



96 Bath
Road,
Reading,
Berkshire,
RG30 2EU

Preliminary Roost Assessment: Daytime Bat and Nesting Bird Survey Report

July 2018



Ref: 18-4431

QUALITY STANDARDS CONTROL

The signatories below verify that this document has been prepared in accordance with our quality control requirements. These procedures do not affect the content and views expressed by the originator.

This document must only be treated as a draft unless it has been signed by the originators and approved by a director.

Revision	-
Date	30/07/2018
Prepared by	P. Holden (on behalf of Syntegra Consulting Ltd)
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Validity of Data

The findings of this study are valid for a period of 12 months from the survey date. If the approved works have not commenced within the 12 months, it may be necessary to have an updated survey carried out to allow for any changes in the status of bats on site to be assessed and to inform any mitigation or recommendations.

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The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by SC in providing its services are outlined in this report. The work described in this report was undertaken in **2018** and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time. The scope of this report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

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Forecast cost estimates do not include such costs associated with any negotiations, appeals or other non-technical actions associated with the agreement on measures to meet the requirements of the authorities, nor are potential business loss and interruption costs considered that may be incurred as part of any technical measures.

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I. PHOTOS FROM INSPECTION

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Syntegra Group was commissioned by Mr Paul Uttley of Form Architecture and Planning on behalf of the client, Pioneer Homez Ltd, to conduct a daytime bat and nesting bird survey at 96 Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EU (Grid Ref: SU 684 223) prior to submitting a Planning Application.

The site consists of a detached bungalow set within residential grounds.

A daytime bat and nesting bird assessment was undertaken on the 20th July 2018.

The existing building is best described a brick built dwelling under a gable ended plain clay tiled roof with uPVC soffits.

The proposals are to demolish the bungalow and replace with a new dwelling in a similar footprint.

The internal survey noted 1 loft space as follows:

The loft space had a sloped roof space with no gable walls present. The ridge height was 2 metres. The roof space consisted of a mixture of insulation and bitumen felt with timber battens and beams. Areas of visible light were located around the edges of the roof space. The space had no signs of bats in the form of marks, stains, droppings and or debris.

The external survey of the dwelling noted potential access points and crevice roosting spaces within the tiled roof, and within the uPVC soffits.

The bungalow noted potential crevice space and access points and was deemed as low potential for roosting bats.

The internal and external inspections found no noted evidence of nesting birds. The shrubs, hedgerows and immature trees on and within the boundaries of the site provide potential nesting sites, it is recommended given the close proximity to the dwelling, that proposed demolition occurs outside of the nesting bird season.

In line with Bat Conservation Trusts guidelines (Collins 2016), sites with low potential for use by roosting bats, recommend a further dusk survey carried out during the active survey season (May to August inclusive) to confirm likely absence of roosting bats.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1. Syntegra Group was commissioned by Mr Paul Uttley of Form Architecture and Planning on behalf of the client, Pioneer Homez Ltd, to conduct a daytime bat and nesting bird survey at 96 Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EU. The surveys were carried out on the 20th July 2018.

2.2. The proposals are to demolish the dwelling and replace with a new dwelling in a similar footprint.

2.3. All bat species are protected by European and national legislation. A bat survey is therefore required to determine the presence or likely absence of bats at the site. The survey aimed to determine whether bat species are present at this site, the type of roost at the site, and the population size.

2.4. The brief was to survey the proposed development site and identify the presence or likely absence of bats and nesting birds. A desk top study consisting of an NBN records search was used to assess the species of bats that may occur on site. Recommendations will be made as necessary in order to inform a mitigation strategy and licence application if required.

3 LIMITATIONS

3.1. The daytime inspection was conducted in July, an active period for bats (BCT Guidelines, 2016). Whilst evidence of roosting can be confirmed by a daytime inspection alone, very often features that could support bats cannot be searched thoroughly to confirm whether bats are indeed roosting.

3.2. Desktop data searches are a valuable tool in evaluating a sites potential to hold protected species. However, it is not an absolute in confirming presence or absence of species due to the nature of how the records are collected and shared. In order to ensure a comprehensive search of all known bat records within 2km of the site, it is always recommended that the client commissions a local biological records data search to inform the report.

3.3. All areas and aspects of the building that were accessible were fully surveyed by the assessor. The upper sections of the roof space could not be fully surveyed given their height and limited accessibility to the surveyor.

3.4. The existing site plans sent over by the agent show a single garage and shed. The ecologist once on site, found no garage or shed, as such, only the bungalow was surveyed.

3.5. This report only applies to plans drawn up at the time of survey. Any alterations to plans may render the report void and/or require further surveys and should be communicated to the ecologist at the earliest opportunity.

3.6. The client is responsible for reading and understanding the advice given in this report. The client must ensure that, where recommended, mitigation is followed through.

4 LEGISLATION

4.1. This section details the legislation relevant to the protection of species and habitats. It also details the relevant policies within national, regional, and local planning policy.

4.2. The National Planning Policy Framework in summary requires that the planning system should aim to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment. The aims are to: protect and enhance valued landscapes as well as geological conservation interests and soils; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

4.3. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists species that are of particular importance on national and local scales. The aim of this plan is to ensure that change does not result in net loss of both the quality and quantity of biodiversity, and ultimately enhance biodiversity where ever possible.

4.4. All species of bats are strictly protected through UK and European regulations. Bats have been placed on protected lists due to the overall steady decline of species over the last century. They are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), under which bats are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance.

4.5. Additional protection for all bat species is provided under Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under Regulation 43 it is an offence to deliberately capture or kill a wild animal of a European protected species, deliberately disturb any such animal and to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site. Since August 2007 amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 have changed the term 'deliberately disturb' such that it is an offence if the species are disturbed in such a way that it is likely to significantly affect the colonies ability to survive, breed or rear their young; or affect the local distribution or abundance of that species. If the deliberate disturbance is considered to fall below the threshold for the Regulations, no licence under this legislation is necessary, but the disturbance may still be an offence under Wildlife and Conservation Act 1981 (as amended).

4.6. Licences are needed if the disturbance is a significant effect on the bat colony and would otherwise be an offence. Licences are granted after strict following of Section 46 under the Habitat Regulations, following the submission of a licence application to Natural England. Licences permit the work that is otherwise considered to be an offence under the legislation.

4.7. Natural England (NE) is the authority for determining licence applications for works associated with developments affecting bats. In cases where licences are required, certain conditions have to be met to satisfy Natural England under the 3 tests set out in the Habitats Regulations 2017 when granting licences. These tests are:

The consented operation must be for “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”; and

There must be “no satisfactory alternative”; and

The action authorised “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

4.8. In order to meet the tests, Natural England expects the planning position to be fully resolved. Full planning permission, if applicable, will need to have been granted and any conditions relating to bats fully discharged.

4.9. All native birds receive protection whilst nesting under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Barn owls receive additional protection under Schedule 1 and 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. On the 20th July 2018, internal and external inspections were carried out. The surveys were carried out by Patricia Holden MSc MCIEEM (bat licence: 2016-20440-CLS-CLS), an experienced ecologist who has undertaken numerous bat and nesting bird surveys and has undergone professional training in bat surveying techniques. The survey followed guidelines by the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016). Any bat droppings found were noted for shape, size, texture and age. The survey also assessed the site to support foraging and commuting bats in line with BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

5.2. *Bats Internal and External Inspections*

5.2.1. The internal inspections of the dwelling identified features of interest and potential bat roost sites. The floor spaces within the dwelling were searched for evidence of bats in the form of droppings and insect debris. Within the roof spaces, features such as cracks, crevices, ridgebeams were inspected for droppings, insect debris, urine stains or markings, scratchings and bat remains.

5.2.2. The external survey of the dwelling identified features of interest such as likely exit and entrance points, examples include: holes in walls, gaps in windows and doors, cracks in stonework, hanging roof tiles, and loose eaves. The grounds around the dwelling were searched for evidence of bats such as droppings or feeding remains.

5.3. *Desktop Study*

5.3.1. Records of protected species and statutory designated wildlife sites within 2km of the site were obtained via Magic.gov.uk and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). These records have been used to inform recommendations made in this report. It is recommended for a more comprehensive record search in line with BCT guidelines, that the client commissions a bat records search from the local biological record centre, without this information it is unknown whether know roosts or individual records of species, are within 2km of the site.

6 RESULTS

6.1. Position in the Landscape

6.1.1. Grid reference: SU 684 223

6.1.2. The detached dwelling is located off Bath Road, Reading, an area that is characterised by medium density-built form and surrounded by further residential land.



Figure 1: OS Map of Site (Provided by Agent)

6.1.3. The dwelling is located within residential grounds. The surrounding landscape is typical of residential plots with areas of amenity grassland, hard standing, garden typical plantings, defunct hedgerows, and semi-mature trees. The adjacent landscapes as viewed on Google Earth, show residential plots, commercial land, roads and a secondary school.

6.1.4. No part of the site contains, or is within, statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A registered park and garden, Prospect Park, is located within 200 metres, east to the site.

6.1.5. The NBN gateway record search due to copy rights could not be reproduced in the report. A MAGIC search for any Granted European Protected Species Applications within 2km of the site, four known EPSL Applications were returned, see table 1 for details of licence applications. For a more comprehensive record search, in line with best practice guidelines, it is recommended that the client commissions a 2km record search from the local biological records centre.

Table 1: Known EPSL Within 2km of Site

Date Granted	Species	Roost Type
2011	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place
2011	Brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place
2011	soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of breeding and resting place
2010	Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared	Destruction of breeding and resting place

6.2. External inspections

6.2.1. The site surveyed consisted of a detached dwelling set within residential grounds. The exteriors of the buildings were inspected for access points, and evidence of bats and nesting birds.

6.2.2. The building is best described as a brick house under a gable ended plain cement-tiled roof with uPVC soffits. To the front of the dwelling are two dormers set within the roof space.

6.2.3. The inspection of the dwelling noted potential access areas and crevice spaces within the southern, western and eastern elevation tiled roof slopes, along with gaps in the southern elevation uPVC soffit boards.

6.2.4. The table below details the dwellings external features and potential.

Table 1: Summary of Dwellings Features, Confirmed Presence and or Potential

Location	Feature	Confirmed Presence or Potential
Roof	Plain Cement Tiled with Cement Ridge Tiles	Southern, western and eastern roof slopes with notable lifts and gaps. Eastern elevation noted missing cement in edge tiles. Several tiles without lichen and or moss growth suggesting potential movement. OVERALL: Potential for Access and Crevice Space
Dormers	Cement hanging tiles, brick wall	Meets the main tiled roof with no gaps and or lifts, hanging tiles tight and intact – OVERALL: –no potential for access and crevice spaces
Walls	Brick with timber frame windows and doors	Good state of Repair, no holes, gaps, missing tiles OVERALL: –no potential for access and crevice spaces
Soffits	uPVC	Southern soffit had notable gaps OVERALL: potential for Access and Crevice Space

6.3. Internal inspections

6.3.1. The internal inspections of the dwelling examined features of interest, potential bat roost sites and bird nesting areas.

6.3.2. The loft had full accessibility to the surveyor. In summary the loft space is open planned and had a ridge height of 2 metres. The loft space had no gable walls and no chimney breasts.

6.3.3. The loft space had a sloped roof space. The loft was lined with a mixture of insulation and bitumen felt with timber battens, ridge beam and support beams. The loft floor consisted of thick insulation.

6.3.4. The loft space noted visible light noted on the northern, western, eastern and southern slopes. Three areas of torn felt was noted within the eastern and western roof slopes. Closer inspection of these torn areas noted tight intact tiles with no areas of visible light. The ridge beam area noted heavy cobwebs. The figure below details the loft inspection features and noted potential. No signs of bats in the form of droppings, debris, marks and or stains were noted during the inspection.

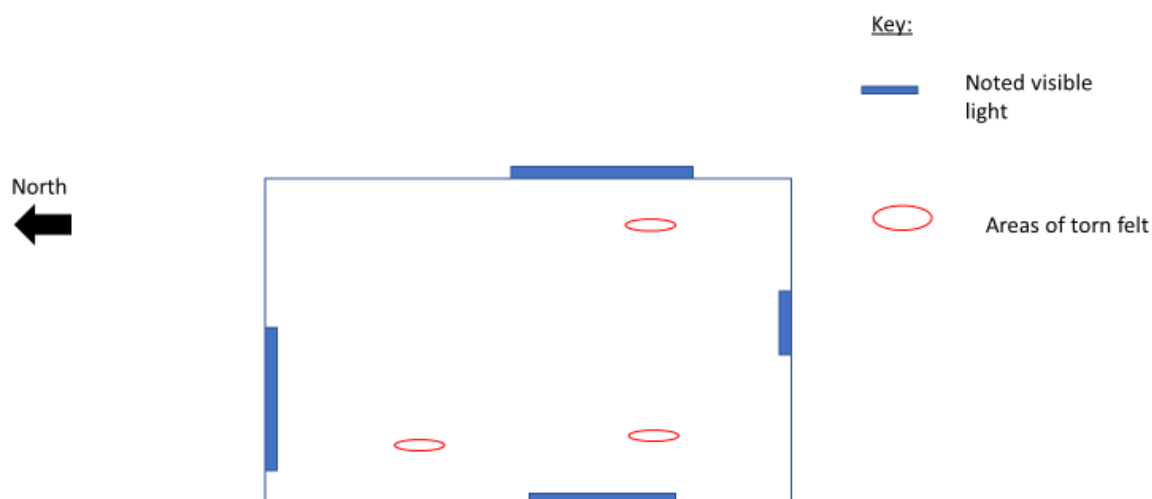


Figure 2: Internal inspection, detailing features, potential and confirmed presence

7 ASSESSMENT

7.1. The dwellings internal inspection identified limited potential accessibility for roosting bats within the bitumen lined roof space and within the soffit boards. The inspection found no confirmed evidence of roosting bats in the form of droppings, debris, marks and or stains. The external inspection of the dwelling noted potential crevices spaces and potential access areas within the soffit boards and roof tiles.

7.2. The high amount of cob webs in the ridge space suggest that no disturbance to these areas have occurred. The potential noted for the dwelling is mainly external with the potential for individuals to access the inner space between the roof tiles and bitumen felt.

7.3. The site is set within the residential area of Bath Road, Reading. The grounds are typical of residential grounds with amenity grassland, garden typical plantings, hedgerows and boundary trees. The boundary as viewed on Google Earth, show further residential land, school grounds, Prospect Park and commercial land. The proposed site and surrounding landscape provides potential traversing and foraging grounds by local bats. The site itself provides potential traversing and foraging grounds for local bats given the on-site and boundary hedgerow and tree boundaries.

7.4. The desktop study returned four known EPSLs for the damage and destruction of a resting and breeding roosts site within 2km of the site. The EPSL applications show a variety of species within the area including crevice species. A record search from a local biological records centre was not undertaken to inform any known roosts or populations within the general area.

7.5. Given the small number of potential access points and crevice space along with the lack of evidence in the form of marks, stains, droppings and or debris has suggested that the dwelling is of low roost suitability. It is recommended that a further dusk echolocation survey is carried out in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Survey Guidelines (3rd edition, 2016) and Natural England's standing advice. The further dusk survey carried out in the active season (May to August inclusive) will confirm likely absence and inform the mitigation strategy for the proposed works.

7.6. Future enhancements for bats can be achieved by planting of native and wildlife friendly species that attract insects (jasmine, honeysuckle) and to provide future foraging grounds for the local bats. It is recommended that the new dwelling incorporates crevice roosting designs into the roof space to accommodate local crevice species such as pipistrelle bats. Given the light sensitive species records within the local landscape, light proposals will need to be of low lux, direct, hooded, and if possible motion sensor.

7.7. The survey did not find evidence of nesting birds, however, the shrubs, hedgerow and trees within close proximity of the dwelling do provide potential nesting sites. The proposed works are best carried outside of the nesting bird season (works outside of March- August inclusive) unless first checked and cleared by a suitability qualified ecologist.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1. The site is located within the residential area of Bath Road, Reading, and is surrounded by further residential land, roads, school grounds and commercial land.
- 8.2. The site consists of a detached dwelling set within residential grounds.
- 8.3. The proposals are to demolish the building and replace with a new dwelling within a similar footprint.
- 8.4. The internal survey of the dwelling noted potential access points and crevice spaces within the roof space.
- 8.5. The external survey of the dwelling noted potential access points and crevice spaces within the roof and soffits.
- 8.6. The dwelling was deemed as holding low potential for roosting bats.
- 8.7. It is recommended that a further dusk survey is carried out to determine the next steps for the proposed works. In line with BCT guidelines, a minimum of one activity survey will be required and carried out during the bat active season (carried out during peak season, May to August inclusive). The further survey will inform the mitigation strategy for the works.
- 8.8. The vegetation surrounding the site noted potential features suitable for use by nesting birds. Given the close proximity of the shrubs, semi-mature trees, immature trees and hedgerows, It is recommended that works to this building occur outside of the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) or unless first checked and cleared by a suitability qualified ecologist.
- 8.9. To ensure that this site complies with wildlife legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework, the following recommendations are made:
- 8.9.1. A further echolocation survey is to be carried out during the active bat season (May to August inclusive). The further survey will inform the mitigation strategy, determine roost type(s), confirm species and numbers.
- 8.9.2. The works to the building must occur outside of the active nesting bird season (March to August inclusive), unless first checked by a qualified ecologist.

References:

Collins (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. Jan 2004. English Nature.

Stebbings, R.E, Yalden, D.W., Herman, J.S. Which Bat Is It? The Mammal Society. 2007.

Appendix I: Photos of The Site



lifts in the front elevation roof space



slight lifts in side elevation (eastern)



tight intact features of dormers – front

elevation



Internal – rip in felt roof space on western side of loft



internal – rip in felt roof space on eastern

side of loft