

310 Henley Road
Caversham
Berks
RG4 6LS

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared by Verity West; reviewed by Emma Turnbull

Ref: R3489/a

July 2023



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mrs Catherine Durham to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 310 Henley Road, Caversham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 73444 75627). The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a double storey side and rear extension.
- 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 interior and exterior of the property was undertaken on the 12th July 2023 by Emma Turnbull registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (2019-41628-CLS-CLS) and assistant ecologist Verity West QCIEEM.
- 1.1.3** No evidence of roosting bats was found internally or externally and the property offered negligible potential roosting sites for typically crevice-dwelling bats.
- 1.1.4** The proposals are considered highly unlikely to lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost or to the disturbance of bats and therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.
- 1.1.5** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the construction, the work must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mrs Catherine Durham to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 310 Henley Road, Caversham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 73444 75627).

2.1.2 The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a double storey side and rear extension.

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; and
- 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 EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:

- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
- **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 LPAs must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning applications where survey findings show that an EPS mitigation licence is necessary before granting planning permission.

2.2.4 EPS mitigation licence application can be submitted once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on EPS mitigation 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). The BMCL permits ‘Registered Consultants’ or accredited agents appointed by them to carry licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work days before the work is due to start.

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 semi-detached dwelling located on the northern side of Henley Road, on the eastern outskirts of Caversham in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 73444 75627).

2.3.2 The detached house is in a suburban setting, surrounded by further residential properties and their associated gardens. Approximately 400 metres to the south lies Caversham lakes, surrounded by fragmented woodland copses and linear

hedgerows. These nearby habitats provide high suitability commuting and foraging opportunities for bats roosting locally.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the exterior and interior of the building was undertaken on the 12th July 2023 by Emma Turnbull registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (2019-41628-CLS-CLS) and assistant ecologist Verity West QCIEEM.

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

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

- Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as windowsills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
- Piles of insect remains, e.g. moth wings (these 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).

3.1.2 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;
- 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 – long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.) 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 throughout the survey and the weather conditions were dry and sunny with an air temperature of 20°C.

- 3.2.2** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roosting locations during a survey and therefore an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

- 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 semi-detached residential property had a concrete tile hipped roof, cavity brick walls that were part pebble-dash rendered and hanging tile cladding on the first floor bay windows, (**Photographs 1-2; Target notes 1-2**).
- 4.2.2** The concrete tiles were mostly tight throughout (**Photograph 3; Target note 3**), with tight lead flashing around the chimneys, with a few lifted tiles behind the chimney (**Photograph 4, Target note 4**). The ridge and hip tile mortar was mostly intact (**Photograph 5**) and the uPVC soffits were tight and sealed throughout (**Photograph 6 ; Target note 5**). The hanging tiles had occasional gaps behind lifted tiles (**Photographs 7-8**).
- 4.2.3** No evidence of bats was found externally.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** The roof void was accessible via a first-floor loft hatch and had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 2 metres (**Photograph 9**). The roof was unlined and draughty, with daylight visible between the tiles. (**Photograph 10; Target note 6**). The floor was part-boarded above fibreglass insulation (**Photograph 11; Target notes 7**). The eaves were open (**Photograph 12; Target note 8**). The ridge was heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 13; Target note 9**). The brickwork party-wall gable, had visible gaps, with gaps behind the rafters (**Photograph 14; Target note 10**).
- 4.3.2** No evidence of bats was found internally.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Status

- 5.1.1** No evidence of bats was found internally or externally and the unlined and draughty nature of the roof void, means it is highly unlikely that the property supports primary void-dwelling bats, such as long-eared (*Plecotus spp.*) for example.
- 5.1.2** Externally there were minimal features that could provide potential roosting sites for typically crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus spp.*) and/or small *Myotis* species. There were gaps behind the hanging tiles at the rear of the property, but these were north-facing and cobwebbed, limiting likelihood for potential roosting bats.
- 5.1.3** Two species of pipistrelle bat, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), are widespread and abundant throughout the United Kingdom (Richardson 2000). Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are widespread and common but less abundant than the aforementioned *Pipistrellus* species. Roosts supporting these *Pipistrellus* and/or small *Myotis* bat species are considered to be of low to moderate conservation importance subject to the type of roost present, i.e. non-breeding roosts supporting individual or small numbers of bats through to maternity roosts supporting large numbers of female bats (Mitchell-Jones 2004).

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 5.2.1** The planning proposals involve construction of a two storey side and rear extension. These proposals are considered highly unlikely to lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost or to the disturbance of bats and therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.
- 5.2.2** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the construction, the work must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once 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.

Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough. ISBN 978-1-78354-494-3.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of property viewed from the south.



2. Rear of property viewed from the north.



3. Concrete tiles mostly tight throughout.



4. Tight lead flashing around the chimney.



5. Ridge and hip tile mortar mostly intact throughout.



6. Soffits tight and sealed throughout.



7. Occasional gaps behind hanging tiles.



8. Occasional gaps behind hanging tiles.



9. Roof void approx. 2 metres in height.



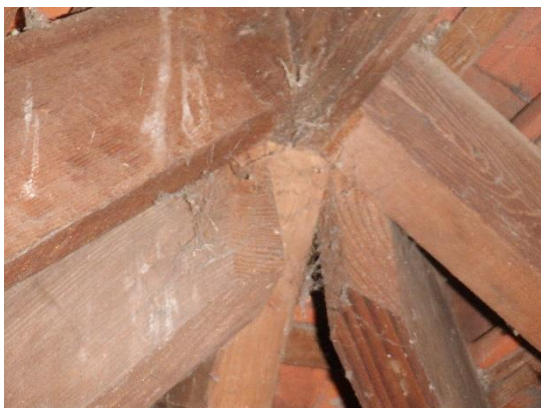
10. Roof unlined and draughty with daylight visible.



11. Part boarded floor over fibreglass insulation.



12. Eaves open.

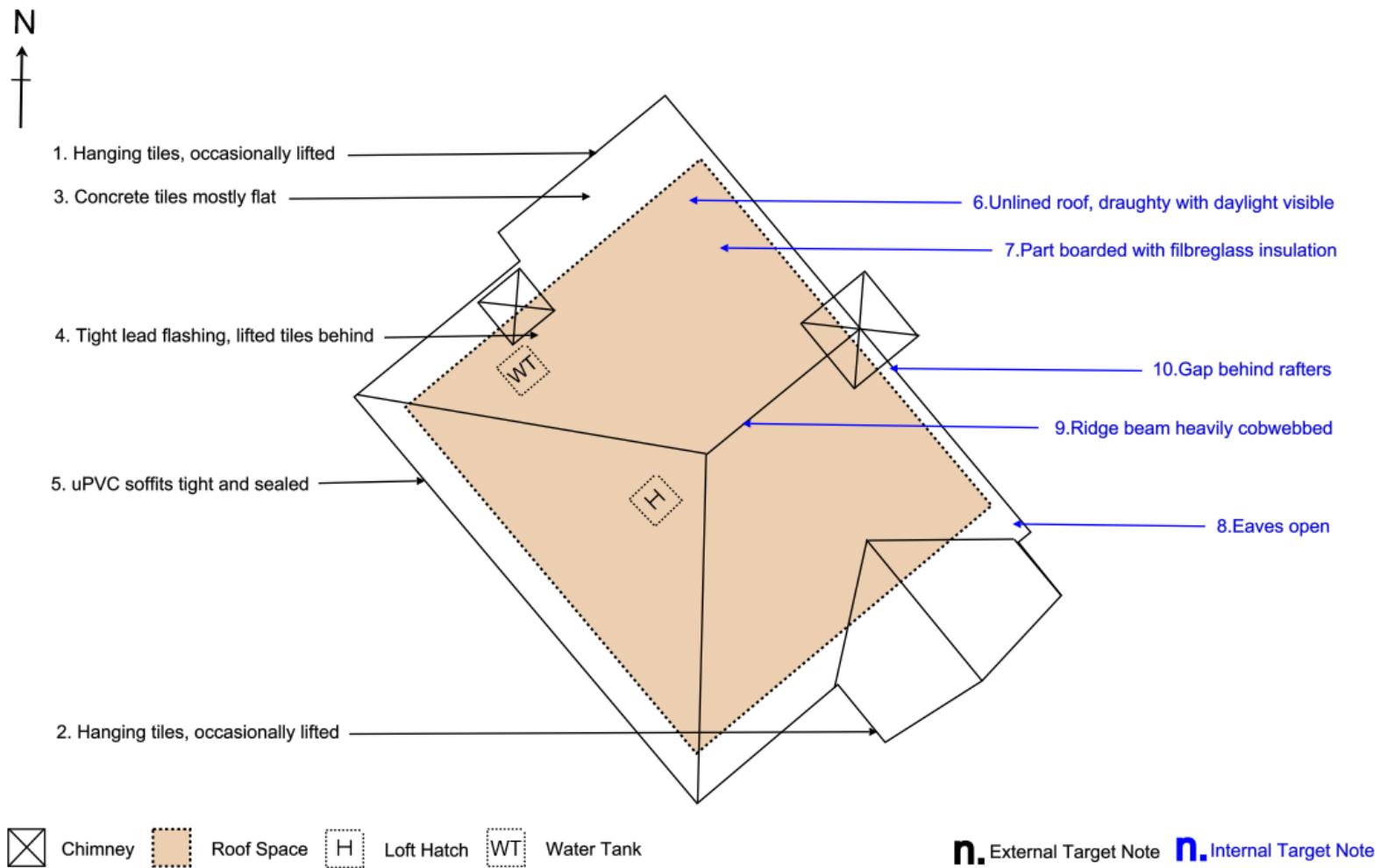


13. Cobwebbed ridge beam.



14. Small gaps in party-wall brick gable end behind rafters.

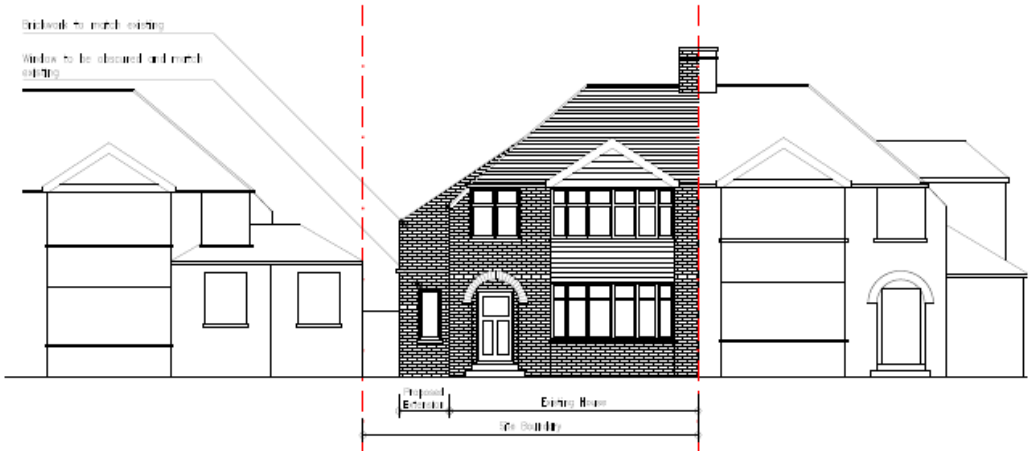
APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



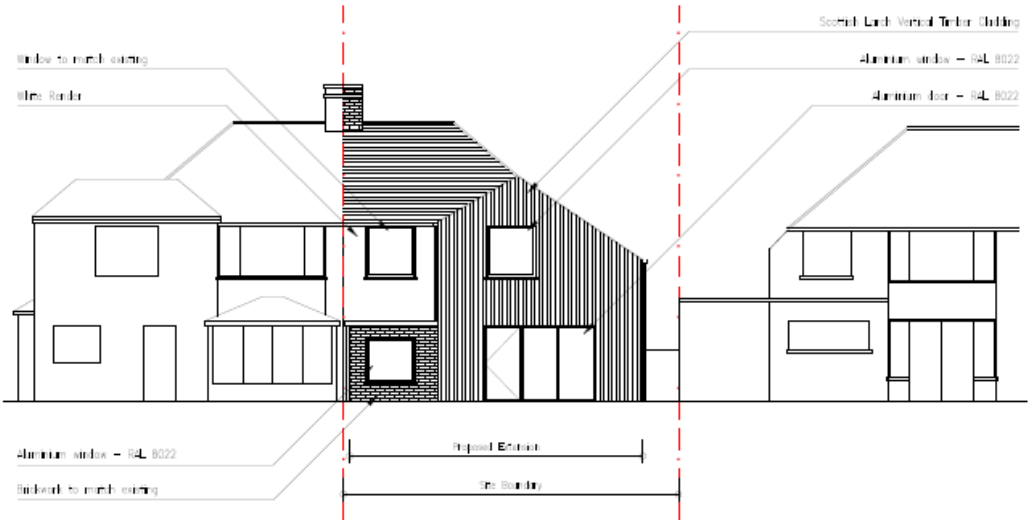
Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	310 Henley Road Caversham	
VW	July 2023	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/07/2023

APPENDIX 2 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS



01 Proposed South Elevation
1:100



02 Proposed North Elevation
1:100



PL001 - Revised for Planning		
client/owner	John	
project		
310 Henley Road, Caversham		
site		
Proposed North & South Elevations		
stage		
PLANNING		
scale	date	
1:100 @A3	Sep 2022	
job no.	dep. no.	external revision
310	104	PL01

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20/07/2023