

**20 Clevedon Road
Tilehurst
Berkshire
RG31 6RL**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared by Verity West QCIEEM; reviewed by Vicky Potts MCIEEM
Ref: R3506/a

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1 Diesel House, Honey Hill, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3BL
Telephone: 0118 3271810 Mobile: 07979 403099 E-mail: info@wenman-ecology.co.uk
www.wenman-ecology.co.uk

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC339057.
Registered office: 100 New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, RG45 6JP where you may look at a list of members' names.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Richard Goodwin to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 20 Clevedon Road, Tilehurst in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 67239 75169). The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the demolition of the existing detached single garage to rebuild a double detached garage, as well as a porch extension to the front of the main residential dwelling.
- 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 2nd August 2023 by Vicky Potts registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (2016-27162-CLS-CLS) and assistant ecologist Verity West QCIEEM.
- 1.1.3** No evidence of roosting bats was found internally or externally although the property did offer potential roosting sites for typically crevice-dwelling bats. The property was considered to have moderate potential for roosting bats.
- 1.1.4** However, 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 Mr Richard Goodwin to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 20 Clevedon Road, Tilehurst in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 67239 75169).

2.1.2 The PRA was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the demolition of the existing detached single garage to rebuild a double detached garage, as well as a porch extension to the front of the main residential dwelling.

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;

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- **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 residential dwelling with detached single garage, located on the northern side of Clevedon Road in Tilehurst, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 67239 75169), west of Reading.

2.3.2 The property is in a suburban setting, surrounded by similar residential properties and their gardens, containing amenity grassland, shrub beds and scattered trees. The property is approximately 200m southwest of The River Thames and the

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mosaic of parkland and agricultural habitats northeast of Tilehurst. 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 2nd August 2023 by Vicky Potts registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (2016-27162-CLS-CLS) and assistant ecologist Verity West QCIEEM.

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and 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.

3.2.2 It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roosting

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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 property is a detached residential dwelling with multi-gabled roof and a single detached garage (**Photographs 1-4**).
- 4.2.2** The concrete tiles of the main property were mostly flat throughout, with occasional missing or lifted tiles (**Photographs 5-7; Target note 1**). There were lifted tiles along the verge of the porch roof however the mortar was intact (**Photograph 8; Target notes 2-3**). There was a large gap behind the front gable barge boards at the bottom, which was closely inspected from a ladder and showed no evidence of use by bats (**Photograph 9; Target note 4**). There were visible gaps around the lead flashings and hanging tiles on the front bay window (**Photograph 10; Target notes 5-6**). The soffits were mostly flat to the brickwork throughout, with a large gap on the porch soffit, which was thoroughly inspected to establish absence of bats (**Photographs 11-12; Target notes 7-8**).
- 4.2.3** The detached garage was of single skin brick construction with a concrete tiled gable roof. There were multiple missing tiles (**Photograph 13; Target note 9**). There was also missing mortar on the verges and brickwork walls (**Photographs 14-15; Target note 10**) and gaps around the timber frame doors at the front (**Photograph 16; Target note 11**). There were gaps behind the soffits which were heavily cobwebbed (**Target note 12**).

- 4.2.4** No evidence of bats was found externally.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** The main roof void was boarded over unlined roof tiles, with occasional gaps and gaps in the boards (**Photographs 17-19; Target note 13**). The floor was part-boarded on top of fibreglass insulation (**Photograph 20; Target notes 14-15**). The blockwork gable end had a visible gap at the apex and was heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 21; Target note 16-17**). The eaves were open and part

covered with wooden planks (**Photograph 22; Target note 18**). An old wasp nest was visible (**Target note 19**).

4.3.2 The smaller second roof void was lined with bitumen reinforced felt liner, which had occasional tears (**Photographs 23-34; Target notes 19-20**). The floor was part boarded over fibreglass insulation, up to and covering the eaves (**Photograph 25; Target notes 21-22**).

4.3.3 The garage was open to the roof with unlined tiles where daylight was visible (**Photograph 26; Target notes 23-24**). There were gaps visible at the eaves and vegetation had encroached (**Target notes 25-26**). The space was heavily cobwebbed.

4.3.4 No evidence of bats was found internally in the roof voids and garage.

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 property, including the detached garage, was considered highly unlikely to support primary void-dwelling bats, such as long-eared (*Plecotus spp.*) for example.
- 5.1.2** Externally there were 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 throughout the property, and the property was considered to have moderate potential for roosting bats.
- 5.1.3** The detached garage was considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats, due to the unlined, draughty and heavily cobwebbed features.
- 5.1.4** 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 the demolition of the existing detached single garage to rebuild a double detached garage, as well as a porch extension to the front of the main residential dwelling. The proposals will not impact the gaps behind hanging tiles and lead flashing on the bay window, and under roof tiles on the main roof. Therefore 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 southwest.



2. Rear of property viewed from the northeast.



3. Front of the garage viewed from the southwest.



4. Rear of the garage viewed from the northeast.



5. Roof tiles with occasionally lifted tiles.



6. Roof tiles with occasionally lifted tiles.



7. Roof tiles with occasionally lifted tiles.



8. Verge mortar of front gable intact.



9. Gap behind front gable barge board.



10. Gaps behind the lead flashings



11. Soffit mostly tight to brickwork throughout.



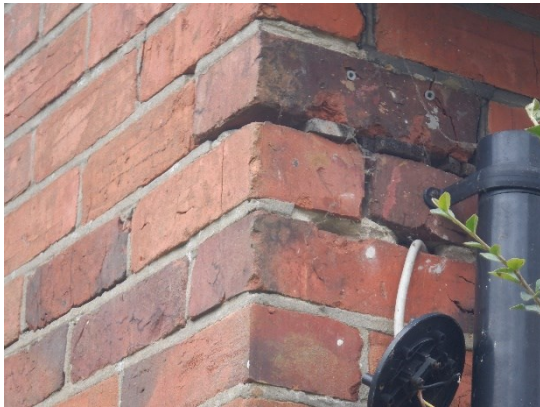
12. Gap behind soffit on porch investigated thoroughly.



13. Missing tiles on garage roof.



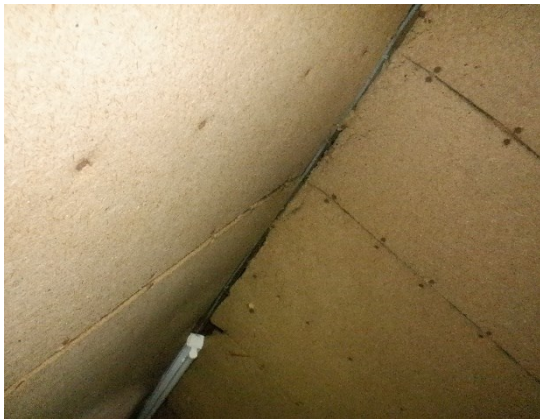
14. Missing mortar on verges.



15. Gaps in the brickwork from missing mortar.



16. Gaps around timber door frame.



17. Boarded unlined roof tiles in main void.



18. Occasional gaps in boarding.



19. Occasional gaps in boarding.



20. Part boarded floor over fibreglass insulation.



21. Gap at apex of blockwork gable, heavily cobwebbed.



22. Eaves open and part covered with wooden planks.



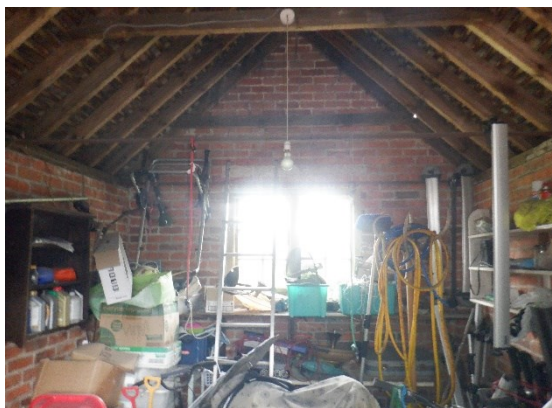
23. Bitumen reinforced felt liner.



24. Bitumen reinforced felt liner.

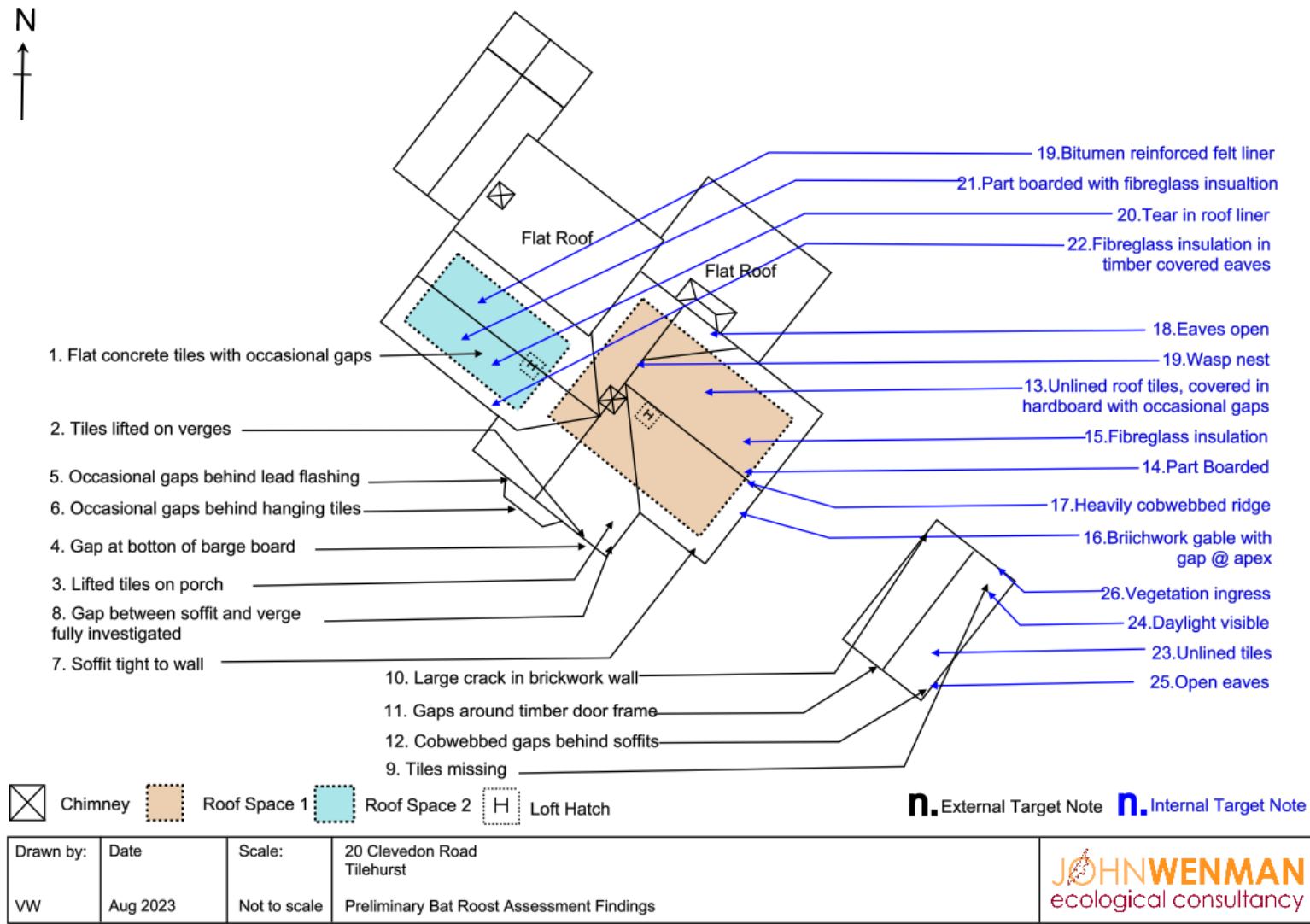


25. Part boarded over fibreglass insulation.



26. Garage internally open and unlined, daylight visible.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



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APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS



SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH WEST ELEVATION

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