

Mr Dave Lewis

Laburnum Cottage, Horseman's Green, Wrexham

Bat Survey Report

June 2015

Produced by



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Mr Dave Lewis commissioned Wildbanks Conservation to undertake bat assessments of a small residential property on the edge of Horseman's Green, Wrexham in support of a planning application to extend the property. This report details the findings of external and internal building assessments and a dusk emergence survey completed in June 2015.
- 1.2 The application site comprised a detached small bungalow set within a garden predominantly laid to lawn with a hardstanding driveway. The grid reference is SJ 43610 42339. The site is approximately 3km south of Threapwood village and 10km due west of Whitchurch. The site is bordered by a hedgerow on the eastern boundary and timber fencing on all other boundaries. The site abuts the busy A525 (see location plan). The site is surrounded by pasture and other agricultural agricultural.
- 1.3 Development proposals are to extend the property on the eastern gable end and convert the loft into another bedroom. Works will include the removal of the roof and chimney stacks.

2.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Desktop Study

- 2.1 A review of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken within 2km of the development site boundary to identify any existing sites with statutory and no statutory nature conservation designations.

Internal/ External Building Assessment

- 2.2 The exterior of the building was visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity in June 2015. Features such as small gaps under barge/soffit/fascia boards, raised or missing roof/ridge tiles or gaps at gable ends, which have the potential for use as access points, were sought. Evidence that bats actively used these potential access points would include staining within the gaps, or bat droppings or urine staining under gaps; a note being made wherever these were present. The presence of cobwebs and / or general detritus within and around potential access points was used as an indicator that bats had not recently used the area to access the building.
- 2.3 The interior of the building, including roof voids where present, were also visually assessed for evidence of bat activity and / or for the potential to be used by bats. Evidence of a roost would be determined by the presence of dead or live bat(s), concentrated piles or scattered droppings, food remains such as insect wing fragments as well as scratch marks and / or staining.
- 2.4 The survey was conducted by two licensed bat workers on 19th June 2015.

Nocturnal Survey

- 2.5 During the internal and external building assessments features were identified in association with the building that had the potential to offer roosting opportunities for bat species. As such, a dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the building to fully determine whether any bats were currently roosting within the building. To complete this assessment two licensed bat workers were positioned around the building to ensure all aspects could be fully observed. The surveyors were positioned around the building from 30 minutes prior to and until 90 minutes following sunset.

- 2.6 This survey was undertaken on 23rd June 2015, when weather conditions were suitable i.e. when the ambient air temperature exceeded 10°C and when there was little/no wind or rain. Batbox Duet bat detectors were used during this survey to aid species identification.
- 2.7 June is within the main activity and maternity season for bats. Consequently, the nocturnal survey has been undertaken on the building during the optimal survey period to confirm the presence or likely absence of a bat roost.

3.0 RESULTS

Desktop Study

3.1 There are no statutorily designated sites within 2km of the site boundary. Two locally designated Wildlife Sites fall within 2km of the development site. Charity Farm Grassland lies 0.7km south west of the development sites and is a semi-improved grassland on the banks of a small stream. Ford wood lies 0.9km west and is a small deciduous woodland.

3.2 No further protected species records were provided by NBN Gateway.

Internal/External Building Assessment (Figure 2 and Plates 1- 5 Appendix 1)

3.3 In summary the building surveyed comprised a small single storey detached cottage with a pitched roof and a flat roofed extension that includes the kitchen. A conservatory is located on the western gable end. The cottage sits within garden laid to lawn with hedgerows bordering the southern and eastern boundaries.

3.4 Building B1a is the old cottage and has a pitched roof with slate tiles, no underfelt is present within the loft space and the slates are secured in place with mortar onto the battens from the inside. All walls are fully rendered, no brickwork is visible externally. No barge boards or fascia or soffits are present. Lead flashing is present around the chimney stack but this was well sealed with no access points noted. Refer to plates 1-7.

3.5 The only potential access points comprised gaps under the ridge tiles and one raised tile by the guttering. No further potentially usable roosting habitat was found in association with this building.

3.6 An accumulation of 19 small bat droppings were seen within the loft space below the ridge of the roof (plate 7). These appeared old but determining the age of bat droppings is difficult. As such an Emergence Survey was conducted to ascertain if bats are using the property.

3.7 Building B1b comprised a single storey flat roofed extension with felt roof. Facia boards were present but the occasional gaps that were present were covered in cobwebs and did not allow bat access.

3.8 No potential access points were seen in association to building B1b

Nocturnal Survey

3.9 Weather conditions during the emergence survey undertaken on 23rd June 2015 were optimal with a light breeze and no rain, 80% cloud cover and an ambient air temperature of 14°C. The survey started at 21:15 and concluded at 23:15. Sunset was at 21:42.

3.10 The first bat detected was a common pipistrelle at 22:22, 40 minutes after sunset. This bat was observed commuting quickly from west to east along the hedge parallel with the A525. Two further bats were seen commuting following the same route at 22:26 and 22:56. One Soprano pipistrelle began feeding around the north west of the property at 23:00 and remained doing so until the end of the survey. No bats were observed emerging from or entering any feature of the surveyed building.

4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No bats were recorded roosting within the surveyed buildings within the application site; therefore it is considered that there are no statutory constraints to the re-development of this building from the presence of a bat roost or any other protected species.
- 4.2 However, an accumulation of 19 small bat droppings were seen within the loft space of the cottage. Roosting potential in association with the surveyed building were primarily limited to gaps beneath ridge tiles, which corresponds to the location of the droppings within the loft. During the nocturnal survey no bats were observed emerging from buildings and bat activity in the vicinity of the site was found to be very low. The bat droppings were considered to not be recent when assessed during the Visual Assessment, this is supported by the fact no bats were seen emerging from the property and the very low numbers of bats recorded during the survey. It is also considered that these pipistrelle bats, recorded commuting through the site, some 40, 44 and 74 minutes after sunset, emerged from roosts earlier in the evening some distance from the site, as pipistrelle bats are known to generally emerge earlier in the evening (sunset to 30min after sunset). It is considered that bats are no longer use this building as a regular roost.
- 4.3 The only bats recorded during the survey were pipistrelle bats. It is known that Pipistrelle bats use multiple roost sites during the year and often move between roosts.
- 4.4 The Emergence Survey was carried out in June, which is within the main activity and maternity season for bats. Consequently, the nocturnal survey has been undertaken on the building during the optimal survey period to confirm the presence or likely absence of a bat roost.
- 4.5 As some roosting opportunities exist and a historic roost has been identified within the property, provision within the new building works should be incorporated to maintain these features. The inclusion of the below features will maintain, if not enhance the opportunities for the small local population of bats.

- 4.6 As such, the re-development works can proceed on the site without any further survey in relation to bats. It should, however, be noted that bats and their roosts are transitory by nature. Due to there being some potential access points, it is recommended that best practice methods are employed during removal of any external building features, including door and window frames, roof tiles or stonework. These features should be removed by hand, where possible. In the unlikely event that bats or more evidence of bats is recorded during works, operations should cease immediately and advice sought from either Wildbanks Conservation or Natural England.
- 4.7 If works requiring the removal of external building features have not been undertaken by 1st May 2016 a further nocturnal assessment (conducted during May to August inclusive) is recommended prior to the start of works to ensure that the status of the building has not altered during the intervening period.
- 4.8 Enhancement measures
- Installation of one Ibstock bat ecohome into the western gable end of the property.
 - Installation of one roosting feature under the ridge tiles

Appendix 1 – Plates 1 – 6

Plate 1 – Shows the southern elevation of B1a.



Plate 2 – Showing the northern and eastern aspects of B1a and B1b and potential access points



Plate 3 – Showing the well-sealed eaves and no potential access points



Plate 4 – Showing the fascia boards of B1b. No gaps present.



Plate 5 – Showing the interior of the roof void, note the mortar present on the back of the tiles, eliminating any potential bat access.

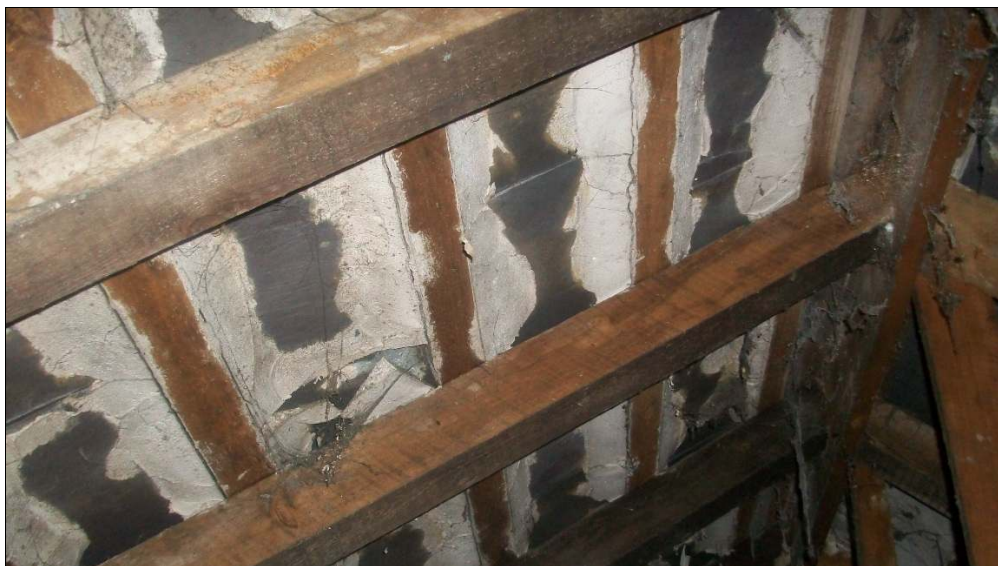


Plate 6 – The roof void within B1a, note the extensive amount of cobwebs



Plate 7 – Accumulation of bat droppings found within the roof void of B1a

