

4 Downshire Square

Bat Roost Assessment

January 2020



T: 0118 989 10 86
E: info@derekfinnie.com
W: www.derekfinnie.com

20 Soames Place, Mulberry Grove
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 5AT



COMMISSIONED BY

Alexander James Contracts Ltd,
1 Wesley Avenue,
London,
NW10 7BZ

4 Downshire Square

Bat Roost Assessment

January 2020

Report Ref: DFA20002V2

Derek Finnie Associates Ltd

20 Soames Place
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5AT

info@derekfinnie.com

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Legislation.....	1
2	METHODOLOGY	3
2.1	Desk Study	3
2.2	Field Survey	3
3	RESULTS.....	4
3.1	Desk Study	4
3.2	Field Survey	4
4	EVALUATION.....	6
4.1	Bat Potential	6
	PLATES	7

TABLES

Table 1.	Assessment criteria for bat roost evaluation.	3
-----------------	---	----------

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates Limited was commissioned by Alexander James Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of a property known as 4 Downshire Square, Reading. There is currently a proposal to demolish the dwelling and replace it with a new residential building. Therefore, in line with current legislation and policy, the level of bat activity, if any, within the building needs to be assessed as it is a material consideration in the planning process.

1.1.2 To this end, a preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken during January 2020. The following report describes the methodology employed throughout the assessment, presents the results and evaluates the likely impact based on the information gained to date.

1.2 Legislation

1.2.1 All species of British bat are afforded full protection under UK legislation, specifically under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which states:

9. Protection of certain wild animals.

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally or recklessly kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5, he shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) Subject to the provisions of this Part, a person is guilty of an offence if intentionally or recklessly

(a) he damages or destroys any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;

(b) he disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or

(c) he obstructs access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

1.2.2 As all species of British bat are included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the above Section applies.

1.2.3 Further protection is given under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which states:

Protection of certain wild animals: offences

43.—(1) A person who—

(a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,

- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,*
 - (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or*
 - (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,*
- is guilty of an offence.*

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A review of aerial photography and the Government's Multi-Access Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was undertaken to assess the extent and quality of potential roosting and foraging habitat within 1km of the property.

2.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

- 2.2.1 An external inspection of the building was undertaken on the 9th January 2020 during good weather, with access being available to all aspects of the buildings. Leica 10 x 32 BGA binoculars, a CluLite 1 million candlepower torch and a 4m telescopic ladder were used to assist in the search as necessary. The external features of the building, particularly the roof and ridge lines were inspected for potential ingress/egress points.
- 2.2.2 After the external inspection, a detailed inspection of the internal void space of the building was undertaken. Evidence of droppings, scratch marks, staining, feeding remains, urine stains and bats themselves were sought throughout the void space. Particular attention was paid to the areas underneath the ridge and joists, especially where the two meet. Evidence of gaps in the roof, indicating access to the outside, was sought, as well as gaps into any cavities that may be present. Again, a CluLite 1 million candlepower torch was used to assist in the search.
- 2.2.3 The potential of the building to support bat was assessed against the criteria in Table 1 (after BCT 2016).

Table 1. Assessment criteria for bat roost evaluation.

Suitability	Description
Negligible	Negligible features likely to be used by roosting bats
Low	A structure or feature with one or more potential roosts sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due its size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by a large number of bats on a more regular basis.

- 2.2.4 The assessment was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust — *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (2016), as well as BS 42020: 2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The MAGIC website identifies some areas of broad-leaved woodland, which have been classified as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat, near to the property, with the nearest being 225m to the west. There are limited other areas within the vicinity that would offer suitable foraging habitats for bats.
- 3.1.2 A mitigation licence relating to common pipistrelle was issued in 2017 for a property 750m to the south east of 4 Downshire Square.

3.2 Field Survey

External Features

- 3.2.1 The property is a brick built, detached, chalet style bungalow set back off Downshire Square in an existing residential area of Reading. The property has recently been vacated and in sound condition throughout.
- 3.2.2 The roof of the property comprises a hip roof with the ridge line running more or less north to south. Flat roofed dormer windows are present on both the front (western) and rear (eastern) aspects. Chimney breasts exit close to the ridge line at the either end of the roof. Hanging tiles are present around the dormer windows; there are no areas of weather boarding on any aspect of the dwelling. A detached garage, with a pitched roof, is present to the south of the house (Plates 1 – 3).
- 3.2.3 The roof of the house is finished with flat, interlocking clay tiles. The tiles are in moderate condition throughout, with no missing or broken tiles noted (Plate 4). There is the occasional small gap between some of the tiles, but none were deemed of sufficient size to allow bat ingress.
- 3.2.4 The hanging tiles around the dormer windows are also in good condition, with no loose or broken tiles present (Plate 5).
- 3.2.5 The wooden soffit and fascia boards are in moderate condition throughout. Polymer sealant is absent between the soffit and adjoining brickwork, however as the walls have been finished with render any gap is negligible (Plate 6).
- 3.2.6 Externally, no ingress points were noted.
- 3.2.7 The trusses of the garage are open and exposed. Windows are also present on either gable end wall, illuminating the internal void space. The roof is finished with large felt tiles. Overall, the garage was assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats (Plates 7 - 8).

Internal Conditions

- 3.2.8 Internally, much of the void space is given over to habitable accommodation; a small attic space is present with additional accessible space within the eaves. The trusses of the voids space are of a simple design. Nail plates are absent at the major junctions, but any resulting gap is minimal. A moderate to heavy build-up of cobwebs was present around the junctions



and throughout the void spaces in general, suggesting a lack of bat activity (Plates 9 - 11). No staining or scratch marks were noted along any of the beams, and there was no evidence of feeding remains. No droppings were noted despite a thorough inspection and the distinct smell often associated with bat roosts was absent. The roof lining is intact.

Summary

- 3.2.9 In summary, no ingress /egress points were found into the property, and no physical evidence of bat presence within the building in the form of scratch marks, stains or droppings was encountered. Overall, the dwelling was assessed as having a negligible potential to support roosting bats.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Bat Potential

- 4.1.1 The property was assessed as having negligible potential to support bats and, as no evidence of bats, or of current or past bat occupancy, was encountered throughout the preliminary roost assessment, additional surveys are not deemed necessary. Due to the presumed absence of bats, it is highly unlikely that the proposed development would result in any infringement of either the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in so far as either piece of legislation relates to bats.
- 4.1.2 However, in the highly unlikely situation a bat is encountered throughout the construction process, all works should stop immediately and advice sought from Natural England.

PLATES



Plate 1. General view of the front of the dwelling.



Plate 2. General view of the northern aspect of the dwelling.



Plate 3. General view of the rear of the dwelling.





Plate 4. Typical view of roof tiles.



Plate 5. Typical view of the hanging tiles around the dormer window.



Plate 6. Typical view of the soffit and fascia.



Plate 7. Typical view of the garage.



Plate 8. Typical view of the garage.

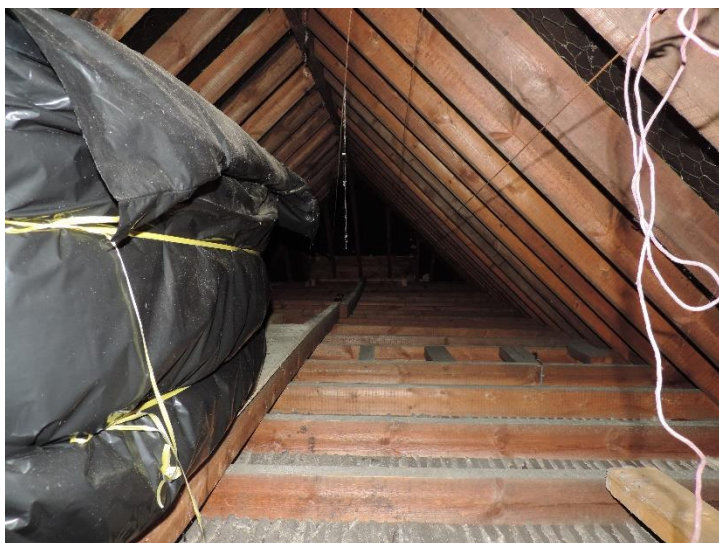


Plate 9. Typical view of the attic void space.



Plate 10. Typical view of the eave void space.



Plate 11. Typical view of the eave void space.