

**2 Ferndale Close
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RU31 6UZ**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2012/a

August 2018



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Boyce to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the detached house at 2 Ferndale Close in Reading, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent to construct a two-storey side extension and a single storey rear extension; work which would involve the demolition of a garage and a utility room.

1.2 Legislative Background

1.2.1 All British bat species are protected fully 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;
- **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 on the eastern side of Ferndale Close - a cul-de-sac in Tilehurst, Reading in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 67055 75356).
- 1.3.2** The house is bordered on all sides by other residential properties and associated gardens. Patches of broadleaved woodland are situated approximately 70 metres to the north and 91 metres to the west. The River Thames runs approximately 170 metres to the north-east and its wooded banks would provide good quality foraging habitats for bats. In the wider area, the Mcllroy Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies approximately 900 metres away to the south-east and comprises of 11.98 hectares of broadleaved woodland but also contains the Kentwood Grove Wood - a 3.65 hectare area of ancient and semi-natural woodland. This would also provide high quality foraging habitats for bats.
- 1.3.3** Overall, the area surrounding the property contains good quality foraging habitats for commuting bats.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

- 2.1.1** A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken by an ecologist registered under Natural England bat survey class licence CL18 and assisted by an assistant ecologist on the 1st August 2018.
- 2.1.2** The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch and looked for features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (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 buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:
- Under roof, ridge and hip tiles, especially when loose or lifted tiles are present, or sections of mortar are missing;
 - Under sections of raised lead flashing;
 - Beneath lifted barge boards;
 - At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof tiles;
 - At the eaves – gaining access via gaps between the soffits and wall;
 - Within an enclosed roof space – long-eared bats (*Plecotus* sp.) for example, will often cluster at the ridge beam.

2.2 Survey Constraints

- 2.2.1** There were no constraints to the survey with full access available to the interior and exterior of the building.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Photographs of the site are presented in **Appendix 1** and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in **Appendix 2**. The survey findings from the exterior and interior of the house are described as follows:

3.2 External Survey

3.2.1 The house was of modern, brick cavity wall construction with a hipped roof covered in flat clay tiles; a hipped roof garage was attached at the rear (northern) corner (**Photographs 1 & 2**).

3.2.2 Viewed from the front, the roof and ridge tiles were fitted tightly, offering no visible roosting opportunities for bats, with the lead flashing around the canopy over the porch also fitted tightly (**Photograph 3; Target Note 1**). At the rear, the moss covered roof tiles were also tight and in place, offering no visible gaps suitable for bats (**Photograph 4; Target Note 2**). The hips were mortared tightly with uPVC soffits lining the eaves of the main building (**Photograph 5; Target Note 3**).

3.2.3 Similarly to the house, the garage was lined with flat roof tiles that were occasionally covered in moss (**Photograph 6; Target Note 4**). The hips of the garage were mortared completely (**Photograph 7; Target Note 5**) and the eaves were formed by UPVC soffits, which were sealed tightly to the brickwork (**Photograph 8; Target Note 6**). At the side (south-east) elevation, the lead flashing at the base of the chimney was fitted closely to the tiles (**Photograph 9; Target Note 7**).

3.2.4 No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the house at the time of the survey.

3.3 Internal Survey

3.3.1 The house had a hipped roof with trussed rafters, accessed via a loft-hatch located in the middle of the void towards the north-western end. The roof had a height of between 2.25 metres to 2.5 metres at the lightly cobwebbed ridge and the floor was covered with fibreglass insulation (**Photograph 10; Target Note 8**) with a small section of boarding by the hatch.

- 3.3.2** The roof was lined with bitumen felt, which was mostly intact and fitted tightly apart from two large gaps: one at the hipped section of the ridge to the south-east, behind which roof tiles were exposed (**Target Note 9**); and another gap on the rear elevation towards the north-west around a ventilation pipe (**Photograph 11; Target Note 10**). Daylight was visible through a hole in the soffit located nearby (**Photograph 12; Target Note 11**). A smaller, cobwebbed tear in the felt was present towards the south-eastern end (**Photograph 13; Target Note 12**). The presence of cobwebbing suggests a lack of recent bat activity in this section. The roof was open at the eaves, which also contained a brickwork chimney on the south-eastern side.
- 3.3.3** The garage was open to the roof and lined with bitumen (**Photograph 14; Target Note 13**). The lining was intact in most places with the exception of a couple of small tears (**Photograph 15; Target Note 14**). The roof was heavily cobwebbed at the corners, and lightly cobwebbed at the ridge, suggesting a lack of recent disturbance within the garage.
- 3.3.4** There was no evidence of roosting bats observed in the loft space of the house or the garage at the time of the survey. A small wasps' nest was found at the south-eastern side of the roof near the chimney (**Photograph 16; Target Note 15**).

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1** The house showed no evidence of the presence of bats, with no features on the exterior with the potential for use by crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.), to roost. The loft space contained a few features such as the hole in the soffit box that could be used as access by void-roosting species such as the long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.); however, no evidence of their presence or activity was observed.
- 4.1.2** Taking into account the lack of features suitable for roosting bats and the lack of evidence of their presence, the house is considered to be of negligible bat roost potential. It is considered highly unlikely that the proposed two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension will disturb or harm bats, or affect their roosts.
- 4.1.3** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the building work, the work should stop immediately and a licensed ecologist must be 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.



1. Front of house viewed from south-west.



2. Rear of house with attached garage viewed from east.



3. Lead flashing fitted tightly around canopy.



4. Tiles at rear covered in moss and fitted tightly.



5. UPVC soffits at rear tight to brickwork.



6. Tightly fitted moss covered tiles on garage.



7. Mortar under hips complete.



8. UPVC soffits on garage tight to brickwork.



9. Lead flashing at base of chimney tight to tiles.



10. Floor of roof void covered with fibreglass.



11. Tear in felt around pipe.



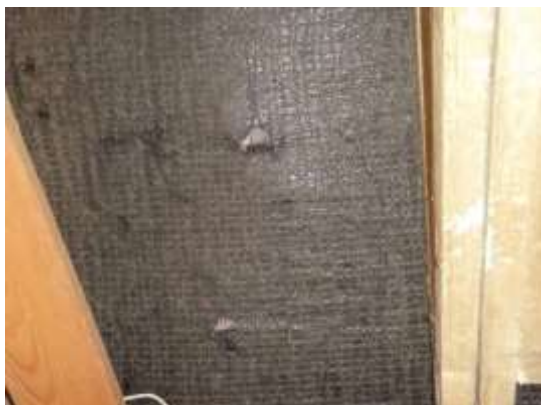
12. Hole in soffit; daylight visible.



13. Cobwebbed tear in felt.



14. Garage lined with bitumen and ground floor open to roof void.

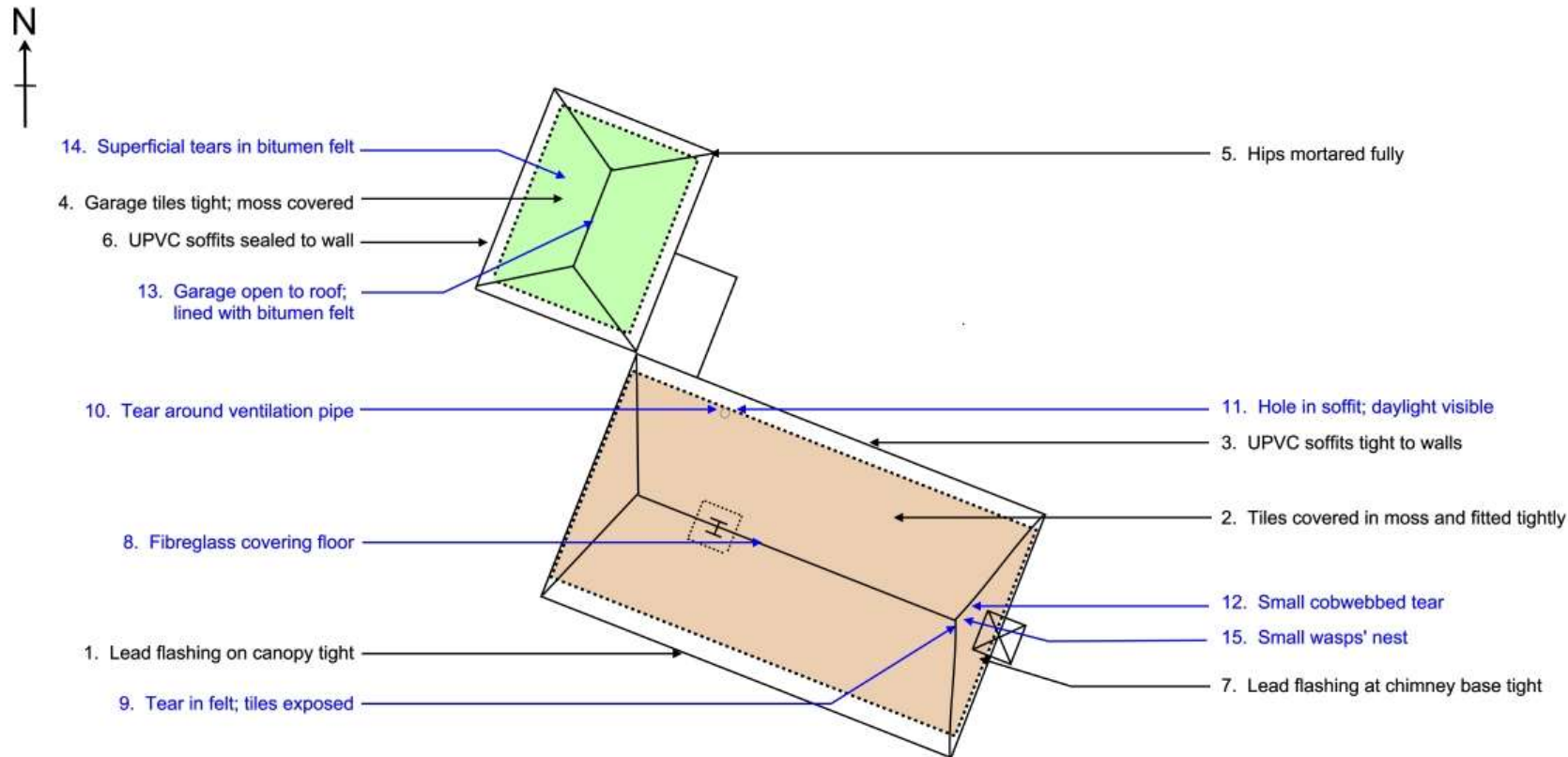


15. Superficial tears in bitumen felt in garage.



16. Small wasps' nest in south-western side of roof.

APPENDIX 2 – INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SURVEY FINDINGS



 Chimney
  Loft hatch
  Water Tank
  Roof space 1
  Roof space 2
  External Target note
  Internal Target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	2 Ferndale Close Tilehurst	
MJ	Aug 2018	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment	

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
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