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Dear Duncan,

72 Northcourt Avenue – Preliminary Roost Assessment

I write to you in regard to the bat preliminary roost assessment conducted of the house at 72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, on 9th February 2021.

Methodology

Ecology by Design were commissioned to conduct a bat preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of 72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ (central grid reference SU 73006 71180). The survey is to inform a planning application for an extension to the roof and conversion of the loft of the existing dwelling.

The survey was conducted by Ecologists Emily Bartlett (Natural England Class 1 Bat Licence 2019-43526-CLS-CLS) and Emily Power (Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence 2017-32544-CLS-CLS). The assessment was based on the guidance included in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)¹ and Government standing advice².

The building was inspected for potential bat use by examining the exterior and interior of the building for active roosts or roosting sites and suitable entry and exit points on the outside of the building, and by searching for other evidence of bat activity such as droppings, smells, sounds, carcasses or feeding remains. A torch (LEDLenser Lamp) was used to illuminate any dark recesses inside the building. Close focusing binoculars were used to inspect external features.

Results

The site is located in Reading in Berkshire and comprises a detached two storey dwelling with a garden. The site is immediately surrounded by further residential dwellings with gardens and minor roads. The

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Gov.uk (2015). *Guidance. Bats: surveys and mitigation for development projects*. Natural England and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Worcester.

wider landscape is dominated by residential development with recreation fields and small areas of woodland. There is a lake approximately 0.9km to the north east and the M4 is 2.0km to the south east.

The building is a two storey house constructed with red brick cavity walls. There is a Dutch gable roof of red clay tiles which has two red brick chimneys with lead flashing at the base on the northern elevation and a further chimney on the southern elevation. There is a further tiled roof section of sloping clay tiles which surrounds the building at the height of the first storey and lead flashing where the roof joins the wall of the building. The walls of the building are in a good state of repair with no missing mortar or broken brickwork present.

Internally, the loft is in active use for storage. The loft is mostly boarded throughout with some areas of rockwool type insulation around the edges of the loft. The loft is lined with tightly fitted wooden sarking boards on top of a modern breathable membrane which appears to be in a good condition. No light ingress was noted within the loft but there are two holes within the wooden sarking on the southern elevation however these are covered with roofing membrane. The apex of the loft space is highly cobwebbed and no bats or evidence of bats were recorded internally.

Externally, no evidence of bats was recorded during the inspection however a number of potential roosting features were identified on the exterior of the building. Gaps are present under the tiles above the bay window on the west elevation and under tiles adjacent to the chimneys on the north elevation. Raised hanging tiles are present on the gables on the east and west elevations of the building along with gaps under a few ridge tiles on the north west elevation.

Due to the presence of a number of potential roosting features externally, along with suitable foraging habitat within the vicinity, the building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The preliminary roost assessment concluded that the building had low potential to support roosting bats therefore a dusk emergence survey or a pre-dawn re-entry survey are required to establish presence or likely absence of roosting bats. These surveys can be undertaken between May and September. Two surveyors would be located strategically around the building focused on specific potential roosting features for bats. Surveyors will use bat detectors to record any bats emerging from or re-entering the building to enable species identification. Dusk surveys commence 15 minutes before sunset and continue for 1.5-2 hours, dawn surveys commence 1.5-2 hours prior to sunrise and

continue until sunrise or 15 minutes after. Data would be requested from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform the assessment.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Bartlett

Emily Bartlett

Ecologist

Appended: Site Photos

Appendix 1 – Photographs

Photograph 1: East elevation of the building



Photograph 2: West elevation of the building



Photograph 3: North east elevation of the building



Photograph 4: Interior of loft space within the building



Photograph 5: Raised hanging tiles on the building



Photograph 6: Gap under tiles behind bay window

