

APPENDIX 1

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Schoolhouse, Heckfield, Hampshire, RG27 0LE


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Survey conducted 3rd February 2023

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SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologist Lisha Price of Plan Ecology at The Schoolhouse, Heckfield on the 3rd of February 2023.

The proposed works seek to fully reroof the property.

The Site consists of semi-detached, brick-built house with an adjacent back garden, situated in the village location of Heckfield.

The building was carefully inspected, and the potential features were examined in the accessible spaces using an endoscope and torch. Bat roosting potential was identified in the form of the raised and slipped roof tiles and ridge tiles and the wooden soffits on the house. The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the scale negligible, low, moderate, or high and the house and was deemed to have high bat roosting potential.

No evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

Three bat activity, dusk and dawn, surveys are recommended for the building during optimal weather conditions over a period of at least 4 weeks to illustrate the use of the building as a bat roost over a period of time. Surveys need to take place between May and September with 2 of the 3 surveys between May and August. The Building could be suitably covered using four surveyors.

Following these activity surveys, it will be possible to assess if bats are roosting and the type of bat roost present.

If any roosts or access points will be destroyed, altered, or disturbed due to the planned works it may be necessary to apply for a European Protected Species Licence (EPS) with Natural England (NE) and a bat mitigation plan designed from the survey results to minimise disturbance and reinstate bat roosting areas and access points.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Schoolhouse, Heckfield, Hampshire, RG27 0LE is a semi-detached, brick-built house with an adjacent back garden, situated in the village location of Heckfield.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to fully reroof the property.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out with the aim to look for evidence of bats roosting and for the presence of structures within the buildings which hold bat roosting potential.

1.4 General information about bats and buildings

Loft spaces can potentially be utilised by bat species such as e.g. Brown Long-eared bats or Serotine bats which are known to commonly roost inside loft spaces. This can generally be discovered via droppings inside the loft as the droppings will stay protected from weather elements.

External features of the building can potentially be used as roosting sites by e.g. Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* spp). Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats out of the British species, and they are known to roost inside buildings utilising areas such as cavity walls, soffits and fascia boards, and between tiles and roofing felt. It is not practical to carry out a full physical examination of such building features, which is why activity surveys have to be done during summer months (May-September) when the bats are fully active.

Access points of 1-2 centimetres only are used by bats to enter and exit their roosting sites. Most buildings will have gaps of such size in roof areas, as ventilation of the roof void would otherwise not be possible.

2. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The buildings were surveyed during the daytime on the 3rd of February 2023 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Lisha has over 18 years' experience of bat surveys and mitigation.

The building was examined internally and externally to identify any changes in existing roost features and/ or to identify any new features/ structures that hold bat roosting potential within or on the church which could affect the overall assessment of the building for use by roosting bats. The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the following scale (adapted from Collins, J. 2016):

- Negligible: Negligible potential roost features likely to be used by roosting bats
- Low: simple structure buildings that have very few potential bat roosting features, which could only be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions, or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
- Moderate: a structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats in some way, but which are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (such as a maternity roost).
- High: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
- Confirmed: evidence of bats such as live or dead bats or bat droppings are present, or there are confirmed records of a bat roost in the building.

The building was inspected for evidence of bats in the form of live or dead bats, droppings, urine staining and insect feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings. A careful visual search using a Clulite torch was conducted of the loft space. An endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps. The exterior of the building was surveyed for droppings on walls and window ledges.

3. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

Bat roosting potential: The building was carefully inspected, and the potential features were examined in the accessible spaces using an endoscope. Bat roosting potential was identified in the form of the raised roof and ridge tiles on all aspects of the roof. There are wooden soffit boxes on the house which have some gaps also. The loft spaces were small, and access was limited, the ceiling was boarded. There was some lifting around the flashing on the chimney. The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the scale negligible, low, moderate, or high and the house and was deemed to have high bat roosting potential.

See APPENDIX 1 for photographs

Evidence of bats: No evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

4. ASSESSMENT

Constraints on study information

All accessible areas of the buildings could be surveyed without restrictions.

A biological record data search was not conducted as the results of a data search is not likely to impact on the decision-making process at this stage.

Bat survey results are generally considered to be valid within a year of the survey date or until the next active bat season of May-September. The County Council Ecologists and/or Natural England may ask for updated surveys if the reports are older than one year.

Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitat.

The works are small and localised and will not be detrimental to foraging or commuting bats.

Legislation and policy guidance

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

Three bat activity, dusk and dawn, surveys are recommended for the extension during optimal weather conditions over a period of at least 4 weeks to illustrate the use of the building as a bat roost over a period of time. Surveys need to take place between May and September with 2 of the 3 surveys between May and August.

Following these activity surveys, it will be possible to assess if bats are roosting and the type of bat roost present.

4.2 Further Survey Effort

The extension was deemed to have high bat roosting potential. Three activity surveys are therefore recommended to be carried in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Survey Guidelines.

Bat activity, emergence, and dawn surveys should be conducted over a period of at least 4 weeks to illustrate the use of the building as a bat roost over a period of time. The surveys need to be conducted during a time of year when bats are generally fully active (between May and September) with two of the three surveys taking place between May and August. The surveys will need to be carried out during optimal weather conditions, as outlined in the Bat Survey Guidelines.

Four surveyors would be suitable for successfully covering all aspects of the building.

4.3 Requirement for a Habitats Regulations (EPS) licence

If any roosts or access points will be destroyed, altered, or disturbed due to the planned works it may be necessary to apply for a European Protected Species Licence (EPS) with Natural England (NE) and a bat mitigation plan designed from the survey results to minimise disturbance and reinstate bat roosting areas and access points.

An EPS licence can be applied for once the further bat surveys have been carried out and any planning consents have been met.

6. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.)(2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practise Guidelines* (3rd edn).The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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APPENDIX 1: Photographs



Photograph 1: Front of property.



Photograph 2: Gaps under clay roof tiles.



Photograph 3: Gaps under roof tiles next to dormer window.



Photograph 4: Lifted tiles next to dormer window.



Photograph 5: Gaps under roof and ridge tiles



Photograph 6: Raised roof tiles.



Photograph 7: Raised roof tiles.



Photograph 8: Side elevation with wooden barge boards



Photograph 9: Rear patio area.



Photograph 10: Loft space used for storage.



Photograph 11: Loft space used for storage.



Photograph 12: Gaps under roof tiles.



Photograph 13: Lifting around lead flashing.



Photograph 14: Gaps under roof tiles and wooden soffits.



Photograph 15: Dormer window.



Photograph 16: Back Garden with hedges and tree.



Photograph 17: Large gaps under guttering.



Photograph 18: Large gaps under guttering.



Photograph 19: Wooden soffits.



Photograph 20: Wooden soffits.



Photograph 17: Back Garden with shrubs and bordering trees.



Photograph 18: Gap under guttering.



Photograph 19: Side elevation.



Photograph 20: Side elevation.