Flight Ecology
32 Firs Road
Milnthorpe
Cumbria
LA7 7QF

07988 718463
rich@flightecology.co.uk
www.flightecology.co.uk

Our Ref: J414/D01

10th February 2022

Paul Scott
Forestry England
Northern England Offices
Eals Burn
Bellingham,
Hexham
Northumberland
NE48 2HP

Dear Paul,

RE: Bat Inspection Survey, Brown Law, Redford, County Durham, DL13 3NL

Further to my visit to the above property to carry out an inspection survey for bats, I am writing to provide you with my survey findings.

Flight Ecology visited the site on the 10th February 2022 to carry out an inspection survey to establish the potential presence of bats. The survey was undertaken by Rich Flight, a Class 2 Natural England licensed bat ecologist and member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). The survey comprised an internal and external inspection of the building.

Evidence of bat presence may include:
• bats;
• bat droppings;
• signs of feeding; and
• staining.

The proposed works involve the re-roofing of the property, as well as the replacement of the external render.

Site Description

The survey site consists of a modest bungalow set within a small garden within an open area of the Hamsterley Forest area of County Durham. Lying towards the end of a small 'dead-end' road which features a small number of detached houses, the property is situated in a relatively remote and rural location.

The surrounding habitat comprises pastoral grazing pasture in the immediate vicinity, before giving way to the dense woodland of Hamsterley Forest. Bedburn Beck, a moderate-sized stream, flows in a generally easterly direction, approximately 150m to the south-east.

There are no major roads or significant conurbations in close proximity to the property, the closest town being Crook, a small town approximately 10km to the north-east.

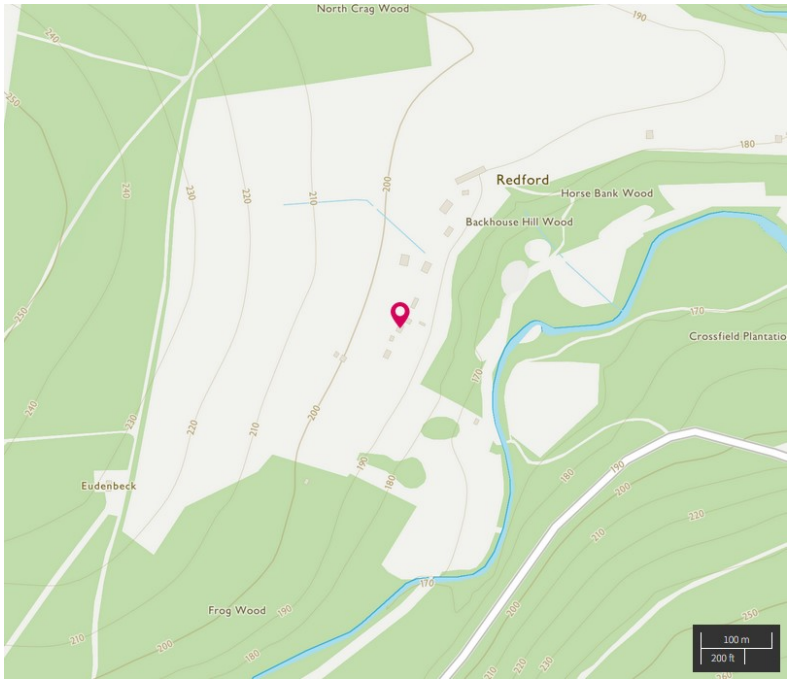

Figure 1: Site Location

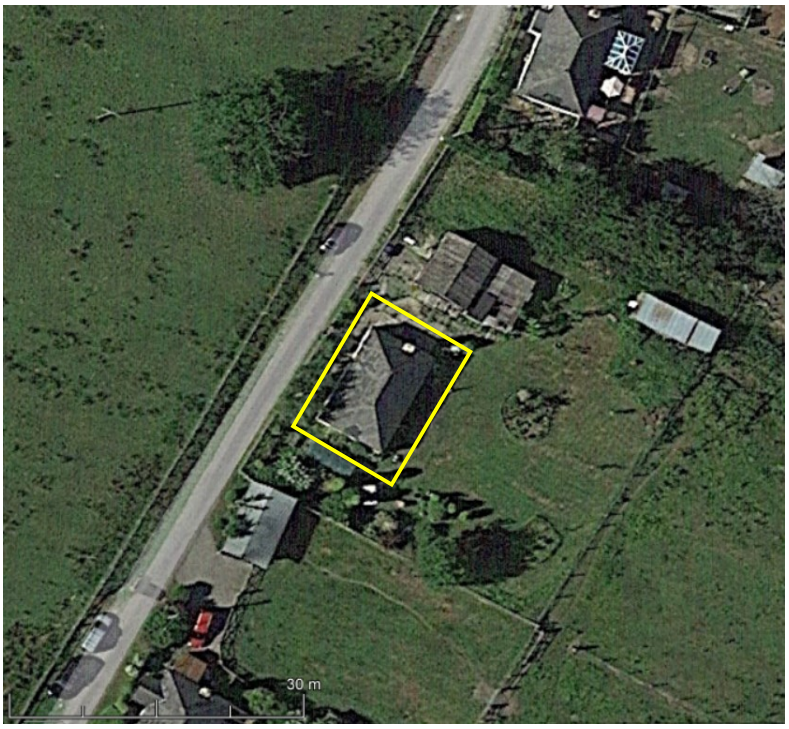

Figure 2: Property outlined in yellow

The survey building comprises a small single-story bungalow. The elevations of the building are rendered throughout. The roof, which is laid out in a hipped style, is covered with manufactured ceramic slates, with ceramic ridge tiles. Internally, there is a single roof void beneath the main house roof.

Survey Results

The external elevations of the property are rendered concrete blockwork throughout, providing little or no potential for roosting bats. The render is mostly intact which eliminates any cracks or crevices that bats might occupy. There is a small patch where damp has caused delamination of the render from the main fabric of the house, but there were no gaps or crevices beneath this area.

Where the rendered sections join the roof there is potential for the render to fail and produce small gaps. However, there is no sign that the render has deteriorated enough in any of these locations to provide bat roosting potential.

The roof is covered with thin ceramic tiles that mimic slates. These are all closely fitted and offer no gaps or crevices between them. Moss can also often be found in the gaps between the tiles, effectively sealing them from the outside. The roof is arranged in a hipped style, which provides a short main ridge and four angled hip ridges. All ridges are covered with ceramic ridge tiles which are close-fitting and sealed with mortar in all instances.

Internally, there is a single roof void over the entire house. The roof is backed with timber sarking boards, which are all intact and close-fitted, thus eliminating any external ingress

through the roof itself. On occasion, light could be seen from the eaves of the roof where a small gap can be found between the roof and the wall-top below. This gap appears to be too small for bats in most places, but has been widened in some locations by mice, which have found access to the roof void.

Mouse droppings were found throughout the roof void, with several mouse nests being found within the ceiling insulation. No bat droppings were found however, which indicates that no bats have been roosting within the roof void. In addition to this, the void featured numerous cobwebs, most notably accumulating at the ridge level of the void. This is a location where open roosting bats (such as brown long-eared bats) would naturally roost, if they were present. However, the presence of the cobwebs strongly indicates the absence of such bat species.

The habitat in the local area is considered to be highly suitable for bats with extensive woodland and access to water, open spaces and edge habitat. The area is also very rural in nature and therefore disturbance and light pollution are both very low.

Conclusions

There is no evidence of bats within the building; the roof appears to be clean and clear of bat evidence. The external inspection also showed no evidence of bats and no locations where bats would be likely to roost; the building appears to be relatively well-sealed.

Although the surrounding habitat is highly suitable for bats, it is likely that the older buildings in the area are more suitable for roosting bats and offer more appropriate gaps and cavities

Therefore, given the lack of any evidence of bats, and the absence of significant suitable roost locations, it is considered unlikely that works will impact any bats or bat roosting locations.

Further surveys are not considered to be necessary, and no mitigation for loss of bat habitat will be required.

If you require any more information or have any questions about the findings of this survey, please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Rich Flight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM
Director
Flight Ecology
rich@flightecology.co.uk

Figure 3: Photographs

Photograph 1: Southern corner

Photograph 2: South-eastern elevation

Photograph 3: Southern roof detail

Photograph 4: Tile detail

Photograph 5: North-eastern elevation

Photograph 6: Chimney

Photograph 7: Damaged render

Photograph 8: Eaves under gutter, showing mouse damage

Photograph 9: Roof void

Photograph 10: Ridge apex showing cobwebs

Photograph 11: Ceiling insulation

Photograph 12: Ridge showing cobwebs

Photograph 11: Mouse nest

Photograph 12: Pipe lagging chewed by mice