

Preliminary Roost Assessment

35 College Close
Longridge
Preston
PR3 3AX

For
Chris Dover



Gritstone Ecology

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Chris Dover. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 35 College Close, Longridge, on 5th February 2021. The survey report will be used to provide supporting information for a planning application, at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Proposed development

The development proposals are for a full height extension of the property above the existing garage, including work to the roof, and changes to the internal layout.

1.5. Site context

The house is located on College Close, Longridge, PR3 3AX, GR SD 60013 36260, approximately 10km northeast of Preston City Centre. The house is on a well-lit road, surrounded by suburban houses & gardens.

The site includes an occupied detached house built in the 1990's, with gardens to the front and rear, and areas of hard landscaping. Habitat within 50m of the house includes; houses, gardens, trees, and well-lit roads. Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, areas of open farmland, reservoirs, hedgerows, and mature trees.

Linked back gardens adjacent the house potentially provide foraging opportunities for bats, however the area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, and other human activity.

The site and immediate surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats, with higher quality habitats available in the surrounding farmland 300m to the south, and west.



1.6. Site location



1.6a – 35 College Close – site location.



1.6b – 35 College Close – aerial photograph.



2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The survey was completed on 5th February 2021. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, cold, and dry, with a temperature of 8°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordinance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.
- Within roof spaces



- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the house were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in February, when bats are less active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are less likely to be present.



3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – The front of the house from the driveway.

Nº35 College Close, Longridge is detached house built in the 1990's which is occupied. It has a pitched roof covered with Marley concrete roof & ridge tiles, and a hipped roof above an attached garage. Roof pitches face north, south, and east, gable ends face east & west. End tiles at the verges are fitted with dry-verge covers, and sealed with cement.

Lead flashing is fitted: at the base of flues & vent pipes, roof valleys, and where roof tiles meet brickwork. UPVC fascia boards & boxed soffits are fitted at the eaves & gables.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity, discreet lintels are fitted, sills are UPVC; window and door frames are UPVC, all glass is intact.

The building is modern, was constructed to a high standard, is well maintained, and in good condition. Cement between ridge tiles is intact, with no viable gaps, there are no missing or damaged ridge tiles. Roof tiles are tightly fitted, with no gaps between tiles. UPVC fascia boards & soffits are fitted tightly against the walls gaps are filled with sealant.

Walls are in good condition, with no missing mortar or cracks. Lead flashing is tightly fitted against tiles and sealed into the brickwork; there are no suitable gaps beneath lead flashing.

There are no features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was present during the inspection.



3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – The main roof void.

The house and garage have separate roof voids. The voids are used for storage, and accessed for essential maintenance. The roof has a modern timber trussed structure lined with bitumen roofing felt, and insulated between ceiling joists with mineral wool.

The wall cavity has been filled with polystyrene bead insulation, the wall cavity was inspected at the wall plate, using an endoscope. Joints in roof timbers are filled with dusty cobwebs. Boxed soffits open into the roof void and were inspected from above.

Roof lining is intact with no tears. There are no gaps at the wall-plate; and there are no gaps which give direct access to the roof void from the outside.

The house has no cellar, and there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Evidence of use

No evidence of use by bats was present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The house has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the house is well maintained, in good condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection.



4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, although bats are likely to be present locally.

Linked back gardens provide limited foraging opportunities for bats locally. With higher quality habitats available to the west, east, and south.

Houses immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. However, the house is well-sealed, and has no features which could be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The house was constructed to a high standard, is well maintained, and in good condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; the roof void has no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The lack of any evidence of use inside the roof void, such as droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the roof void, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition, and ridge tiles are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

The walls are brick with an insulating cavity. The wall cavity has been filled with insulation. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Lead flashing is tightly fixed against roof tiles and brickwork and offers no suitable roosting opportunities.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

Fascia boards & boxed soffits at the eaves and gables are tightly fixed against brickwork, with no suitable gaps; wall cavities open into the roof void, and were inspected from above.

The small gaps between brickwork, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using an endoscope. These areas were dusty and cobwebbed. No droppings were found, and no suitable gaps were present which could give access, or shelter to roosting bats.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat



2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have).

If bats or bat roosts are present in the building, the proposed extension would likely result in an offence being committed.

5. Impact assessment

The proposals are for a full height extension of the property above the existing garage, including work to the roof, and changes to the internal layout.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats, and has **negligible suitability**.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has a **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.



7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the house from the driveway.



2 – The rear of the house and rear ground floor extension.



3 – Ridge tiles are sealed with cement, roof tiles are tightly fitted.



4 – Gaps between UPVC boxed soffits and brickwork are filled with sealant.





5 –End tiles at the gable end verges are sealed with no suitable gaps.



6 – Brickwork is in good condition with no gaps in mortar.





7 – Window and door frames are tightly sealed into brickwork with no suitable gaps.



8 – End tiles in the roof valleys are filled with cement, with no suitable gaps.

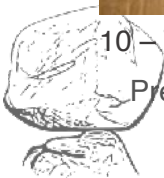


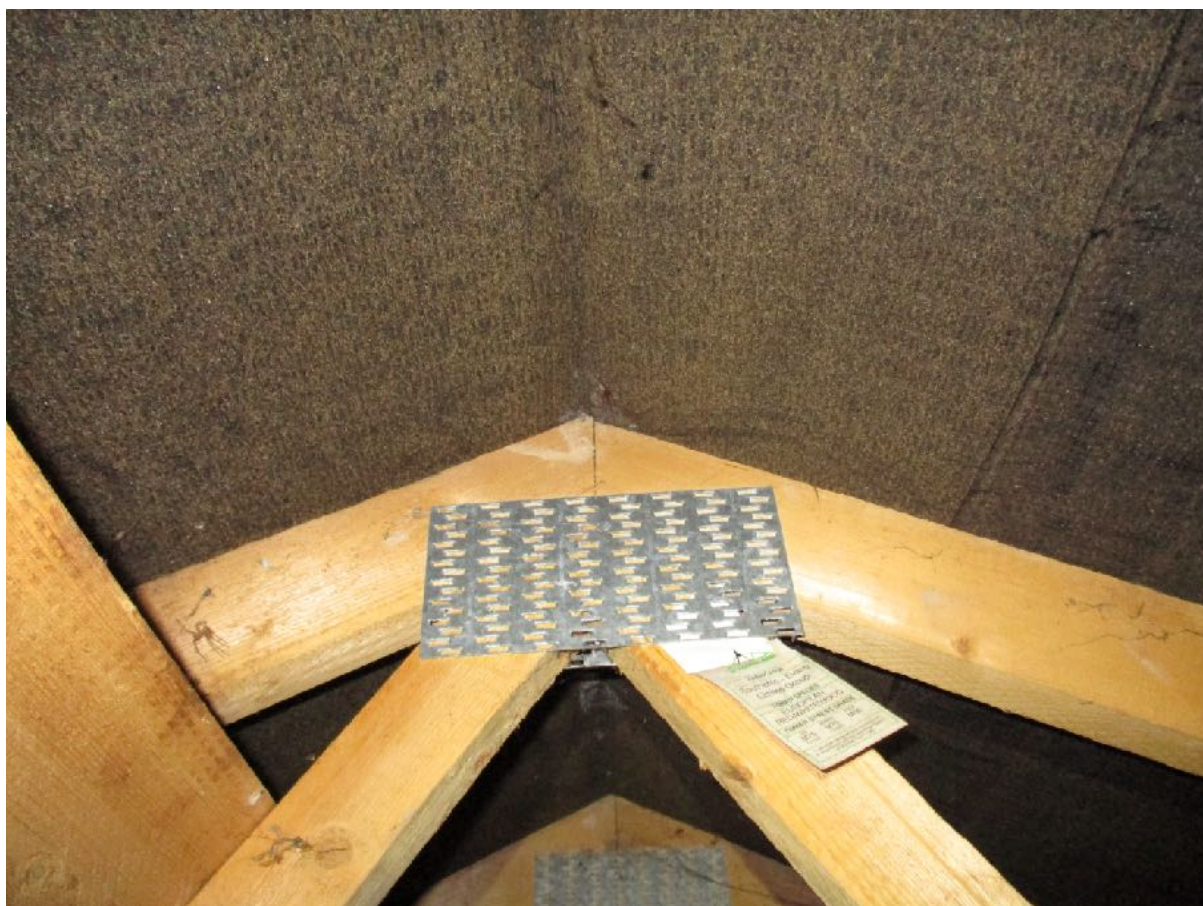


9 – Lead flashing is tightly fitted with no suitable gaps.



10 – The house has a single roof void lined with bitumen felt.





11 – The roof lining is in good condition with no gaps or tears.



12 – Joints in timbers are filled with dusty cobwebs.

