

Initial Bat Assessment

6 Cleveland Road

Tilehurst

Reading

RG31 6RL



Dr Stacey Dawn Waring

16-005-IBA

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Signed:



Date: 1/07/2016

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Executive Summary

Eaves Ecology was commissioned by Mr John Zelenik to carry out an initial bat assessment, at 6 Cleveden Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6RL. The site is located a grid reference SU 67081 75223. This was to support a planning application submitted to Reading Borough Council.

The bat survey and report have been conducted and prepared by a qualified licensed bat ecologist Stacey Dawn Waring. This report provides results of an initial bat assessment conducted on 14th June 2016 during daylight hours.

An internal and external inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats. There was no evidence of bats (internally or externally). The condition of the buildings results in very few areas that could be utilised by bats and the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be very low (based on the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines). As a result no further survey effort is recommended and an EPS Licence will not be required for planning to proceed.

1 Introduction

Eaves Ecology was commissioned by Mr John Zelenik to carry out an initial bat assessment, at the detached residential property, located at 6 Cleveden Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6RL.

The initial bat assessment and report have been conducted and prepared by a qualified Natural England licensed bat ecologist Dr Stacey Dawn Waring. This report gives details of the day time assessment survey conducted on the 14h June 2016.

1.1 Objectives of the Survey and Report

The initial bat assessment is designed to provide information to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the house and extension
- Provide information on the status of bats using the building (currently or previously)
- Establish whether further surveys, mitigation or an EPS licence is required.

The survey and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2012).

1.2 Surveyor Information

The initial bat assessment survey and report were completed by Dr Stacey Dawn Waring who holds a Class II Bat Licence (No. 2015-6768-CLS-CLS) and is an associate member of CIEEM. She has 7 years' experience of carrying out research for the Bat Conservation Trust and has worked with several ecological consultancies conducting bat surveys.

2 Legislation

All bats in the UK are protected under law and therefore thought must be given when demolition and/or planning is to be considered. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), forms the key legislation protecting habitats and species in the UK. All UK bat species are fully protected under the 1981 Act through inclusion on Schedule 5. All bats are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive into UK law. In combination, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly take, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a place or structure used by bats for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; or
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb bats while occupying a roost.

Bat roosts are protected under these laws whether the animals are present at the time of survey or not. A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which [a bat] uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the

time of survey. The above is a summary of the relevant legislation and the original Acts and Schedules should be referred to for the precise wording.

Barbastelle Bats *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*, Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* are also listed as being species of principle importance to the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3 Background

3.1 Site Description

6 Clevedon Road is located in Tilehurst, a suburb 4km north-west of Reading town centre (Figure 1). The site is located a grid reference SU 67081 75223.

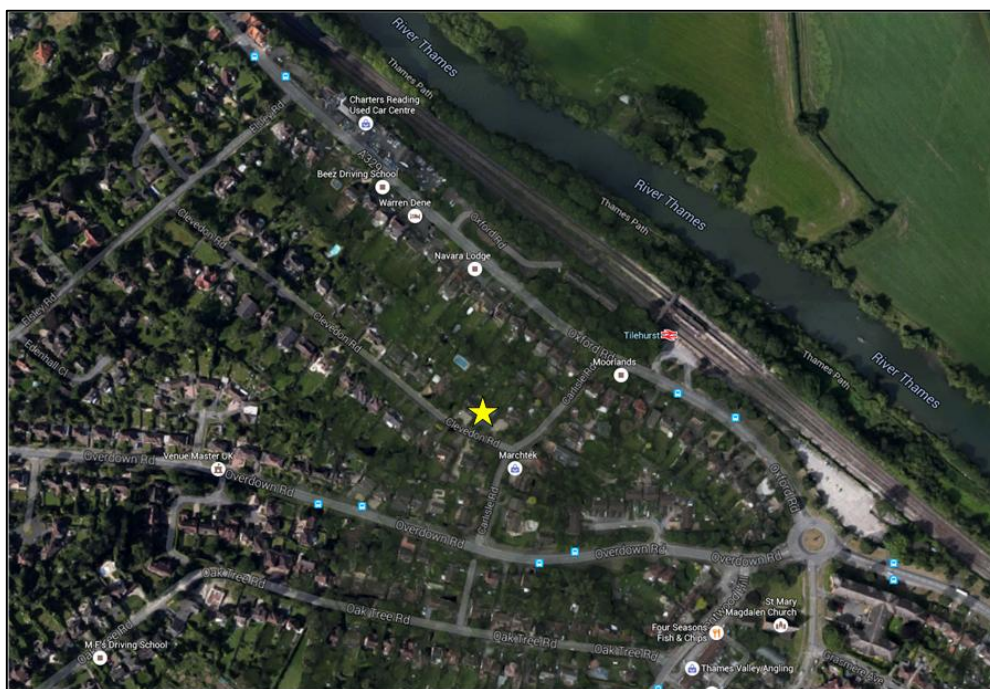


Figure 1 – Showing site location of 6 Clevedon Road (courtesy of Google Earth)

The site is in a suburban area and is surrounded by residential dwellings, gardens, allotments and roads (Figure 1). To the south of the site (within 300m) is Arthur Newbery Park which contains areas of Priority Habitat and Deciduous Woodland (BAP habitat). Also to the south-east (within 500m) are McIlroy Park and Round Copse; both are designated Local Nature Reserves and contains areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland and Deciduous Woodland which are BAP priority habitats. To the south-west of the site (within 1km), there are further areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, Deciduous Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland (BAP Priority habitats) located within Sulham. There are several small water bodies within the vicinity of the site, including small ponds (within

200m) and the River Thames is approx. 200m to the north of the site. These habitat areas combined with the waterbodies in the vicinity of the site increase the areas ability to support bats and their insect prey.

The site consists of a detached, two storey building of brick construction (Figure 2) with a pitched roof, consisting of timber rafters resting on the walls and machine-made tile covering (Figure 3). Here are solar panels located on the front (southern) elevation. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied.



Figure 2 - Front elevation of 6 Clevedon Road



Figure 3 – Rear elevation of 6 Clevedon Road

3.2 Development proposals

The plans for works to be conducted at 6 Clevedon Road can be seen in the planning application submitted to Reading Borough Council (Application No. 160954). They include a two storey rear extension and single storey rear extension. Front porch and bay window. Loft conversion with two rear dormer windows and a Velux window.

The surveys were required to identify if any bats are present and using the building and how they may be impacted by any proposed development of the building for planning consent.

4 Methods

4.1 Daytime assessment

The buildings' suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features. Structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void, the presence of access points into the building (including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and fascias, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.

The buildings' suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane or an area of woodland.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the buildings were then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Hundt, 2012) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat surveys later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

A detailed initial bat assessment was undertaken by Dr Stacey Dawn Waring (NE licensed ecologist) on the 14th June 2016. A systematic internal inspection of the building was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. An external search around the perimeter of the buildings was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with the high powered torch and ladder as required.

Features of potential value to bats surveyed for included:

- Construction of the Building – Soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc;

- Building Condition – structure of roof and walls;
- Internal conditions – Microclimate stability, drafts etc;
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats;
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates;

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were also searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings);
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances;
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs;
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats;
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats;
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

5 Results

All accessible areas were examined around the buildings for droppings and evidence of bats. It should be noted however that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.

5.1 Daytime assessment

5.1.1 *Internal inspection*

Main House

The property had a single, L-shaped roof void accessible through a hatch in the ceiling. The roof void was approx. 2m high (at the ridge) throughout the length of the roof and had a bitumen felt underlay fitted (Figures 4&5). The roof void had a small chimney stack on the western elevation and was in good condition. There were no visible access points or draughts to suggest gaps in the roof covering and the eaves were covered with vented soffits. There was a moderate level of cob-webbing, suggesting bats had not recently been flying around and no evidence of bats was found in the roof void.



Figure 4 – Roof void showing lighting present



Figure 5 –Bitumen felt underlay was in very good condition

5.1.2 External Inspection

Main House

The external features of the house were also examined for signs described in section 4.1. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The primary roof covering consisted of machine-made tiles which interlocked and were in good condition. There were no missing or broken tiles (Figure 6), which could provide access to roosting bats. The mortar along the ridge and verges was in good condition with no missing sections that could be utilised by bats. Around the chimney the lead flashing was in good condition with no areas missing or lifted. The eaves were sealed and the soffits in very good condition.

The southern elevation of the roof also had a number of solar panels fitted (Figure 7) which would cause fluctuations in the roof temperature, as such they were deemed to lower the potential for bats.



Figure 6 – machine made tile roof covering showing good condition



Figure 7 – Solar panels fitted on southern elevation

During the internal and external inspections of 6 Clevedon Road no evidence of bats was found. The potential for roosting bats to utilise the site is deemed to be very low for the reasons specified in this report.

5.2 Constraints/limitations

Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with so many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites.

Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during day time assessment.

Prior to the initial bat assessment recent weather conditions may have washed away external droppings.

6 Conclusions

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation contravening (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 2010, (which make it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or otherwise disturb bats, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost, whether bats are present or not). In some cases, if the proposed work will have a detrimental effect on bats or disturb or damage their roost then an EPS licence from Natural England has to be applied for.

Initial observations consider the local area suitable for bats. The proximity of the site to woodland, riparian habitat and water bodies increases the likelihood that the site may support roosting bats.

The initial bat assessment at 6 Clevedon Road found no evidence of bats roosting within the property. The condition of the building results in very few areas that could be utilised by bats and the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be very low (based on the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines). As a result no further survey effort is recommend and an EPS Licence will not be required for planning to proceed.

7 References

Bat Surveys Good practice Guidelines – Bat Conservation Trust 2012

Bat Workers Manual – Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004

Bat Mitigation Guidelines – Natural England 2006

The Conservation and Habitat Regulations 2010