



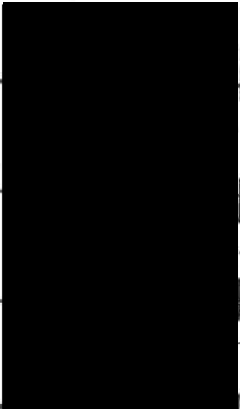
**St. George's Catholic Church,
Round Close Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire**

Protected Species Survey Report

November 2015

on behalf of Catling and Catling Ltd

Client	Catling and Catling Ltd
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1 Introduction

1.1 Site Description

St. George's Catholic Church is located to the south of Round Close Road, to the western side of the village of Adderbury in Oxfordshire. The approximate Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is SP 467 353. Adderbury is located approximately 2.8km to the south of Banbury.

The study includes the church itself and surrounding area of land which comprises bare ground and ruderal vegetation. A small stream runs through the site, to the south of the building. The northern boundary of the site is marked by a stone wall and temporary heras fencing, beyond which is Round Close Road. The eastern and western boundaries are marked by walls or fences. The southern boundary is denoted by a wooden fence.

The area surrounding the site is largely residential, comprising buildings, roads and small gardens. The Lucy Plackett Playing Field, a recreation ground with a small woodland to the south, is located approximately 40m to the east of the site. The Sor Brook flows from north to south approximately 225m to the east of the site, beyond the recreation ground.

1.2 Proposed Works

There is a proposal to demolish the existing building and to erect four new dwellings within the site, with associated gardens and access.

1.3 Aims of Study

The aims of this study are to survey the building for bats and/or evidence of bats. The study assesses the overall potential of the building to support roosting bats and discusses the likely impact of the proposed demolition on bats and their habitats. The study also describes and evaluates the habitats present and aims to assess the potential for the site to support other protected and notable species. The report discusses the likely impacts of the proposed development on the ecology of the site, on valued habitats and protected/notable species.

2 Methodology

2.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 14th October 2015 by Tracy Gray BSc GradCIEEM. A walkover of the site was conducted and a description of the habitats present was prepared using standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC 2010). Target notes were also prepared on features of particular ecological interest and an assessment was made of the site's potential to support protected and notable species (such as species listed under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006).

2.2 Bat Survey (Building Inspection Survey)

A bat survey (building inspection survey) was also undertaken on 14th October 2015 by Tracy Gray BSc GradCIEEM. Miss Gray holds a licence from Natural England to survey for bats within all counties of England (Natural England Level 2 WML-CL18 Licence 2015-14396-CLS-CLS). A detailed internal and external survey of the church was undertaken in order to look for bats and/or evidence of bats and to assess the potential of the building to support roosting bats.

The interior of the building was inspected for bats, bat droppings, urine stains, feeding remains (such as moth wings) and characteristic fur staining around bat access points and 'hanging-up' sites. Notes were made on the relative freshness, shape and size of bat droppings and the location and quantity of any feeding remains. A one million candle-power torch was used in the detailed inspection of the building's interior and exterior elevations. The bat survey was undertaken according to best practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Hundt 2012).

The bat survey was undertaken according to best practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Hundt 2012) and the *Bat Workers Manual* (JNCC 2010). The study also takes into account the structure of the building and ecological context of the site, including the following factors which may increase the likelihood of roosting bats being present (Hundt 2012):

- Age of the building (pre-20th Century or early 20th Century construction)
- Nature of construction; traditional brick, stone or timber construction
- Large and complicated roof void with unobstructed flying spaces
- Large (>20 cm) roof timbers with mortice/tenon joints, cracks and holes
- Entrances and gaps for bats to fly and crawl through
- Poorly maintained fabric providing ready access points for bats into roofs, walls; but at the same time not being too draughty and cool.
- Roof warmed by the sun, south-facing roofs in particular
- Weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles with gaps
- Undisturbed roof voids
- Buildings and built structures in proximity to each other providing a variety of roosting opportunities throughout the year
- Buildings or built structures close to good foraging habitat, in particular mature trees, parkland, woodland or wetland, especially in a rural setting.

The following criteria are used to determine the level of 'bat roost potential' within buildings:

- **None** – There are no features that roosting bats could use for shelter. No further surveys are required.
- **Negligible** – While presence cannot be absolutely discounted, no obvious features that could be used by bats for shelter are identified. No further surveys are required.
- **Low** – A small number of potential roosting features are identified. These features are most likely to offer shelter to small numbers of non-breeding and non-hibernating bats. One further survey (dusk/dawn watch) is likely to be necessary.
- **Moderate** – Several potential roost features are identified. Features have the potential to offer shelter to several bats, several species and/or a breeding colony. The site is set within suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Two further surveys (dusk/dawn watches) are likely to be necessary.
- **High** – Particular features of potential significance for roosting bats are identified such as inaccessible loft spaces, deep cavities and crevices. Surrounding habitat is of high quality for foraging and commuting bats and the site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that could be used by bats. Three further surveys (dusk/dawn watches) are likely to be necessary.
- **Presence Confirmed** – Evidence indicates the presence of bats:
 - bats seen roosting;
 - significant numbers of bat droppings, particularly fresh droppings, are present;
 - bats heard 'chattering' on a warm day or at dusk;
 - three further surveys (dusk/dawn surveys) are likely to be necessary.

3 Results

3.1 Habitats

3.1.1 Building

St. George's Catholic Church is thought to date from the mid-20th Century and is of a very simple construction. It is a rectangular, single-storey building with external walls of pebble-dash render. The roof is pitched and has a covering of wooden shingles.

The interior of the building comprises a large room with a smaller room to the rear (south). Both rooms are plastered throughout and there are no loft spaces. Above each room is a small apex void which appears to be no more than 50cm in height. Wooden bargeboards are fixed to the gable ends of the building and wide sloping wooden soffit boards have been fitted at the eaves along the eastern and western elevations. A shallow concrete alcove is present within the northern elevation of the building, above a porch which has a flat roof of concrete.

The building is in a good state of repair, with no cracks or gaps observed within the exterior render. The wooden bargeboards are tight fitting. The sloping soffit boards fitted to the eaves on either side of the building are also tight fitting. A number of wooden shingles have become very warped, but these do not appear to create any potential shelter for bats within the fabric of the roof.

The building is considered to have negligible potential to offer shelter to bats within an undetected roost space.

3.1.2 Bare Ground with Ruderal Vegetation

The land surrounding the church comprises an area of bare ground with sparse ruderal vegetation. Species include willowherb *Epilobium* spp., spurge *Euphorbia* sp., herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, ivy *Hedera helix*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, field speedwell *Veronica persica*, fat hen *Chenopodium album*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, sow thistle *Sonchus* sp., cut-leaved crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*, dove's-foot crane's-bill *Geranium molle* and wood avens *Geum urbanum*.

A number of snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus* saplings are present within an area of rubble to the south of the church. Young snowberry and young holly *Ilex aquifolium* shrubs were noted growing to the south-western corner of the church.

The ruderal vegetation is typical of disturbed, urban habitats and waste ground and is of negligible ecological value.

3.1.3 Running Water

A small stream is present to the southern side of the site. It flows above ground for a short section of its length (approximately 10m) before being culverted beneath adjacent properties. The stream appears to have good water quality and is of 20cm depth at its deepest point, with a bed of rubble and soil. The only aquatic vegetation found within the stream is fool's watercress *Apium nodiflorum*. The banks are shallow and the watercourse has an approximate width of 80cm.

The stream is considered to be an important ecological feature within the context of the site. This is due to the fact that the stream provides habitat for aquatic plants and aquatic invertebrates. The stream is not suitable habitat for otters *Lutra lutra* or water voles *Arvicola amphibius*.

3.2 Species

3.2.1 Bats

No bats or evidence of bats were found within the church. The building is considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats.

3.2.2 Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was found in association with the church and the building is considered to have negligible potential to provide suitable nest sites. There are no trees or shrubs within the site that could offer nest sites to breeding birds.

3.2.3 Amphibians

The stream is unsuitable as a breeding habitat for great crested newts and unsuitable for breeding by other amphibian species. This is due to the fact that amphibians do not use shallow, rapidly flowing water as a breeding habitat. The bare ground and ruderal vegetation are considered to be unsuitable habitats for amphibians during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle.

3.2.4 Other Species

No evidence of other protected species was noted during the survey. The site is considered to be unsuitable for other protected species including reptiles, water voles and otters.

4 Impact Assessment

4.1 Habitats

The proposed development will result in the loss of a building and areas of bare ground and ruderal vegetation. The loss of these habitats will not result in any significant ecological impacts, this is due to the negligible ecological value of the habitats and their unsuitability for protected species.

In addition, the small open section of the stream flowing through the site will require culverting. Although the stream is considered to be the most interesting ecological feature within the site, it is not considered to be of value outside of the context of the site. Therefore, culverting the stream is not considered to cause any wider ecological impacts considering the vast majority of the stream is already culverted.

4.2 Species

4.2.1.1 Bats

There is no evidence to suggest that the building is being used as a place of shelter/protection by roosting bats and the building is considered to have negligible potential to offer shelter to roosting bats. As a result of this conclusion, demolition is unlikely to result in any significant impacts on bats or the places that they use for breeding, shelter and/or protection (roosts) and no specific compensation measures are considered necessary (Mitchell-Jones 2004).

In addition, since no significant impacts on bats are predicted under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, a European Protected Species (bat) licence will not be required for the proposed works to proceed. Since there are no predicted impacts on bats or their habitats, it is not necessary to consider the 'three tests' of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 in this instance.

4.2.1.2 Other Species

There are no foreseeable impacts on other protected species.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Habitats

During works to culvert the stream it should be protected from run-off and pollution in accordance with the Pollution Prevention Guidelines from the Environment Agency.

Any new planting should comprise native species, preferably of local origin.

5.2 Species

No timing constraints are considered necessary.

Demolition works should proceed in a careful and controlled manner. Contractors should be briefed with regard to the fact that individual bats can often exploit very small crevices as roost sites (such as gaps in beneath wooden shingles and beneath wooden soffits) and that bats can move between roost sites on a regular basis.

In the very unlikely event that bats or significant evidence of bats (for example large accumulations of fresh bat droppings) are encountered, works should stop immediately and advice sought from a qualified ecologist or Natural England.

If it is confirmed that bats are, or have been, roosting within the building a European Protected Species Licence is likely to be required to allow for the demolition to proceed under the legal protection afforded to bats under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. This is due to the fact that demolition will result in the 'destruction' of roost sites.

6 References

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JNCC, 2007. *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a technique for environmental audit*. JNCC Revised reprint 2003, reprinted 2007

Neuweiler, G., 2000. *The Biology of Bats*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

7 Appendix 1. Photographs



Photograph 1. St George's Church viewed from the east.



Photograph 2. The interior space of the church.



Photograph 3. A photograph showing some of the lifted wooden shingles.



Photograph 4. A gap at the eaves of the western elevation.



Photograph 5. Bare ground and ruderal vegetation.



Photograph 6. The shallow stream.

8 Appendix 2. Site Location Plans



Aerial photograph showing location of the site (red outline). Source: <https://earth.google.com/>



Ordnance Survey map showing the approximate location of the site (red circle) within the local area. Source: www.bing.com/maps/