

Daniel Simpson (Housing)

From: Stephanie Lonergan <slonergan@mores.ie>
Sent: Thursday 30 January 2025 10:30
To: Housing wildlifelicence
Cc: Gregory Egan (Housing); Dyfrig Hubble
Subject: Millbrook Hall, Abbeyleix - Derogation Licence Application Further Information

Categories: Derogation Mailbox

CAUTION: This eMail originated from outside your organisation and the BTS Managed Desktop service. Do not click on any links or open any attachments unless you recognise the sender or are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you are in any doubt, please contact the OGCIO IT Service Desk.

A chara,

Following correspondence with Gregory Egan via phone on 29th January, we have been advised to provide further justification to question 11 in the application for a bat derogation licence for construction works at Millbrook Hall, Abbeyleix. We would be grateful if you could add this email to the file for our derogation licence application. Please see additional justification for the application of a derogation licence below:

11.1: Explanation as to why the derogation licence sought is the only available option for works and no suitable alternative exists as per Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

- A derogation licence is the only available option as the only other alternative is to leave the Coach House in situ and not proceed with construction works. This will contravene Condition 1(h) set out by Laois County Council in the grant of planning for the construction works at Millbrook Hall and the Coach House (Planning Ref: 24/60010).
 - 1(h): *'The recommendations and mitigation measures set out in the Bat Report received by the Planning Authority on 12/01/2024 shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.'*
- The bat report submitted for the aforementioned development contained a number of commitments, including the installation of bat-specific roof tiles and the construction of a new roof void space for bats. A derogation licence is required to facilitate these roof works which must be completed in line with Condition 1(h) of the grant of planning.
- The building is in a poor state of repair and the proposed works are required to restore the structural integrity of the building, particularly the roof.

11.2: Evidence that actions permitted by a derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range as is required under Section 54(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

- The derogation licence will facilitate the redevelopment of the coach house at Millbrook Hall and roofing works as described in the original planning application. These works will be completed outside of the active bat season to ensure that the actions permitted by the derogation licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of local bat populations. Additionally, works on the roof of the coach house will be supervised by a bat ecologist named on the licence to ensure that roof tiles are removed in a systemic way that is cognisant of any bats potentially roosting within the roof of the coach house.
- A Site inspection was undertaken on 21st January 2025. The building was internally and externally inspected using a thermal camera and endoscope. No evidence of roosting bats were identified during this inspection.
- It should be noted that only one individual bat (a soprano pipistrelle) was observed entering into the roof of the coach house. Further internal inspections of the roof of the couch house did not identify any evidence this bat or any other bats roosting within the coach house.
 - Furthermore, a bat loft specifically designed to enhance the roof space for bats has been included as part of the design and redevelopment works. The roof space has been designed for both crevice dwelling bats and roof void dwelling bats.

11.3: Details of any mitigation measures planned for the species affected by the derogation at the location, along with evidence that such mitigation has been successful elsewhere.

- The following mitigation measures have been included in the bat technical note and the bat survey report prepared by MOR Environmental and submitted alongside the derogation licence application:
 - *'The aspects of the Proposed Development that involve the removal of the roof of the coach house (the location of the bat roost) shall be supervised by a suitably experienced bat ecologist;*
 - *Ridge tiles with traditional bitumastic hessian roofing felt should be used for the roof of the coach house. Breathable membranes should not be used as these can entangle and trap bats in flight. The location and number of these ridge tiles will be determined following the additional surveys by a suitably experienced bat ecologist;*
 - *The optimum season for works carried out at summer roosting sites is 1st September to 1st May. Therefore, all roof works on the coach house should be completed prior to 1st May 2025.*
 - *A suitable roof void space for soprano pipistrelles will be incorporated into the Proposed Development that replicates the current features on the Site. Bats will be able to access the roof space of the coach house via bat-specific ridge tiles (see Plate 4-1 for examples of suitable bat access ridge tiles). Additional required design features to be implemented include:*
 - *Access into the roof via a 15-20mm gap. The Project Ecologist will visit the Site during construction works to ensure that the access points into the Coach House are still suitable for bat species;*
 - *Smooth plastic roof lining should be avoided as bats cannot hang freely from this;*
 - *Timber cladding mounted on 20-30mm counter battens with bat access at the bottom or sides; and,*
 - *Access to roof voids via soffit gaps.*
 - *Only bat safe compounds shall be used during the chemical treatment of roof timbers, further details of this process can be found in 'The Bat Worker's Manual';*
 - *No rodenticide usage will be permitted within the vicinity of the Site;*
 - *Water tanks in the attic will be covered fully to prevent the drowning of bats in the roof space;*
 - *In the event that any bats are identified during the Proposed Development, the bat(s) will be captured and released at night into the woodlands surrounding the Site. Should night-time temperatures be considered to be unsuitable, the bat(s) will be placed into bat boxes erected onsite/in the woodlands; and,*
 - *All personnel involved in the construction phase will be made aware of the legal status of bat species in Ireland and the role of project ecologist.'*
- It is anticipated that the above mitigation measures will ensure that no bat species are affected by the works permitted by the derogation licence. Additionally, it is anticipated that the above measures will enhance roof space within the coach house and make it more suitable for a variety of roosting bat species. Additionally, the roost identified within the coach house was determined to be a satellite roost, and it is considered that the measures above may make the roof space of the coach house suitable for a larger maternity roost colony in the future.

11.4: As much information as possible to allow a decision to be made on this application.

- Please refer to the technical note and derogation licence application submitted by MOR Environmental on 21/01/2025.

The main building at Millbrook is in a very poor state of repair and works at the Site to stabilise the building and prevent further collapse have been ongoing for the past couple of years. The project is now at a stage where they are looking to progress with the full restoration and redevelopment of the Site and the roofing works to the coach house form a key part of these works. In order to allow enough time for these works to be completed within optimal time frame, we would be grateful if you could process this the derogation licence as quickly as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the above.

Go raibh maith agat,

Stephanie Lonergan (she/her)

B.A. (Mod) (Hons)
Environmental Consultant

for and on behalf of

Malone O'Regan Environmental

Ground Floor - Unit 3
Bracken Business Park
Bracken Road, Sandyford
Dublin 18
D18 V4K6
[+353 1 5677655
Mob: 086 177 1410

✉: slonergan@mores.ie

Web: www.mores.ie

Disclaimer: This email is confidential and should be read by the intended recipient only. If you receive this email in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the message from your computer.

Warning: All files in our office are regularly scanned for viruses, nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the recipient to scan all incoming email messages and attached files before opening.