

Pipers Island
Preliminary Bat Roost
Assessment
January 2017

COMMISSIONED BY
Colony Architects Ltd.
250 South Oak Way,
Green Park,
Reading,
Berkshire,
RG2 6UG

Pipers Island

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Derek Finnie Associates Ltd
82b Toutley Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG41 1QL

info@derekfinnie.com

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates Limited was commissioned by Colony Architects on behalf of Pipers Island restaurant to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of Island Bar and Restaurant, Pipers Island, Caversham. There is currently a proposal to undertake alterations to the site which would lead to interference with the roof void. Therefore, in line with current legislation and policy, the level of bat activity, if any, within the building needs to be assessed as it is a material consideration in the planning process.

1.1.2 To this end, a preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken during November 2016. The following report describes the methodology employed throughout the assessment, presents the results, and evaluates the likely impact based on the information gained to date.

1.2 Legislation

1.2.1 All species of British bat are afforded full protection under UK legislation, specifically under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which states:

9. Protection of certain wild animals.

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally or recklessly kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5, he shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) Subject to the provisions of this Part, a person is guilty of an offence if intentionally or recklessly

(a) he damages or destroys any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;

(b) he disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or

(c) he obstructs access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

1.2.2 As all species of British bat are included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the above Section applies.

1.2.3 Further protection is given under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), which states:

Protection of certain wild animals: offences

41.—(1) A person who—

(a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,

(b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,

(c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or

(d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,
is guilty of an offence.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A review of aerial photography and the Government's Multi-Access Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was undertaken to assess the extent and quality of potential roosting and foraging habitat within 1km of the property.

2.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

- 2.2.1 An external inspection of the building was undertaken on the 22nd November 2016 during good weather, with access being available to all aspects of the building. Leica 10 x 32 BGA binoculars, a CluLite 1 million candlepower torch and a 4m telescopic ladder were used to assist in the search as necessary. The external features of the building, particularly the roof and ridge lines were inspected for potential ingress/egress points.
- 2.2.2 After the external inspection, a detailed inspection of the internal void space of the building was undertaken. Evidence of droppings, scratch marks, staining, feeding remains, urine stains and bats themselves were sought throughout the void space. Particular attention was paid to the areas underneath the ridge and joists, especially where the two meet. Evidence of gaps in the roof, indicating access to the outside, was sought, as well as gaps into any cavities that may be present. Again, a CluLite 1 million candlepower torch was used to assist in the search.
- 2.2.3 The assessment was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust — *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (2016), as well as BS 42020: 2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The MAGIC website identifies limited areas of broad-leaved woodland, which have been classified as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat, near to the property; the closest is some 425m to the west. However, the Site is located on an island in the Thames which may well offer suitable foraging habitat for bats.

3.2 Field Survey

External Features

- 3.2.1 The building is a two-storey structure located on Pipers Island in the centre of the Thames, immediately to the east of Caversham Bridge, Reading. The building is currently in use as a restaurant and bar and appears to be in sound condition throughout.
- 3.2.2 The property supports a gable roof, with the ridge line running north west to south east; a cross gable extends to the front (south west) in the centre of the structure (Plates 1 - 3). There are no chimneys or vents exiting the roof. A terrace is present along the front and sides of the upper storey, which extends out over the lower ground floor. The majority of the walls of front and side aspects of the building comprise glass.
- 3.2.3 The roof of the house is finished with flat, interlocking tiles, which are in good condition throughout and tight with one another (Plate 4). No potential ingress points were noted. The ridge lines are also intact.
- 3.2.4 The walls of the property support plastic boarding attached onto what is assumed to be a prefabricated frame. The boards are in good condition throughout and tight with one another, with no gaps or splits noted (Plate 5).
- 3.2.5 The plastic soffit and fascia boards are in good condition throughout and tie in directly with the adjoining plastic boards, eliminating any potential gap.
- 3.2.6 Externally no potential ingress points were noted.

Internal Conditions

- 3.2.7 Internally, joists and rafters within the roof void are of a simple design. Nail plates are present at the junctions, eliminating any potential gap (Plates 6). A moderate build-up of cobwebs was present around the majority of the junctions, suggesting a lack of bat activity. No staining or scratch marks were noted along any of the beams, and there was no evidence of feeding remains. No droppings were noted despite a thorough inspection; the distinct smell often associated with bat roosts was absent.
- 3.2.8 The roof lining is complete and intact throughout with no egress points noted (Plate 7).
- 3.2.9 The void space is used for storage of restaurant furniture and is exposed to relatively frequent disturbance.

Summary

- 3.2.10 In summary, no ingress /egress points were found into the roof void of the house, and no physical evidence of bat presence within the building in the form of scratch marks, stains or droppings was encountered.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Bat Potential

- 4.1.1 As no evidence of bats, or of current or past bat occupancy, was encountered throughout the preliminary roost assessment, additional surveys are not deemed necessary. Due to the absence of bats, it is highly unlikely that the proposed development would result in any infringement of either the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) or the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* (as amended) in so far as either piece of legislation relates to bats.
- 4.1.2 However, in the highly unlikely situation a bat is encountered throughout the construction process, all works should stop immediately and advice sought from Natural England.

PLATES



Plate 1. General view of the north west aspect of the property



Plate 2. View of the garage to the south west aspect the property.



Plate 3. View of the south east aspect of the property.



Plate 4. The roof is finished with flat, interlocking tiles.



Plate 5. The plastic boarding that forms the walls is in sound condition.



Plate 6. General view of the internal void space.



Plate 7. The roof lining is in sound condition.