

**50 Allcroft Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 5HH**

Daylight Bat Survey

Ref: R1906a

May 2018



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Ibbotson to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 50 Allcroft Road in Reading, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the proposed construction of a part two-storey and part single-storey rear extensions, and a single storey side extension (Planning application reference: 180459)

1.2 Legislative Background

- 1.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations'). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
 - Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
 - Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.
- 1.2.2** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:
- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
 - **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range" and;

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- **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of “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”.

1.2.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. They must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting European Protected Species before granting planning permission.

1.2.4 If a European Protected Species licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

1.2.5 Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring species occupying roosts of low conservation importance may fall under the remit of the Low Impact Class Licence, which would enable consultants registered by Natural England to carry licensable work under the Class Licence once sites have been registered in advance with Natural England. Registration forms must be submitted at least three weeks before work is due to start, and if acceptable, Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks.

1.2.6 Survey data supporting EPS licence applications or the registration of the site under the Low Impact Class Licence (WML-CL21) must be up to date i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

1.3 Site Location and Context

1.3.1 The detached house is situated on the northern side of Allcroft Road in Reading, Berkshire (OS Grid Reference: SU 72457 72386).

1.3.2 The house is situated in a residential area with further properties on all sides. A small pocket of woodland is situated within the gardens of 50

Allcroft Road and the row of houses along the northern side of the Road. In the wider area, the grounds of the University of Reading are situated 540 metres to the south east and these comprise areas of parkland, woodland, meadows and a lake. School playing fields are situated approximately 140 metres north west and 390 metres to the north east, and Cintra Recreational Park is situated 380 metres to the south. The habitats in close vicinity of the property are likely to be of moderate value to foraging bats, particularly widespread species typical of rural and suburban habitats.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken on the 25th April by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL018 and assisting ecologist.

2.1.2 The search was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch. Signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines were looked for (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones 2004; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004).

2.1.3 The following may indicate the presence of a bat roost within a building:

- Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as window sills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
- Piles of insect remains e.g. moth wings (these may be indicative of regular feeding sites used by species such as brown long eared bat);
- Staining at roost entrances or within the roost (urine and oil from fur can leave stains on timbers when bats are gathered for long periods);
- Bats (live or dead).

2.1.4 Residential, hipped roofed buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- At the eaves behind barge boards and soffits;
- Under timber cladding, hanging tiles or roof tiles;
- Under lead flashing, roof and ridge tiles;
- Within an enclosed roof space – species such as brown long eared bat for example will typically cluster around the ridge beam or at gable ends.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 Full access was available to the exterior of the house and most of the roof space apart from a section towards the front southern side of the house where stored items partly restricted access and therefore had no significant constraints.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Building Inspection

- 3.1.1** The external and internal bat survey findings are detailed on a plan with target notes in **Appendix 2** and photographs of the site are shown in **Appendix 1**. There follows a description of the external and internal survey findings:

3.2 External Survey

- 3.2.1** The house was detached with a hipped roof covered in flat roof tiles. Two pitched roofed dormer windows were present to the front of the house, a hipped roofed dormer was present on the eastern side elevation, and two flat roof dormers were present to the rear. A solid concrete balcony and single storey extension were situated to the rear of the house (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 3.2.2** The flat roof tiles were all in place and mostly fitted tightly, apart from the occasional uneven tiles in particular to the front and rear of the house just below the hip tiles where the tiles were lifted, and there were a few gaps under roof tiles on the rear, single storey extension, which were closely inspected and were cobwebbed showing no signs of use by bats (**Photographs 3, 4 & 5; Target notes 1, 2 & 3**). The mortar under the ridge and hip tiles was all in place (**Target note 4**). Lead flashing was slightly lifted around the sides of the chimney on the western side elevation (**Photograph 6; Target note 5**). Lead flashing was fitted tightly around the junction of the windows with the roof, but there were large open gaps at the junction of the flat roof windows to the rear of the house that were unsuitable for bats (**Photograph 7; Target note 6**). The front pitched and side hipped dormer windows were clad with hanging tiles, which were mostly tight. There was a slight gaps under the hanging tiles on the western most front dormer window and around the corner hanging tiles on the side hipped dormer window (**Photograph 8 & 9; Target notes 7 & 8**). There were slight gaps under the verge tiles on the sloping roof to the front of the house (**Target note 9**). The tile ends were mortared fully and tight at the verge on the front gable end and on the eastern side of the house (**Photograph 10; Target notes 10 & 11**). The soffit boxes around the eaves of the house were sealed tightly to the external walls (**Photograph 11; Target note 12**).

3.2.3 No evidence of bat activity was found on the exterior of the house.

3.3 Internal Survey

3.3.1 The house's roof was of traditional 'cut and pitch' construction with an exposed ridge beam and rafters (**Photograph 12**). The roof space was accessed through a loft hatch and had an estimated roof to floor height of 1.5 metres. The roof was lined with wooden sarking, which was intact but gaps were visible between the boards and where they did not extend as far as the ridge, exposing the undersides of the roof tiles (**Photographs 13 & 14; Target note 13**). The ridge was cobwebbed (**Target note 14**). The floor was insulated partly with hard foam and partly with plastic covered insulation, which did not extend as far as the eaves, which were open (**Photograph 15, Target note 15**). The front gable end was lined with boarding which had slight gaps visible (**Photograph 16; Target note 16**). A small old wasps' nest was present in the roof space. No bats or evidence of bat activity was found inside the roof space.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 The house showed no evidence of the presence of bats. The property had a few external features including: the gaps under lifted roof tiles and the verges to the front of the house, a couple of gaps under hanging tiles, and gaps under lead flashing around the sides of the chimney, which could be suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species such as *Pipistrellus* species. These features showed no evidence of roosting bats and furthermore the features identified are to be retained unaffected by the planned extension, which will affect only the single storey rear extension, one of the flat roofed dormer windows to the rear of the house and a small section of the rear roof slope and lower sections of brickwork, all of which were unsuitable for bats. Only a small section of the roof tiles on the rear elevation of the house are to be affected by the extension which were fitted tightly, and the single storey rear extension which did have some lifted roof tiles, however these were closely inspected and showed no evidence of bats and were cobwebbed. Therefore the works to extend are considered highly unlikely to have any impact on bats or their roosts.

4.1.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the building work, the work should stop immediately and a licensed ecologist called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; work should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this point, a European Protected Species licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

5 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of the house viewed from the south.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the north.



3. Roof tiles mostly tightly fitted to the front of the house; slight gaps beneath verge tiles.



4. Uneven roof tiles just below the hip tiles to the front of the house.



5. Uneven roof tiles just below the hip tiles to the rear of the house.



6. Lead flashing lifted around the sides of the chimney.



7. Lead flashing tight around the rear dormer window and large open gap at junction with the roof.



8. Slight gap under hanging tiles to the front of the house.



9. Corner hanging tiles lifted on the hipped roof to the eastern side of the house.



10. Verge tiles mortared fully on the front gable end.



11. Soffit boxes tight around the eaves of the house.



12. Internal view of the roof space viewing west.



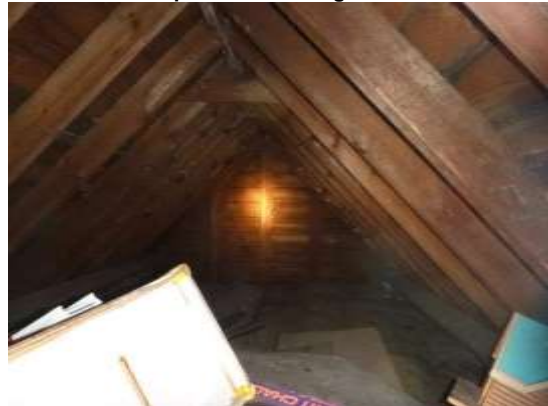
13. Gaps visible between the wooden sarking.



14. Roof tiles exposed at the ridge.

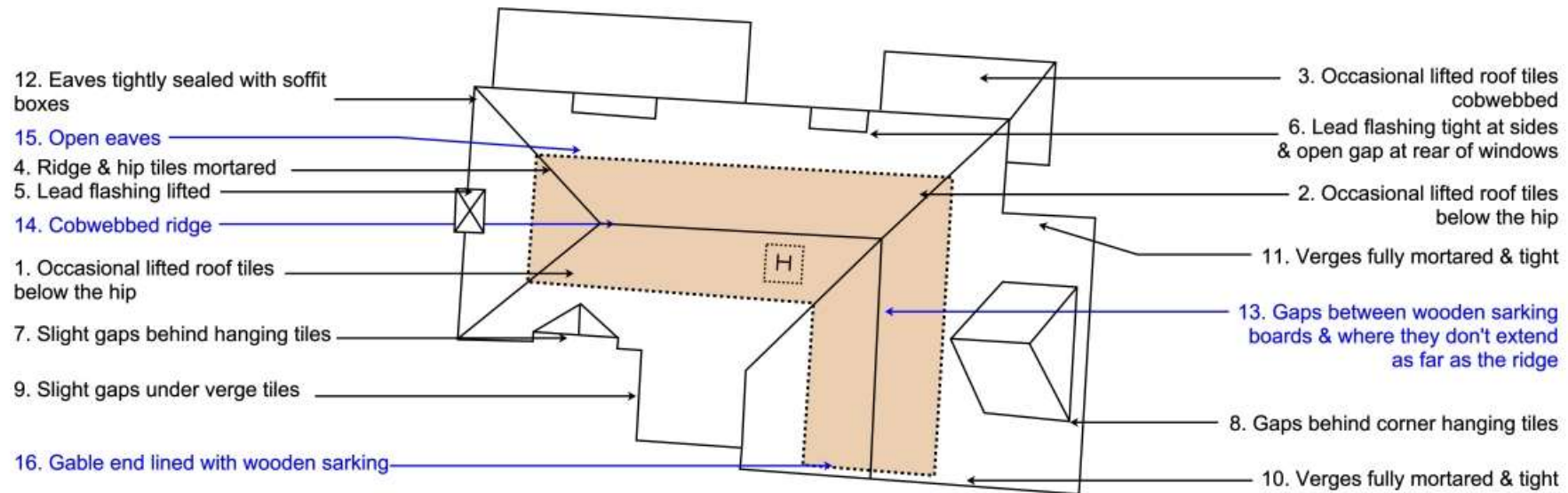


15. The open eaves



16. Front south facing gable end lined with boarding

APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS



Chimney
 Loft hatch
 Roof space
 External Target note
 Internal Target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	50 Allcroft Road Reading	
VP	May 2018	Not to scale	Daylight Bat Survey Findings	