

25th June 2019

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Forwarded by email only (emily@etplanning.co.uk)

**59-61 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, READING – EXTENSION OF EXISTING DWELLING |
INFORMATION PERTAINING TO ECOLOGICAL MATTERS**

Dear Emily,

I write in relation to the above address and submit the results following a survey to identify any ecological constraints.

I understand that the proposal is to convert the property from its existing commercial use into numerous residential units (1x one-bedroom, 1x two-bedroom and 7x short-term let units). This would involve conversion of the roof space and extensive repairs to the roof.

Survey methodology

Given the small-scale nature of the proposal the survey focused on assessing the potential for the buildings to support roosting bats and nesting birds.

The assessment of the building was aided by binoculars (8x42 magnification) and high-powered torches (11,000 lumens), targeting any features that may present entry/roosting opportunities for bats. Internal inspections were also performed which checked for signs of use (e.g. droppings). This initial assessment was sufficient in scope to establish whether any further survey work was necessary to inform the planning application. This survey element was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's latest Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

An inspection for evidence of nesting birds was also performed. This checked for any nests and other signs which can indicate use.

The survey was performed on 27-Feb-2019.



Bat roosting potential

The building is considered to be Victorian in age and is constructed from red brick which supports a pitched slate tiled roof. It is three-storey with two-storey extensions to the rear. The building is currently unoccupied and is in a very poor state of repair with various damage to the roof structure resulting in missing/slipped tiles. Photographs are appended to this information note for reference.

Inspection of the main roof void (to the three-storey section) confirmed that the stale tiles sit directly onto the timber battens. The ceiling to the void was missing and extensive water damage was observed. No evidence of roosting bats was found and the roof space was not considered to provide suitable roosting sites being light and drafty.

Vaulted roof spaces were present to the ridge within the two extensions to the rear. Full access to these roof spaces was not possible, however, visual inspection confirmed that the stale tiles also sit directly onto the timber battens. Further damage to the roof was observed which again would render the roof space sub-optimal for roosting bats.

Overall, the building is judged to present limited opportunities for roosting opportunities and the likelihood of encountering roosting bats is considered to be low. As such, no further survey work is considered to be required.

Bird nesting potential

A number of Feral Pigeon *Columba livia domestica* were observed roosting within the main roof void with one potentially nesting.

Recommendations

To provide an enhancement for roosting bats it is recommended that a suitable bat box (e.g. Schwegler's zFE wall-mounted bat shelter) is mounted to one of the north-east orientated gable end walls.

Given the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under wildlife legislation, it is recommended that destruction work elements to the roof take place outside of the main nesting season (March to August inclusive) or only following a specific check survey performed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

I trust the above provides sufficient information to allow Reading Borough Council to determine the planning application, however, if you require any further information then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alexander Heath
Director









