

BRAEMAR AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL

BRAEMAR AVENUE
WOOD GREEN
LONDON N22

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT



2022

CLIVE HERBERT

Amphibian, Reptile & Mammal Conservation Limited
Species protection and habitat conservation specialists

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A standard Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Braemar Avenue Baptist Church and its associated Church Hall in Braemar Avenue, London N22 7BY, situated at approximately National Grid Reference TQ 382 877, was completed.
- 1.2 This Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in order to determine the potential for bats to occur within the proposed development footprint and to identify if any further bat survey work or mitigation/avoidance measures were required at either of the two buildings.
- 1.3 The assessment was commissioned in support of a forthcoming planning application for the refurbishment of the main Church, particularly the demolition of a modern rear extension, together with the demolition of the separate derelict Church Hall, and its replacement with a mixed use development comprising new community space with residential accommodation above.
- 1.4 There are, however, no historical records of any bats roosting within either building and this assessment was therefore undertaken, in accordance with 'best practice' guidance, as a precautionary measure in order to inform the future planning process.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The objective of the daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment was to view the existing site layout and to inspect the exterior and interior of the main church and church hall buildings in order to assess their suitability to act as a bat roost site(s) by identifying the presence of any 'potential roost features' that bats could utilise.

These may typically include, but are not limited to, missing or damaged tiles, broken air-bricks, ill-fitting soffits, bargeboards or weatherboarding, raised flashings etc., that may act as access routes for bats into the fabric of a building.

Detailed internal and external searches for any direct evidence of past or current bat occupancy, such as droppings, staining on walls, rafters, windows etc., were also conducted.

- 2.2 The assessment was completed on 7th July 2022 when there was complete access to all parts of the proposed development footprint and standard 10 x 40 binoculars, together with ladders, torches, mirrors and an endoscope were available, where required, to inspect the exterior and interior of the two buildings.
- 2.3 This work was carried out under *Natural England* Class Survey Licence WML-CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number 2015-13348-CLS-CLS and

completed by the report's author, a licensed bat ecologist with over 35 years' experience working in and around Greater London.

- 2.4 The assessment was conducted according to the latest 'best practice' standards as published in the 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines' (Bat Conservation Trust, 3rd edition, 2016) and the Standing Advice to LPAs published by *Natural England* on 28th March 2015 and updated on 4th March 2019.

3. Constraints

- 3.1 It is considered that there are no specific constraints operating on the assessment results presented in section 4 below.
- 3.2 The absence of a bat roost in any one season can, however, never completely prove the absence of a roost at another season, such as during the winter hibernation period, as bats regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of the year.
- 3.3 The results presented in section 4 below remain valid for a period of twelve months from the date of the assessment visit, after which time they should not be relied upon and further advice should be sought regarding updating the survey.

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The site is located in a predominantly suburban/residential area but adjoins Nightingale Gardens, a small parkland area with mature trees and close-mown amenity grassland habitat that links south towards the New River and Alexandra Palace Park beyond, and which may be expected to afford some foraging habitat for bats.

Braemar Avenue Baptist Church

The proposed development footprint comprises a brick-built church, with a tower on the front elevation, located on the south side of Bounds Green Road (A109) between Braemar Avenue and Nightingale Gardens parkland (see photographs 1 - 6 below).

The Grade II listed building, which dates from 1907, has been extended on the southern rear elevation with a modern 1950s, flat-roofed unit that is now proposed for demolition, together with refurbishment works to the main church building.



Photographs 1 - 6: Braemar Avenue Baptist Church - front, rear & side elevations

The church building has a suite of pitched, tile-covered roofs at different levels. Most are in good condition but the main roof shows some limited damage with several missing or raised tiles that could act as potential bat ingress points (see photograph 7 below).

The valleys and associated flashings, however, appeared to be tight-fitting with no obvious gaps for bat access (see photograph 8 below). There are no chimneys present.



Photographs 7 - 8: Damaged roof tiles & close-fitting valley flashing

The various soffits present were all found to be tight-fitting with the walls and afforded no potential points of ingress for bats to utilise.

The structure of the flat-roofed rear extension was also found to afford no suitable bat access points or potential roosting features.

There are no other potential roost sites, such as hanging tiles, weather-boarding etc., that could provide suitable bat roost locations away from the roofs.

There are also no underground structures present that would be suitable as potential hibernation sites for bats in the winter.

As a result of the structure of the main church building, with several raised or missing roof tiles identified, it was assessed to be of 'low potential' as a roost site for bats.

Church Hall

The proposed development footprint also comprises a separate hall, located to the south of the main church (see photographs 9 - 12 below). The building is derelict and has not been used for many years. It shows signs of serious decay and the walls are extensively bowing and separating in places.

The building has a pitched, sloping roof corrugated iron roof (see photograph 13 below) and asbestos walls.

There is no loft void present and no chimneys. The structure and materials used for the roof covering were considered to provide no suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

As a result of the structure of this building, with no potential bat access points or roost features identified, it was assessed to be of 'negligible potential' as a roost site for bats.



Photographs 9 - 12: Church Hall



Photograph 13: Roof sheeting

4.2 Internal Inspection

Notwithstanding an intensive search of the interiors of both buildings, no past or current evidence of bat occupancy was detected.

4.3 External Inspection

No evidence of any past or current bat occupancy was found during the detailed external inspection of both buildings.

5. Summary & Recommendations

- 5.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment of the proposed development footprint categorised the main church building as having a '**low potential**' and the church hall as having a '**negligible potential**' to support a bat roost.
- 5.2 The internal inspection of the two buildings did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy.
- 5.3 The external inspection of the two buildings also did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy.
- 5.4 In accordance with nationally published guidance, it is therefore now **recommended** that a **single dusk emergence survey** is required to be undertaken during the bats' active season (May - August) in order to confirm the presence/absence of a roost in the main church building but that **no dusk emergence surveys are required** to be completed in respect of the church hall.