

**49 Briants Avenue
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 5AS**

Daylight Bat Survey

Ref: R1475/a

September 2016



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Devon Glasford to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 49 Briants Avenue in Caversham, Reading in 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 and rear extension with a dormer window.

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 2010 ('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 53(9)(a)** - there is “no satisfactory alternative” to the derogation, and;
- **Regulation 53(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 53(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 9(5) 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 an application affecting European Protected Species, when a licence is required, 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 house is situated on the eastern side of Briants Avenue in Caversham, Reading in Berkshire (OS Grid Reference SU 72386 74752).
- 1.3.2** The semi-detached house is in an urban setting surrounded by residential properties with their associated gardens on all sides. About 450m to the south of the property is the River Thames, and 475m to the southeast is the Thames and Kennet Marina, which has small areas of dense woodland connecting to Caversham Lakes. These areas would offer good foraging habitats for bats in the vicinity.

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 CL017 and an assisting ecologist on the 12th September 2016.

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 (Bat Conservation Trust 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, pitched roofed buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- Gaps and cracks in brick or block work, which provide access to a wall cavity or sheltered crevice;
- At the eaves behind barge boards and soffits;
- 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 The internal and external features could be surveyed fully and therefore there were no significant constraints to the survey.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1** The external and internal bat survey findings are detailed on a plan with target notes in **Appendix 2**; 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 of brick, cavity wall construction with a hipped roof covered in flat slate tiles (**Photograph 1**). There was a flat-roofed extension attached to the rear of the house (**Photograph 2**).
- 3.2.2** The roof tiles were fitted very tightly on all parts of the roof offering negligible opportunities for roosting bats (**Photograph 3; Target note 1**). The ridge tiles were intact and mortared tightly (**Photograph 4; Target note 2**). The hip tiles were mortared tightly at the rear (**Photograph 5; Target note 3**); however there were two gaps in the mortar under hip tiles on the northern elevation of the roof (**Photograph 6; Target note 4**).
- 3.2.3** The soffit box was tight to the brickwork around the house (**Photograph 7; Target note 5**). The wooden bargeboard on the rear extension had a narrow gap behind it but it was heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 8; Target note 6**). There was tightly fitted lead flashing around the chimneys at the front and rear of the house (**Photographs 10 & 11; Target notes 7 & 8**). The flat bitumen felt roof on top of the rear extension had no gaps beneath also (**Target note 9**).
- 3.2.4** No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the house.

3.3 Internal Survey

- 3.3.1** The roof space was accessed through a loft hatch situated towards the front of the house and had a floor-to-ridge height of about 2.5 metres. The roof was hipped and was lined partly with bitumen felt and partly with foil covered insulation panels (**Photograph 12**). There was a large tear in the bitumen felt on the rear roof elevation exposing the roof tiles underneath (**Photograph 13; Target note 10**). The ridge beam was cobwebbed heavily (**Target note 11**).
- 3.3.2** The floor was boarded partly and insulated with fibreglass, which extended

to the eaves in some places (**Photograph 14; Target note 12**). There was a hole at the eaves where cables were running through and daylight could be seen through it (**Photograph 15; Target note 13**). The internal gable end was made of brick and was cobwebbed heavily. There were gaps in the brickwork of the gable (**Photograph 16; Target note 14**) and a heavily cobwebbed gap at the apex (**Photograph 17; Target note 15**). There were two chimneys made of brick, which both had cobwebbed gaps between the timber and brickwork (**Photograph 18; Target note 16**).

3.3.3 There was no evidence of bat activity found inside the roof space.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Assessment of Bat Potential

- 4.1.1** There were no signs of bats in the roof space. The hole at the eaves was a potential access point into the roof space but no evidence was found that void-dwelling bats were using this space and it was heavily cobwebbed, which can suggest there has been no recent activity. Externally the house offered potential features that could offer roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats such as the gaps underneath the hip tiles on the northern elevation.

4.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 4.2.1** The two-storey rear extension will affect the rear section of the roof slope only; a section of the roof that was fitted tightly with no visible roosting opportunities for bats.
- 4.2.2** The potential features that could offer roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats i.e. the two gaps underneath the hip tiles on the northern elevation will not be affected by the proposed works and therefore it is considered highly unlikely that the planned work to extend the property will have any impact on bats or their roosts.
- 4.2.3** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the building work, the work should stop immediately and a licensed ecologist 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

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). *Bat Surveys – 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.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of the house viewed from the northwest.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the west showing the flat-roofed extension.



3. Tightly fitted, flat slate roof tiles.



4. Tightly mortared ridge tiles at the front of the house.



5. Tight hip tiles at the rear of the house.



6. Two gaps underneath hip tiles on the northern roof elevation.



7. Tightly sealed soffit at the side of the house.



8. Cobwebbed gap behind bargeboard of rear extension.



9. Tight lead flashing around chimney at front of the house.



10. Tight lead flashing around chimney at rear of the house.



11. Roof partly insulated with bitumen felt and partly with foil covered insulation panels.



12. Tear in felt exposing tiles underneath at rear of house.



13. Fibreglass insulation extending to eaves in some places.



14. Hole at eaves at front of house where cables were running through.



15. Gap in brickwork of internal gable.

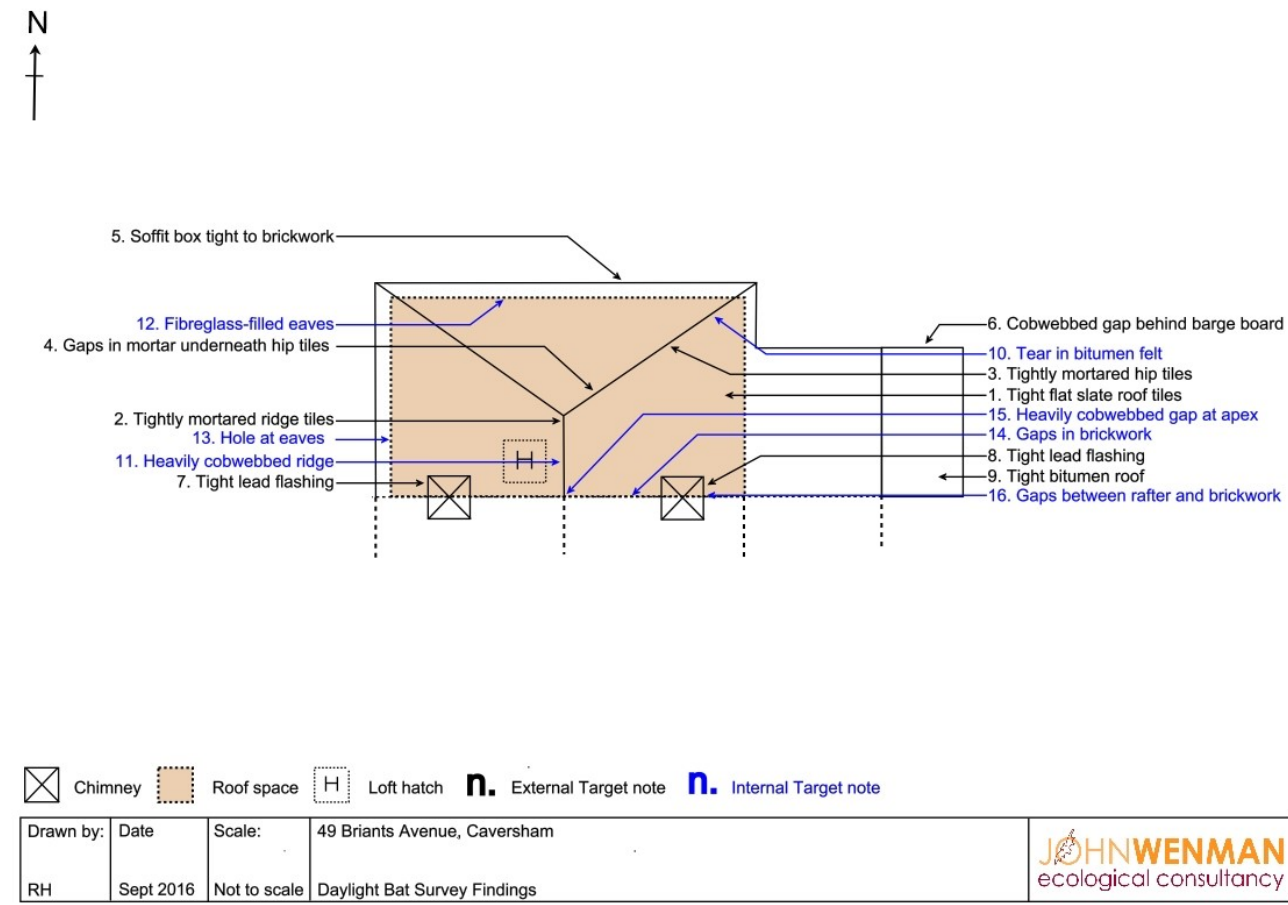


16. Heavily cobwebbed gap at apex of internal gable.

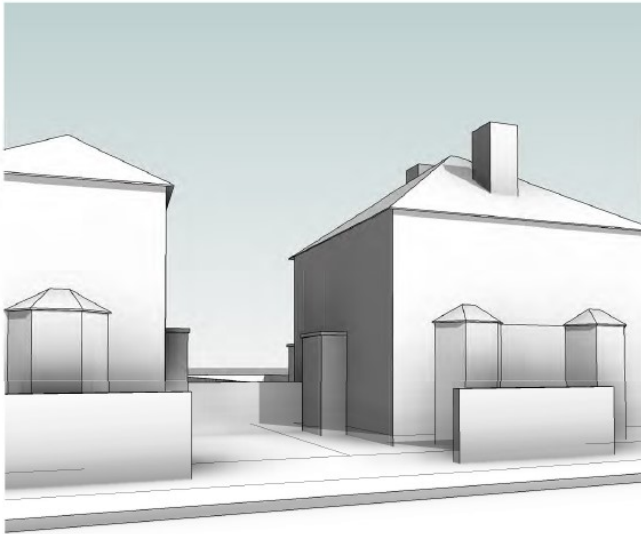


17. Cobwebbed gap between rafters and brickwork of chimney.

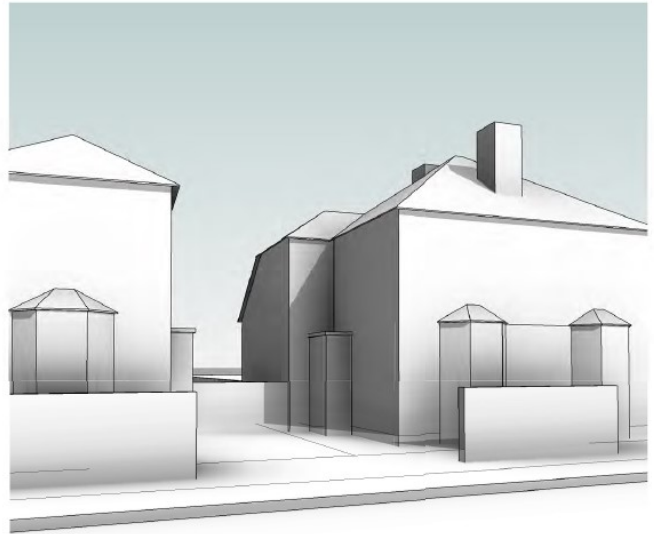
APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS



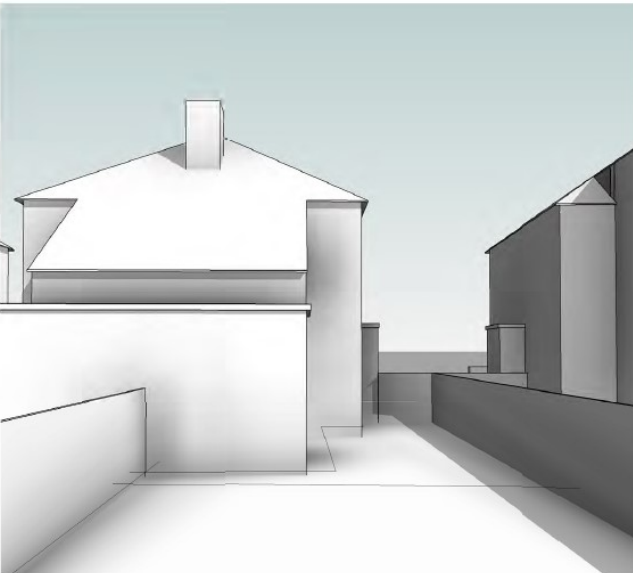
APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS AND ELEVATIONS



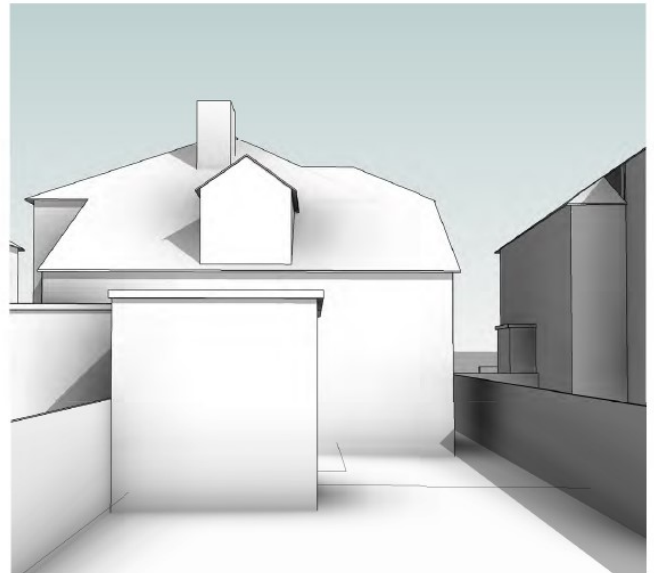
3D View - Front Elevation - Existing



3D View - Front Elevation - Proposed



3D View - Rear Garden - Existing



3D View - Rear Garden - Proposed