of the building is in good state of repair and tightly-sealed.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, government guidance and best practice.

1. No further presence/absence surveys are required to support the planning application for this site as the potential for bats to occur and significant impacts to arise during works is considered to be negligible.
2. Any required cleaning works within the loft of the Club House should be undertaken outside the bat activity season (bat activity season April – October, inclusive) wherever feasible. If not possible, a suitably-licenced ecologist should undertake a detailed loft inspection prior any works undertaken.
3. As a precautionary approach, it is recommended that a licensed ecologist directly supervises the hand removal of soffits / fascia boarding if these require replacement. The ecologist should undertake a detailed inspection of any holes within the soffit/ fascia boarding to be replaced, using an endoscope where required. The licenced ecologist should then be 'on call' during the remaining works. **In the unlikely event that roosting bats and / or evidence of roosting bats (e.g. droppings) are discovered, works must cease immediately and Natural England must be contacted to advise on any licensing requirements to allow lawful completion of the work.**
4. In line with Government policy on biodiversity, two bat boxes should be installed within the landownership of Worcester Norton Sports Club. The boxes should be installed on suitable mature trees along the south - western boundary of the site (e.g. Large Multi Chamber WoodStone Bat Box, Schwegler 2F Bat Box). The boxes should be installed at least 4m above ground-level, sheltered from strong winds, and exposed to the sun for part of the day (usually south or south-west facing).
5. Removal of ivy cover from 'changing rooms' building' (potential bird nesting habitat) should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March – August, inclusive) or

otherwise under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, who will be able to identify any nesting birds and advise of appropriate safe working distances.

6. This report is deemed valid for 12 months. Should any development commence after this time has elapsed an update survey will be required to determine the status of the site during the intervening period.

I trust the above information is clear and satisfactory to requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or clarification.

Kind regards

Robert Pelc
Ecologist

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QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Focus Environmental Consultants® has the expertise to provide sure-fire environmental solutions to a wide range of projects. The company ethos forges the highest standards of professional scientific practice with a best value approach for our clients. Our core area of expertise is in the production of specialist ecological and arboricultural reports and advice to support planning applications. We are also building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to smaller projects allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Robert Pelc MSc GradCIEEM

Robert is an Ecologist who joined Focus Ecology in 2019 and has over four years' of professional experience in the field of ecology. Prior to joining Focus Ecology Robert worked as an Ecologist at a small ecological consultancy firm in Herefordshire. His ecological experience includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and surveying for European Protected Species including bats, great crested newts and hazel dormice. Robert is competent in a range of bat survey techniques, from detailed building and tree inspections to more advanced trapping techniques and radio tracking. Robert is also a competent surveyor of reptiles and barn owls. He holds a Natural England survey licence (Class 2) and Natural Resources Wales licence for bats. He also holds a Natural England survey licence (Class 1) for great crested newts. Robert is a Graduate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

This report has been checked for quality and content by:

Graham Davison BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB

Graham is an ecologist with over eighteen years of experience in the field of applied ecology. He holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Zoology and an MSc with distinction in Law and Environmental Science. Graham's Masters paper on legal and practical implications for mammal reintroductions was published by the IUCN. His ecological experience includes surveys to identify nationally and locally important sites for wildlife, ecological services to local planning authorities and provision of ecological reports to accompany major infrastructure projects, housing schemes, industrial developments and mineral extraction. Graham is a skilled botanical surveyor (FISC 4) specialising in Phase I and Phase II (NVC) Habitat Surveys. Graham has considerable expertise in protected species surveys and licensing, and is a Registered Consultant under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence scheme (BMCL). Graham has appeared and delivered evidence as an expert witness for Planning Appeals and Public Inquiry. Graham has been interviewed for BBC local radio and TV programmes to provide specialist expertise on ecological topics.