

85 Cressingham Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG2 7RX

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared by Conor Watson ACIEEM; reviewed by John Wenman MCIEEM
Ref: R3528/a

September 2023



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Singh to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 85 Cressingham Road in Reading, Berkshire. The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for two storey side and rear extensions (refer to existing and proposed drawings in **Appendix 3**).
- 1.1.2** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). A survey of the exterior and interior of the property was undertaken on the 1st August 2023 by John Wenman MCIEEM, registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18.
- 1.1.1** No evidence of roosting bats was found inside the roof void and on the whole, the property lacked external features that could provide potential roosting sites for crevice-dwelling bats. There were a few low-level features i.e. a hole with a plastic pipe insert in the gable wall and slight gaps beneath verge tiles and lead flashing on the side of the shop frontage – that were closely inspected and showed no signs of bat occupation (droppings, staining etc.). The property has been assigned negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 1.1.2** The survey findings demonstrate that these proposed works are highly unlikely to result in the damage or destruction of a bat roost or lead to the disturbance of bats occupying roosts. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to proceed lawfully.
- 1.1.3** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the demolition work, the work must stop immediately and a licenced ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; work should not continue until further written advice has been received.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Singh to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 85 Cressingham Road in Reading, Berkshire.
- 2.1.2** The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for seeking consent for two storey side and rear extensions (refer to existing and proposed drawings in **Appendix 3**).

2.2 Legislative Background

- 2.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

- 2.2.2** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:

- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation;
- **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range"; and
- **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest,

including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.

- 2.2.3** Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. The LPA must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting EPS before granting planning permission.
- 2.2.4** If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.
- 2.2.5** Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring species occupying roosts of low conservation importance may fall under the remit of the low impact Bat Mitigation Class Licence WML-CL21 (BMCL), which would enable consultants registered by Natural England, or accredited agents appointed by them, to carry licensable work under the BMCL once sites have been registered in advance with Natural England. Registration forms must be submitted at least three weeks before work is due to start, and if acceptable, Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks.
- 2.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or the registration of the site under the BMCL must be up to date, i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season, i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

2.3 Site Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The property is a two-storey residential dwelling and shop situated on the southern side of Cressingham Road in Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 72540 70952).
- 2.3.2** The property is in an urban setting surrounded by residential properties and their associated gardens. There is green infrastructure, including a footpath, adjacent to the property and a large woodland, approximately 330m southeast, called The Cowsey. The wider landscape includes Whiteknights Park parkland at the University of Reading to the northeast and the River Kennet to the west with riparian woodland

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and floodplain grazing. These nearby habitats provide moderate suitability commuting and foraging opportunities for bats adapted to the built environment.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the exterior and interior of the property was undertaken on the 1st August 2023 by John Wenman MCIEEM, registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no.: 2016-23859-CLS-CLS).

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars, a high power (1 million candle power) torch looking for signs of bat occupation and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004; Reason & Wray 2023).

3.1.3 The following may indicate the presence of a bat roost within a building:

- Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as window sills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
- Piles of insect remains, e.g. moth wings, which may be indicative of regular feeding sites used by species such as brown long eared bat;
- Staining at roost entrances or within the roost (urine and oil from fur can leave stains on timbers when bats are gathered for long periods); and
- Bats (live or dead).

3.1.4 Residential buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations; favoured locations include:

- Under roof, ridge and hip tiles, especially when loose or lifted tiles are present, or sections of mortar are missing;
- Under sections of raised lead flashing;
- At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof tiles;
- At the eaves – gaining access via gaps between the soffits and wall; and
- Within an enclosed roof space – brown long-eared bats for example, will often cluster at the ridge beam.

3.2 Survey Constraints

3.2.1 There were no significant constraints because full external and internal access was

available through the survey and the weather conditions were clear skies with an air temperature of 14°C.

- 3.2.2** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roosting locations during a survey, particularly for crevice-dwelling bats which roost behind roof lining and inside wall cavities. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1** Photographs of the property are presented in **Appendix 1** and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in **Appendix 2**. The survey findings from the exterior and interior of the property are described as follows:

4.2 External Survey

- 4.2.1** The detached property was of brick cavity wall construction with a pitched roof; it had a single-storey shop frontage and a single-storey rear extension (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 4.2.2** The pitched roof was covered with interlocking roof tiles that were flat and intact except for a couple of missing verge tiles at the western gable, but cement blocked any potential bat ingress/egress (**Photograph 3; Target note 1**). The ridge tiles were securely mortared, and the gable verge mortar was all intact (**Photographs 4 & 5; Target notes 2 & 3**). The uPVC soffits were intact and tight at the eaves (**Photograph 6; Target note 4**). A hole with a plastic pipe insert in the western gable wall was closely inspected and showed no signs of bat occupation (**Photograph 7; Target note 5**).
- 4.2.3** The shop frontage had a sloping roof covered with interlocking roof tiles that were flat and intact; there were slight gaps beneath verge tiles and lead flashing, but these were closely inspected and showed no signs of bat occupation (**Photograph 8; Target note 6**). The rear extension had a flat bituminous roof with timber fascias which were flush to the walls (**Photograph 9; Target note 7**).
- 4.2.4** No evidence of roosting bats was found during the external inspection of the property.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** The roof void covered the two-storey footprint of the property and was accessible via a first floor loft hatch. The void had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 2.5 metres, was of 'cut and pitch' roof construction and had three roof lights (**Photograph 10**). The roof was lined with intact non-bitumen coated breathable roofing membrane and the ridge beam was lightly cobwebbed, which can indicate an absence of recent void-dwelling bat activity (**Photograph 11; Target notes 8 & 9**).

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The floor had a new layer of fibreglass insulation above an older layer; the eaves were filled with fibreglass insulation (**Photograph 12; Target note 10**). The gable ends were of brick construction and featured gaps behind the end roof rafters; these were closely inspected and showed no signs of use by roosting bats (**Photograph 13; Target note 11**).

4.3.2 No evidence of roosting bats was found during the internal inspection of the property.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

5.1.1 No evidence of roosting bats was found inside the roof void, which was a sub-optimal size for uninterrupted internal flight exhibited by primarily void-dwelling bats such as the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), so it is considered highly unlikely that the property supports such species.

5.1.2 Overall, the property lacked external features that could provide potential roosting sites for crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. There were a few low-level features – i.e. a hole with a plastic pipe insert in the gable wall and slight gaps beneath verge tiles and lead flashing on the side of the shop frontage of very limited suitability – that were closely inspected and showed no signs of bat occupation (droppings, staining etc.).

5.1.3 The property has been assigned negligible suitability for roosting bats.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The planning proposals seek consent for two storey side and rear extensions and associated changes to the roof including the installation of dormers (refer to existing and proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**). The survey findings demonstrate that these proposed works are highly unlikely to result in the damage or destruction of a bat roost or lead to the disturbance of bats occupying roosts. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to proceed lawfully.

5.2.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the demolition work, the work must stop immediately and a licenced ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; work should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this point, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

6 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3RD Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of property viewed from northeast.



2. Rear of property viewed from south.



3. Couple of missing verge tiles (rear elevation).



4. Securely mortared ridge tiles (rear elevation).



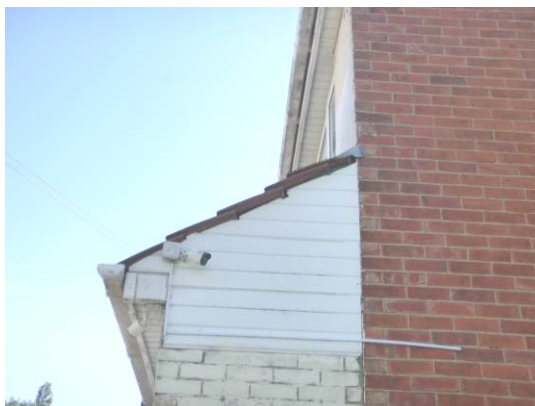
5. Intact verge mortar (east elevation).



6. Intact and tight uPVC soffits (front elevation).



7. Hole with pipe insert in gable wall (west elevation).



8. Slight gaps beneath verge tiles and lead flashing on shop frontage (front elevation).



9. Bituminous flat roof and flush timber fascias on rear extension (rear elevation).



10. Roof void.



11. Breathable roofing membrane and lightly cobwebbed ridge (roof void).



12. Eaves filled with fibreglass insulation (roof void).

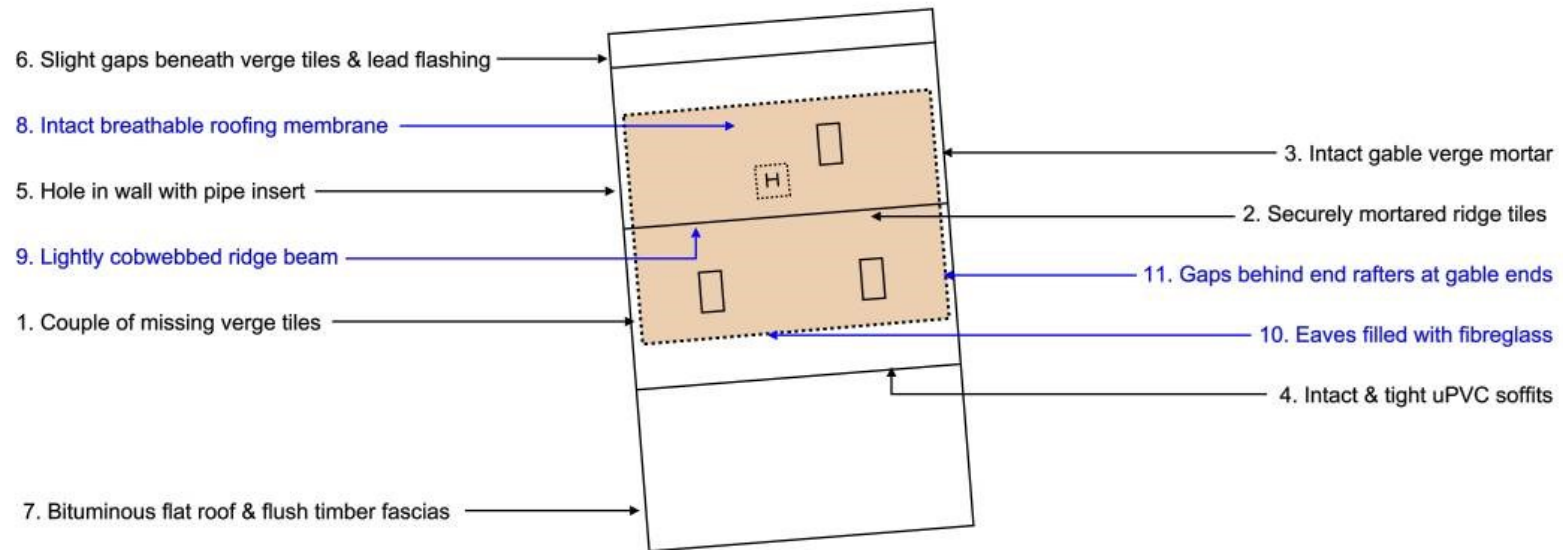


13. Gaps behind rafters at gable end (roof void).



14. Gaps behind rafters at gable end (roof void).

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



 Roof Void
 H Loft Hatch
 n. External Target Note
 n. Internal Target Note

Drawn by:	Date:	Scale:	85 Cressingham Road Reading	
CW	Sept 2023	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Plan	

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APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



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Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Scale
1 : 50

GENERAL NOTES:
All drawings to be read in conjunction with relevant specifications, details and current Building Regulations Approved Documents.
All existing and proposed footings to be confirmed on site with structural engineer and Building Control Officer.
Information provided in conjunction with consultants drawings for setout and co-ordination of:
- structural walls, columns & floor joists
- service openings
- external drainage & roadwork's
- landscaping
- mechanical services
All services, ducting, rainwater pipes and drainage pipes are shown indicatively. Capacities, sizing and service runs to be fully designed by M&C consultant/contractor. Roofing access points to be provided at every change in direction.
All existing and proposed waste pipes connected to manhole/runs to be confirmed & agreed on site with Building Control.
All above and below foul and rainwater drainage arrangements are to be agreed on site with site surveyor.

All steel beams /columns to receive 1 hour fire intumescent paint. Applied in accordance with manufacturers instruction. Refer to structural engineers drawings/specifications for sizes of all structural elements.
Background ventilation in accordance with Approved Documents R.
- Habitable rooms 10,000mm²
- Kitchen 5,000mm²
Utility and Bathroom to be provided via trickle vents above window frames. Where a room does not contain a window, ie WC on ground floor, an air vent gap to be provided between door & floor level.
Every habitable room to have natural ventilation not less than 1/20th of floor area via operable window.
Any window with glazing below 800mm off the finished floor level, and glazing in doors up to a height of 1500mm above finished floor level and any glazing within 300mm beside external doors, to be safely glazing in accordance with Approved Documents R.
Smoke detectors are recommended to all habitable rooms. Locations to be agreed on site.
All pile sizes, cut-off levels and setting out to be coordinated by structural engineer.
Allow 250 x 250mm holes where soil pipes pass through floor.
Extension set out in accordance with approved Planning drawings. Refer to structural engineers drawings for structural floor heights.
All dimensions to be confirmed on site prior to construction.



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NOTES:

THE CONTRACTORS ARE TO CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS, DRAIN RUNS AND GENERAL CONDITIONS ON THE SITE BEFORE WORKS COMMENCE AND INFORM JCENG SOLUTIONS IMMEDIATELY UPON DISCOVERY OF ANY ERRORS, OMISSIONS OR DISCREPANCIES. ALL WORKS ARE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT BUILDING REGULATIONS, BRITISH STANDARDS, CODE OF PRACTICE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY REQUIREMENTS. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING WITHOUT FIRST OBTAINING WRITTEN AUTHORISATION FROM JCENG SOLUTIONS.

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- 1 White upvc door
- 2 Redbrick match to existing
- 3 White upvc double glazed window
- 4 Plain roof tiles match to existing
- 5 White upvc fascia
- 6 White upvc obscure glass window
- 7 fire escape staircase

- RE Rodding Eye
MH Man Hole
(S) Smoke detector
(M) Mechanical fan outlet
(H) Heat detector
(V) Soil vent pipe
(W) Rain water pipe
(F) Foul water drain
(D) Rain water drain
(S) Site boundary
(B) Beam /finials
(D) Demolition
FD30s 1/2hour fire door
FE Fire door
Towel rail size 300mm L x 800mm H
Radiator size 1200mm L x 600mm H

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
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CLIENT ADDRESS

85 Cressingham Rd,
Reading RG2 7RX

TITLE

Proposed Elevation

CLIENT

Mr. Kularia

DRAWN BY JC

CHECKED BY RB

DATE 04/05/23

SCALE (@ A1)

1 : 50

PROJECT NUMBER

85-CR-01

DRAWING NUMBER

A102

insultancy
2/09/2023