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**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013**

Giles Pritchard  
Reading Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Castle Street  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 7AE

Dear Giles,

### **Reading Abbey Gateway, Reading – Daytime bat survey**

RPS was commissioned by Reading Borough Council to undertake a daytime bat survey of Reading Abbey Gateway, Abbey Street, Reading, Berkshire.

The Gateway is a Grade 1 listed building. It is currently in need of repairs due to a leak from the roof, which is causing some internal damage, and one piece of fallen stonework. The survey was commissioned to determine any potential ecological constraints, particularly in regard to bats, to the repair works.

### Survey Methodology

The site survey involved a suitably qualified ecologist inspecting the exterior of the building for suitable features that could be used by bats (areas of missing mortar between the brickwork, gaps behind boarding, around the roof or other gaps on the building). Any suitable features found were then inspected using a high powered torch for evidence of bat use, including bat droppings, 'clean' gaps that would indicate the movement of animals, scratch marks and staining from faeces or oils from rubbing fur.

Internal surveys of the building were also carried out on the same day. All rooms were inspected for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings and staining from urine or oils from fur rubbing

### Results and Recommendations

The Abbey Gateway comprised a three storey building of stone and flint construction with a central archway. The roof was shallowly pitched and consisted of lead, with four corner stone and flint turrets. Several rooms were present on the ground and first floors, with a single large open plan room on the third floor which spanned the archway.



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Several gaps were present due to missing mortar between the stonework on the four roof turrets but these did not extend back into the building very far and were therefore not considered suitable to support roosting bats.

The top of the archway was constructed of wooden beams. Several gaps were noted between the beams. Several floor boards in the room above these gaps were loose. These were lifted and the gap between the floor boards and the main beams of the archway was inspected. Solid historic insulation was present which covered any gaps between the beams of the archway. This area was not considered suitable to support roosting bats.

Four chimneys were present, with two at either end of the roof. One chimney was exposed on top and was open to rain and daylight. The other three had stone covers on top with small gaps around the edges. The three covered chimneys had some, albeit low, potential to support roosting bats.

The proposed repair works include the repair of the lead on the roof, the rain water drain pipes and internal repairs to the floors and plaster on the walls which have been affected by damp.

### *Ecological constraints*

The survey suggests that there are no potential ecological constraints to the proposed repair works on site.

Three of the chimneys were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats. These are not due to be affected by the proposed works. Any noise disturbance to these areas is anticipated to be minimal due to the thick stonework of the chimneys.

No other features were present which were considered suitable to support roosting bats.

### *Recommendations*

The proposed repair works are not considered likely to impact on roosting bats. However, if at any stage it is considered necessary to carry out any works directly on the chimneys then further surveys would be required at an appropriate time of year (April – September depending on weather conditions).

In addition to the repair works it is also proposed to install some scaffolding to protect the roof from bad weather until the repairs can be completed. If any tarpaulin is to be used it is recommended that the eastern and western sides, adjacent to the chimneys, be kept clear vertically in order to maintain access to the chimneys.

### Conclusions

No potential ecological constraints were identified on site.



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Unless the chimneys are likely to be directly disturbed by the repair works, then no further surveys are required.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely  
for RPS

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'N Betson'.

**Dr Nicholas Betson CEnv MCIEEM**  
**Principal Ecologist**