

Preliminary Roost Assessment

179-195 Oakfield Road

Anfield

Liverpool

L4 0UF

For

URBED Ltd



Gritstone ecology

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Methods	4
3	Results	6
4	Evaluation.....	9
5	Impact assessment	10
6	Required actions	10
7	References	11
8	Appendix 1 – Photographs	12



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw, for URBED Ltd. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of N° 179-195 Oakfield Road, Anfield, on 12th March 2019.

1.2 Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3 Surveyor details

Stewart is licenced to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning and preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4 Proposed development

The development proposals are for the refurbishment and repair of the buildings, to bring them back into use. The work will involve removal and repair of the roof and walls, to weather-seal the buildings, and extensive internal works.

1.5 Site context

The terrace is located on Oakfield Road, Anfield, L4 0UF, GR SJ 36305 92915, approximately 3km northeast of Liverpool City Centre.

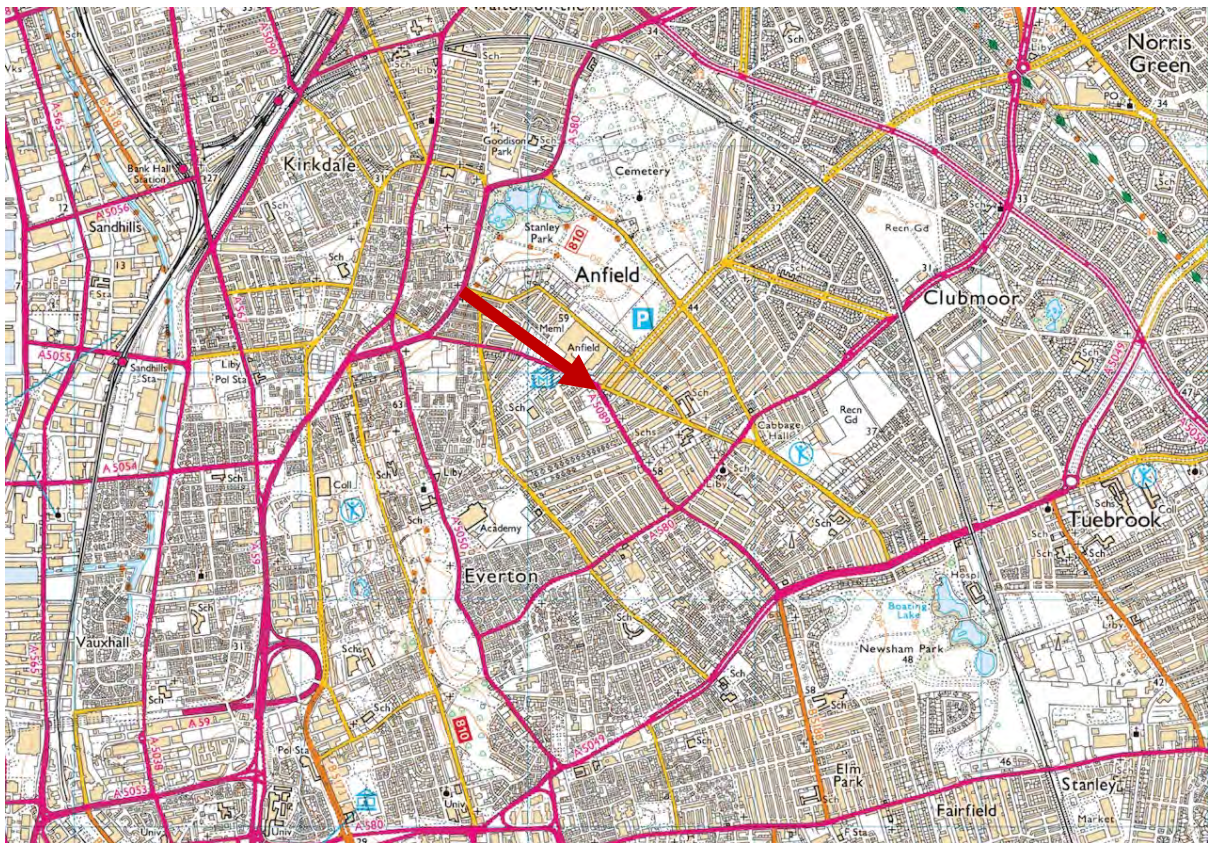
The site includes the 9 adjacent terraced houses, and their back yards; there are no gardens, landscaped areas, or outbuildings. Habitat within 50m of the building includes; high density urban housing, bare ground, and busy well-lit roads.

Habitat within 500m includes, high density urban housing, commercial and retail units, Anfield Football Stadium, busy well-lit roads, linked back gardens, and minor areas of open green-space.

The area as a whole is fragmented by busy well-lit roads; and the site and surrounding area provide negligible quality habitat for bats.



1.6 Site location



1.6a – 179-195 Oakfield Road – site location.



1.6b – 179-195 Oakfield Road –aerial photograph looking north.



2 Methods

2.1 Survey timings

The survey was undertaken on 12th March 2019. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, cold and dry with a temperature of 9°C.

2.2 Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3 Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4 Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.

Within roof spaces



- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5 Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6 Survey limitations

The survey was carried out in March, a time of year when bats are less active, and external signs of use, such as droppings are less likely to be present. The buildings are in poor condition and have been subject to vandalism and theft. Lead flashing has been removed from roofs and chimney bases, and ridge tiles have been removed. As a result, the ceilings have collapsed in some areas, and roof voids are exposed to the elements, or unsafe to inspect.



3 Results

3.1 External inspection



3.1a – The east side of the terrace with N° 179 to the left.

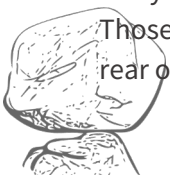
N°s 179 – 195 Oakfield Road are unoccupied terraced houses, which (with the exception of N° 189) have been empty and un-used for up-to 10 years. The front room of N° 189 is used by Homebaked CLT. The buildings are fitted with steel security shutters, have been subject to vandalism & theft, and are in a poor state of repair.

The terrace is set on a busy road, with high level lighting, in an area of dense urban housing, with no gardens or open green space close by.

The houses have pitched roofs covered with a mixture of Marley concrete, & slate roof tiles; and Marley concrete, & ceramic ridge tiles; roof pitches face east & west, the gable end faces south. End tiles at the verges are sealed with cement. The northern end of the terrace is in use by the Homebaked Community Bakery and will not be affected by these proposals.

Leadwork was fitted at the base of chimneys, however, this has been removed from all of the houses, with the exception of N° 189, where it is tightly fitted. Ridge tiles have been removed from approximately 30% of the ridge line, those remaining are fixed in place with cement.

Walls are solid brick, lintels are a mixture of arched brickwork & stone, sills are stone. Window and door frames are a mixture of UPVC and aluminium. Much of the glass is missing or broken. All windows are fitted with steel mesh, and steel security doors are fitted to each property, to prevent entry or further vandalism. Wooden bargeboards are fitted at the rear, and at the south gable end. Those on the south gable end are in good condition and tightly fixed against the wall. Those to the rear of the properties are in poor condition, wet, rotting, and in some places missing.



The terrace is in poor condition. Roof and ridge tiles have been broken or disturbed, possibly when leadwork was removed, these could give access to the inside of the building. Walls are in generally good condition, with few areas of missing mortar, and no suitable cracks in the brickwork or stonework.

Although there are opportunities for bats to enter the building, there are no features externally which are likely to be used by roosting bats, as a result of the poor quality of the surrounding habitat.



3.1a – A typical section of ceiling and roof void, now open to the elements, where ceilings have collapsed.

3.2 Internal inspection

The buildings have been empty and un-used for several years, and internal fittings have been removed. Internal walls are plastered or bare brick, there are no dry lined, or hollow stud walls which could be used by roosting bats. There are no cellars. Each of the houses has single roof void, with a wooden rafter and purlin roof structure, lined with bitumen roofing felt, or a more modern, non-breathable, membrane; and insulated with mineral wool between ceiling joists, or boarded and used for storage.

There are missing roof tiles at the rear of the properties, missing ridge tiles, and missing lead flashing around chimney bases. The missing tiles and leadwork have opened the roof voids to the elements, pigeons, and potentially to bats. Pigeons were present in every property (except for N° 189, whose roof is intact). There are large volumes of pigeon droppings, and rat droppings in each property.

Roof voids are in general: draughty, wet, and open to the elements, with water running through, and areas of collapsed ceiling and rotting timbers offering little suitable shelter for roosting bats.



All rooms and semi-enclosed spaces, including the gaps between intact panes of glass, and external boarding, were searched in detail.

The space between roof timbers, tiles, and the wall plate, or party walls, was inspected using an endoscope. These were in general dusty and cobwebbed, no droppings were found, and no suitable crevices, which are likely to be used by roosting bats, were noted.

The terrace offers open access for bats in flight. However, the poor quality of the surrounding habitat, high levels of disturbance from light and human activity, and poor condition of the buildings reduce the likelihood of the presence of bats. The wet, well-lit, & draughty, nature of the roof voids, further reduces the likelihood of bats being present.

3.3 Evidence of use

No evidence of use by bats was present during the survey, either internally, or externally.



4 Evaluation

The terrace is set in an area of high-density urban housing, on a busy road lit by high level street lighting, and subject to disturbance from traffic, noise and human activity.

There are no areas of suitable foraging habitat close to the building, and the area provides poor quality habitat, for bats.

The immediate surrounding habitat is dense urban housing, consisting of terraced houses with back yards, and no gardens, trees, or shrubs. There is no suitable foraging habitat close by, and there are no linkages to wider areas of more suitable habitat. The area is fragmented by busy well-lit roads; further reducing the quality of the habitat for bats.

The houses have been unoccupied, and un-used for several years and have been vandalised, subject to theft, are in a poor state of repair.

Roof voids have been opened by the theft of lead flashing, which has allowed water to rot timbers, and caused ceilings to collapse. The roof voids are open, wet, draughty, and unlikely to be used by roosting bats.

The removal of lead flashing has also removed potential roosting features from the buildings, as some crevice dwelling bat species roost behind leadwork.

The walls are solid brick and are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats. Window and door frames, lintels and window sills, are sealed into the brickwork with no suitable gaps.

No evidence of the presence of bats was noted during the building inspections. The lack of any evidence of use inside the building, such as droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. The building has no features which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

Considering the low quality of the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats.

4.1 Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have).

If bats or bat roosts are present in the building, the proposed works would likely result in an offence being committed.



5 Impact assessment

The proposals are for the refurbishment and repair of the terrace, to bring it back into use. The work will involve repairs to the roofs, and walls to weather-seal the buildings, and extensive internal works.

The houses have **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, and impacts on bats or bat roosts, resulting from the works are unlikely.

6 Required actions

The houses have **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, and as the presence of bats, or bat roosts is unlikely.

No further surveys are required prior to the start of work.



7 References

- Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8 Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the terrace from Oakfield Road, and high level lighting.



2 – The south gable end of the terrace.



3 – Habitat to the rear of the terrace is an area of cleared ground.



4 – Roofs are a mixture of slate and Marley tiles, many ridge tiles are missing.



5 – Roof and ridge tiles have been disturbed where leadwork has been removed.



6 – Brickwork and stonework are in good condition with no suitable gaps.





7 – Cement at the verge of the south gable end is intact, bargeboards are tightly fitted.



8 – Water is running down walls where leadwork and ridge tiles have been removed.





9 – The walls and floors are rotten as a result of water ingress.



10 – Pigeons were present in all but one of the houses.





11 – Roof voids are matted with pigeon and rat droppings.



12 – The houses have been damaged and vandalised.





13 – Rooms are well lit by natural light through the windows.



13 – The area surrounding the terrace is well lit and provides poor habitat for bats.