

07 November 2017

Attention: Patrick Ashcroft
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RG4 8SR
UK

Unit 16
Hampden House
Monument Park
Chalgrove
Oxfordshire
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Dear Paddy,

43 Brooklyn Drive, Reading - Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment

I write to you in regards to the bat preliminary roost assessment we conducted of the above building on Tuesday 7th November 2017.

Methodology

Patrick Ashcroft commissioned Ecology by Design to conduct a bat preliminary roost assessment of the property at 43 Brooklyn Drive, Reading, RG4 8SR.

The survey was conducted by Principle Ecologist Ben Gardner and Assistant Ecologist Kate Philpot of Ecology by Design in cold, damp conditions. The assessment was based on the guidance included in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn) (Collins. J, 2016)¹ and Bat Workers Manual (JNCC 2004)².

The building was inspected for potential bat use by examining the internal structure for active roosts or roosting sites and suitable entry and exit points on the outside of the building, and by searching for other evidence of bat activity such as droppings, smells, sounds, carcasses or food remains. A torch was used to illuminate the dark recesses inside the building to carefully inspect any features of potential value to roosting bats.

Equipment used included:

- LEDLenser Lamp.
- Close focusing binoculars.

During the survey the building was thoroughly inspected including:

- Roof structure - Gaps in tiles, under and over wall plates where accessible, gaps in wooden beam structure, between tile roof and beams. Internally through tears in roofing felt.
- Walls - Gaps in walls, between beams and the walls.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Mitchell-Jones, A.J., & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004), 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough
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Evidence searched for included:

- The presence of free hanging bats and bats within gaps, crevices.
- Bat droppings, urine stains, rub marks, scratch marks, in wall holes, exposed battens and across the ceiling.
- Feeding remains scattered around the building, along the ridgeline and on top of stored materials.

Results

The building was located along Brooklyn Drive, in a residential area on the outskirts of Reading. The house was surrounded by other dwellings with large mature gardens. In the wider landscape to the west there was a golf course with pockets of woodland. There were fields and woodland to the north of the house and further residential development to the south and east.

The house was largely rendered with pebble dash, with a red brick base, sections of decorative hanging tiles and a pitched clay tile roof. The main loft space in the house was accessible, the newer extension section was not accessible due to the lack of boarding but could be seen fully from the main loft space. There was a loft space above the single storey kitchen which was not accessible. The property was fully inspected externally.

Externally the building was well maintained. The roof tiles were in a good condition and the mortar was intact along the ridge tiles. The soffit box was plastic in places and wooden in others with peeling paint, although this did not form a feature. All the lead work was flush and in good condition. On the southern elevation, some of the hanging tiles below the dormer window were lifted although the gaps underneath were very small and there was no evidence of scratching, staining or droppings. The hanging tiles also appeared to have been covered in vegetation in the past as it was possible to see some remaining vegetation protruding from underneath the tiles. The northern elevation also had hanging tiles which were lifted at the edges but again, no scratching, staining or droppings were present. On the northern elevation there was a small amount of mortar missing from one of the ridge tiles although there was still some mortar remaining which filled the hole substantially. There was also a small hole on the underside of the soffit box which was possibly caused from a knot in the wood falling out. However, the small hole was at an awkward angle for bats to access and there were no signs of scratching, staining or droppings present. There was no evidence of bats on any of the elevations and overall the roof was in good condition.

Internally, the main loft space was felt lined, insulated and boarded throughout. The ridge was cobwebbed and there was no light ingress. The whole loft space was used as storage. The felt was in good condition with no pockets and there was no evidence of bats. The newer extension loft space was not boarded and therefore not accessible but could be seen sufficiently from the main loft space. It was lined with both felt and a modern plastic membrane underneath and was fully insulated. There was no evidence of droppings on the insulation, the felt was in good condition and there was no light ingress.

Additionally, there was a wooden shed with a bitumen felt pitched roof in the garden that will be demolished as part of the development proposal. Externally there was a loose section of wooden cladding on the northern elevation although there was netting behind the gap and therefore it did not provide an access point into the shed. Internally the shed was cobwebbed and there were small holes in the ceiling (although these did not go right through to the outside), as the shed was well sealed externally there would be no way for bats to access these holes. There were no signs of droppings on any of the stored materials.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The preliminary roost assessment did not identify evidence of bats internally or externally, furthermore the property was in a good, well maintained condition. There were a few very small gaps under the hanging tiles which could have formed potential roosting features however for a space so small, evidence in the form of scratching, staining or droppings would be expected and there was none, it is also possible that old vegetation was blocking many of the gaps from the inside. There was also one small hole on the underside of the soffit box, however due to its position it would be a very awkward angle for bats to get into and due to this and the lack of evidence in the form of scratching, staining or droppings it is highly unlikely bats would use this as a feature. Therefore, in the sites current state, bats pose no constraint to the proposed works. However, due to the close proximity of woodland to the house it is recommended that a single bat box is installed on the house or garage after the works are completed to provide a new roosting feature as an ecological enhancement.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Philpot
Assistant Ecologist

Appended:

- Site Photos

Appendix 1 – Photographs



Photo 1 –Southern and western elevation



Photo 2 –Southern elevation



Photo 3 – Northern elevation



Photo 4 – Eastern elevation



Photo 5 – Lifted hanging tiles – southern elevation



Photo 6 – Lifted hanging tiles – northern elevation



Photo 7 – Hole in soffit box – northern elevation



Photo 8 – Main loft space



Photo 9 – Newer extension loft space