

BRAEMAR AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL

**BRAEMAR AVENUE
WOOD GREEN
LONDON N22**

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT



2020

CLIVE HERBERT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A standard Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Braemar Avenue Baptist Church and its associated Church Hall in Braemar Avenue, Wood Green, 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 in either of the two buildings and to identify if any further bat survey work or mitigation/avoidance measures were required.
- 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 current planning process.
- 1.5 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.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The objective of the daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment was to view the existing site layout, to inspect the exterior and interior of the two buildings in order to assess their suitability to act as a bat roost site(s) and to conduct detailed internal and external searches for any direct evidence of historical or current bat occupancy, such as droppings, staining on walls and rafters etc.
- 2.2 The assessment was completed on 26th August 2020 when there was full access to all parts of the proposed development footprint and standard 10 x 40 binoculars together with an endoscope were available, where appropriate, 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 30 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

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 the refurbishment of the main church building.

The main church building has a suite of tile-covered roofs at different levels that are all in reasonable condition with only minor damage to the tiles and no missing mortar or other gaps visible that could act as potential bat ingress points (see photograph 7 below).

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

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



Photographs 7 - 8: Close-fitting roof tiles & valley flashing

Church Hall

The proposed development footprint comprises an adjacent church 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 obvious decay and the walls are bowing and separating in places.



Photographs 9 - 12: Church Hall

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.

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

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 building, materials used and the complete lack of potential roost features, the church hall was assessed to be of 'negligible potential' as a roost site for bats.



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.

This result supports the 'negligible potential' assessment of the two structures (see section 4.1 above) to support a bat roost.

4.3 External Inspection

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

This result also supports the 'negligible potential' assessment of the two structures (see section 4.1 above) to support a bat roost.

5. Summary & Recommendations

- 5.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment of the proposed development footprints categorised both buildings as having a '**negligible potential**' to support a bat roost due to their structure and materials used, together with the lack of any potential roost features.
- 5.2 The internal inspection of the two buildings did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy within the property.
- 5.3 The external inspection of the two buildings also did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy within the property.
- 5.4 In accordance with nationally published guidance, it is therefore now **recommended** that **no dusk emergence surveys are required** to be completed during the bats' active season in order to confirm the presence/absence of a roost in either building.

In our opinion, therefore, any planning application can be determined without further reference to the presence of bats, subject to being within the timing constraints noted within section 3.3 above.