

**'NETHERWOOD'
35 CARBONE HILL
NORTHAW
HERTFORDSHIRE**

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT



2017

CLIVE HERBERT

Amphibian, Reptile & Mammal Conservation Limited
Species protection and habitat conservation specialists

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Amphibian, Reptile & Mammal Conservation Limited were contracted on 3rd November 2017 by Mr. Oktay Yilmaz, via Philip Dean Limited, to undertake a standard Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of an existing vacant property (see cover photograph), known as ‘Netherwood’, 35 Carbone Hill, Northaw, Hertfordshire EN6 4PN, and situated at approximately National Grid Reference TL 2944 0390.
- 1.2 This initial Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was completed in order to determine the potential for bats to occur in the building and to identify if any further bat survey work or mitigation / avoidance measures were required.
- 1.3 The assessment was commissioned in support of a forthcoming planning application for a rear extension to the property.
- 1.4 There are, however, no historical records of any bats roosting within the building, although a desk study prior to the site visit highlighted the presence of roosting Brown Long-eared Bats (*Plecotus auritus*) in at least one other property in the same road, and this assessment was therefore undertaken as a precautionary measure to inform the planning process.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The objective of the daytime Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was to view the existing site layout, to inspect the exterior and interior of the building in order to assess its suitability to act as a bat roost site(s) and to conduct a detailed internal and external search for any direct evidence of historical or current bat occupancy, such as droppings, staining on walls and rafters etc.
- 2.2 The assessment was completed on 8th November 2017 when there was full access to all parts of the proposed development footprint and standard 10 x 40 binoculars together with an endoscope were available, where appropriate, to inspect the exterior and interior of the building.
- 2.3 This work was carried out under *Natural England* Class Survey Licence WML-CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number 2015-13348-CLS-CLS and completed by the report’s author, a licensed bat ecologist with 30 years’ experience working in and around the county.
- 2.4 The assessment was conducted according to the latest ‘best practice’ standards as published in the ‘Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines’ (Bat Conservation Trust, 3rd edition, 2016) and the Standing Advice to LPAs published by *Natural England* in September 2012.

3. Constraints

- 3.1 It is considered that there are no specific constraints operating on the assessment results presented in section 4 below.
- 3.2 The absence of a bat roost in any one season can, however, never prove the absence of a roost at another season, such as during the summer maternity roost period, as bats regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of the year.
- 3.3 The results presented in section 4 below remain valid for a period of twelve months from the date of the survey, after which time they should not be relied upon and further advice should be sought regarding updating the survey.

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The site comprises a large vacant residential two-storey property (see photographs 1 – 4 below) that is brick-built with a single storey side extension to the north and a rear conservatory.

The roof has three chimneys and is part felt-lined and part wooden-boarded (see photograph 5 – 6 below). Old fibreglass floor insulation is also present throughout the loft void.

The building has a single L-shaped loft void below the pitched, tiled roof. The tiles on parts of the roof are old and appeared to be in poor condition with many obvious raised gaps visible from ground level, especially on the rear elevation adjacent to the conservatory (see photograph 7 below). These gaps provide a number of potential points of ingress for bats to access roof space.

With the exception of an area immediately around the loft hatch, the roof space shows no evidence of disturbance for many years, thereby providing excellent undisturbed conditions for recording any past bat activity.

There are no other features associated with the house which could provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats away from the roof space and areas described above. There are also no underground structures present that would be suitable as potential hibernation sites for bats in the winter.

As a result of the gaps in the roof tiles, the building was assessed to have a **‘high potential’** to act as a bat roost site.



Photographs 1 – 4: Front, rear and side elevations



Photographs 5 – 6: Internal roof void



Photograph 7: Example of raised tiles on rear elevation

4.2 Internal Inspection

The internal inspection of the loft void located numerous Brown Long-eared Bat droppings (see photograph 8 below) throughout the main area of the L-shaped roof space: Droppings were not concentrated in any particular section of the loft void which is suggestive of pre-emergence internal flight within the roof space.



Photograph 8: Example of bat droppings in loft void

4.3 External Inspection

No evidence of any past or current bat occupancy was found during the detailed external inspection of the building.

The assessment visit was, however, carried out in early winter after the end of the bats' active season and so it is highly possible that any external evidence has been lost to the weather during the autumn period.

5. Summary & Recommendations

5.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment of the property categorised the building as having a '**high potential**' to support a bat roost(s) due to the structure and condition of the property affording numerous opportunities for bat ingress, such as gaps in tiles, and an undisturbed loft void for shelter.

5.2 The internal examination of the building confirmed this assessment and located extensive evidence of Brown Long-eared Bat presence throughout the main loft void.

5.3 The external examination of the building did not locate any evidence of past bat occupancy but this is considered most likely to be a 'false negative' resulting from the loss of such evidence to weather during the autumn period.

5.4 In accordance with nationally published guidance, it is therefore now **recommended** that a series of three dusk emergence / dawn re-entry surveys are completed during the bats' forthcoming 2018 active season (between May and September inclusive).

5.5 This work is required in order to identify the full species assemblage present, confirm the status of the roost (e.g. if the property is being used as a summer maternity roost) and the numbers present in order to provide the necessary data to inform any future DEFRA licence application that may be required to disturb, damage or destroy a roost of a European Protected Species.