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HERTFORDSHIRE BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE

Environment, County Hall, Hertford, Herts, SG13 8DN

Miss J Phillips
Case Officer
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6A

Ask for: B. Tranter
Our Ref:
Your Ref: S6/2012/2424/FP
Tel: 01992 556155
Date: 13/12/2012

Dear Miss Phillips,

Planning application: S6/2012/2424/FP. Anchor Cottage, Vineyards Road, Northaw. Erection of two storey rear extension.

Thank you for consulting HBRC on the above application. We have the following comments to make:

1. HBRC database.

HBRC do not hold any specific biological data for the above property.

From online photographic evidence and the supplied drawings we feel that the structure of the soffits and roof in general do not support features favourable for bats. In addition the proposed extension will only have a minor impact on the roof and loft space.

We consider the dwelling to be sub-optimal for bats as a roost site, and that it would be unreasonable for the LPA to require a bat assessment survey to be submitted in support of this application. However, the surrounding habitat is favourable to bats for foraging and there is always a possibility that bats may be present.

2. Bats the Law and Planning Process.

Bats and their roost sites are protected under both European and national legislation and are a material consideration in the determination of a planning application, that if implemented would be likely to result in harm to the species.

3. Recommendations.

We advise that a precautionary approach is taken to the planned development and recommend that if your council is minded to grant permission ***the following informative regarding bats is attached to any planning permission*** (unless evidence of bats has been seen, such as bats being observed within or emerging from the dwelling or key field signs noted inside or outside of the building such as droppings, scratch marks or urine stains in which case a European Protected Species derogation licence may be required and advice should be sought from a licenced bat worker immediately).

Bats are protected under domestic and European legislation where, in summary, it is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in a roost or deliberately disturb a bat in a way that

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would impair its ability to survive, breed or rear young, hibernate or migrate, or significantly affect its local distribution or abundance; damage or destroy a bat roost; possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat; and intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

Development should proceed with caution, particularly that which is associated with the roof and loft spaces. In the event of bats being found, work must stop immediately and advice taken on how to proceed lawfully from either of the following organisations:

The UK Bat Helpline: 0845 1300 228

Natural England: 0845 6014523

Herts & Middlesex Bat Group website: www.hmbg.org.uk

Bearing in mind the above information, as an alternative, the applicant may wish to commission an appropriately qualified ecological bat consultant before works start to determine whether or not bats are present on the site. A list of bat consultants can be obtained from the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre on 01992 555220 or the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's website www.ieem.net.

We trust these comments are of assistance in determining this application and should you require any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Tranter PhD MIEEM
Senior Ecological Consultant for HBRC