



JAMES BLAKE ASSOCIATES

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Preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of potential bat roost features of 25 Furze Close, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds

Introduction and background

This letter is intended to give an overview of 25 Furze Close, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk with regards to the potential for bats to be using the building within the site boundary.

The assessment was undertaken on site on the 5th January 2024 by Harry Hirst BSc (Hons) MSc and Sean Minns BA (Hons). The method of the preliminary ground level roost assessment for bats was to observe the structure carefully externally and internally using binoculars and torches where necessary, noting all potential roost features (PRFs) present including gaps, cracks cavities and spaces:

- under lead flashing, roof tiles and ridge tiles
- within eaves, soffits and barge boards
- between downpipe and walls
- within wooden cladding in porch
- top of gable ends or dividing walls
- surrounding windows or window sills
- in mortise and tenon joints in loft
- in beam supports in loft
- between roofing tiles and roofing fabric in loft
- between brick walls

The building is located approximately 150m to the west of Barton Road and is single-storey bungalow (B1) with a recent rear extension (B2) with mono pitched-roof. There is a single-storey enclosed flat-roofed conservatory (B3) and garage/workshop (B4). Positions of each building is shown in Figure 1.

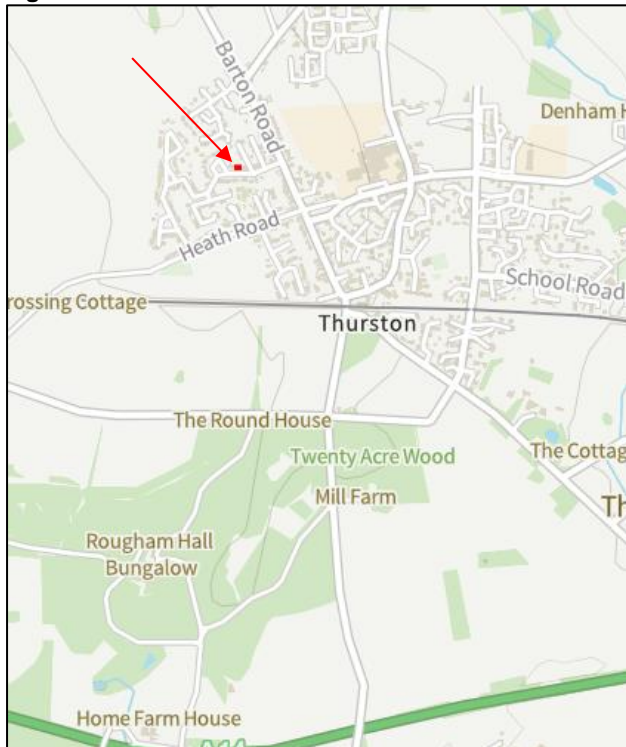
Figure 1: Building positions



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The location of the site is shown in Figure 2 and photographs of the bungalow, garage and conservatory on site are presented in Appendix A.

Figure 1: Site Location



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Under current proposals, the roof tiles would be replaced and internal linings replaced for B1, and B3 removed and rebuilt.

All buildings were searched internally and externally for signs of bats e.g. droppings, feeding perches and remains, staining on beams etc. No droppings were detected within the loft space or on external features of all buildings. No other signs of bats were found internally or externally.

There were motion-activated lights on all four sides of B1/B2 and the porch of B1.

Results and evaluation

The individual assessments of buildings B1 to B4 can be found below:

B1

B1 is the main house, consisting of a single-storey brick-built bungalow (c1960's), with a gabled pitch-roof, wooden roof structure, internal fabric lining between the external concrete roof tiles and internal roof structure. Loft insulation was present within the loft space, along with a small water tank and stored belongings.

There is a small dormer window at the front of B1 positioned to the east of the porch and small chimney, which provides light within the front of the loft.

There were several possible access points to the loft and spaces between the roof lining and external roof tiles and lead flashing in B1:

- 1) Gap between external concrete roof tiles or lead flashing to the west of the loft window, with light visible.
- 2) Gap between bricks under the external security camera at front of B1 above the main window with light visible in roof space.
- 3) Gap at base of roof, possibly a small gap under external tile, with light visible in roof space.
- 4) Gap under roof tiles with space between tiles and fabric with light visible in roof space.

There were no signs of droppings, staining or feeding on the floor, loft insulation beams or other surfaces within the loft. There were also extensive areas of spider webs around all the external access points and spaces within between the lining and roofing tiles or superstructure suggesting the loft space is currently not being used as a maternity roost. The roof space was very cold and unlikely to hold a hibernating roost.

The exterior brick work was largely well-pointed, though there were some areas of loose mortar, there no obvious cracks or crevices in the brickwork. The exterior had just three potential roosting features:

- 5) Two cracked roof ridge tiles on top of B1
- 6) Small gaps under lead flashing around chimney
- 7) Single gap in wooden soffit and cracks in concrete base board on southeast corner of B1
- 8) Small gap under lead flashing around base of dormer window

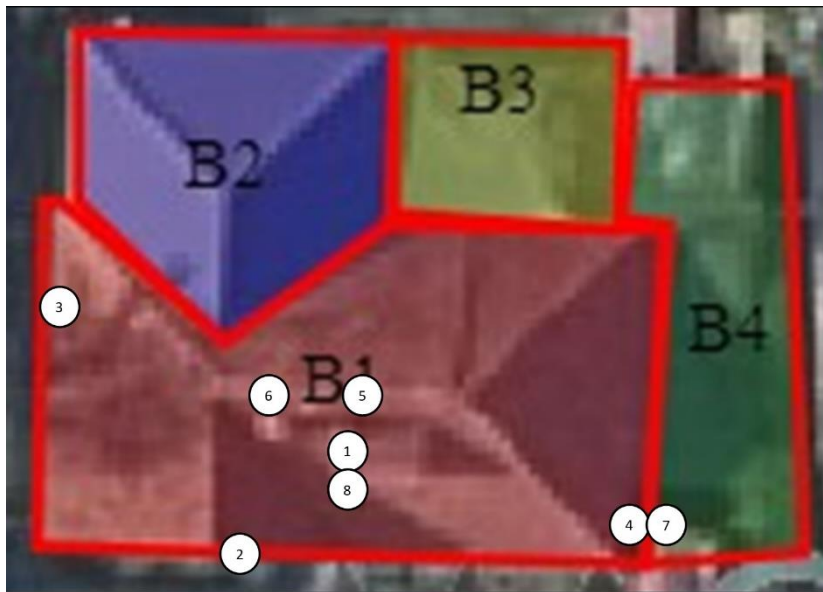
However, the exterior, especially the porch is well lit by motion-sensored lights, with a light directly under the gaps and cracks in the wooden soffit on the southeast corner of B1.

The cracks within the ridge tiles were difficult to view from the ground but would at best be suitable for a single bat potentially roosting between spring and autumn.

The gaps under the lead flashing were also small and would likely at best offer potential roosting opportunities for 1-2 bats between spring and autumn.

The gap and cracks in the soffit/baseboard were clear of cobwebs, but showed no signs of droppings or staining and would likely be utilised by single or small numbers of roosting bats between spring or autumn. The position of access or potential roosting features can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Position of access points to loft and potential roosting features



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B1 is considered to have ‘negligible’ roosting features.

See Appendix B for pictures of potential external or internal access points and roosting features.

B2

The rear extension was built in 2016, with new concrete roof tiles and external brick and uPVC windows, guttering and soffits.

There was no external access or potential roosting features noted during the survey of B2. The concrete roofing tiles were new and well-sealed, there were no gaps or cracks within the soffits, gaps between the guttering and soffits/walls. A single vent is present in the soffits close to the kitchen, but is linked to the stove and had a small mesh covering. The brickwork is well-pointed and in good condition, with no gaps in the brick work providing roosting features.

The interior loft space had no access points from the exterior, although the space could be accessed from the adjoining loft space of B1. However, there were no potential roosting features within the B2 loft space and no signs of droppings, feeding or staining.

B2 is considered to have ‘no roosting features.’

B3

This building is an enclosed single-storey flat-roofed conservatory at the rear of the property, between B2 and B4, has uPVC windows and metal frame, with a timber-framed roof structure and corrugated clear plastic roof. There were no internal or external access points or potential roosting features and no droppings internally or externally.

B3 is considered to have no potential roosting features.

B4

This building is a single-storey brick structure with timber-framed, felt-covered roof, with access through a uPVC door from B3 and metal shutter door at the front of the property. There were no access points or roosting features noted on the exterior or interior of the building. The garage is used as a workshop and is well-lit with strip lighting.

B4 is considered to have no potential roosting features.

Conclusion

Buildings B2, B3 and B4 have no potential roosting features. Building B1 had access points from the exterior to the interior of the loft space, but the loft was well lit from the dormer window and in regular use, with a cold internal temperature. Moreover, cobwebs covered any potential roost features inside the loft. The external feature of the broken ridge tile and loose flashing were only likely to hold 1-2 bats as an occasional roost and the hole in the soffit on the south-east corner was well-lit by a security light and covered in cobwebs making it unlikely it is being used as a roosting feature.

No further surveys are considered necessary, but as a precaution all works/demolition on B1 and B4 should be conducted outside of the breeding season to avoid disturbance of any bats roosting within the limited external or internal roosting features in B1. For clarity, works should be undertaken between October and March/April.

Raised bat tiles could be included within the design of the new roof or bat tubes placed high up on the eastern gable end of B1 to provide future roosting features post-development.

Should works not commence within 2 years of this survey, an updated assessment should be undertaken to note any changes which may have occurred in the interim.

Yours sincerely,

Sean Minns
Assistant Ecologist
James Blake Associates

References

Collins, J. (ed) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition); The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Appendix A: Photographs of buildings

Image 1:B1 external southern/eastern aspect with dormer window and garage B4



Image 2:B1 Porch underside



Image 3:B1 Internal loft space W side



Image 4:B1 internal loft space centre



Image 5:B2 western aspect



Image 6:B2 northern aspect and roof



Image 7:B3 internal



Image 8:B3 external



Image 9:B4 internal



Image 10:B1 Internal dormer window



Appendix B: Photographs of potential roost features and limiting features

<p>Image 1: B1 Gap between internal lining and lead flashing well lit and with cobwebs and (Feature 1)</p>	<p>Image 2: B1 Gap between bricks and security light cable well lit and with cobwebs (Feature 2)</p>
	
<p>Image 3: B1 Cracked roof ridge tile with small gap with limited opportunity for roosting bat(Feature 5)</p>	<p>Image 4: B1 Small gap under lead flashing of chimney with limited opportunity for roosting bat (Feature 6)</p>
	
<p>Image 5: B1 Single gap in rotted wooden soffits and cracks in concrete baseboard (Feature 7) with light below and cobwebs.debris inside</p>	<p>Image 6: B1 Small gap under lead flashing of dormer window leading to area in image 1 (Feature 8)</p>
	