

Mr and Mrs C. Hewitt

## 24 Mill Way, Bradninch Application



### Technical Note: Internal & External Building Inspection Summary

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following technical note has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd., on behalf of Mr & Mrs C. Hewitt. It provides an Ecological Appraisal related to internal and external inspection of the property at 24 Mill Way, Bradninch, Exeter (EX5 4NL).
- 1.2 The surveys were instructed to inform an application for an extension to the property, and corresponding extension of the roof structure.
- 1.3 The property comprises a single storey bungalow, with a hipped roof composed of composite shingles and cement tiling along the roof hips and ridge. Number 24 Mill Way is located on the eastern edge of the village of Bradninch. Extensive farmland lies immediately to the south and east, with neighbouring residences along Mill Way in the immediate locality and further residential environs associated with the village to the north and east.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### Building Assessments

#### *Internal / External Surveys*

- 2.1 On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the property was surveyed for its potential to provide roosting opportunities for bats.
- 2.2 Internal assessment consisted of a systematic search of potential features inside the building, including all surfaces, window ledges, floors, roof void, etc., using high powered torches and endoscopes (where possible and required). During the survey evidence of roosting bats was sought. This included the presence of live or dead bats, or any associated evidence, such as droppings, urine staining, feeding remains, and potential roosting sites/access points.
- 2.3 The external building assessment was undertaken from ground level, with the aid of a torch and binoculars (where appropriate). Surveys were undertaken by suitably experienced ecologists from FPCR. During these surveys Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats including (but not limited to) the following were sought:

- Broken and missing roof tiles, verge tiles, ridge tiles and crevices between hanging tiles,
- Access points behind soffits, fascia boards and barge boards,
- Gaps beneath lifted roofing felt and lead flashing,
- Openings in to roof voids, such as through eaves and gable end,
- Loose mortar between bricks, tiles, or cracks in rendering,
- Crevices between windows and lintel,
- Chimney stacks, cracks in mortar or lead flashing,
- Spaces between downpipes or guttering,
- Timber cladding that may be warped, lifted, or have knot holes present; and/or
- Roof joists, and gaps between support beams.

2.4 The buildings were then classified as offering *negligible, low, moderate, or high* potential dependent on the number and type of features and / or evidence observed, as outlined in *Table 1* below.

**Table 1: Building bat roost habitat classifications.**

Roost Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
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

2.5 Evidence acquired from the roost inspection was then used to determine the requirement for further survey work and to classify the type of roost, if any, that the building supports. These are categorised as follows:

- *Maternity roost* - where young are born and raised until they're independent, this has the highest conservation status,
- *Hibernation roost* - where bats are found during winter,
- *Mating roost* - where males and females gather during the autumn,
- *Feeding roost* - where bats rest at night between feeding sessions,
- *Transitional or swarming site* - where bats may be present in spring or autumn; and
- *Summer roost* - used by males and non-breeding females.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### Internal Inspection

- 3.1 The internal inspection of the property was undertaken by an Ecologist from FPCR (Holly Spencer, Natural England class licence: 2022-10160-CL17-BAT) on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The inspection was limited to the roof void. Safe substrate on which to conduct the inspection was restricted to the immediate area around the hatch, where crawl boards were laid. Safe access over the insulation material across most of the roof space was lacking. However, the visibility from the hatch was good, enabling a wide field of view from which the majority of the internal space could be seen under illumination from the loft light fitting.
- 3.2 The roof was of a standard trussed construction, comprised of ridge boards, common rafters, hipped rafters, purlins, and joists, with paper sheeting loosely attached to the timber roof trusses. No other lining was present, leaving the underside of the roof shingles visible. Timber rafters and apex beams supported the roof.
- 3.3 No light egress into the roof void was evident, indicating well-sealed construction with no gaps in the roof structure that bats might utilise. The internal space was also relatively clean and well maintained. No evidence of bat presence was noted, with no droppings or urine staining found on the crawl boards, chimney bricks, rafters, and/or roof insulation.

#### External Inspection

- 3.4 The property was a single storey, brick bungalow, with outer paint rendering on all aspects. The hipped roof was tiled with interlocking diamond shaped fibre composite shingles, with overlapping concrete/cement capping tiles fitted over the ridge and down each hip. Cast iron guttering was directly affixed under the eaves. Two brick chimney breasts were situated on the roof, one each on the eastern and western pitches of the roof, each with lead flashing at their bases. A small conservatory, of PVC construction, extended from the southern aspect, with a PVC framed porch on the eastern aspect, facing onto Mill Way.

**Photo 1: View northeast from front of 24 Mill Way; hipped roof, dual chimneys, PVC conservatory and porch**



- 3.5 Obvious potential roost features were not visible during the external inspection. The fibre composite shingles were intact and well fitted, with no signs of damage. Similarly, there were no soffits or fascia boarding that may have offered opportunities for access to bats, with the cast iron painted guttering affixed directly to the wall under the eaves, with little gap. The concrete/cement capping tiles over the roof ridge and hips were slightly raised in a few places; however, the gaps underneath were not found to be large enough for bats to access, being less than 7mm across.

3.6 Given the lack of potential features suitable to support roosting bats on the exterior of the property, the building was assessed to be of **negligible** potential for roosting bats. Consequently, roosting bats are not considered a material constraint to the proposed extension and no further survey is required.

#### **4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

4.1 No evidence of bats was recorded within the property during internal and external inspection in November 2023. Potential roost features suitable to support bats were lacking. Closer inspection of possible external roof features found them to be unsuitable and inaccessible to bats. Roosting bats are not considered a material constraint to the proposed extension and no further survey is required.

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