

**Heriots,
Wokingham Road,
Hurst,
Wokingham,
RG10 0RX**

Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment

Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol

10th September 2024

Level 1 bat license holder no. 2020-46400-CLS-CLS



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Summary

Consultant Chartered Ecologist Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol was commissioned by the owners to undertake a Daytime Bat Assessment (Phase 1) of Heriots, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Wokingham RG10 0RX (GR: SU802724).

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023) by Dr.Jonty Denton on 10th September 2024.

The loft is of clay tiles which are partially lined within, with numerous gaps into the under-tile spaces over the wall ends. The loft has large amounts of nest material from generations of house sparrows but there was no sign of any bat activity within the loft. Therefore, the property has low potential for bats and a Phase 2 bat survey is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Background

I was contracted to undertake a Phase 1 Daytime Bat assessment at Heriots, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Wokingham RG10 0RX. This report presents the findings of the survey undertaken on the 10th September 2024, which is aimed at assessing the suitability of the property to support bats.

Site Setting and Description

The property is a detached two-storey house west of Wokingham Road in rural setting in Hurst Parish in Berkshire. It is flanked to the west by a mature garden with small pasture fields beyond with the tree lined Wokingham Road to the east with open pasture beyond. There are no woodlands on the Priority habitats Inventory within 500m of the house (see figure 1). The habitats in the area provide good foraging and commuting for common bat species.



Figure 1. Location of Heriots. *Courtesy of Googlemaps*

METHODS

Phase 1 Bat Survey Methods

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Details of the survey methods are given below.

The property was investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas such as gaps or holes between wooden cladding, roof tiles, fascias and soffits and to record direct evidence of bat presence such as droppings and urine staining. This was followed by a detailed investigation of all accessible internal spaces to record evidence of bat roosting activity such as droppings, feeding remains, live animals, corpses, urine staining and fur staining. The building was assessed as to its suitability for supporting roosting bats. The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Bat Conservation, (2023) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines* 4th edition).

The details of the assessment criteria used to determine the ecological value of on-site attributes is outlined below. During the Phase 1 survey the assessment criteria are based on the potential for the site to support the species considered. However, in many cases Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm presence /absence of any bat species and hence the importance of a population at the site, therefore the assessment of value should be considered as provisional.

Where possible, a provisional assessment of potential will be made although this may well require Phase 2 surveys to confirm status.

High Potential- High potential buildings are those that have features highly suitable for use by roosting bats, including gaps around soffits, hanging tiles, extensive roof spaces etc. High potential buildings are often, but not always, buildings of more historic construction. Further Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Moderate Potential- buildings which have a moderate number of features that may be utilised by bats for roosting, these may include loose fascias, roof spaces etc. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Low Potential- Low potential buildings are those that provide limited bat roosting potential although some features that may be utilised by bats may be present. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

No/Negligible Potential – These are buildings that are extremely unlikely to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features. Further Phase 2 surveys are unlikely to be required for buildings with negligible potential.

Phase 1 Survey Equipment

During the Phase 1 survey the surveyor was equipped with 10 x 42 close focus binoculars and a high-powered torch.

RESULTS

Bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and also receive additional protection via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2017) from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. It is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place used for shelter or protection" whether or not bats are present at the time or not. Barbastelle Bats, Bechstein's Bat, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat are also UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

According to DEFRA's Magicmap, one EPS Bat license has been issued for a property within 1km of the plot. This is 715m to the northwest issued in 2017 covering common pipistrelles.

The house was subject to a full Phase 1 bat survey outlined below.



Figure 2. Roof layout *Courtesy of Googlemaps*

Building Assessment

The house is a grade II listed building dating to the early 17th century with a large 20th century extension on north. (See figure 2). There are numerous openings into the under-tile spaces on the roof and into the under eaves (see figures 3-7).

The modern extensions are faced with lap-planking which is in good order, however the under eaves have potential openings.

The roof space above the northern extension has a boxed off inaccessible void with a potential opening at the apex of the north gable (see figure 6)

There single storey extension off the rear is contiguous with the side garage. These have a felt covered roof and no internal voids and have negligible potential for (See figure 2 and 3).

The main loft is the oldest part of the house is accessed via a doorway up a small flight of stairs. The roof is lined with felting which is in good order (See figure 4). The floor is covered in glass fibre insulation and partly used for storage (see figures 5 and 6). There were a few old bat droppings on the floor of the loft.



Figure 3. Southern elevations (eastern half) looking northeast. Red arrows indicate potential openings for crevice roosting bats.



Figure 4. Southern elevations (western half) looking north. Red arrows indicate potential openings for crevice roosting bats.



Figure 5. Western elevations looking east. Red arrows indicate potential openings for crevice roosting bats.



Figure 6. Northern and eastern elevations looking south. Red arrows indicate potential openings for crevice roosting bats.



Figure 7. North outbuilding looking north. Red arrows indicate potential openings for crevice roosting bats.



Figure 8. House Loft

Conclusions

There is evidence of historic bat activity in the loft of the oldest part of the house in form of droppings. There are inaccessible roof voids in the north wing and above the ground floor extensions. The clay tiled roofs have dozens of potential openings for crevice roosting bats. Therefore, the property has high potential for bats.

Phase 2 emergence surveys would be required to elucidate the current status of bats within the structures.

A dusk emergence survey is recommended to identify whether bats are utilising the property. These can be carried out in suitable weather between May and the end of September.

This would entail surrounding the structure with surveyors such that all potential entrance/exit points are covered. The structure is then watched from either 15 minutes before sunset to 2 hours after or 2 hours before dawn to sunrise.

All emerging or re-entering bats are recorded along with their flight path, their species and the time of flight.

An emergence survey would identify:

- Whether bats are present in a structure, the species and number involved
- Entrance and exit points for the roost
- The type of roost
- Actions needed to be taken to ensure legal compliance

New exterior lighting should be avoided, but if necessary for security purposes, then the latest updated lighting guidance note (GN08/23) should be followed. This is available at Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk) and supersedes all previous guidance.

References & Bibliography

Collins, J. (ed.)(2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practise Guidelines (4th edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.