
Eaton Court, Reading (5710)

Technical Note TN01: Update Bat Survey and Assessment

15th December 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Venta PropCo 1 Ltd in October 2022 to undertake a bat roost assessment of the buildings at Eaton Court, 104-112 Oxford Road, Reading (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The proposals are for demolition of the existing buildings and construction of new residential development.
- 1.2. Initial survey work was conducted in 2019 to determine the presence/likely absence of roosting bats at the site, with the survey results set out within Aspect Ecology's Bat Survey and Assessment report dated March 2021. This technical note details the results of the update bat survey work undertaken in November 2022.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. The buildings within the site were initially subject to a specific internal and external inspection survey in August 2019, with an update inspection undertaken on the 8th November 2022, using ladders, torches and binoculars where necessary.
- 2.2. During the external inspection, particular attention was given to any potential roost features or access points, such as broken or lifted roof tiles, lifted lead flashing, soffit boxes, weatherboarding, hanging tiles, etc. and for any external signs of use by bats such as accumulations of bat droppings or staining. Binoculars were used to inspect any inaccessible areas more closely where appropriate.
- 2.3. During the internal inspection, evidence for the presence of bats was searched for with particular attention paid to any loft voids and relevant potential roost features and locations, such as ridge boards, rafters, purlins, gable walls, and mortise joints. Specific searches were made for bat droppings that can indicate present or past use and extent of use, whilst other signs that can indicate the possible presence of bats were also searched for, e.g. presence of stained areas, feeding remains, corpses, etc.
- 2.4. Suitability for roosting bats was rated based on relevant guidance as either:
 - Negligible;
 - Low;
 - Moderate; or
 - High.

3. Results

- 3.1. **Building B1.** The exterior of this building continues to exhibit a number of potential roost features for bats, including lifted and cracked roof tiles, and lifted lead flashing at the southern elevation, above the glass atrium, and at the third storey of the northern elevation of the western wing. Missing brickwork is also present at the interface between a red brick pillar and metal soffit at the northern elevation of the northern wing. In addition, small gaps are present between the metal soffit and flat roof along the western elevation of the northern wing, and multiple small holes are present within the wooden soffit of the southern elevation of the west wing of the building.
- 3.2. The bird-netting attached to the building is broken in multiple places, with access to a flue shaft available, which extends from the roof to the second floor of the building. The flue shaft is covered by a corrugated metal outbuilding, the door of which was open at the time of the survey. A dead Feral Pigeon *Columba livia domestica* was recorded at the bottom of the flue shaft, indicating access to the building is possible. The flue shaft itself however is constructed from concrete and cluttered by pipes and, as such, does not provide suitable roosting conditions for bats.
- 3.3. Internally, no loft voids are present within the building. The building is well-sealed with potential internal access points limited to gaps in the ventilation panels leading to the two plant rooms located on the first and second floor of the building respectively. The plant rooms are well lit internally due to the presence of windows and internal lighting fixtures.
- 3.4. In common with the 2019 inspection survey findings, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded in association with building B1 during the 2022 update inspection survey. However, based on the 2019 dusk emergence / dawn re-entry surveys, B1 is known to support a non-breeding day roost for a low number of Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and, as described above, external crevice opportunities for this species remain. Despite the lack of fresh evidence, given the relatively recent nature of the previous survey work, and current condition of the building, it is reasonable to assume the bat roost remains present.
- 3.5. **Building B2.** This building comprises a single storey plant room constructed of red brick. The roof is flat and lined with bitumen felt, supported internally by wooden ceiling joists. There are three wooden doors present on the eastern elevation which have narrow wooden slats within them providing potential internal access. During the update survey work it was noted that two of the slats in one of the wooden doors were missing, albeit as noted above access for bats was already possible through the gaps between the slats. Internally, the building remains cluttered and subject to regular disturbance, and no evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats was recorded during the update survey work. As such, building B2 remains of negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 3.6. **Building B3.** This building comprises a row of garages integrated within the ground floor of the existing car park which all have metal up and over doors to the frontage. The doors to the garages were open at the time of the November 2022 survey, providing internal access, albeit there are no internal features suitable for use by roosting bats. Internally, the building remains cluttered and subject to regular disturbance, and no evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats was recorded during the update survey work. Building B3 therefore remains of negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

4. Summary and Conclusions

- 4.1. Overall, the update survey work confirms that the suitability of the buildings within the site to support roosting bats remains unchanged since the time of the previous survey work in 2019, with no fresh evidence of bats recorded. As such, the evaluation and assessment of impacts set out within the Bat Survey and Assessment report, dated March 2021, remain valid and appropriate.
- 4.2. In the absence of any significant changes to the condition of the on-site buildings it is concluded that update dusk/dawn survey work is unlikely to yield any additional information which will alter the assessment of impacts on roosting bats and the proposed mitigation strategy, prior to determination of the planning application. Nonetheless, update dusk/dawn survey work will be required prior to the acquisition of a Natural England European Protected Species licence, to confirm the current status of the known Common Pipistrelle roost associated with building B1.
- 4.3. A suitable mitigation strategy will need to be implemented under the proposals to ensure bats are safeguarded during the construction and operational phases of the development. Mitigation measures will include a pre-works inspection survey immediately prior to any demolition works, a soft strip demolition of potential roosting features under ecological supervision and the provision of replacement and new roosting opportunities for bats (see Section 4 of Bat Survey and Assessment report, dated March 2021, for full mitigation details).

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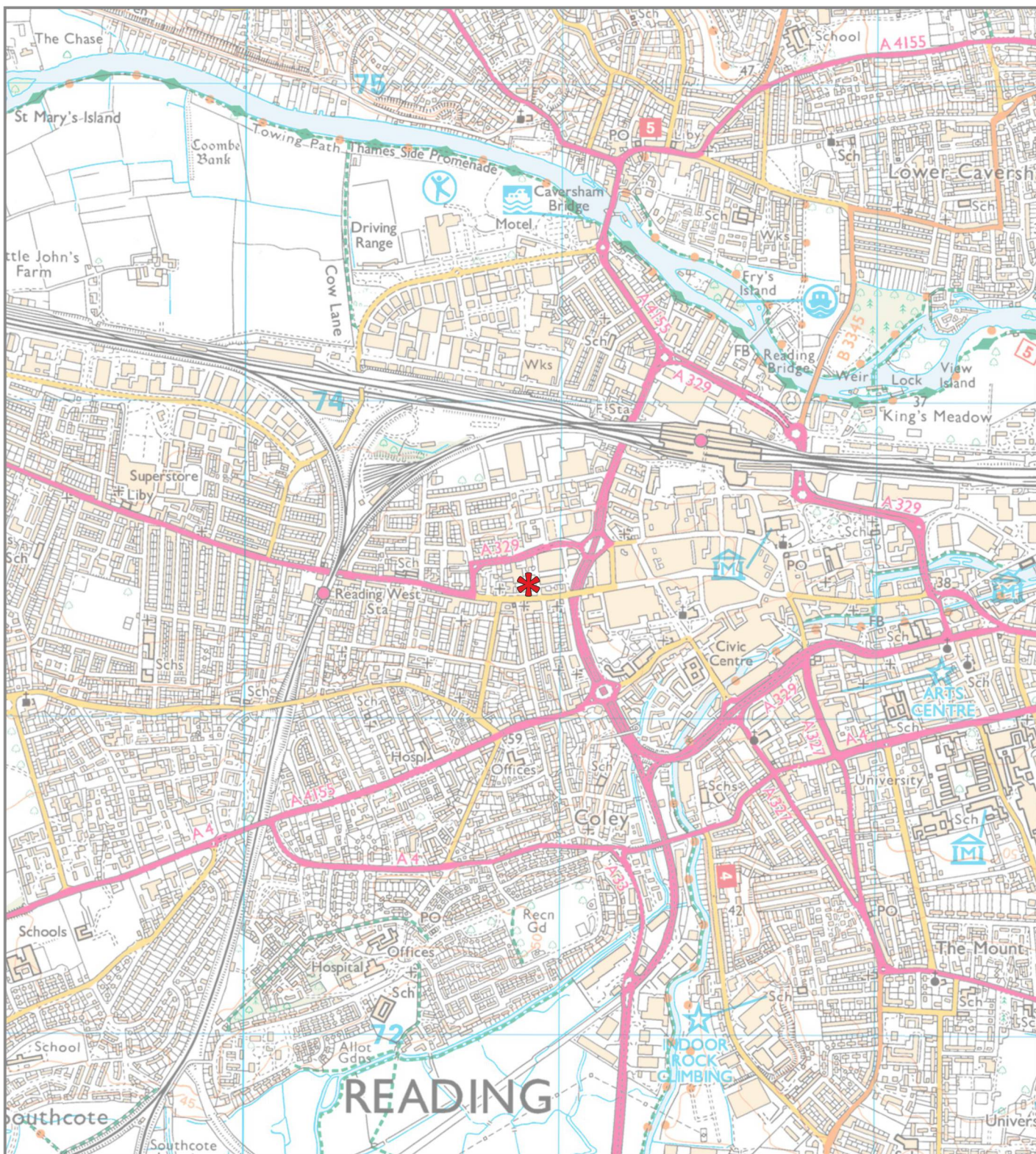
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Plan 5710/BSA1:

Site Location



Key:



Site Location

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Eaton Court, 104-112 Oxford Road,
Reading

Site Location TITLE

5710/BSA1 DRAWING NO.

- REV.

October 2019 DATE



Plan 5710/BSA2:

Bat Survey Results



Key:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | Site Boundary |  | Trees |
|  | Building |  | Indicative Roost Location |
|  | Surveyor Location |  | Flight Path - Dusk 28/08/19 |
|  | IR Camera Location |  | Flight Path - Dusk 25/09/19 |

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Eaton Court, 104-112 Oxford Road,
Reading
Bat Survey Results



PROJECT
TITLE
5710/BSA2
DRAWING NO.
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October 2019
DATE

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The logo for Aspect Ecology Ltd features the word "aspect" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A thin, white, diagonal line is positioned above the "t", extending from the top of the letter to the right.

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