

Initial Bat Assessment

**190 Henley Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5LN**



**Dr Stacey Dawn Waring
18-004-IBA
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Signed:



Date: 29/01/2018

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Executive Summary

Eaves Ecology was commissioned by Mr Paul Coldwell to carry out an initial bat assessment at the freestanding garage, located at the rear of 190 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5LN. The site is located a grid reference SU 72838 75240. This was to support a future planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council.

The bat survey and report have been conducted and prepared by a qualified licensed bat ecologist Dr Stacey Dawn Waring. This report provides results of an initial bat assessment conducted on 22nd January 2018 during daylight hours.

An inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats. There was no evidence of bats (internally or externally). The condition of the building results in no areas that are suitable for use by roosting bats. Consequently, the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be negligible (based on the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines). As a result no further survey effort is recommend and an EPS Licence will not be required for works to proceed.

1 Introduction

Eaves Ecology was commissioned by Mr Paul Coldwell to carry out an initial bat assessment at the freestanding garage, located at the rear 190 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5LN. The main house is not covered by this survey or report. The initial bat assessment and report have been conducted and prepared by a qualified Natural England licensed bat ecologist Dr Stacey Dawn Waring. This report gives details of the day time assessment survey conducted on the 22nd January 2018.

1.1 Objectives of the Survey and Report

The initial bat assessment is designed to provide information to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the freestanding garage
- Provide information on the status of bats using the building (currently or previously)
- Establish whether further surveys, mitigation or an EPS licence is required.

The survey and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2012).

1.2 Surveyor Information

The initial bat assessment survey and report were completed by Dr Stacey Dawn Waring who has held a Class II Bat Licence (No. 2015-6768-CLS-CLS) for 6 years and is an Associate Member of CIEEM. She has 8 years' experience of carrying out research for the Bat Conservation Trust and has worked with several ecological consultancies conducting bat surveys for over a decade.

2 Legislation

All bats in the UK are protected under law and therefore thought must be given when demolition and/or planning is to be considered. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), forms the key legislation protecting habitats and species in the UK. All UK bat species are fully protected under the 1981 Act through inclusion on Schedule 5. All bats are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive into UK law. In combination, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly take, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a place or structure used by bats for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; or
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb bats while occupying a roost.

Bat roosts are protected under these laws whether the animals are present at the time of survey or not. A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which [a bat] uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the

time of survey. The above is a summary of the relevant legislation and the original Acts and Schedules should be referred to for the precise wording.

Barbastelle Bats *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*, Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* are also listed as being species of principle importance to the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3 Background

3.1 Site Description

The property located at 190 Henley Road is located on the south-east boundary of Caversham, approximately 2.5km to the north-east of Reading town centre (Figure 1). The site is located a grid reference SU 72838 75240.

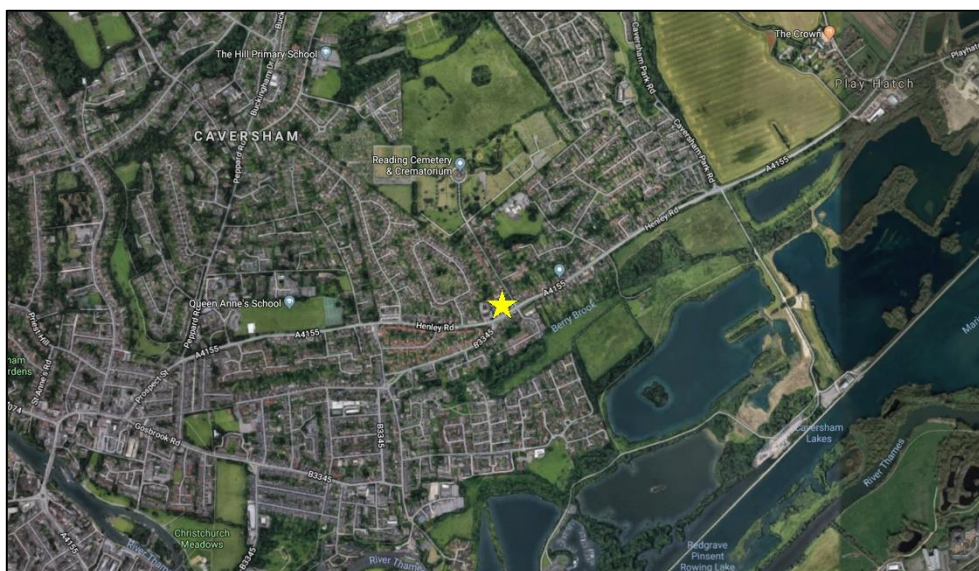


Figure 1 – Showing site location of 190 Henley Road (courtesy of Google Earth)

The site is in an urban area and is located directly on the A4155. It is directly surrounded by residential dwellings, gardens, amenity grassland and roads (Figure 1). The site has busy roads within 10m to the front (south) and side (east) of the property. There are areas of amenity parkland and Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) within 100m of the site to the south at Berry Brook and to the east at Lowfields Farm. There are also areas of Deciduous Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland (BAP Priority Habitat) at Caversham Park and Reading Crematorium, 500m to the north of the site. There are numerous waterbodies within the local vicinity, including Caversham Lakes (200m south-east). There are known bat roosts locally, including a *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* maternity colony at The Hill Primary School (1km north-west). Whilst these sites may provide good habitats for bats and their insect prey the connectivity between these sites is limited due to urbanisation.

The site consists of a 20th Century, detached, single storey freestanding garage of single skin brick, wall construction (Figure 2 and 3) with a low-slope pitched (gabled) roof, consisting of timber rafters resting on the walls and a corrugated asbestos fibre board/plastic covering. The building is in fair condition and is currently used for car storage.



Figure 2 – Rear (western) elevation of garage at 190 Henley Road



Figure 3 – Front (eastern) elevation of garage at 190 Henley Road

3.2 Development proposals

The plans for works to be conducted at the garage, located to the rear of 190 Henley Road; include the demolition of the garage and the erection of a new residential dwelling. Plans are yet to be finalised and submitted to Reading Borough Council. The survey was required to identify if any bats are present and using the building and how they may be impacted by any proposed development of the building.

4 Methods

4.1 Daytime assessment

The buildings' suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features. Structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void/crawl space, the presence of access points into the building (including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and fascia's, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose roof coverings, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.

The buildings' suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane or an area of woodland.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the buildings were then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Hundt, 2012) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat surveys later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

A detailed initial bat assessment was undertaken by Dr Stacey Dawn Waring (NE licensed ecologist) on the 22nd January 2018. A systematic internal inspection of the building was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. An external search around the perimeter of the buildings was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with the high powered torch and ladder as required.

Features of potential value to bats surveyed for included:

- Construction of the Building – Soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc;
- Building Condition – structure of roof and walls;
- Internal conditions – Microclimate stability, drafts 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 also searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
- 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.

5 Results

All accessible areas were examined around the building for droppings and evidence of bats. It should be noted however that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.

5.1 Daytime assessment

5.1.1 *Internal inspection*

The garage consisted of a single open internal void (Figure 3), thus there was no separate roof void to inspect. The internal void was approximately 2.5m high at the central point. The garage had windows along the rear elevation (Figure 2) and sheets of corrugated plastic in areas along the roof, which resulted in the internal space being very light (Figure 4). The two double garage doors fitted to the front of the building (Figure 3), whilst in good condition, allowed an elevated level of air movement through the building. Consequently, the internal space was very draughty and the microclimate will be affected by the external environment. Whilst there is a central wall in the garage dividing the space into two rooms. The wall does not reach ceiling height (Figure 5) and so the conditions on both sides of the garage will be subject to the same environment.

There was no underlay fitted beneath the asbestos and plastic roofing, thus there were no areas internally that would provide a dark and suitable place for bats to roost. There was some evidence of cobwebbing throughout the garage, however, the regular use of the building for storage and the draughts could result in this. No evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.



Figure 4 – internal space of garage located at 190 Henley Road



Figure 5 – showing gap at top of wall dividing the garage

5.1.2 External Inspection

The external features of 190 Henley Road were also examined for signs described in section 4.1. The roof, windowsills, exposed features around the windows and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The primary roof covering consisted of corrugated asbestos fibre board and plastic over the whole of the property (Figure 9). The primary roof covering was in fair condition and had no overlapping boards or areas that could be utilised by bats. The construction of the roof means that the corrugated boards only rest on the gable walls of the garage. This means there are open eaves and verges (Figure 10 & 11) around the whole of the building. Whilst bats could use this for access, these gaps will further reduce the suitability of the internal microclimate for roosting.

The ridge consists of a half round asbestos ridge fitting (Figure 11). The ridge was not sealed either along its length or at the ends. The underside of the ridge fitting was also visible from inside the garage. Consequently, the ridge was exposed to both draughts and light and provided no suitable areas for

roosting bats. The timber boards fixed at the eaves, along the side of the building (Figure 9), are in good condition and tightly fitted against the building.



Figure 9 – rear of the garage showing corrugated roof and close-fitting timber boards at eaves



Figure 10 – gable end showing gap between wall and corrugated asbestos fibre board



Figure 11 – showing open ended ridge fitting

During the internal and external inspections of 190 Henley Road no evidence of bats was found. The potential for roosting bats to utilise the site is deemed to be negligible for the reasons specified in this report.

5.2 Constraints/limitations

Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites.

Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during day time assessment.

Prior to the initial bat assessment seasonal weather conditions may have washed away external droppings.

6 Conclusions

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation contravening (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 2017, (which make it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or otherwise disturb bats, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost, whether bats are present or not). In some cases, if the proposed work will have a detrimental effect on bats or disturb or damage their roost then an EPS licence from Natural England has to be applied for.

Initial observations consider the local area to be relatively suitable for bats and their insect prey. The proximity of the site to a parkland, waterbodies and gardens increases the likelihood that the site may support roosting bats, however, the lack of connectivity between sites and the busy roads directly in front/to the side of the property make these features less suitable.

The initial bat assessment at the garage located at the rear of 190 Henley Road found no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspections. The condition of the building results in no areas that could be utilised by bats for roosting. The light, draughty and open nature of the building reduce its suitability as a roost; consequently, the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be negligible (based on the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines). As a result, no further survey effort is recommended and an EPS Licence will not be required for works to proceed.

7 References

Bat Surveys Good practice Guidelines – Bat Conservation Trust 2012

Bat Workers Manual – Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004

Bat Mitigation Guidelines – Natural England 2006

The Conservation and Habitat Regulations 2017