

**24 Grove Hill
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 8PN**

Daylight Bat Survey

Ref: R1435/a

August 2016



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Anderson to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 24 Grove Hill in Caversham, Reading, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the proposed construction of a two storey side extension and front porch (Application No. 161253) (refer to existing and proposed elevations in Appendix 3).

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 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 situated on the southern side of Grove Hill in Caversham to the north of Reading town centre, Berkshire (OS Grid Reference: SU 71310 75887).
- 1.3.2** The house is in a residential area with further residential dwellings and their associated gardens immediately on all sides. A patch of woodland (Beech Wood) is situated 100 metres to the north east and links to recreational fields to the north west. Further patches of woodland are situated 400 metres to the north east. Balmore Walk - a park including areas of meadow and woodland - is located approximately 200 metres to the south. The nearby patches of woodland, grasslands and tree-lined roads in Caversham offer good quality habitat for foraging bats.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken on the 8th August 2016 by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL018 and an assisting ecologist.

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:

- At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof tiles;
- 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 timber cladding, hanging tiles or roof tiles;
- 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** Full access was available around the interior and to the majority of the exterior of the building; however due to the slope of the rear garden, the tiles on the rear roof elevation were not visible.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 The external and internal bat survey findings are detailed on a plan with target notes in **Appendix 2** and 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 pitched roof covered with flat, concrete roof tiles, with an additional gable end to the front, a single storey flat roofed extension attached to the eastern side of the house and a timber shed attached to the western end of the house (**Photographs 1 & 2**). The roof tiles on the front roof elevation were all in place and fitted tightly (**Photograph 3; Target note 1**). The mortar under the ridge tiles was all in place, offering no access opportunities for bats (**Photograph 3; Target note 2**).

3.2.2 The verges on the eastern and western side elevations were mortared fully (**Photograph 4; Target note 3**); however a crack was present in the mortar of the front gable end (**Photograph 5; Target note 4**). The uPVC soffit boxes around the eaves of the house were sealed to the external walls thereby offering no access opportunities for bats (**Photograph 6; Target note 5**). A slight gap was visible under the lead flashing on the northern side of the chimney but this was superficial and showed no evidence of use by bats; the lead was tight to the southern side of the chimney (**Photographs 7 & 8; Target notes 6 & 7**).

3.2.3 No evidence of bat activity was found on the exterior of the house.

3.3 Internal Survey

3.3.1 The house's roof space was accessed through a loft hatch and had an estimated roof to floor height of 1.5 metres in the main section (**Photograph 9**). An open water tank was present towards the south eastern end. The roof was lined with a spray on foam insulation (**Photograph 10; Target note 8**). The ridge was largely covered with the foam and was cobwebbed (**Photograph 11; Target note 9**). The floor was boarded centrally and insulated with fibreglass insulation beneath (**Target note 10**). There was no

daylight visible at the eaves which were filled with the foam insulation (**Photograph 12; Target note 11**). The gable ends were of blockwork construction and sealed tightly to the roof with foam insulation (**Photograph 13; Target note 12**).

3.3.2 No evidence of bat activity was found to the interior of the house.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1** The house showed no evidence of the presence of bats. The property had only one external feature: the gap in the mortar at the front of the house which could be suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species such as *Pipistrellus* species and this showed no evidence of use by bats. This feature is to be retained unaffected by the planned extension and therefore the works to extend are considered highly unlikely to have any impact on bats or their roosts.
- 4.1.2** 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.

Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. The front of the property viewed from the north.



2. The rear of the property viewed from the south.



3. Tightly fitted roof and ridge tiles.



4. Mortar in place at the eastern facing gable end.



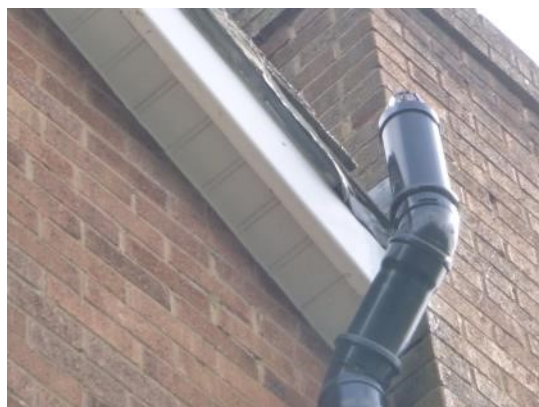
5. Crack in the mortar on the front gable end.



6. uPVC soffits tightly sealed to brickwork walls.



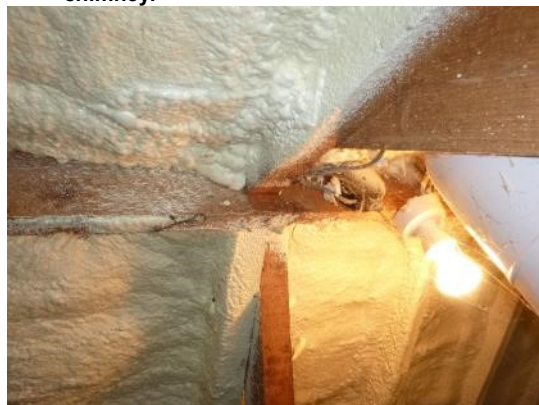
7. Superficial, slight gap under the lead flashing at the northern side of the chimney.



8. Lead flashing tight on the southern side of the chimney.



9. Internal view of the pitched roof.



10. Roof space tightly sealed with spray foam insulation.



11. Ridge largely covered with the foam and cobwebbed.

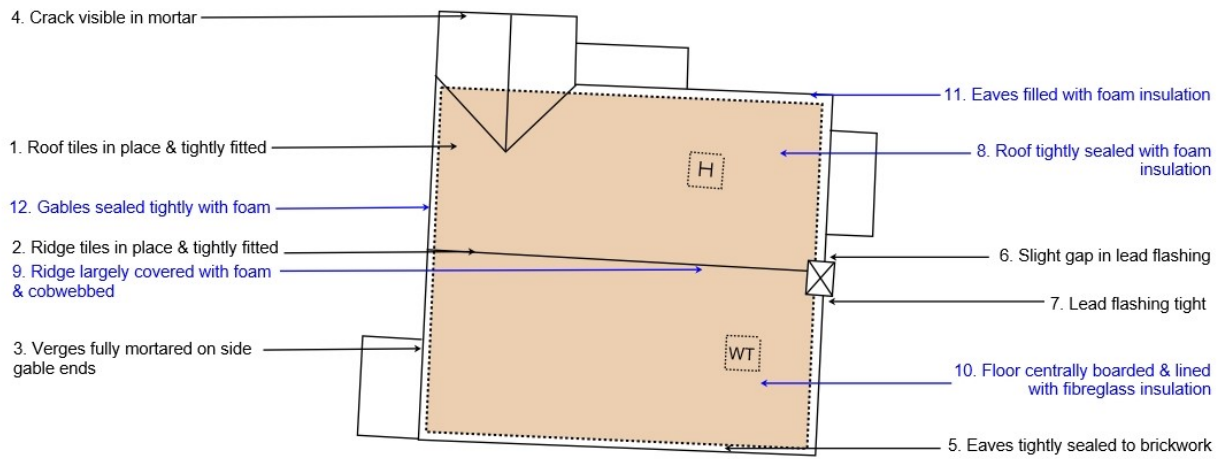


12. Eaves filled with foam insulation.



13. Block work at gable end tight to roof with foam insulation.

APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS

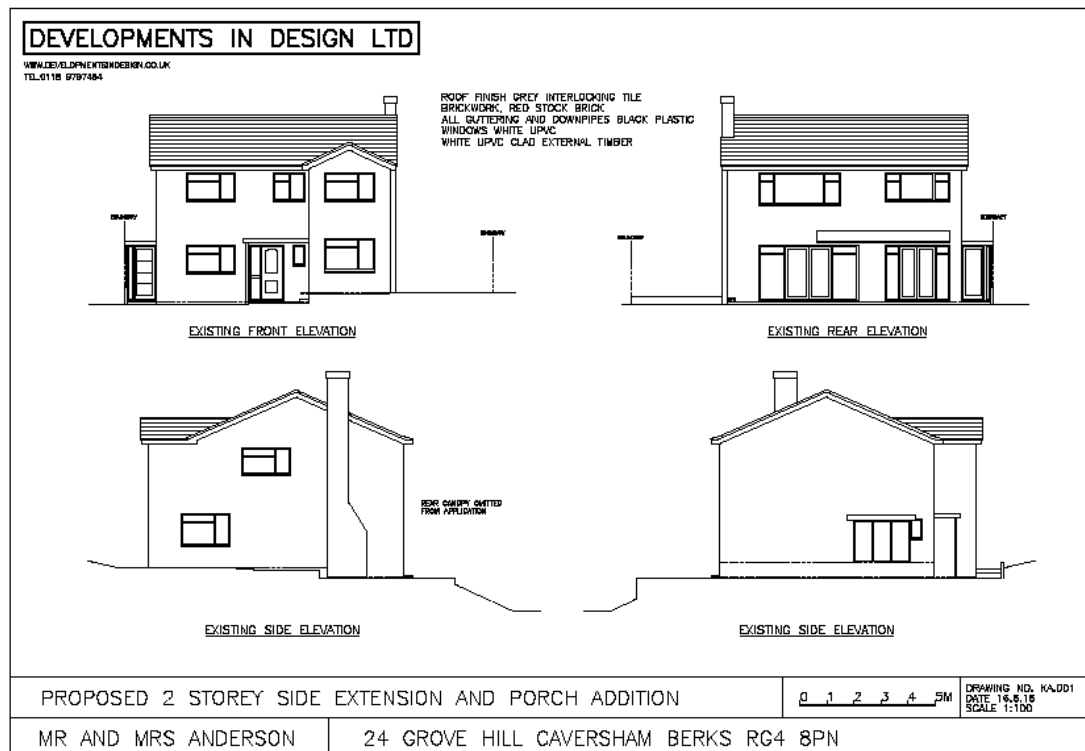


 Chimney
  Roof space
  Loft hatch
  Water Tank
  External Target note
  Internal Target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	24 Grove Hill Emmer Green	
VP	Aug 2016	Not to scale	Daylight Bat Survey Findings	

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS

Existing Plans



Proposed plans

