



PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST APPRAISAL

201 READING ROAD
WOKINGHAM RG41 1LH

Date: 5th December 2024

Client: Riordan Welby

Martin Ecology

Tel: (South) 0208 6548580
Tel: (Midlands) 02476 6678839
Mobile: 07752 243194
Email: info@martinecology.co.uk
Web: www.martinecology.co.uk

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Location	3
1.2 Site description	3
1.3 Scope of survey	3
1.4 Planning context	3
1.5 Legislative context - bats	3
1.6 Licensing	4
1.7 Legislative context - birds	4
2. METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Building inspections	4
3. RESULTS	5
3.1 Building inspection	5
4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	6
5. RELEVANT LITERATURE	8
APPENDIX 1	9

1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located at 201 Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1LH. National Grid Reference: **SU 79381 69784**.

Site description

1.2 The site is a detached, double storey house. Immediate habitats are of low quality for bats and are suburban and adjacent to a busy Road. Habitats include modified grassland lawns with lines of mature oak and scattered shrubs. These, connect to better habitat¹ such as patches of deciduous woodland and Windmill Pool, a significant body of standing fresh water.

Scope of Survey

1.3 It is understood that a planning application is being prepared to demolish the house and garage and replace with a new dwelling (no plans had been viewed at the time of writing). A Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal (PBRA) was requested by the LPA to try to assess whether or not the proposals would impact bats and find out whether or not a European Protected Species License (EPSL) would be required for the proposals to go ahead. The survey would also look for the presence of and potential for breeding birds to assess potential impacts.

Legislative context-bats

1.4 All species of bats are protected under *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*), *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* and it is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, recklessly disturb or take bats;
- obstruct access to their roosts (or place of rest);
- damage or destroy bat roosts;
- Possess or sell bats unless acquired legally

1.4.1 Bats commonly use man-made structures to roost within and when undertaking building work in houses or other structures such as remedial work, extension, renovation or demolition there is potential to contravene the legislation outlined in 1.4.

Planning context

1.5 According to planning policy, prior to planning permission being determined it is expected that all survey work pertaining to protected species (and mitigation scheme if required) should be completed and reported.

1.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development should enhance the environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Licensing

1.6 The presence of bat roosts that will be affected by proposals that would trigger the above legislation (such as removal of a roof / roof tiles or demolition of a building) necessitates the application for EPSL from Natural England. Such licences permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful. Licences are only issued if three tests are satisfied, and these are:

¹ Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> checked 5/12/2024.

- there is no satisfactory alternative
- there are overriding reasons of public interest and,
- the favourable conservation status of bat populations is maintained.

Legislative context-birds

1.7 All species of wild bird and their nests and eggs are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*). This makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; and
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

1.7.1 Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* gives some bird species greater protection against disturbance whilst breeding (including barn owl).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Building inspection

2.1.1 A daytime visit was made to the Site and the interior of the building was searched for bats and evidence of bats (such as droppings, fur, feeding remains and roost exits). All accessible roof void sections were examined, and the inspection was made using a ladder and with the assistance of a one million candlepower torch and a Bosch GIC 120 C endoscope. All accessible potential roosting features (PRFs) where bats might roost were inspected for bats, or evidence of bats.

2.1.2 An inspection was made of the exterior of the building for signs of bats such as: staining, grease marks, urine, fur, feeding remains and droppings on windowsills and walls, or PRFs that might offer access for bats into the building (such as cracks and fissures on or around roof and ridge tiles, soffits, barge boards or brickwork). A one million candlepower torch, an extendable ladder, a Bosch GIC 120 C endoscope and binoculars were used to undertake the external inspection and all accessible features were inspected for bats or evidence of bats.

2.1.3 During the visit signs of breeding birds was also looked for at the exterior. A photographic record was made of the site and some photos are included within Table 1.

2.1.4 Dean Martin (MCIEEM) conducted the survey work on 28th December 2024. Natural England bat licence number: 2015-10605-CLS-CLS.

2.1.5 The building was assessed along with local habitats and their potential for widespread crevice-dwelling and void-seeking bat species was considered. Google maps was used to make a general assessment of the site and local habitats. The government website <https://magic.defra.gov.uk> was checked for European Protected Species (EPS) licences granted by Natural England for bats within 2km of the site which revealed licences issued for common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat and brown long-eared bat.

2.1.6 Constraints
None were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Building inspection

3.1.1 The house was a two storey rendered brick structure that appeared to have been built during the early twentieth century and included three gables. The roof was covered with concrete interlocking tiles, which were in good condition and showed no PRFs; the tiles were in place the eaves and all mortar at the ridge and lead at the chimney were tightly sealed. The timber slats at the south gable were also well-sealed.

3.1.2 Inside the loft void it was apparent that the roof was supported by light weight timbers and was lined with traditional bitumen felt. Light cobwebbing was present at the ridge, which evidenced that no bats had used this feature in recent times. The loft floor was covered with fibreglass insulation, and this supported a thick layer of old dust, although no evidence of bats was encountered. Evidence of mice was present in the form of droppings and bits of chewed material. The house was considered as having negligible bat suitability.

3.1.3 The single storey garage to the rear was a timber structure. The roof was covered with natural slate tiles, which were in good condition and showed no PRFs. Access for bats and birds was possible via the open door.

3.1.4 Inside The structure it was apparent that the roof was not lined and was vaulted. No PRFs, evidence of bats or breeding birds was discovered. The garage was considered as having negligible bat suitability, although it was considered that void-seeking species would be able to roost within the interior opportunistically.



Photo 1 South west elevation



Photo 2 North east elevation



Photo 3 Sealed verge



Photo 4 Roof void



Photo 5 Cobwebs across gaps



Photo 6 Clear ridge



Photo 7 Old dust at loft floor



Photo 8 Mouse droppings



Photo 9 Garage



Photo 10 Garage interior

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bats was encountered either at the exterior or interior of the buildings. It is considered that bats have been unable to roost within the structures because they lack suitable PRFs / ingress points, and consequently it is thought that bats are unlikely to be impacted by the proposals. The buildings are considered to have negligible bat suitability. No further surveys are recommended and an EPSL will not be required for the development to proceed.

4.2 No evidence of breeding birds or scope for breeding birds was encountered, and so no mitigation is recommended.

4.3 Validity of data

Should one-year elapse from this survey being carried out without the current proposals or similar proposals being implemented, a repeat 'top up' bat inspection will be required to obtain more up to date information on the bat roosts / breeding birds at the Site.

5. RELEVANT LITERATURE

Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*.

CIEEM (2023) UK BAT MITIGATION GUIDELINES. A guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats.

Schober, W and Grimmberger, E. (1993) *Bats of Britain and Europe*. Hamlyn.

Mitchell-Jones, A. (2004) *Bat mitigation guidelines*. English Nature.

Wardhaugh, A. A. (1987) *Bats of the British Isles*. Shire Natural History.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Stebbing, R. E. (1986) *Bats*. Mammal Society.

.

APPENDIX 1

BAT METHODS STATEMENT 201 READING ROAD

The following precautionary measures will be adopted to ensure that bats will not be harmed during destructive works to the garage, in the event that a bat is roosting within the structure during this time. A copy of details below will be made available to all workers and visually displayed on Site. A toolbox talk will be given to contractors by a licensed bat worker about where bats may be roosting. The talk will cover:

- bat legislation
- that the risk to bats is low
- bat safeguarding measures
- actions to be taken in the absence of a licensed bat worker
- best working practices

- During removal of the roof tiles, a licensed bat worker will carry out a check for bats at the interior of the building. Should any bats be found prior to destructive works, work will immediately stop until the Local Planning Authority and Natural England (0300 060 3900) have been contacted for advice on how to proceed. In such a scenario it is likely that an EPSL application would need to be made to Natural England before works could recommence.

- Should any bats be found during works in the absence of a licensed bat worker, work will immediately stop until the licensed bat worker, the Local Planning and Natural England (0300 060 3900) have been contacted for advice on how to proceed.

- Any bats found during the construction period may cause a significant delay to construction works until a license has been issued by Natural England.

- In the unlikely event a bat is found injured, it will be placed into a ventilated box and taken to a cool, dark place.