



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (BATS) OF 76A QUEENS ROAD CAVERSHAM



Prepared for:
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The validity of this report ceases at the prescribed time limit or after two years from the site inspection, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner.



Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Ravi and Dipiksha Sodha to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 76a Queen's Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DH. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council demolish the workshop and bungalow and replace them with two terraced houses.

The site visit was carried out on Saturday 17th November 2018 at 13:30 hours, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the buildings took place to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the two buildings for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, internally or externally, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

Externally the both buildings were in a fair condition with no broken or slipped tiles on the house roof, well-sealed ridge tiles and tightly fitting soffits and fascias, which provide no potential roosting opportunities for bats. There was a covered side passage with no access, this has a corrugated iron roof with a hole in it. Internally, no bats or bat droppings were observed inside the house, there was limited access to the extremely small loft space but no bat droppings were visible.

Due to the very limited roosting potential for bats and a lack of evidence of bats during the detailed inspection of the building, it is concluded that the building has a very low potential for bats to be present. Based on the recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines prior to works, no further surveys are required, and the planned works should proceed.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Ravi and Dipiksha Sodha to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) on 76a Queen's Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DH. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council to demolish the workshop and bungalow and replace them with two terraced houses.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats at the building.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the building (currently or previously).
- To add confidence where no bats are found, or to categorise the nature of a roost where evidence of bats are found.
- To establish whether further surveys, mitigation or a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) is required.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.3 Proposed Works

This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council to demolish the workshop and bungalow and replace them with two terraced houses.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The survey was undertaken and report written by Bridget Parslow who has 30 years' experience of working with bats and holds a Class 2 licence (CL18, number 2015-10391-CLS-CLS) and Science and Education Licence (2015-10324-CLS-CLS).

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Legislative Background

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time. A summary of the main legislation and planning considerations are included at Appendix 1.

Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.



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3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The property is located at Grid Reference SU 72080 74461, see Ordnance Survey (OS) extract on Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2 below.

Figure 1. 76a Queens Rd, Caversham, highlighted.

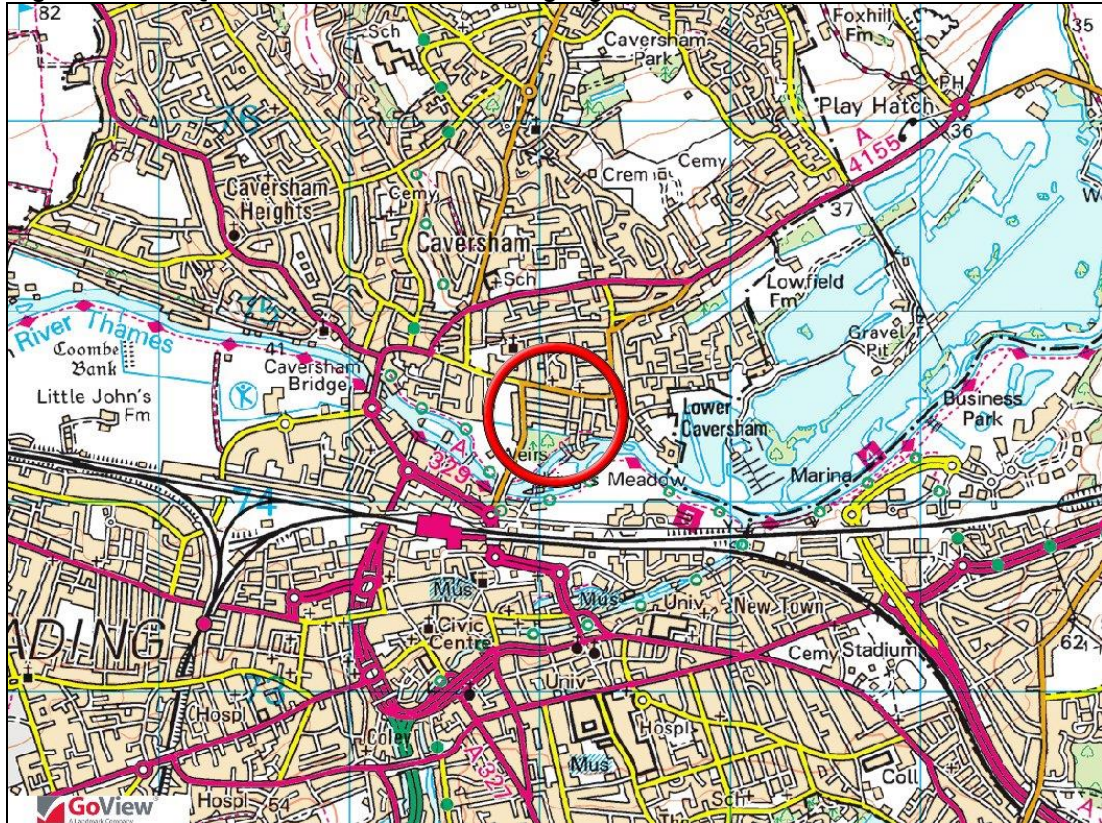
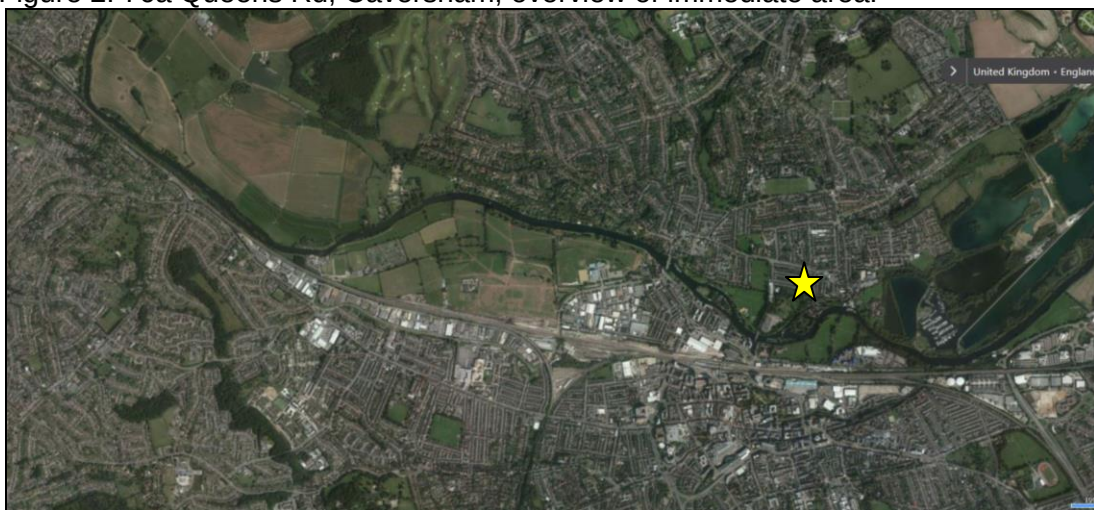


Figure 2. 76a Queens Rd, Caversham, overview of immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site is located between two terraces of houses along a road in Lower Caversham. It comprises a single-storey garage/workshop with a bungalow behind. There is a small area of concrete in front of the garage and the remains of the pipe structure for fuel delivery, see cover photo. There was a small patch of ground behind the bungalow with a sycamore tree, but no apparent access from the house, and a covered passageway to the east of the workshop, with a damaged corrugated iron roof (also no access), see Figure 3 below. The neighbouring properties have small front and rear gardens. The site itself offers very little foraging or commuting habitat for bats.

Figure 3. Workshop roof and covered passageway to the east, 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

Due to the small size of the development and the very local impact that will occur, no data was sought from local records centres. Google Earth and MAGIC maps (magic.defra.gov.uk) were used prior to the survey to determine the suitability of the surrounding habitat to support roosting bats and to identify any statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

The site is surrounded by streets of similar terraced houses. Caversham Park and Cemetery are just over 1km to the north, the River Thames is about 200m to the south and the Caversham Marina lakes are 600m to the east (Magic Maps 2017). These areas provide good roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for bats however, there is limited connectivity from the site to these areas.

A search of the Magic interactive website indicated two current EPSL's (detailed below) within 2km of the site.

2016-22301-EPS-MIT	21/4/16	20/4/21	Common pip
2017-28045-EPS-MIT	8/3/17	8/3/22	Daubenton

4.2 Daylight Survey

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) at 76a Queens Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DH was carried out by Bridget Parslow on Saturday 17th November 2018 at 13:30 hours. The weather conditions for the survey were clear and sunny with a temperature of 10 degrees. Equipment used included a ladder, high-powered torch, telescopic pole and digital cameras.

During the preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) an internal and external inspection of the building was carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the building – soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls.
- Internal conditions – microclimate stability, draughts etc.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the building.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances.
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

Buildings or structures with no bat roosting potential and that were unsuitable for roosting bats were not inspected in detail.



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4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client and there were no constraints to the survey, except the lack of access to the right hand side passageway.

5. Survey Findings

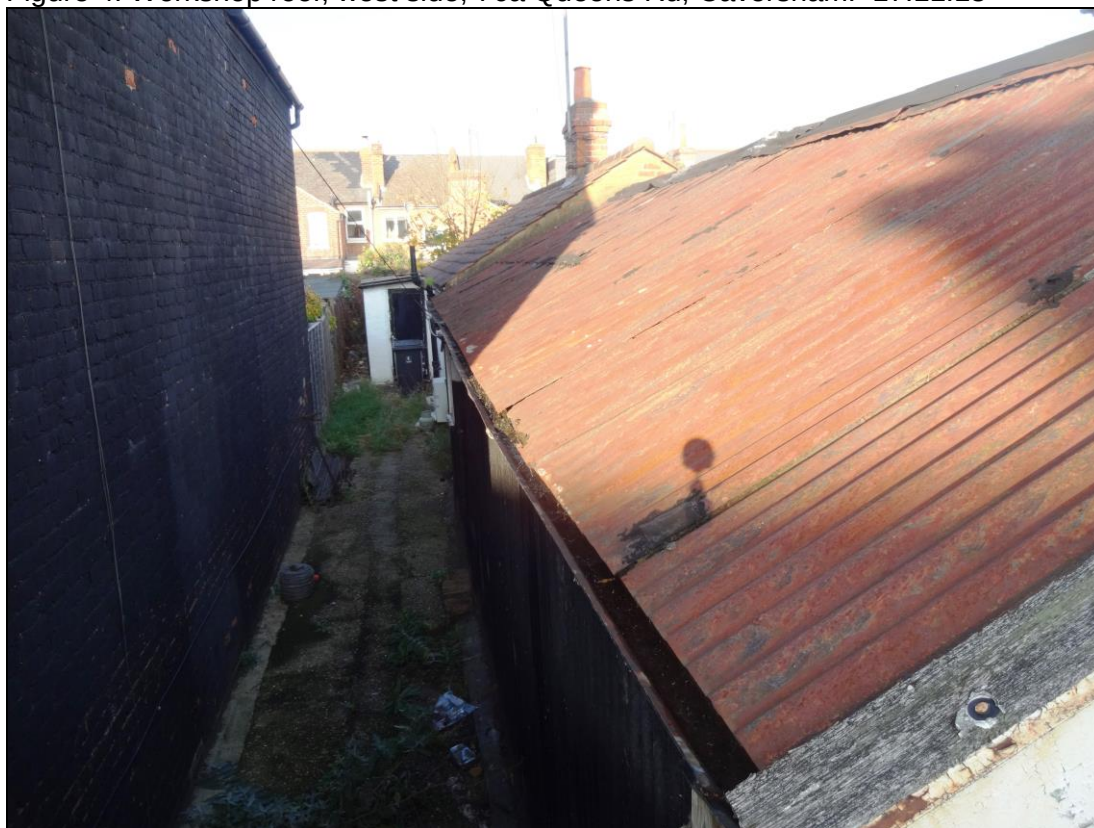
5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, soffits, fascias and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The workshop is made of timber and corrugated iron, with a corrugated iron roof, see Figure 4 below. It adjoins the bungalow which is brick built and whitewashed with a clay tile roof, see Figure 5. Both buildings are in a fair condition externally, intact but in need of minor care and attention. The ridge tiles and verges are all sealed and in good condition, see Figure 6. The workshop soffits are all well sealed, see example at Figure 7. There is a small outdoor toilet adjacent to the bungalow with a corrugated asbestos roof in fair condition. The walls are unlined brick and the roof is unlined.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external survey.

Figure 4. Workshop roof, west side, 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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Figure 5. Example of roof tiles, bungalow at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18



Figure 6. Bungalow verges at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18



Figure 7. Workshop soffits at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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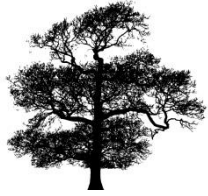
5.2 Internal Inspection

An internal inspection of the buildings was undertaken and examined for any signs of bats (as described in section 4.2). Internally the bungalow is in very poor condition with the lathe ceilings showing through gaps in the plaster board in a number of places, see Figures 8 & 9. The bungalow has a very small loft about 0.5m high. The hatches were very small, see Figure 10, the roof tiles are unlined and the roof space is uninsulated.

The front half of the workshop is lined with plaster board, the back half with sarking boards, see Figures 11 and 12.

Figure 8. Sitting room ceiling, bungalow at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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Figure 9. Bedroom, bungalow at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18



Figure 10. Kitchen showing hatch, bungalow at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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Figure 11. Workshop space at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18



Figure 12. Sarking on the ceiling of the workshop at 76a Queens Rd, Caversham. 17.11.18





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6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site has been assessed with reference to the criteria laid out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). These criteria are listed below with the features **highlighted in bold**.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures:

- are of a pre-20th Century construction;
- are in a lowland rural setting;
- **have** woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or **water nearby**;
- have large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes;
- have numerous crevices in stonework and structures;
- have an uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty;
- have hanging tiles or roof cladding, especially on south-facing walls;
- **have a roof warmed by the sun**;
- **are disused or little used; largely undisturbed**;
- provide appropriate hibernation conditions, such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, or fortifications; or
- Recent or historical records of bats on the site, or bat roosts in the general area.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be lower where structures:

- **are in an urban setting with little green space**;
- are subject to heavy disturbance (constant movement due to draughts and noise, also unstable microclimate);
- **have a small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared)**;
- are of a modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelle bats may still be present);
- **are comprised of prefabricated steel or sheet materials; (some sections)**
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

From the internal and external inspections, it can be concluded that there is no evidence of current or prior use of the property by bats and the building is in a poor condition. Informed by the results of the detailed preliminary bat survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that the building has a very low potential for roosting bats. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licensed bat ecologist.

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 24 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may have changed and become more suitable to support roosting bats.



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8. References

Collins, J (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), London.

HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act.

HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (1999). Bat Workers' Manual (2nd Edition). Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, Peterborough.

9. Queries

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed, in the first instance, to Urban Tree Experts:

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