BAT ACTIVITY SURVEYS AT THE HUNTERS INN AND 113 – 117, MARPLE ROAD, CHISWORTH, DERBYSHIRE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2012 by Robinsons Brewery to undertake bat activity surveys at four properties on Marple Road, Chisworth (grid reference SJ996922). The properties are part of a terrace and comprise the Hunters Inn (no longer in use) and three cottages, no's 113, 115 and 117, which are also empty. The properties are all stone-built with pitched tile roofs. The buildings are the subject of a planning application to convert and renovate for residential use.

1.2 A daytime internal and external inspection for bats was conducted at the properties in April 2012 by The Tyrer Partnership (see *Hunters Inn & 113–117 Marple Road, Chisworth, Derbyshire SK13 5DL, Inspection and Assessment in Relation to Bats – Tyrer Partnership*). The report concluded that the buildings were in a state of disrepair with low potential to support a bat roost. However, the report went on to state that given the rural location of the buildings and the fact that small gaps were evident between the roof tiles along the terrace, bat activity surveys would be required. The report recommended a dusk (emergence) survey and a dawn (re-entry) survey.

1.3 All bat species are European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, updated and consolidated by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A dusk survey and a dawn survey were conducted at the site. During each survey, the surveyors stood outside the Hunters Inn and the adjoining cottages, observing the buildings for either emerging bats or bats re-entering roosts. Heterodyne bat detectors were used to pick up echo-location.

2.2 The dusk (emergence) survey took place on 25th June 2012 and the surveyors were on site from 9.30pm until 11.15pm. The dawn (re-entry) survey took place on 29th June 2012 and the surveyors were on site from 2.45am until 4.15am.

2.3 Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist) with assistants undertook the surveys. Rachel Hacking has over ten years experience of bat surveys, including building inspections and activity surveys.

3.0 RESULTS

Dusk (emergence) Survey

3.1 No bats were observed emerging from the buildings during the dusk survey. A low level of general foraging activity was recorded. Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats were heard and seen flying along the frontage of the buildings and over the trees to the south. Table 1 details the bat foraging activity noted along with timings.

Table 1. Bat activity noted during the dusk survey	
Time	Activity
21.46	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east
22.08	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east
22.14	Common Pipistrelle foraging along frontage of buildings
22.21	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east
22.34	Common Pipistrelle foraging along frontage of buildings
22.51	Common Pipistrelle foraging along Marple Road + hedgerows

Dawn (re-entry) Survey

3.2 No bats were observed entering/re-entering the buildings during the dawn survey. Foraging in the locality was observed. Common Pipistrelle bats were noted flying along the road, following the lines of the hedgerows. Table 2 details the bat activity recorded.

Table 2. Bat activity noted during the dawn survey	
Time	Activity
2.58	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east
3.03	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east
3.11	Common Pipistrelle foraging over the buildings
3.20	Common Pipistrelle foraging along Marple Road + hedgerows
3.44	Common Pipistrelle foraging along Marple Road + hedgerows
3.52	Common Pipistrelle foraging over trees to east

Weather conditions

3.3 The weather on the 25th June 2012 was overcast, dry, with a slight breeze and a temperature at dusk of 14°C. The weather on 29th June 2012 was overcast, dry and with a temperature at dawn of 12°C.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No bats were seen emerging or re-entering the Hunters Inn or the adjacent cottages during the dusk and dawn surveys. Limited bat activity was recorded in the locality. Common Pipistrelle bats were seen and picked up on the bat detectors whilst foraging along Marple Road and the associated hedgerows, in addition to the trees to the east and occasionally flying along the frontage of the buildings.

4.2 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, for example, bats can rest up in tiny spaces such as between roofing tiles. However, it is the opinion of the author of this report that development can proceed without the need for bat mitigation. It is advised that conversion is carried out with care and that **if bats are found during the development, then work should stop immediately and an ecologist be contacted.**

4.3 It is recommended that the development takes into account the bats foraging in the vicinity and that where possible, bat boxes are incorporated into the design. Wooden bat boxes with crevices for Pipistrelle bats, for example, are ideal.