

Our ref: West Farm report

Your ref:

14 December 2020

Neil Mattinson  
West Farm Cottage  
Main Street  
Sibford Gower  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire OX15 5RT

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Mattinson

**Re: Bat survey of West Farm Cottage, Main Street, Sibford Gower,**

I am writing to report on the findings of the survey I completed of the above property on Thursday 10 December. I have set out below my understanding of the proposed works based on the architect drawings and your description of your plans, a description of the property where it will be affected by the proposed works, the results of my survey and my assessment of the potential impact on bats.

**Project Proposal**

I understand that you are proposing to construct a two storey addition to the existing western extension of the property that will extend at right angles to the cottage northward into the rear garden. This will result in the loss of the northern elevation of the existing western extension (it will become incorporated into the internal structure of the new build) and will require the roof of the new build to join the north facing slope of the roof of the existing western extension.

**Survey work and results**

I am an experienced bat ecologist with over 25 years professional experience of working with bats and 15 years as a volunteer roost visitor undertaking visits to private households for Natural England in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Oxfordshire. I hold a Level 3 survey licence (Class Licence Registration Number: 2015-15470-CLS-CLS) which enables me to enter and undertake bat surveys of roosts. I undertook an external and internal inspection of the western extension of the existing cottage. I had good visual access to all exterior parts of the building which was inspected using a Clulite (1 million candle power) torch. I looked for potential entrance points at the eaves and along the gable end at the junction of the wall and the roof. I searched for droppings and looked for characteristic staining and scratch marks that might indicate an entrance to a roost. I also entered and searched the roof void of the western extension and had clear views of the ridge beam and the two gable end walls. The roof also contained a number of boxes and storage containers and I was able to search these for evidence of use by bats such as droppings, dead bats, urine splash marks in fine layers of dust or crystalline urine marks.

**Building description**

The western extension has at some time in the past been added to the original West Farm Cottage. It does not sit flush with the alignment of the walls of the original cottage being set back on the southern elevation and extended further into the garden on the northern elevation. The southern elevation and

western gable end is constructed of Cotswold stone to match the rest of the cottage. The northern elevation is covered by a plaster render which is painted cream (see photos below). There are no gaps in the mortar on the gable end and at the top of the wall where it meets the roof all the mortar is complete with no cracks or gaps that could be used by bats. There is one bedroom window and a set of glass doors in the gable end wall both of which have a wooden lintel. There are no gaps or potential access points for bats associated with the lintels or the window and door frames.

The top of the wall on the northern elevation has a fascia board attached to which is the guttering and there are no gaps between the fascia and the wall. The northern elevation at some time in the last few years was covered by Virginia creeper judging by the characteristic sucker marks on the fascia board guttering and top of the wall. There is a single living room window which is tightly sealed with no gaps or access points for bats.

The roof has a covering of slate tiles and a slate ridge tile. The tiles are in good condition with no gaps and the mortar along the ridge tiles was also complete with no gaps.

### **Results**

During the survey I found no evidence of use by bats. Externally the western extension is in good condition with no gaps in mortar or lifted or broken tiles that would provide potential access points for bats. The stone work on the southern elevation and western gable end is in good condition with no gaps in the mortar. The wall of the northern elevation is in excellent condition and is covered by a smooth intact plaster render. As a consequence I could find no potential access points into the building or external features that might be used by bats.

Internally in the roof void I found no evidence of use by bats. The ridge and the tops of both gable end walls are covered in cobwebs with no clean cobweb free spaces that are often indicative of the coming and going or roosting use by bats. I found no evidence of droppings, urine splashes, crystalline urine, feeding remains, characteristic staining or scratch marks. I also noted that the bitumen roof liner appears to be folded over the top of the ridge beam blocking potential access through the ridge into the roof void, if there were gaps in the mortar of the ridge tiles.

### **Assessment**

December is not an optimal time of year to survey for bats and evidence of use on external features such as droppings or urine runs or splashes may no longer be present having been washed away by autumn and winter rain. Internally, however, evidence of bat use will remain throughout the year. As such an assessment of bat use/potential should be precautionary to reflect the time of year. However, I had unrestricted access to both the internal and external features of the western extension and excellent views of all parts of the building that will be affected by the proposed build, which increases the confidence that can be placed in this assessment. Internally, there is no evidence of use by bats and I am confident that bats are not accessing and using the roof void of the western extension. Externally there are no obvious access points into the walls of the building as there are no gaps in mortar or behind fascia boards that could provide access to external roosting spaces in the walls or around window or door frames. The roof is in good condition with no broken or slipped tiles that would provide access to the small void between the tiles and roof liner. Also as the tiles are slate they are flat and smooth and lie flush on top of each other (unlike clay tiles) and as such there are no gaps between tiles that could be accessed by bats. For the reasons stated above I am confident that there is negligible potential for bats to roost in the external features of the western extension. This combined with the result of the internal inspection leads to the conclusion that the western extension shows no evidence of use by bats and that it has negligible potential to be used by bats. As such I am of the opinion that there is no justification for further survey work in relation to bats in relation to the building works you are proposing and that these works will have no impact on bat roosts.

Yours sincerely



Dr Peter Shepherd MCIEEM  
For and on behalf of BSG Ecology

Photographs



Western Gable elevation showing good condition of the stonework.



Northern elevation showing plaster render fascia board and guttering and slate covered roof.



Northern elevation showing fascia board and guttering. Grey marks on guttering are the sucker stains left by Virginia creeper.