

Bat Survey Report

Survey Site: Cockgate Farm,
Bircher.
Leominster,
Herefordshire.
HR6 0BL

Grid reference: SO46146546

Survey Dates: 3rd June to 29th July 2019

Report Reference: 022/19

Site investigation undertaken by:
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Questions arising from the survey report should be directed to Shropshire Wildlife Surveys who will be pleased to clarify any issues raised.

Whilst the surveyor makes every reasonable effort, Shropshire Wildlife Surveys cannot guarantee that all protected species have been identified and survey results are definitive.

Reports are not normally valid for more than two years. It is recommended that Surveys are checked after one year for change of status of protected species.

Where EPS Licences are recommended / required; reports over two years old will not normally be acceptable. In the case of Low Impact Class Licences surveys must be up to date and have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal season.

All species records will belong to the surveyor and will be passed to the LRC in accordance with current guidelines.



Executive Summary

Shropshire Wildlife Surveys were commissioned by Martin Bashford the owner of the property to carry out an ecological survey for bats at:- Cockgate Farm, Bircher, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0BL, grid ref: SO46146546 in relation to proposed alteration of roofline and existing bat loft.

Visual and Emergence surveys were carried out between the 3rd June to 29th July 2019 by John Morgan an experienced wildlife surveyor and licensed Bat Worker.

Results.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the visual survey and no bats were observed to exit the building during the emergence / activity survey.

Assessment.

The surveyor is of the opinion that the current bat loft is inappropriate for most species of bats and there is no evidence to support it has ever been used. Past evidence could easily have been the result of access prior to the bat loft being closed off from the rest of the building.

The proposed changing of the roofline and its construction will provide more appropriate conditions for a bat loft and with a dedicated access point for bats away from the busy main road that leads to nearby cover of hedge and buildings there will be a greater likelihood of it being used for its original purpose of mitigation for building converted many years ago.

A series of recommendations is contained within the full report.

If any protected species are found at any stage of the development then work in that area must stop and Shropshire Wildlife Surveys contacted on 01952 416307 / 07854025807 or alternatively, Natural England on 0300 060 3900 for advice.

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of John Morgan.

John Morgan
October 2019



1.0 Introduction.

Shropshire Wildlife Surveys were commissioned by Martin Bashford the owner of the property to carry out an ecological survey for bats at:- Cockgate Farm, Bircher, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0BL, grid ref: SO46146546 in relation to proposed alteration of roofline and existing bat loft.

Visual and Emergence surveys were carried out between the 3rd June to 29th July 2019 by John Morgan an experienced wildlife surveyor and licensed Bat Worker; Natural England licence numbers: -

Bats

CLS19 - 2015-17229-CLS-CLS

CLS20 - 2015-14388-CLS-CLS

He was assisted by Lynn Edwards and Eve Byles during the activity survey.

In accordance with the guidance given in The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), ODPM Circular 06/2005 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:

Evidence was sought of the presence or absence of bats as defined in:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - as listed in:

Schedule 5. Protected animals

The Conservation [Natural Habitats, &c.] Regulations 1994 - as listed in:

Schedule 2. European protected species of animals

A summary of current legislation applicable to bats within England is shown at appendix 1.

The area and buildings investigated are highlighted in red on the appended documents:

Ordnance Survey map & aerial photograph (Appendix 2)

Site Plan (Appendix 3)

1.1 John Morgan had been previously engaged to oversee works under a Method Statement:

Scope of works: Proposed conversion of offices and storage building to dwelling

Background information: Planning consent P173181/F condition 5 states: -

"Prior to commencement of the development, details of Reasonable Avoidance Measures for bat species and habitat protection involving timing or works and any lighting for bats should be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved. An appropriately qualified and experienced ecological clerk of works should be appointed (or consultant engaged in that capacity) to oversee the ecological mitigation work."

To confirm the status of bats and usage of the existing bat loft a visual survey was carried out on 6th December 2017 by John Morgan of Shropshire Wildlife Surveys.

Evidence of episodic usage by bats within the loft in the form of small quantities of droppings were identified at three distinct locations within the loft. All droppings were old and identified as most likely Brown Long-eared Bat.



A Schwegler 2FN bat box hanging from one of the purlins inside the bat loft appeared to be unused, a Schwegler 1FF bat box attached to the outside of the bat loft on its western face adjacent to the road was also unused and in a totally unsuitable location.

Entrance into the loft appeared to be via open eaves which are partially obstructed on the western side by immature trees.

The surveyor is of the opinion that the bat loft is not used during the winter and as such it is unlikely that bats will be encountered within it until early spring. (April)

Roosting places:

From the available evidence within the bat loft, it appears there is episodic use of the bat loft by small numbers / individual Brown Long-eared bats. Resting places appear to be timber purlins, no obvious crevices were observed other than the Schwegler 2FN bat box which is located in an unusual position free hanging in the middle of the loft. There was no evidence inside this bat box of usage.

No other potential roosting places were observed around the building that might be affected by the proposed works.

2.0 2019 Proposal.

The existing bat loft is inappropriate with its dimensions, roof covering, and draughty conditions caused by gaps at eaves. Additionally, its location on the end of the building directly adjacent to the busy B4362 only allows access via eaves of building.

Re-roofing of the section of building will improve thermal qualities of any bat loft. The current size of the bat loft is the equivalent of a large room, the proposal is for a bat loft running the full length of the building with the compromise being a lower height. The new entrance will give safe egress to cover of nearby hedgerow and buildings.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study.

A desk study was carried out to locate any national and local nature conservation designations and any species records which already exist for the area. The desk study was based upon a search of the NBN Gateway with the view of consultation of the Local Record Centre should the NBN suggest the need for more in-depth results.

Ordnance Survey, Magimap, and Aerial photographs were scrutinised for any features that might indicate probable species to be found.

The Local Planning website was trawled for additional information from local planning permission to determine if any bat records have not yet been entered onto the local record centre data set.

3.2 Bats

Using '*The Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition*' as guidance, the buildings were systematically searched (where accessible) for any signs of bats. The signs included droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, colouration of access points or perches by rubbing and scratch marks.

A mirror, bright torches, close focus binoculars, digital camera with x30 optical



magnification with x2 digital magnification (total x60), ladders and a Medit PF9-13 fibrescope were available to examine parts which were otherwise inaccessible.

Five Anabats, bright red LED torches, night vision equipment, and hand held radios were available during the activity surveys. Anabat recordings were analysed and compared to reference files for identification of species.

On one occasion a 12m double high and a 12m single high set of mist nets were used across an identified flight path of a *Myotis* species to confirm identification of the species.

An AT100 lure using a variety of social calls was used to attract bats.

4.0 Constraints.

There were no constraints.

5.0 Results.

The background search did not reveal any nearby records of bats that would be a material consideration for survey considerations.

All surveys were carried out in suitable weather conditions.

5.1 Visual Survey.

Visual surveys carried out in 2017 concluded that there was episodic use of the bat loft by small numbers of bats and identified as most likely Brown Long-eared from the small quantity of old droppings found. All droppings were removed during that survey to show if any further droppings accumulated during the conversion of the building from offices and workshop to domestic dwelling.

Visual surveys on 3rd June and 29th June (prior to emergence survey) found no evidence of usage by bats, detritus on the floor of the bat loft indicated there had been no disturbance since previous visit in 2017.

5.2 Emergence / Activity Survey.

Because no evidence of bats was found to be using the bat loft in 2019 and previous evidence was minimal and obviously very old, a single emergence survey was carried out to determine likely usage at a peak time of year.

No bats were observed to exit the building. All activity appeared to originate from the east and north where there are several buildings and open parkland with mature trees and boundary hedge on the Croft Castle Estate.

Site plan showing dispositions of observers and Anabats along with species pass counts is shown at Table 1 at appendix 5. Tables 2 at appendix 6 give details of weather, equipment and data during the surveys.

5.3 Bats Summary

No evidence of bats was found within the bat loft.

No evidence was observed of bats exiting the building.

First recordings for all species strongly indicate that they were flying from elsewhere to the site to forage or cross it.



6.0 Assessment.

The surveyor is of the opinion that the current bat loft is inappropriate for most species of bats and there is no evidence to support it has ever been used. Past evidence could easily have been the result of access prior to the bat loft being closed off from the rest of the building.

The proposed changing of the roofline and its construction will provide more appropriate conditions for a bat loft and with a dedicated access point for bats away from the busy main road that leads to nearby cover of hedge and buildings there will be a greater likelihood of it being used for its original purpose of mitigation for building converted many years ago.

The design of the entrance will be weather resistant, draught free and more appropriate to other species likely to be found in the local area.

7.0 Recommendations.

- It is recommended that the Schwegler 1FF bat box currently within the bat loft is removed and attached to one of the mature trees in the boundary hedge. This will provide additional roosting opportunities for all species of bat recorded at the site during the emergence / activity survey. It should be attached as high as possible with open uncluttered access.
- I.A.W Natural England current guidelines, the new roof will use F1 Bitumastic Felt sarking. (There are no recommended BRM materials available at this current time in the UK.)
- Entrance to the new bat loft will be via a 'hopper style' opening. This will allow open access for all species of bats that might be found in the local area and be weatherproof, draught resistant and significantly reduce potential light penetration. (example with approximate dimensions at appendix 6.)
- All lighting will be low lumen and down lighting so as not to light up the sky above.
- No lighting will illuminate the bat loft entrance or any bat boxes on nearby trees.
- All security or courtesy lights will be PIR activated and set to minimum timer and musty comply with the above lighting restrictions.

If any protected species are found at any stage of the development then work in that area must stop and Shropshire Wildlife Surveys contacted on 01952 416307 / 07854025807 or alternatively, Natural England on 0300 060 3900 for advice.

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of John Morgan.

John Morgan.
October 2019



Protected Species and the Law (Brief summary)

Taken together, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, make it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) any Bats;
- deliberately disturb any Bats;
- recklessly disturb any Bats;
- damage or destroy a 'breeding site or resting place' of any Bats;
- possess or transport unless acquired legally any Bats;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange, or parts of any Bats.

Because bats tend to re-use the same roosts after periods of vacancy, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

Enforcement

The police are the main enforcement body for wildlife offences, and in some cases local authorities may also take action.

Section 24(4) of the 1981 Act gives English Nature the function of providing advice or assistance to the police in respect of alleged offences.

The maximum fine on conviction of offences under Section 9 of the 1981 and Regulation 39 currently stands at £5000.

The CROW Act 2000 amended the 1981 Act to allow for a custodial sentence of up to six months instead of, or in addition to, a fine.

Note: Fines may be imposed in relation to each offence committed, so operations involving many animals or repeated offences can potentially accrue large fines.

In addition, items which may constitute evidence of the commission of an offence may be seized and detained.

The CROW Act 2000 also amends the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to render Section 9 offences 'arrestable', giving the police significant additional powers.

The use of an EPS licence in respect of protected species.

An EPS licence is a licence which permits an action that is otherwise unlawful,

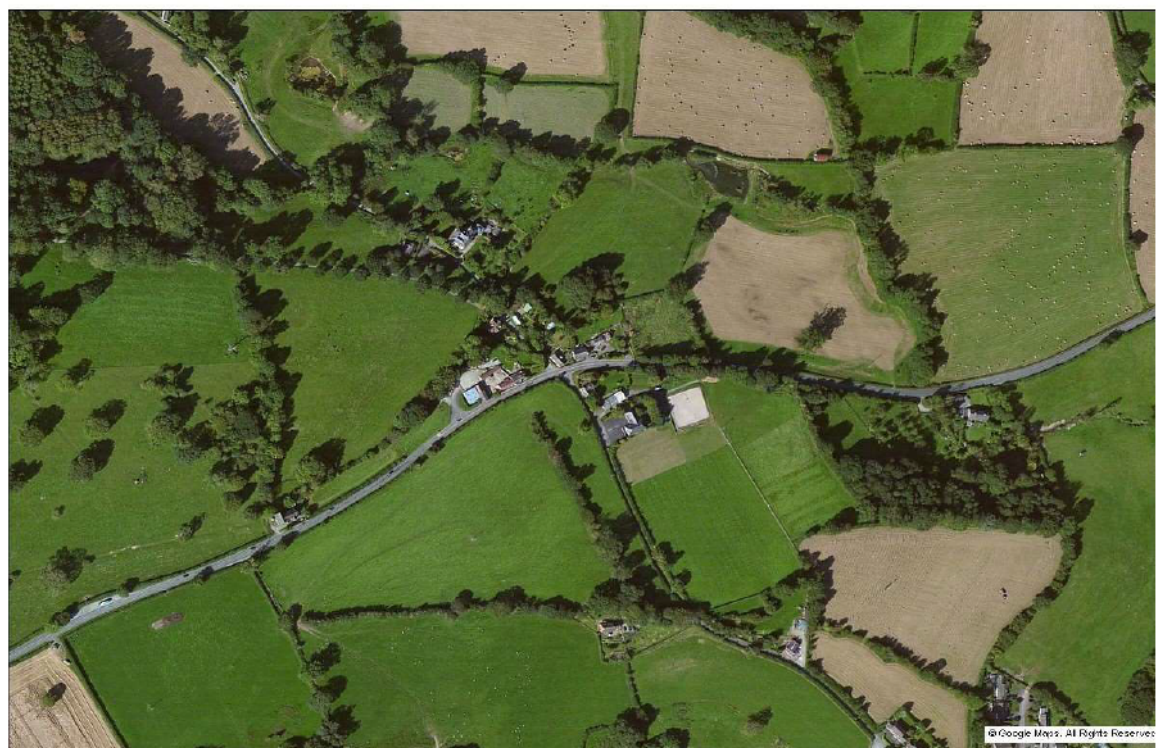
To ensure that no illegal activities are undertaken during the course of a development, it is recommended that a licence is applied for if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge, it is considered that

- the site in question is demonstrably a breeding site or resting place for protected species
- the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence

No licence is required if the proposed activity is unlikely to result in an offence.



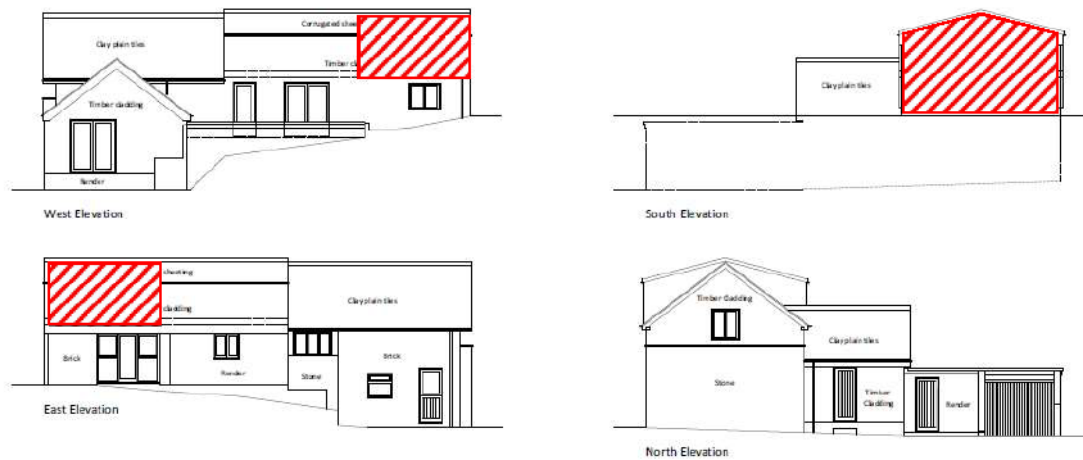
Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale



Aerial



Existing unused bat loft location



Proposed bat loft location

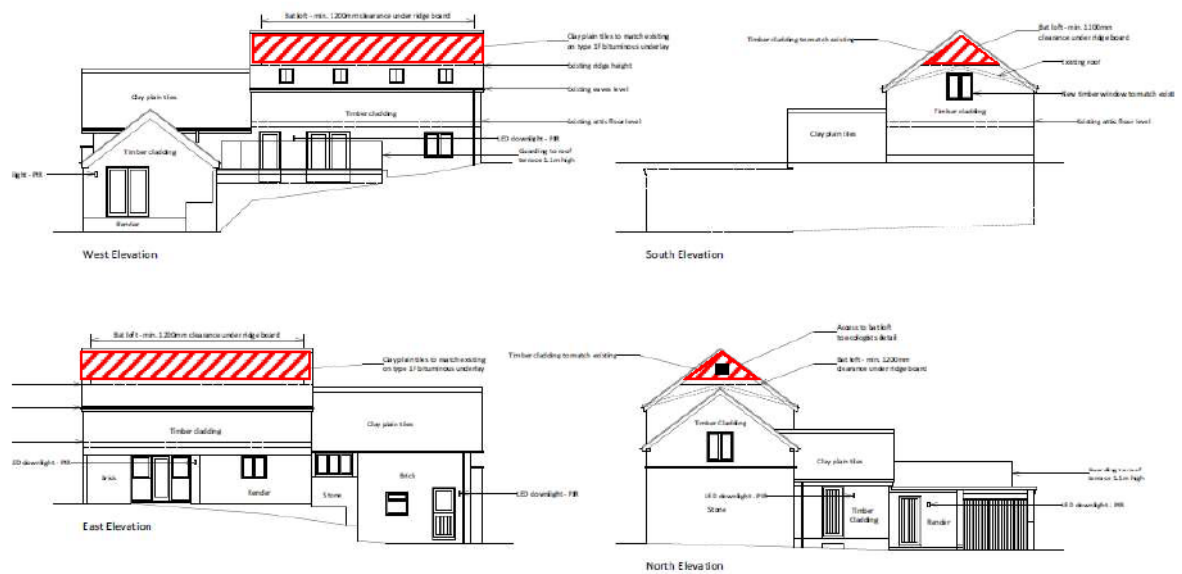




Fig 1. Southerly gable wall backing onto busy B4362 with Schwegler 1FF batbox that was removed from external position prior to original conversion.



Fig 2. This 1FF Batbox was adjacent to the road and totally obscured by a small Ash tree that was growing in the roadside verge until owner advised to move it because it was very highly unlikely to be used by bats.



Fig 3. Looking at northerly wall in bat loft that separates it from the domestic living area that is still under construction.. Hatchway is entrance to bat loft.



Fig 4. Describing the amount of light entering loft from eaves.



Table 1
Activity survey layout

Position	Total Passes	Species in order of recording – predominant species underlined
1	41	<u>Ppip</u> , Nn, Ppyg
2	50	<u>Ppip</u> , Nn, Ppyg, Paur
3	37	<u>Ppip</u> , Nn, Ppyg, Paur
4	24	Nn, <u>Ppip</u> , Ppyg
5	36	<u>Ppip</u> , Nn, Ppyg
5	= Static Anabat	
1	= Observer with Anabat	
→	= flight routes of bats	



All flight routes are Ppip



Table 2
Findings (Activity survey)

Abbreviations.

Ppip = Common Pipistrelle

Ppyg = Soprano Pipistrelle

Nn = Noctule

Paur = Brown Long-eared

Date	29/07/19			
Time (start)	20:50	hrs		
Sunset	21:08	hrs		
Sunrise				
Air Temp	20.1	°C		
Time (Fin)	22:20	hrs		
Air Temp	18.1	°C		
Weather	6/8 Ac	Cloud:		
	Nil	Wind :		
	Nil	Precip:		
Personnel	John Morgan Eve Byles Lynn Edwards			
Equipment	Anabats x 5 Radios Image Intensifiers x2 Red Torches			
Total bat passes*.	188			
Species Recorded**	Species	Total	Time	Pos
Showing first pass by species and position.	Ppip	100	21:12	2, then around site
	Ppyg	30	21:18	2, then around site
	Paur	3	21:56	4, only recorded on north side of site
	Nn	18	21:14	2, then around local area.
Finish Reason	Light Gone & activity declined.			
Remarks	Note orientation of site plan at table 1. All early activity originated to the east of the site and the field hedgerow. Later activity believed to be bats returning following the usual beat of along hedge and around the buildings. Max count of bats at any one time was 2 and believed to be Ppip chasing Ppyg			

* Total record of bat passes is indicative of bat activity not numbers of bats.

** Species passes each minute occasion.

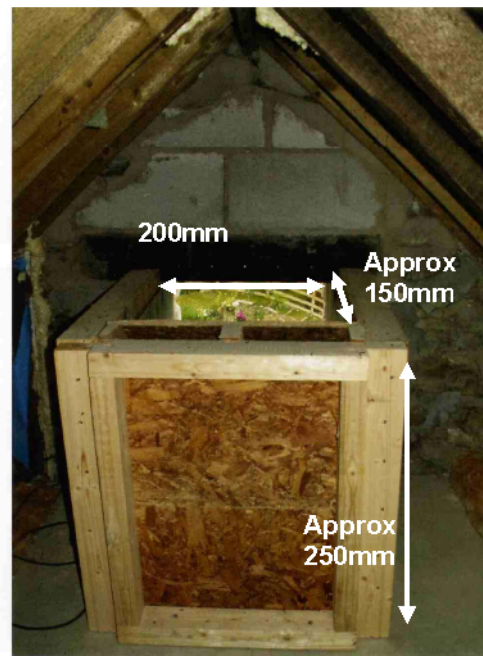


Table 3
Raw Data

Site	Grid ref	Date	Time	Species	Pass	Total pass	Pos 1	Pos 2	Pos 3	Pos 4	Pos 5	Total pass
Lockgate Farm	S048146646	29.07.2019	21:08	Hs	1	1	21:12	Pvg	1	21:15	Pvg	1
			21:10	Hs	1	1	21:13	Pvg	1	21:16	Pvg	1
			21:12	Nh	1	1	21:14	Nh	1	21:17	Nh	1
			21:14	Pvg	1	1	21:16	Pvg	1	21:19	Pvg	1
			21:16	Pvg	1	1	21:18	Pvg	1	21:21	Pvg	1
			21:18	Pvg	1	1	21:20	Pvg	1	21:23	Pvg	1
			21:20	Pvg	1	1	21:22	Pvg	1	21:25	Pvg	1
			21:22	Pvg	1	1	21:24	Pvg	1	21:27	Pvg	1
			21:24	Pvg	1	1	21:26	Pvg	1	21:29	Pvg	1
			21:26	Pvg	1	1	21:28	Pvg	1	21:31	Pvg	1
			21:28	Pvg	1	1	21:30	Pvg	1	21:33	Pvg	1
			21:30	Pvg	1	1	21:32	Pvg	1	21:35	Pvg	1
			21:32	Pvg	1	1	21:34	Pvg	1	21:37	Pvg	1
			21:34	Pvg	1	1	21:36	Pvg	1	21:39	Pvg	1
			21:36	Pvg	1	1	21:38	Pvg	1	21:41	Pvg	1
			21:38	Pvg	1	1	21:40	Pvg	1	21:43	Pvg	1
			21:40	Pvg	1	1	21:42	Pvg	1	21:45	Pvg	1
			21:42	Pvg	1	1	21:44	Pvg	1	21:47	Pvg	1
			21:44	Pvg	1	1	21:46	Pvg	1	21:49	Pvg	1
			21:46	Pvg	1	1	21:48	Pvg	1	21:51	Pvg	1
			21:48	Pvg	1	1	21:50	Pvg	1	21:53	Pvg	1
			21:50	Pvg	1	1	21:52	Pvg	1	21:55	Pvg	1
			21:52	Pvg	1	1	21:54	Pvg	1	21:57	Pvg	1
			21:54	Pvg	1	1	21:56	Pvg	1	21:59	Pvg	1
			21:56	Pvg	1	1	21:58	Pvg	1	22:01	Pvg	1
			21:58	Pvg	1	1	22:00	Pvg	1	22:03	Pvg	1
			22:00	Pvg	1	1	22:02	Pvg	1	22:05	Pvg	1
			22:02	Pvg	1	1	22:04	Pvg	1	22:07	Pvg	1
			22:04	Pvg	1	1	22:06	Pvg	1	22:09	Pvg	1
			22:06	Pvg	1	1	22:08	Pvg	1	22:11	Pvg	1
			22:08	Pvg	1	1	22:10	Pvg	1	22:13	Pvg	1
			22:10	Pvg	1	1	22:12	Pvg	1	22:15	Pvg	1
			22:12	Pvg	1	1	22:14	Pvg	1	22:17	Pvg	1
			22:14	Pvg	1	1	22:16	Pvg	1	22:19	Pvg	1
			22:16	Pvg	1	1	22:18	Pvg	1	22:21	Pvg	1
			22:18	Pvg	1	1	22:20	Pvg	1	22:23	Pvg	1
			22:20	Pvg	1	1	22:22	Pvg	1	22:25	Pvg	1
			22:22	Pvg	1	1	22:24	Pvg	1	22:27	Pvg	1
			22:24	Pvg	1	1	22:26	Pvg	1	22:29	Pvg	1
			22:26	Pvg	1	1	22:28	Pvg	1	22:31	Pvg	1
			22:28	Pvg	1	1	22:30	Pvg	1	22:33	Pvg	1
			22:30	Pvg	1	1	22:32	Pvg	1	22:35	Pvg	1
			22:32	Pvg	1	1	22:34	Pvg	1	22:37	Pvg	1
			22:34	Pvg	1	1	22:36	Pvg	1	22:39	Pvg	1

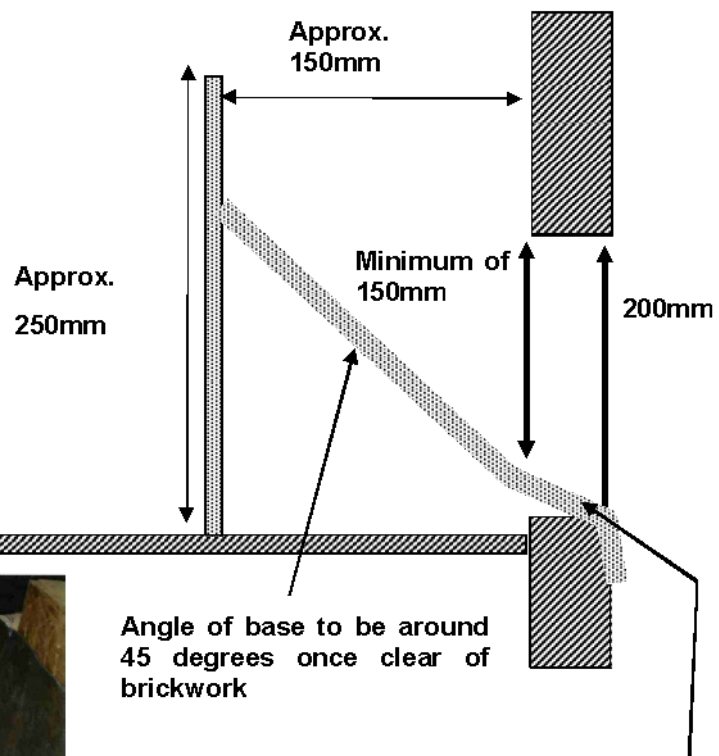


Hopper Entrance (photograph describe larger entrance)



Hopper constructed from studwork and (say 22mm or similar OSB or plywood).

Slope & sides to be covered in metal so that birds cannot gain purchase and make entrance weather proof. Lead suitable but anodised aluminium or stainless steel better as more 'slippery'



View looking down hopper to outside. Droppings visible on lead.

Angle sufficient for drainage and unsuitable as ledge for birds to gain purchase or nesting.