

39 Grove Road

Bat Assessment

May 2019

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

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



COMMISSIONED BY

Caroline Stallwood
39 Grove Road
Emmer Green
Reading

39 Grove Road

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Report Ref: DFA19037V2

Derek Finnie Associates Ltd

20 Soames Place
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5AT

info@derekfinnie.com

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates Limited was commissioned by Caroline Stallwood to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of a property known as 39 Grove Road, Emmer Green. There is currently a proposal to add an extension to the property which may have an impact upon the roof and roof void. 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 2019 with a follow up emergence survey being undertaken in May 2019. 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 dwelling was undertaken on the 14th January 2019 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.

2.3 Emergence Survey

- 2.3.1 A surveyor, equipped with an Anabat Walkabout bat detector, was positioned in the rear garden to allow maximum coverage of the potential ingress/egress features that had previously been identified during the preliminary bat roost assessment. The Anabat Walkabout allows bat calls to be recorded in both full spectrum and heterodyne; any bat calls can then be analysed using Analook Insight where necessary. A Newton Trace Monocular Infrared video recorder was also used to assist in the survey, which allows the exact location of any emerging bats to be pinpointed by subsequent analysis of the video recording.
- 2.3.2 The emergence/re-entry survey was undertaken on the date shown in Table 1. The survey began 20 minutes before sunset and ended approximately two hours after sunset.

Table 1. Dates and Conditions for Emergence surveys

Date	Sunset	Start time	Temperature	Weather
13/05/19	20:42	20.20	12°C	Clear, warm, very light wind.

- 2.3.3 The BCT Guidelines suggest that for buildings with Low roost suitability, a single emergence survey is sufficient. The use of infrared detection equipment also allowed bats that would normally emerge in complete darkness to be detected.

- 2.3.4 The presence of any features that could support roosting bats were assessed based on the criteria present in Table 2 (after BCT 2016).

Table 2. Assessment criteria for bat roost evaluation (after BCT 2016)

Suitability	Description
Negligible	Negligible features likely to be used by roosting bats
Low	Buildings: A structure or feature with one or more potential roosts sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically Trees: A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree 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 or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by a large number of bats on a more regular basis.

2.4 Survey Constraints

- 2.4.1 The weather condition during the survey period were assessed to be suitable. Access was available to all aspects of the buildings. There were no constraints to the survey.
- 2.4.2 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 several areas of broad-leaved woodland, which have been classified as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat, near to the property, with the closest some 250m to the south. An allotment garden is also located directly opposite the dwelling, which may offer additional foraging habitat for bats.
- 3.1.2 A mitigation licence was issued in 2013, some 360m north of the property for brown long eared bats, indicating bats are known from the wider area.

3.2 Field Survey

External Features:

- 3.2.1 The property is a brick built, two storey, detached house set back off Grove Road in an area of existing residential development. The property is currently occupied and in sound condition throughout.
- 3.2.2 The roof of the property comprises a hip roof; a flat roofed, two storey extension is present on the eastern aspect, whilst a single storey flat roofed extension is present to the rear. There are no hanging tiles or weather boarding on any aspect of the building. A single chimney breast exists the roof on the rear (south eastern) aspect with a second present on the south western aspect (Plates 1 – 2).
- 3.2.3 The roof of the house is finished with flat, interlocking clay tiles. The tiles are in moderate to good condition. However, several on the rear aspect are uneven, creating gaps that may allow bat ingress, whilst two tiles around the chimney breast are also missing (Plate 3). The ridge lines are intact.
- 3.2.4 The plastic fascia soffit boards are sound throughout, with no gaps noted. Polymer sealant is present between the brickworks and soffit board, eliminating any potential gaps (plate 4).
- 3.2.5 The lead flashing around the chimneys is intact and tight with surrounding tiles.
- 3.2.6 Externally, potential ingress points have been created by the uneven and missing tiles on the rear aspect. These were assessed as being of Low potential to support roosting bats.

Internal Conditions:

- 3.2.7 Internally, there is limited enclosed void space. What does exist has been boarded out such that the trusses are not visible. No evidence of droppings or feeding remains were noted within the void space (Plates 5 and 6).

3.3 Emergence Survey

- 3.3.1 No bats were seen emerging from the building throughout the survey.
- 3.3.2 A common pipistrelle was first detected feeding in the rear garden at 21:04, and what was assumed to be the same individual was heard several times in the same location



throughout the remainder of the survey. A soprano pipistrelle was noted once at 21:20. As the mean emergence time for common pipistrelle is approximately 20 minutes after sunset, it could be assumed it was roosting nearby, with the soprano pipistrelle, which has a similar emergence time, originating from a roost further away.

Summary

- 3.3.3 In summary, potential ingress points were identified on the rear aspect of the dwelling due to the presence of loose and uneven tiles. However, an emergence survey did not identify any bat usage of these features.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Bat Potential

- 4.1.1 The property was assessed as having low potential to support bats but as no evidence of bats, or of current or past bat occupancy, was encountered throughout the preliminary roost assessment or emergence survey, 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 property.



Plate 2. General view of the rear of the property.



Plate 3. Typical view of the tiles on the rear aspect of the building.



Plate 4. Typical view of the soffit and fascia boards.



Plate 5. General view of internal void space.



Plate 6. General view internal void space.