BAT SURVEY REPORT

86 ASHBOURNE ROAD, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE

JANUARY 2017

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by Sammons Architectural on behalf of Mr Neville, to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of an outbuilding at 86 Ashbourne Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5AT. The survey was required to inform a planning application for demolition of the building and replacement with a new garage.

A preliminary roost assessment of the building was undertaken on 9 January 2017.

The surveys were led by an experienced ecologist who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds a current Natural England bat licence.

The survey found no evidence of bats either inside the building or externally.

There were several potential roosting crevices present on the external walls which could not be safely accessed to check with an endoscope; however, due to the poor condition of the roof allowing water to drain down the walls, these features appeared to be of low suitability for roosting bats.

As a precaution, it is recommended that a licensed bat worker is present during the initial stages of demolition, to undertake an endoscope check of the higher crevices which could not be safely accessed during the survey, prior to careful dismantling of these areas.

In the unlikely event that evidence of a bat roost was found during this precautionary check, work would need to stop immediately. In this instance it is likely that further survey would be required in spring to inform a licence application from Natural England.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background & Objectives

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by Sammons Architectural on behalf of Mr Neville, to undertake a bat survey of an outbuilding at 86 Ashbourne Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5AT (SJ991563). The survey was required to inform a planning application for demolition of the building and replacement with a new garage.

A preliminary roost assessment of the building was undertaken on 9 January 2017.

The survey was undertaken by an experienced and licensed ecologist who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds a current Natural England bat licence.

Unless the client indicates to the contrary, information on any species found to be present on the site will be passed to the county biological records centre to update records held for the area.

2.2 Site Description

The site comprised a derelict outbuilding adjacent to the client's house. The property was located on a track leading down from Ashbourne Road on the south-east corner of the market town of Leek. The site was near to open fields and woodland to the south, and residential houses and buildings to the north, west and east.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

All 18 British bat species and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 as amended and are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012. Combined, this legislation means that it is illegal to:

- Deliberately or intentionally kill, injure or take a bat.
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not)
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An internal and external building inspection of the outbuilding was undertaken on 9 January 2017.

A powerful torch, binoculars and endoscope were used during the search for evidence of bats which includes droppings, urine stains, feeding remains, staining and individual bats. Potential roost sites and access points were also recorded.

An assessment of the building for potential to support a bat roost was also undertaken.

Weather during the survey was light rain, overcast, with a light breeze and temperature of 6°C.

3.2 Personnel

The survey was carried out by Eleanor Weir, an experienced ecologist who has held a Natural England bat licence for 12 years (Bat licence Level 2: 2015-12689-CLS-CLS) and is a full member of CIEEM.

3.3 Constraints

The building could be accessed fully both internally and externally. The building was very damp inside with a wet floor, and bat droppings are unlikely to be visible for long in these conditions.

The upper cracks and crevices of the external wall could not be safely inspected with an endoscope at the time of the survey due to the poor conditions of the walls.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The outbuilding was a former animal shed which was single storey and comprised brick walls which were rendered with concrete on the inside and on the external west wall. The roof was pitched and covered with unlined corrugated asbestos which had deteriorated in places, allowing water ingress. There were some plastic panels in the roof allowing additional light in. Most of the windows and doors were open and unglazed so inside the building was very light, damp and draughty. There was a lean-to extension on the north side of the building which was divided into two sections. Each section had a corrugated asbestos roof which had largely caved in. The walls of the lean-to were either stone or brick and lined with clay tiles or rendered with concrete.

Inside the building was open to the roof (i.e. no roof space was present) and the asbestos ridge was open underneath, so there was no potential for bats to roost in ridge cavities. The rafters holding the roof sheets in place had been concreted into the walls, and the concrete render also sealed much of the eaves and gables where the roof met the walls.

Inside the smaller lean-to area there was a shallow crack in the wall where the roof had collapsed. At the back of one side of the lean-to the stone wall had been lined with vertical clay roof tiles – there appeared to be a cavity between the roof tiles and the external wall but no evidence of bat use.

Externally there were several gaps in the brickwork on the north and east walls due to missing mortar and a cracked lintel. The lower gaps which could be safely accessed were checked with an endoscope and no evidence of bats was noted. Due to the poor condition of the roof overlap and broken ridge above the north and east facing walls, it is likely that water drains into these walls (which appears to have contributed to the poor condition of the brickwork in places). This is likely to reduce suitability for roosting bats.

It was noted that the outbuilding was heavily used by the owner's cat, with numerous bird and small mammal skeletons and carcasses, however no bat corpses were found.

4.2 Photographs

Plate 1: South aspect and east facing gable wall of outbuilding

Plate 2: North side of outbuilding showing lean-to

Plate 3: West gable end and lean to

Plate 4: Crevices at top of north wall showing broken roof which is likely to cause water to drain down into the wall

Plate 5: Crevices in brickwork and broken lintel at top of east facing gable wall (left); inside outbuilding (right).

Plate 6: Inside lean-to with broken roof and shallow crack in wall

Plate 7: Inside lean-to with broken roof and tile lined wall.

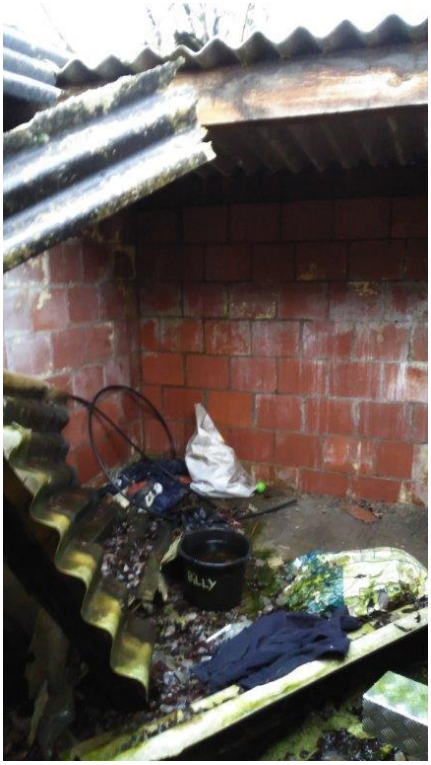

Plate 8: Small gap above tile lined wall leads to a cavity behind. No evidence of bat use found.

5. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The preliminary roost assessment found no evidence of roosting bats either internally or externally using the outbuilding.

Although there were several potential roosting crevices present, due to the likely damp ingress from damaged roof structures, the building was assessed to have low potential for supporting a bat roost.

5.2 Potential Impacts of Works

The building is in a poor state of repair and demolition is proposed.

In the unlikely event that bats were present, demolition could cause loss of bat roosts and bats could potentially be harmed or killed during works.

5.3 Recommendations

There were several potential roosting crevices noted on the building- those that could be checked were confirmed to be absent of bats. The features which could not be safely accessed to check with an endoscope are likely to be of low potential for roosting bats due to water draining down the walls from the damaged roof.

As a precaution, a licensed bat worker should be present during the initial stages of demolition, to undertake an endoscope check of the higher crevices within the lintel and brickwork prior to careful dismantling of these areas.

In the unlikely event that evidence of a bat roost was found, work would need to stop immediately. In this case further survey would be required to inform a licence application prior to demolition.

If the building is not demolished within 18 months, it is recommended that an updated survey is undertaken.

6. REFERENCES

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

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

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