
BAT & BIRD SURVEY & STRATEGY

THE THREE MAGPIES, MEYSEY HAMPTON, WILTSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Three Magpies is a roadside Georgian former farmhouse/ pub and is Grade II listed.
2. After years of dereliction it is now family-owned, and consent is being sought to renovate it as a home.
3. The architect requested a bat and bird survey to inform the project.
4. Subsequent to this survey listed building consent has been granted (a) to repair stonework & guttering PL/2024/05724 & (b) to rebuild the brick chimneys PL/2025/00639.
5. This report is to inform a listed building application to renovate the building that will require more extensive work.

SURVEYS

6. The survey work was undertaken by (a) Colin Menendez BSc (Hons) MCIEEM CEnv, who has 25+ years professional experience surveying bats and holds a Class 2 survey licence for bats, & (b) Jeremy Doe BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, who has 15+ years' professional experience undertaking bat surveys.
7. Three Magpies has a Gloucestershire post code and sits on the Wiltshire – Gloucestershire border 90% surrounded by Gloucestershire : (a) a standard 2 km data search was undertaken with the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records, (2) Wiltshire council's planning website was checked for information at the same postcode & (c) the Government's MAGIC website checked for information.
8. A daytime search survey was undertaken on 23rd November 2023. This was a metre-by-metre search inside and outside the building and included all outbuildings on the overall plot. Equipment: high-powered torch, close-focusing binoculars & ladder (endoscope to hand). Conditions: dry, sunny, light breeze & mild 11 °C.
9. This was followed by three standard dusk bat-emergence surveys during the optimum bat-survey season due to a potential for roosting bats.

10. Dusk survey 1 was on 17th May 2024. The surveyors were positioned angled at both ends of the building. Survey was aided by bat detectors, recorders and video recorders positioned around the building. This included equipment on the front/ northern roadside that was too dangerous for a surveyor. Equipment: BatBox Duet, BatBox IIID, Anabat SD, Anabat Expresses x2, Song Meter Mini Bat 2, NightFox Whisker Night Vision & HikMicro 2.0 Infrared. Conditions: dry, calm, patchy cloud becoming clear & warm – mild 17 – 13 °C.
11. Dusk survey 2 was on 21st June 2024. The survey was more or less the same as before with the surveyors and equipment in similar tweaked positions. Conditions: dry, light breeze, full cloud & warm 18 – 16 °C.
12. Dusk survey 3 was on 22nd July 2024. This was one surveyor positioned and with the equipment concentrated on the western end of the building where a long-eared bat had been seen in the garden during the previous survey. Conditions: dry, calm, full cloud, humid & warm 20 - 17 °C.
13. Constraints: The building is next to a fast, unlit highway (A417) with no pavements and a ditch on the other side. It was unsafe to place a surveyor on the roadside in the dark – the front elevation of the building was therefore covered by recorders and video recorders.

SETTING

14. The Three Magpies is in a rural setting next to the A417 highway and surrounded by agricultural fields. These are mostly arable, large, and open.
15. A deep ditch passes under the road next to the plot (dry during all visits). The road, close-by fields and ditch are lined by a mix of stone walls, hedges, and trees (some of them aged oaks).
16. The setting is moderate to high quality habitat for bats.

PAST INFORMATION

17. The clients, who live in the house, did not know of any roosting bats.
18. The data search and other investigations revealed no records of surveys or bats at Three Magpies.
19. The nearest record is a Brown long-eared bat maternity roost (50+ bats) in some stables at a farm 670 m to the south (in Wiltshire). Other species in flight at that location: Natterer's bat, Noctule, Common pipistrelle & Soprano pipistrelle. This was in August 2009.
20. Further afield Noctule, Common pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bats have been recorded 900 m – 1 km to the south-west in Meysey Hampton village.

21. There are no European species licences within 2 km on MAGIC.

BATS - DAYTIME SURVEY

22. The building is a Cotswolds stone, three storey dwelling (previously a pub on the ground floor). It comprises the house with a lower stable/ hayloft and storerooms at one end.
23. The roofs are twin-pitched and capped with Cotswolds stone slates (except the end storeroom that has a corrugated tin roof), and brick chimneys with mortared bases.
24. The stone roofs had partly collapsed at the stables end and rear of the house. Temporary repairs were in place with plastic sheeting under and tarpaulin over the holes.
25. The house was lived-in, with doors and glazed windows mostly intact - some boarded and one broken window glazing.
26. Within the house was a small side loft on the first floor and up the main stairs are rooms in the second floor roof space with glazed windows.
27. In the loft the underside of the stone slates on battens could be seen, with pinpricks of daylight. No signs of bats were found in it, and the underside of the roof was cobwebby.
28. In the top rooms the underside of the pitched ceilings/ roofs were plastered, though in places this had fallen exposing the stone slates on battens with sarking (no felt). No signs of bats were found.
29. The stable had an open doorway, which was therefore accessible to bats as well as via holes in the roof.
30. Within the stable was a hayloft accessible from within it. The stone slates sit on battens (no felt), and the roof was partially collapsed. Roof timber joints were tight. No signs of bats were found.
31. The storerooms were open and airy, with no signs of bats found.
32. It was concluded that although no evidence of bats was present, there remained a potential for bats to occur unseen in the stone roofs.
33. The building was assessed to have a moderate potential for roosting bats.

BATS - EVENING SURVEYS

Survey 1 - 17th May 2024

34. No roosting bats were seen to exit the building.
35. A single Common pipistrelle was present from 31 minutes after dusk on-and-off feeding in the vicinity.

Survey 2 - 21st June 2024

36. No roosting bats were seen to exit the building.
37. Initially heard in the background, a Common pipistrelle was present feeding in the vicinity from 26 minutes after dusk – with briefly a second bat. And a couple of passes by Soprano pipistrelle later-on.
38. There was a pass by a Long-eared bat in the rear garden next the western boundary 52 minutes after dusk.

Survey 3 - 22nd July 2024

39. No roosting bats were seen to exit the building.
40. The same as before, initially heard in the background, a Common pipistrelle was present feeding in the vicinity from 23 minutes after dusk – with briefly a second bat.
41. There were two passes Long-eared bat at the rear 41 and 48 minutes after dusk.

USE BY BATS

- 42. No evidence of roosting bats was found and none seen to exit the building. It is therefore concluded that the building is not a bat roost.**

IMPACT

- 43. No impact on roosting bats due to the proposal has been identified.**
44. Long-eared bats are a difficult species to survey and there was a bat present on two of the evenings, so caution is advised going forwards, though the bat/s may have been from the large maternity roost of this species a couple of fields away.

45. Notwithstanding the safety for people being of primary importance, it is recommended that any plans to install external lights consider bat flightlines in this setting. The key ones are along the ditch corridor on the western boundary and trees east of the garden. A detailed lighting plan is not warranted here but standard good practice is suggested.

LEGISLATION - BATS

46. Bats and their roosts are legally protected including from disturbance that has a significant impact (Appendix 4).

STRATEGY

47. Timing

- **No time-of-year constraints for the work.**

48. Pre-works

- **The owners will report any sightings of bats or potential signs of bats using the building.**

49. Work procedures

- **Work will immediately stop if a bat is seen and an ecologist consulted.**
- **Much of the work is self-build but any contractors will be briefed to immediately stop too.**

50. External lights

- **External lights will be positioned to not illuminate surrounding habitat/ flight paths**
- **Lights will be directed downwards (no up-lights)**
- **Lights will have cowls/ hoods to stop upwards or sideways light/ glare (no eye-lid lights)**
- **Lights will be PIR activated and set to turn-off after a maximum of one minute of inactivity**
- **Bulbs will be LED of maximum 2,700 kelvin.**

LICENSING

51. A licence is not required for the work.

FURTHER SURVEY

52. If after 18 months (April 2027) the work has not started, an updated bat survey by a suitably experienced/ licensed ecologist is advised.

OPPORTUNITIES

53. Encouraging roosting bats next to the busy A417 is not ideal, therefore **the fitting of a long-lasting bat box on a tree on the land to the rear within the client's worship is recommended.**
54. An Isabella Bat Box or Schwegler 1FF, being suitable for the species in the locality.

BATS - OUTBUILDINGS

55. The metre-by-metre search of the outbuildings (Nissan hut, garage & store) found no evidence of bats, and they have a negligible potential for daytime roosting bats. A bat may fly in and rest-up in the open Nissan hut at night, but it has a through draught so conditions in it are unlikely to be particularly warm and attractive to bats.

NESTING BIRDS

56. No bird nests were noted in the stable/ hayloft and storerooms. This included no nesting Swallows and no signs of Barn owls.
57. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to damage or destroy the nests of breeding birds.
- As a standard precaution, **if within March – September check for bird nests before work. Delay/ change the work if an occupied nest is found.**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Habitats

58. There are no designated wildlife sites or county wildlife sites within 1 km. The nearest are Cotswold Water Park SSSI at 1.8 km and Honeycombe Leaze Conservation Road Verge at 1.5 km (Gloucestershire).
59. North Meadows & Clattinger Farm SAC is at 6.3 km to the south-west. This is within 8 km so potential consideration with regards recreational pressure *per* the Impact Risk Zone that Three Magpies sits in (MAGIC). However, the proposal is not for a net increase in residential units and therefore this is not applicable.

Species

60. The ground around the base of the house was either bare (gravel, tarmac, earth) or grass and other protected species are almost certainly not a material consideration, but for information:

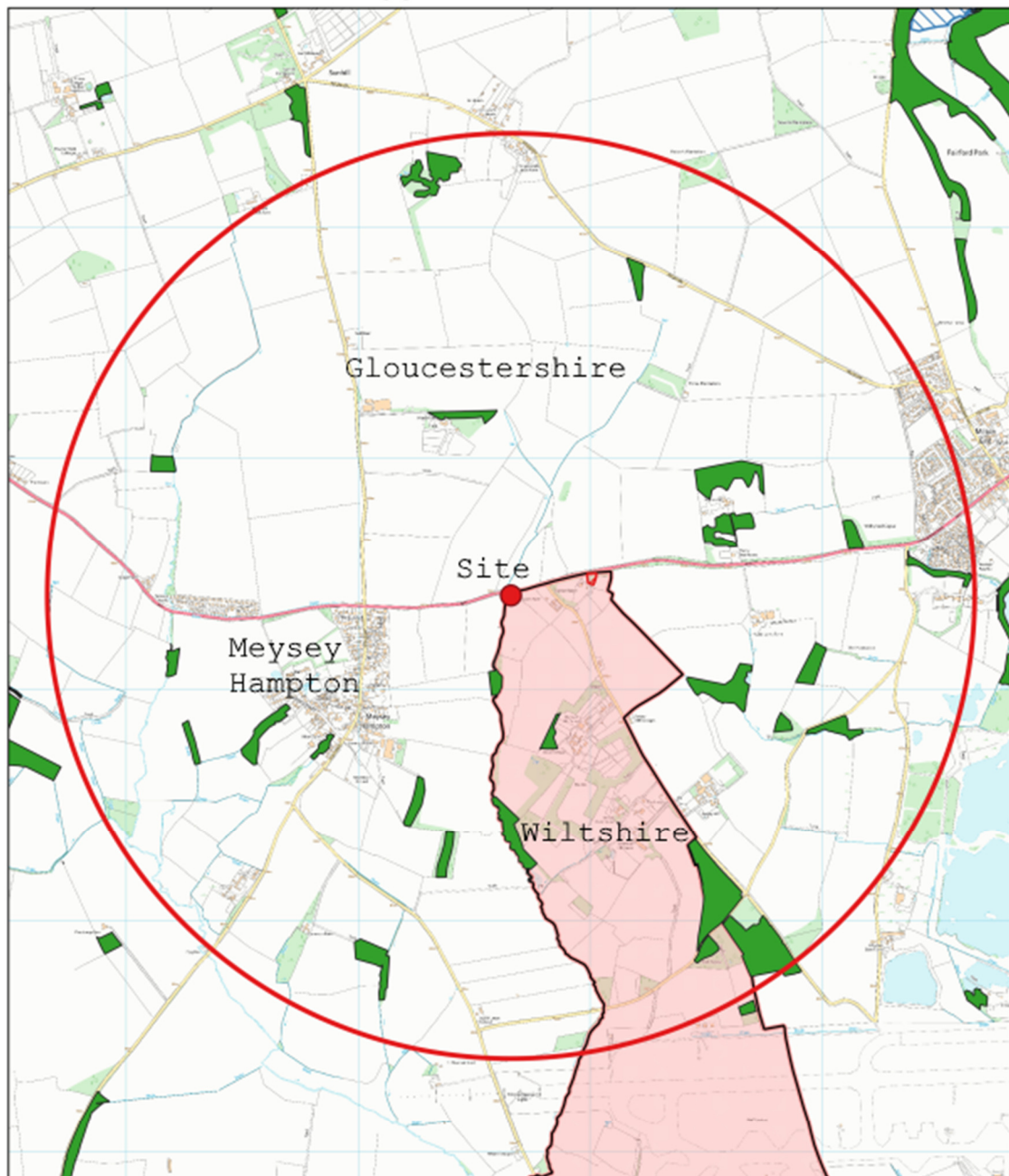
- Badgers: a single record at 1.7 km.
- Reptiles: the only record is Grass snake at 770 m in the village.
- Great crested newts: the data search shows a population in the village 1 km to the south-west. The nearest pond to Three Magpies discernible on maps is 280 m to the east with fields and woodland between.

61. As a standard precaution, **before and during the works keep the footprint of the works bare to deter species resting-up.**

APPENDIX 1 - LOCATION

NGRef. SP 1266 0041
Post code GL7 5LJ

Priorities habitats mapped within 2km within Gloucestershire



Priority Habitats

- Deciduous woodland
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Traditional orchard



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Priorities Habitats layer provided by Natural England Open Data - PHI v2.1 December 2023

APPENDIX 2 – AERIAL VIEW



APPENDIX 3 - PHOTOS



Stable & hayloft



Storerooms



House – example room in roof space



House – loft (temporary repair visible)



Hayloft



APPENDIX 4 - LEGISLATION

Bats

There is considerable evidence that all species of bat in Britain have declined significantly this century, particularly since the 1960s. The reasons for the decline include loss of suitable roost sites, loss of feeding habitat, reduced availability of insect prey through pesticide use and mortality resulting from the use of highly toxic timber treatment chemicals in house roosts.

All species of British bat are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. As well as giving full protection from intentional and deliberate killing, injuring, disturbing, and taking of bats, the cited legislation protects bat breeding and resting places (roosts) from damage, destruction and preventing access to such places. This includes from significant disturbance. The legislation regarding roosts applies irrespective of whether the bats are present or not. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 added the word “reckless” to existing protection against “intentional and deliberate” actions.

The law requires that reasonable effort be made to ensure that any actions, plans or projects do not detrimentally affect bats or their roosts. Proposed developments that affect bats or bat roosts may require a licence from Natural England.