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12/6/2024

Preliminary Roost Assessment

14 The Dales

Langho

Blackburn

BB6 8BW

For

Kelly Moss



Gritstone Ecology

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Kelly Moss. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 14 The Dales, Langho, on 11th June 2024.

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 15 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the extension of the property including a full height side extension over the existing garage, which will tie in to part of the existing roof; and changes to the internal layout.

1.5. Site context

The house is located on The Dales, Langho, BB6 8BW, GR SJ 69073 33953, approximately 6km north of Blackburn Town Centre. The house is in a residential estate in a predominantly rural area, and is surrounded by suburban houses and gardens, with open farmland in the wider area.

The site includes a modern detached house which is currently occupied, with an attached garage, gardens to the front and rear, and areas of hard landscaping.

Habitat within 50m of the house includes; houses, gardens, small areas of open green-space, and quiet access roads.

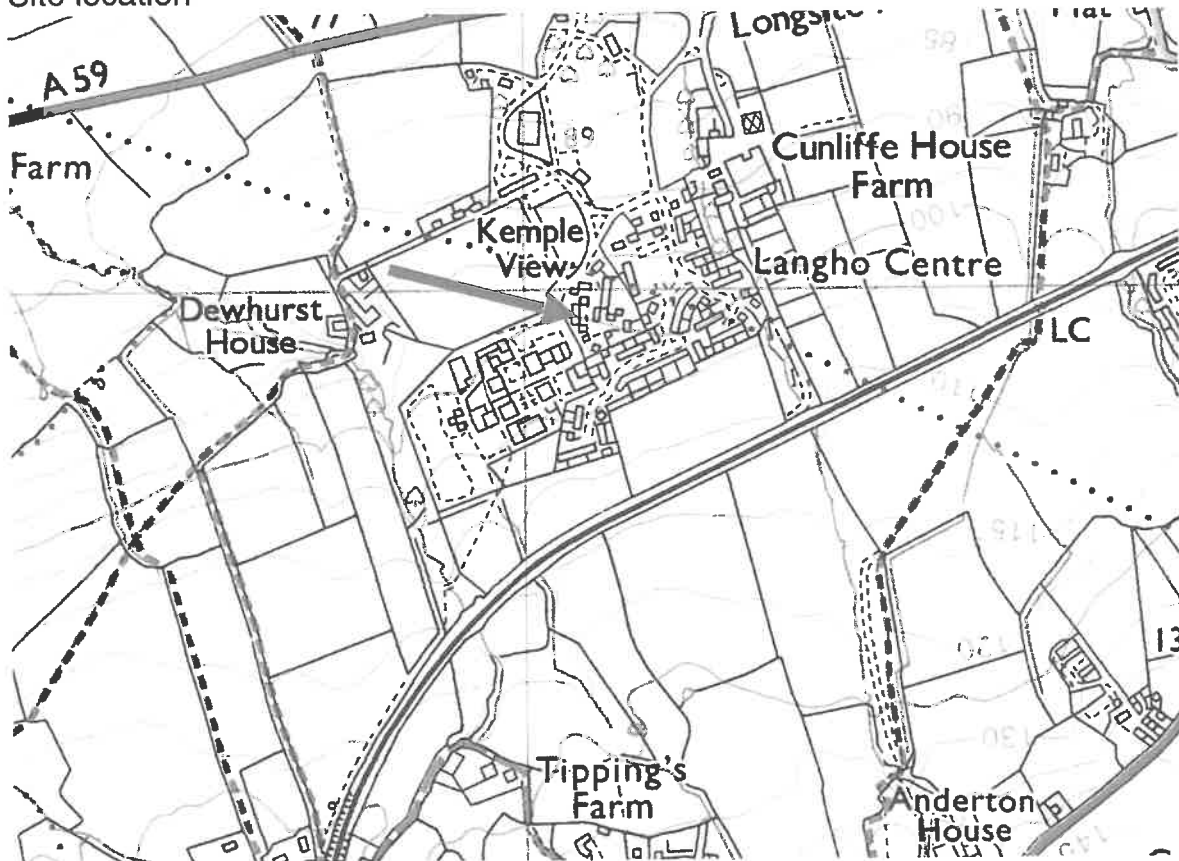
Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, areas of open farmland, hedgerows, watercourses, ponds, and mature trees.

Areas of open farmland locally, trees, and linked back gardens, potentially provide good quality foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is subject to little disturbance from light, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

The site and immediate surrounding area provide moderate quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats; with higher quality and less disturbed habitat in farmland surrounding the estate.



1.6. Site location



1.6a – 14 The Dales – site location.



1.6b – 14 The Dales – aerial photograph.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The survey was completed on 11th June 2024. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, mild, and dry, with a temperature of 15°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 Ordnance 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.

Additionally a camera drone was used to inspect the roof in detail.

2.6. Survey limitations

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



3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – The front of the house.

Nº14 The Dales, Langho, is a modern detached house, which is currently occupied. It has a pitched roof, covered with Marley concrete roof and ridge tiles. An attached garage to the side has a pitched roof covered with concrete tiles.

Roof pitches face east and west, gables face north and south. Lead flashing is fitted in roof valleys, and where roof tiles abut brickwork. UPVC fascia boards and boxed soffits are fitted at the eaves; these have been replaced within the last 5 years, and are in good condition.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity, discreet steel lintels are fitted, sills are UPVC; window and door frames are UPVC, all glass is intact. Mock Tudor timbers and white painted render are present above ground floor level at the front of the house.

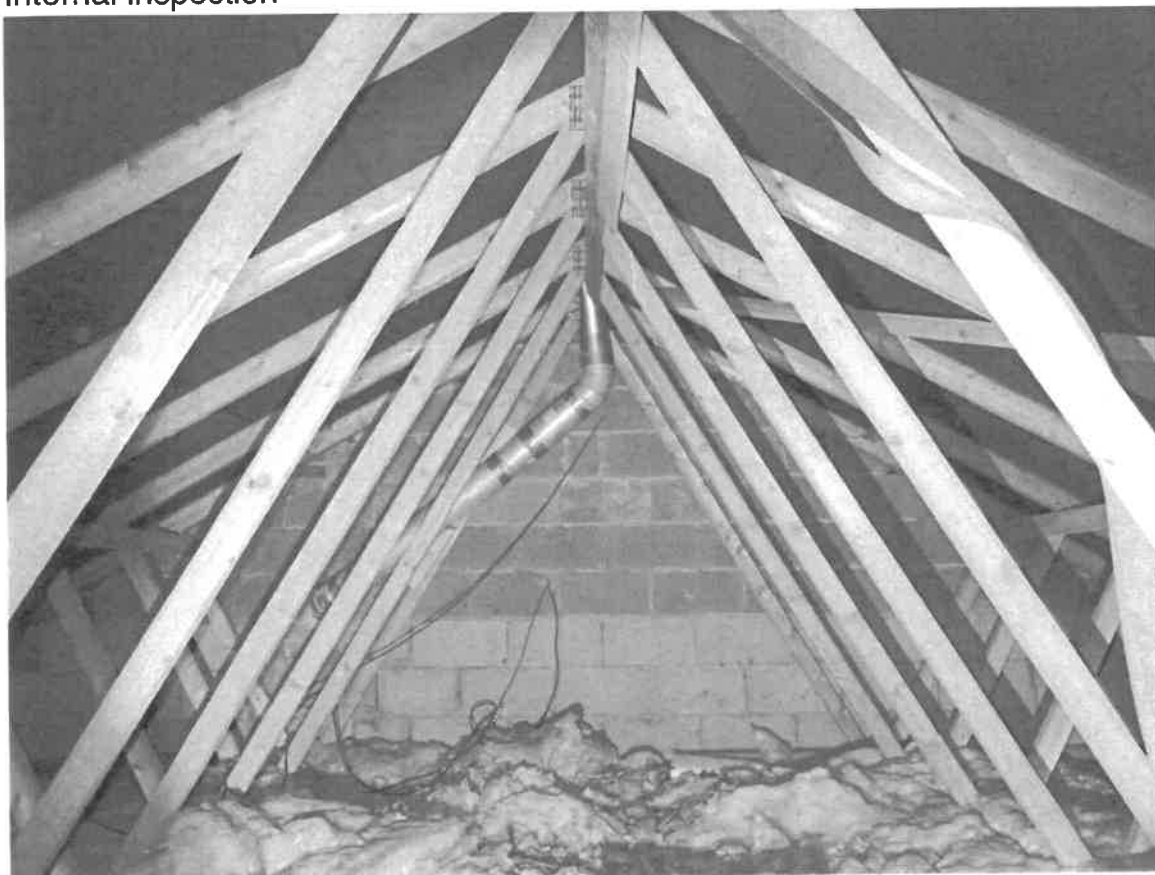
The building is relatively modern, well maintained, and in good condition. Ridge tiles are fixed tightly, there are no damaged or missing ridge tiles. There are no damaged, slipped, or missing roof tiles. Roof tiles are tightly fitted, with no gaps between tiles.

Fascia boards and boxed soffits are fitted tightly against the walls gaps are filled with sealant. Walls are in good condition, with no missing mortar or cracks.

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 roof void.

The house has a single roof void, which is not used for storage, and accessed infrequently for essential maintenance.

The roof has a timber trussed rafter structure, lined with bitumen felt, and insulated with mineral wool between the ceiling joists. The roof lining is in good condition with no tears, or gaps.

The wall cavity was inspected at the wall plate and gables using an endoscope. There are no gaps at the wall-plate or gables; and there are no gaps which give direct access to the roof void from the outside. Boxed soffits open into the roof void and were inspected from above.

The garage is used for storage and accessed daily. It has no enclosed roof void, and the underside of roof timbers and roof lining is exposed.

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

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the building inspection, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The house has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building 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 moderate quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, and bats are likely to be present locally.

Areas of open farmland, trees, and linked back gardens locally potentially provide good foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is subject to little disturbance from light and noise.

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 house 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 indications of use inside the roof void, such as bat 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; ridge tiles are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

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

Fascia boards and boxed soffits at the eaves are fixed tightly against brickwork, with no suitable gaps; wall cavities and boxed soffits open into the roof void, and were inspected from above. Gable end verges are sealed with cement, and fitted with UPVC dry-verge covers.

The small gaps between brickwork, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using an endoscope. 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 were roosting in the building, the proposed works would likely impact bats or bat roosts.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the extension of the property including: a full height side extension over the existing garage, which will tie in to part of the existing 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 for use.

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 **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.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th 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

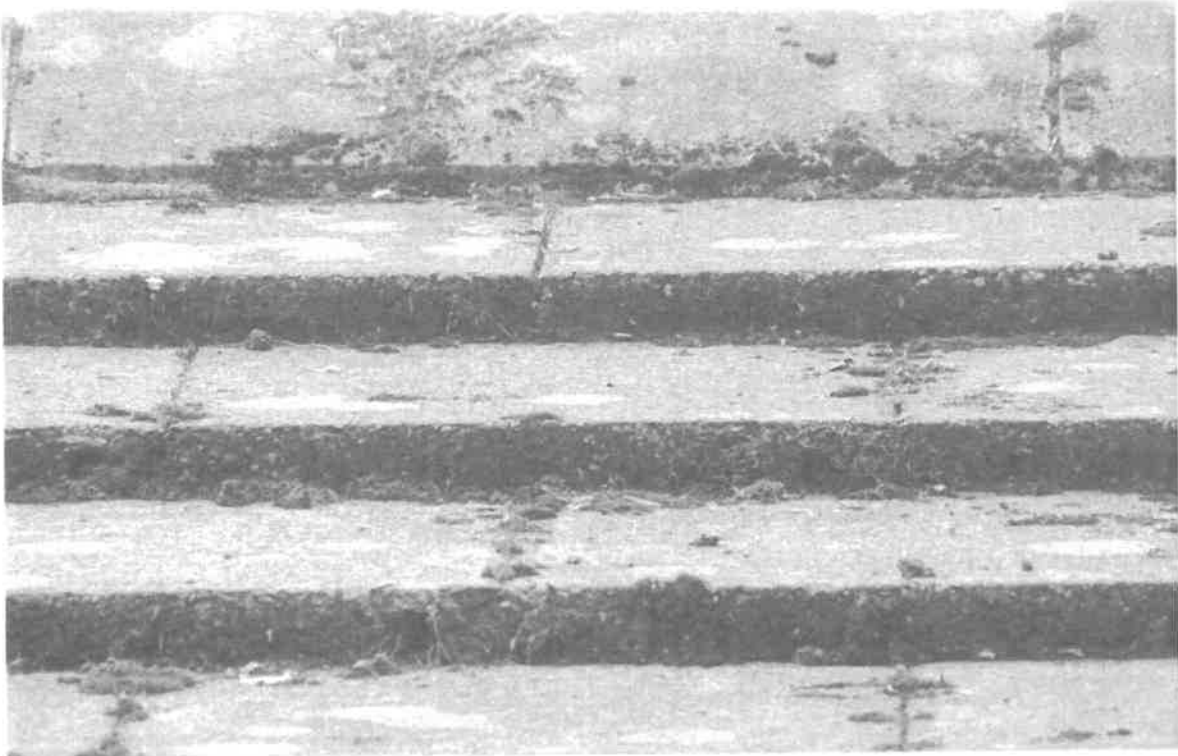


1 – The front of the house and garage.



2 – The rear of the house.





3 – Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition with no suitable gaps.



4 – Fascia boards and soffits at the eaves and gables are fixed tightly against brickwork.



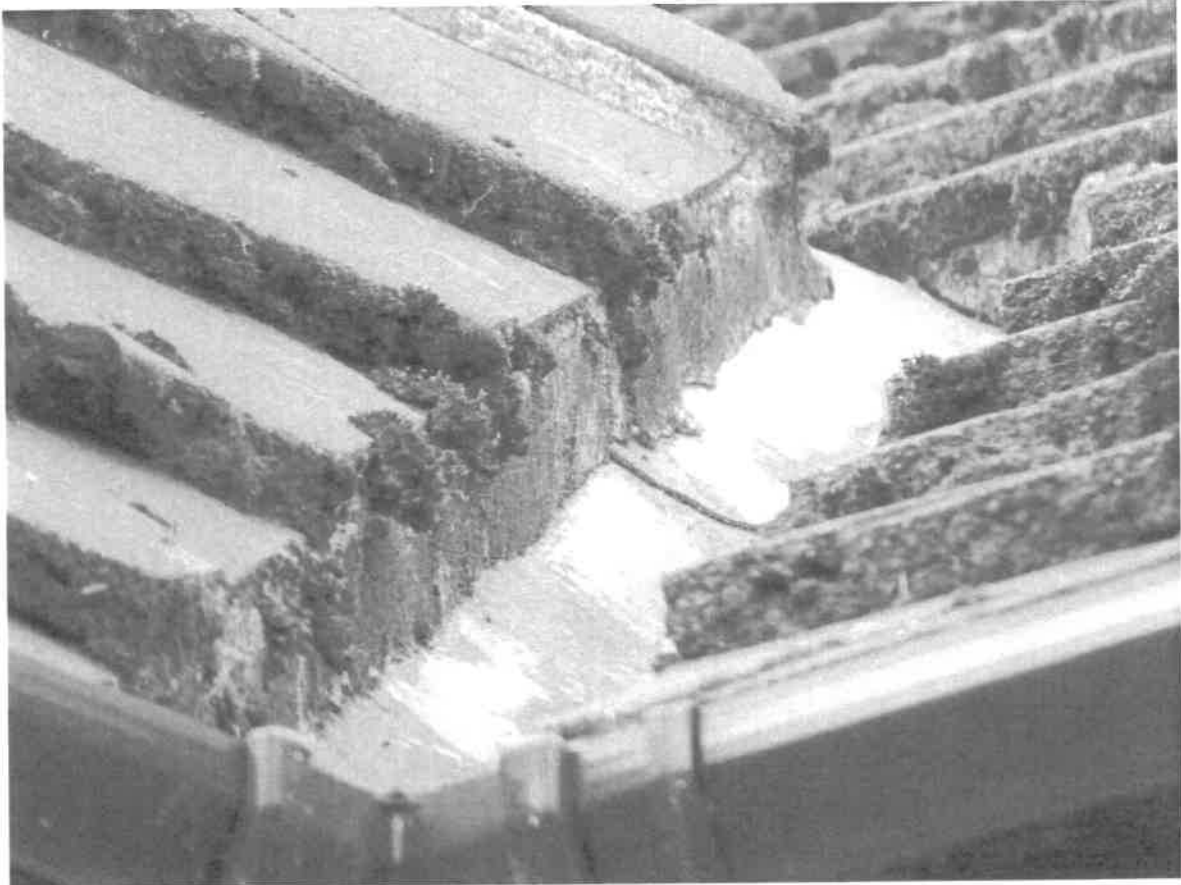


5 – Lead flashing is fitted tightly with no suitable gaps.

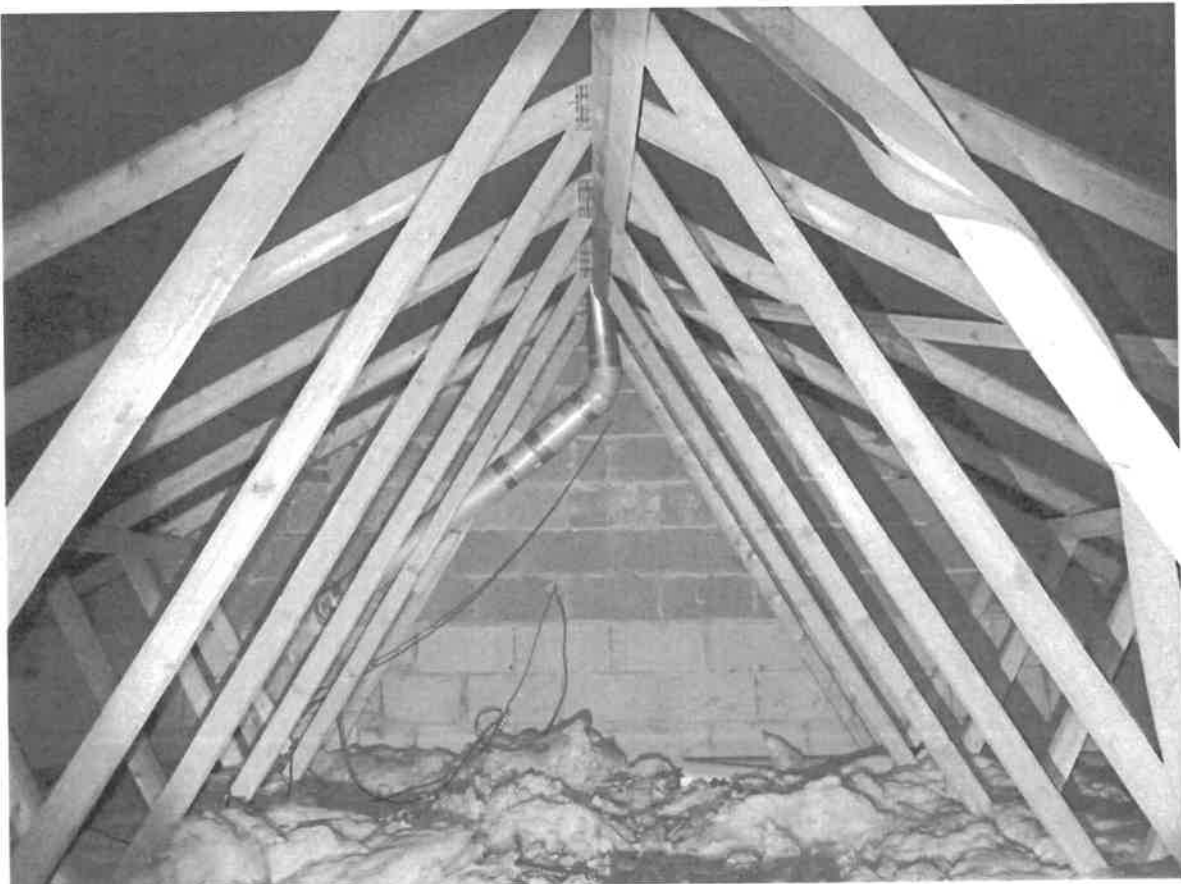


6 – Brickwork, mortar, and window frames are in good condition with no suitable gaps.





7 – Tiles and lead flashing in roof valleys are in good condition with no suitable gaps.



8 – The house has a single enclosed roof void.

