

Matthew Baldwin
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27th March 2018

Our Ref: RT-MME-127659

Dear Matthew,

Endoscope Bat Survey– Mercedes Benz, Richfield Avenue, Reading.

In February 2018 Vertu Motors PLC commissioned Middlemarch Environmental Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (RT-MME-127659) at the site of the proposed development at Mercedes Benz, Richfield Avenue in Reading.

A detailed external review was undertaken on site, including the features described above, and no evidence of bats was recorded. However, it was not possible to fully inspect features located at height and those which extended beyond the reach of an endoscope and into the cavity wall. Taking into account the structural characteristics, and the immediate surrounding habitat and the constraints encountered during the survey, it was deemed that Buildings 1 and 2 have moderate potential for roosting bats.

As a result of this report an Endoscope Bat Survey was recommended and completed on the 15th March 2018.

Methodology

In line with the specifications detailed by English Nature (2004), a daytime walkover survey of the site will be conducted. A visual assessment will be undertaken of the site for activity and signs of possible bat presence. Any accessible holes/cracks and crevices, which could allow bat access into potential roosting areas, were inspected using an endoscope. A Mobile Elevated Working Platform (MEWP) was used to access and inspect features which could not be inspected during the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Results

Building 1 (Mercedes Benz Showroom)

During the preliminary bat roost assessment of building 1 a number of external features were recorded around the building which could be used by bats to gain entry into the structure and potential opportunistic roost locations. These features include:

- Damaged metal fascia board;
- Gaps around piping in metal soffit box; and,
- Weep and pipe holes in the brickwork.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the preliminary roost assessment. However, the damaged metal fascia board gaps leading into a metal soffit box were located at height and could not be inspected for evidence of bats.

Following an inspection of the features with the aid of a MEWP, the damaged metal fascia board and holes around piping were found to provide access into a thin metal gutter. The gutter was fully inspected and no evidence of bats was recorded within the feature which could be fully inspected.



Plate 1: Building 1 - Damaged Metal Gutter



Plate 2: Building 1 – Thin Metal Gutter

A small number of weep holes were recorded at 2 m on the eastern elevation of Mercedes Benz structure. Due to the low height of the weep holes and heavy disturbance around them (located above workshop doors with lighting), their value for roosting bats is reduced to negligible. There were no indications that bats had been using the features.

Following the endoscope survey, it is considered that all features with value for roosting bats have been inspected, with no evidence of bats recorded.

Building 2

During the preliminary bat roost assessment of building 2 a number of external features were recorded around the building which could be used by bats to gain entry into the structure and potential opportunistic roost locations. These features include:

- Gaps under metal cladding;
- Open windows;
- Missing canopy panels; and,
- Weep and pipe holes in the brickwork.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the preliminary roost assessment. However, the upper level weep and pipe holes, and the metal cladding were located at height and could not be inspected for evidence of bats.

Following an inspection of the features with the aid of a MEWP, the pipe holes and crevices under metal cladding on the western aspect were fully inspected. No evidence of bats was recorded within the features.



Plate 3: Building 2 – Weep Holes above Windows



Plate 4: Building 2 – Pipe Holes in Wall

There were 27 weep holes located at height (approximately 6 m) on the northern elevation of building 2, above windows. There were 6 further weep holes above windows on the northwest corner of the building. Of the weep holes, 10/27 on the northern elevation and 4/6 weep holes on the western elevation were either filled with debris, heavily cobwebbed or were too narrow to provide access for bats.

These features were fully inspected. The remaining weep holes provided clear access into the cavity wall, which cannot be inspected with an endoscope. There were no indications that bats had been using the features. However, as there was an open flight path to the weep holes and low levels of disturbance, it is not possible to rule out occasional usage of the features by bats.

There were a small number of weep holes located at 2 m height on the western aspect of the building. Due to the comparatively low height of the weep holes and heavy disturbance around them (above workshop doors with lighting), their value for roosting bats is reduced to negligible.

Conclusions

Building 1

Building 1 has been fully inspected for evidence of bats. No evidence of bats was recorded, and following the endoscope survey it is considered that no further bat surveys are recommended at this time. If the building is not demolished within 1 year then these surveys are recommended to be updated.

Building 2

As no evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection, which included a full inspection of the majority of features and a partial inspection of features which extended beyond the reach of an endoscope, it is considered that the risks of bats being present has been significantly reduced (although their presence cannot be not entirely ruled out).

It is therefore recommended that a single pre-demolition works bat emergence survey is carried out on the structure. It is understood that demolition is planned for mid-april. The pre-works emergence survey will be carried out in suitable weather conditions immediately prior to demolition when bats are considered to be active. If bats are discovered roosting in the building during the survey then works should cease and a bat licence application to Natural England would need to be applied for to support the demolition process and associated survey work to support the application would need to be carried out.

We trust you find the above level of information sufficient and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

For and On Behalf of Middlemarch Environmental Ltd.

Will Rees

Ecological Consultant

Checked by:

Paul Roebuck MCIEEM

Principal Ecological Consultant