

36 LIEBENROOD RD, READING, BERKS, RG30 2EB

Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment

Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol

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Written by: Dr. Jonty Denton (Chartered Ecologist) 31 Thorn Lane, Four Marks,
Hampshire, GU34 5BX

email: jontydenton@aol.com

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Summary

Consultant Chartered Ecologist Dr. Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CECol was commissioned by Felicity Deacon to undertake a Daytime Bat Assessment (Phase 1) of 36 Liebenrood Rd, Reading

This is required to support a planning application seeking to carry out alterations to and extend the property:

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

There was no evidence of any bat activity within the house, and no inaccessible under tiles spaces. The only inaccessible voids (above the garage entrance and rear extension) had no obvious entry points.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

I was contracted by the owners to undertake a Provisional Environmental Assessment and Daytime Bat assessment at 36 Liebenrood Rd, Reading

This report presents the findings of the survey undertaken on the 14th May 2019; which is aimed at assessing the suitability of the house and gardens to support protected species.

1.2 Site Setting and Description

36 Liebenrood Rd is a semidetached house built in the 1930s. It is set in a semi-urban area with the open tree lined expanse of Prospect Park to the west. There are some small ornamental trees within 20m of the house, and the Road itself is lined with mature deciduous trees.



Fig 1. Site location.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Phase 1 Bat Survey Methods

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

The Phase 1 Bat Survey was carried out on the 14th May 2019, and comprised of a daytime walkover of the site, internally and externally, to record evidence of any protected bat species.

Details of the survey methods are given below.

2.2.1 Bats

The property and outbuildings were investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas such as gaps or holes between wooden cladding,

roof tiles, fascias and soffits and to record direct evidence of bat presence such as droppings and urine staining. This was followed by a detailed investigation of all accessible internal spaces to record evidence of bat roosting activity such as droppings, feeding remains, live animals, corpses, urine staining and fur staining. The building was assessed as to its suitability for supporting roosting bats. The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Bat Conservation, (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines* 3rd edition).

The details of the assessment criteria used to determine the ecological value of on-site attributes is outlined below. During the Phase 1 survey the assessment criteria are based on the potential for the site to support the species considered. However, in many cases Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm presence /absence of any bat species and hence the importance of a population at the site, therefore the assessment of value should be considered as provisional.

Where possible, a provisional assessment of potential will be made although this may well require Phase 2 surveys to confirm status.

High Potential- High potential buildings are those that have features highly suitable for use by roosting bats, including gaps around soffits, hanging tiles, extensive roof spaces etc. High potential buildings are often, but not always, buildings of more historic construction. Further Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Medium Potential- Medium potential buildings have a moderate number of features that may be utilised by bats for roosting, these may include loose fascias, roof spaces etc. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Low Potential- Low potential buildings are those that provide limited bat roosting potential although some features that may be utilised by bats may be present. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

No/Negligible Potential – These are buildings that are extremely unlikely to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features. Further Phase 2 surveys are unlikely to be required for buildings with negligible potential.

2.4 Phase 1 Survey Timing and Weather Conditions

The Phase 1 bat survey was carried out on the morning of the 14th May 2019, which was warm and sunny with 0% cloud cover, and an ambient temperature of approx. 17 °C.

2.5 Phase 1 Survey Equipment

During the Phase 1 survey the surveyor was equipped with 10 x 42 close focus binoculars and a high-powered torch.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Bats

Bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and also receive additional protection via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. 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 or not. Barbastelle Bats, Bechstein's

Bat, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat are also UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

According to DEFRA's MagicMap one site has been subject to a Bat license within the 1km square and 8 others within 6km of 36 Liebenrood Rd.

The house was subject to a full Phase 1 bat survey outlined below.

3.1.1 Phase 1 Bat Survey Results

3.1.2 Bats – Building Assessment

Exterior assessment: The residential dwelling within the site comprises a two-storey semi-detached structure. The dwelling dates to 1930s. The exterior walls are brick built with a clay tiled roof (see fig.2). At the rear there is an old wooden framed conservatory in poor repair which has no potential for bats (See fig 3.). There is an extension at the NE corner (see fig. 4) with a cat-slide roof, with an inaccessible void above the cloakroom area. However the roof /fascias were in excellent order with no potential access points.



Fig 2. Front (western elevation of house).



Fig 3. Conservatory on eastern (rear) elevation



Fig 4. Rear extension

Interior assessment: The main loft void was accessed via a hatch on the landing. The loft has a pitched roof with soft-wood timber frame. The roof is *unlined* and the undersides of the tiles are visible throughout. There is a small window in the roof which illuminates the void throughout. The loft partially boarded out with the remainder insulated with fibre glass. There was no sign of bat or rodent droppings.

The loft void along the entire apex had been filled with the scaffold webs of a *Steatoda spp.* Two halogen strip lights had been added to illuminate the space.

Several old nests made by Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* were present.



Fig 5. Interior of main loft looking north



Fig 6. Interior of garage.

The tiles, soffits etc. were all in excellent order with no obvious access points. The tiled roof over the garage had a couple of broken tiles but the stubs were still *in situ* so no access point had been created.

4.0 EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2 Phase 1 Bat Survey

There was no evidence of any bat activity within the loft void, and no hidden voids or under tile spaces (as the loft is not lined with felting etc.). Externally the house has low potential for bats with no obvious access point could be seen from the exterior.

The lack of any evidence of bats in a loft of such an age was surprising but the presence of a skylight window which permanently illuminates the loft void by day is unusual and may well be a contributory factor.

5. References & Bibliography

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