

Proposed Strategy to Support and Encourage Bats

April 2025

Roof Repairs

Castlemans Cottage, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Berks. RG10 9UT

Planning Portal Reference: PP-13905061

BCS Reference: 25/0784/OTHBN

This document forms part of an application for listed building consent sought for the repairs to the existing second storey tiled roof.

It is not a standalone document; it must be read with the rest of the submission which constitutes the principal information.

This strategy has been provided to support the decision-making process for Listed Building Consent in order that the roof can be reinstated without delay.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Original planned work was for isolated patch repairs extending to less than 25% of the roof and would not alter the special architectural or historic interest of the building – Listed Building Consent (and Building Control) would not have been required for this level of work and bat surveys not considered.
- 1.2. As the work began on 17th March 2025, the roof structure condition was revealed further and was far worse than expected. It was considered in parts to be unsafe due to the overall poor state and signs of significant decay. It was recommended that the weight should be removed from the roof structure immediately by stripping all remaining tiles. Scaffolding and a temporary 'tin-hat' roof was erected several days later, after which the tiles, battens and felt were removed and the whole roof structure exposed by 24th March 2025.
- 1.3. Given the findings and the activity required, Listed Building Consent, and as part of that, a Bat Survey was now necessary. The application was started immediately upon receiving the news and a bat licenced ecologist was sought.
- 1.4. A Preliminary Roost Assessment was conducted by bat licenced ecologist on 16th April 2025. No roosts were found. Two droppings were discovered and retrieved for testing but not confirmed as bat by the ecologist.

2. PROPOSED WORKS

- 2.1. Reinstating the roof, like-for-like, and therefore reinstating potential roosting sites, must occur without delay since it is understood that bats are active from May onwards, and this time is especially important for breeding.
- 2.2. With DNA analysis pending, the owners/applicants propose proactively installing enhanced mitigation features to support and encourage bats, to compensate for any potential impact on the population that may be in the area of Castlemans Cottage.
- 2.3. These compensation measures will be influenced by the local species, with details such as type, quantity, locations, etc. to be recommended by the consultant ecologist and will be in line with

Government guidance. An initial proposal is provided in REF 1 'Castlemans Cottage - Roof Repairs - Proposed Bat Features'.

- 2.4. The Roofers and Carpenters have extensive experience with the presence of bats in buildings and have worked alongside ecologists on numerous occasions.
- 2.5. Works to reinstate the roof will be conducted during the day, ensuring minimal disturbance from noise, and will be surgical in nature, meaning limited to sections of the roof at a time.
- 2.6. Summary of compensation measures, pending guidance from ecologist:
 - 2.6.1. A wealth of mature trees exists within the grounds, providing ample opportunity for installation of appropriate bat boxes.
 - 2.6.2. Additional bat access features may be installed on the property (dependant on approval from Built Heritage Officer).
 - 2.6.3. Bituminous felt (hessian backed) will be installed on the flanks that may contain bat access points, with breathable felt installed elsewhere. This provides a compromise between the bats' environment and the conservation of the historic fabric which requires ample ventilation to protect the longevity of the roof structure, as recommended by the specialist conservation structural engineer.
 - 2.6.4. Where it is necessary to use any timber treatments, only treatments on Natural England's approved list of 'Timber-treatment products suitable for use in or near bat roosts' may be used. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bat-roosts-insecticides-and-timber-treatments/timber-treatment-products-suitable-for-use-in-or-near-bat-roosts>)

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. In this way we are demonstrating that;
 - 3.1.1. A qualified ecologist has carried out an appropriate survey at the correct time of year.
 - 3.1.2. Pending the DNA analysis, enough information will be provided to identify the potential protected species.
 - 3.1.3. Appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures will be incorporated into the proposed works and put in place.
 - 3.1.4. A protected species licence is not needed since no roost has been found and the work is to reinstate the existing roof, therefore reinstating potential roosting opportunities, along with inclusion of additional enhanced features to support and encourage bats to roost.

Ashley Bryant and Katherine May Carson

The Applicants

4. REFERENCES

REF 1. 'Castlemans Cottage - Roof Repairs - Proposed Bat Features'