

**20 Rosehill Park
Emmer Green
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 8XD**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R3040a

February 2022



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Anthony Gordon to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment at 20 Rosehill Park in Emmer Green, Reading in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 72112 77385). The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey 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 conducted on the 9th February 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 and an assistant ecologist.
- 1.1.3** No evidence of bats was found either internally or externally within the house or garage. Externally, the house had limited potential roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and small *Myotis* species.
- 1.1.4** The proposals to build a two-storey rear extension on top of a single storey flat roof will not have an impact on any features that had potential to be used by bats. As such, the proposals are considered highly unlikely to lead to the disturbance of bats or lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost during the works. A European Protected Species mitigation licence (EPSML) 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 building work, 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, a EPSML may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Anthony Gordon to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment at 20 Rosehill Park in Emmer Green, Reading in Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 72112 77385).

2.1.2 The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey 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 significantly affect 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 Mitigation Licences (EPSML) 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".

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- 2.2.3** Local authorities 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 Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that an EPSML is necessary before granting planning permission.
- 2.2.4** EPSML applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days.
- 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 Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21). The Class Licence permits 'Registered Consultants' or accredited agents appointed by them to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.
- 2.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS licence applications or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21) 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 detached house is located on the eastern side of Rosehill Park in Emmer Green Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 72112 77385).
- 2.3.1** The detached house is situated in a residential area, with surrounding neighbouring properties and their respective gardens on all sides. A small patch of woodland is situated 125 metres to the east with a woodland copse 420 metres to the east and a further woodland patch 470 metres to the northwest. The greens of a golf course, with scattered trees and patches of woodland is situated 540 metres to the west. These nearby habitats provide moderate quality commuting and foraging opportunities for bats roosting locally.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the property was conducted on the 9th

February 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 and an assistant ecologist.

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch, searching for 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 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 (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).

3.1.4 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;
- Beneath lifted barge boards;
- 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 survey constraints as full internal and external access was available throughout the survey.

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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 detached house was of modern brick wall construction, with a pitched roof (**Photographs 1 & 2**). There was a flat roof garage, which connected to the neighbouring property to the south, a flat roofed porch and rear extension and a conservatory to the rear (**Photograph 3**).
- 4.2.2** The main roof of the house was covered in interlocking concrete roof tiles, which were tightly fitted (**Photograph 4; Target note 1**). The ridge tiles were all in place and fully mortared (**Photograph 5; Target note 2**). The verges at both gable end and end ridge tile at the southern end had been recently repaired (**Photographs 6 & 7; Target note 3**). There was a newly mortared chimney at the northern end of the house and a flue pipe, which both had tightly fitted lead flashing around the bases (**Photographs 8 & 9; Target notes 4 & 5**). The soffit boxes were mostly flush to the walls along the eaves of the house, apart from a narrow gap above a window to the rear and to the front of the house (**Photographs 10 & 11; Target notes 6 & 7**). A gap was also present at the edge of the soffit box where it joined the edge of the chimney (**Photograph 12; Target note 8**).
- 4.2.3** The flat roofed extensions were all tightly fitted with a roof lined with bitumen felt and uPVC soffits (**Photograph 13; Target note 9**).
- 4.2.4** No evidence of roosting bats were observed on the house during the external inspection.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** The roof void covered the two-storey footprint of the house and was accessible via a loft hatch (**Photograph 14**). The void had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of one and a half metres and the ridge was cobwebbed in places, which can indicate little or no bat activity at the ridge (**Photograph 15; Target note 10**). The roof was lined with a bituminous roofing membrane, which had occasional tears and a section where the sheets overlapped, where the underside of the roof tiles was visible

(**Photographs 16, 17 & 18; Target notes 11 - 14**). The felt was also loose along at the ridge and around the flue pipe (**Photographs 19 & 20; Target notes 15 & 16**). The floor was insulated with fibreglass with vermiculite beneath (**Photograph 21; Target note 17**). The eaves were open in places or filled with fibreglass (**Photographs 22 & 23; Target notes 18 & 19**). The gable end walls were of brickwork construction. There were some gaps around the edges of the brickwork, which had been filled with plastic and a large gap was present at the apex at the southern gable end (**Photographs 24 & 25; Target notes 20 & 21**). Some shredded fibreglass was visible filling the cavity wall at the southern gable end (**Photograph 26; Target note 22**). The north facing gable end had gaps between the end rafter and brickwork, which was heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 27; Target note 23**). There was an old wasp nest at the eaves of the void (**Target note 24**).

- 4.3.2** No evidence of roosting bats were observed inside the roof void during the internal inspection.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential/Status

5.1.1 There was no evidence of roosting bats within the roof void, and the cobwebbed ridge indicated a lack of activity by void-dwelling bat species such as the long-eared (*Plecotus* sp.) bat. Externally, the house had limited potential roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and small *Myotis* species, including crevices behind the soffit box at the northern gable end and front of the house. Signs of crevice-dwelling bats utilising these external features (i.e., droppings) are typically hidden from view and therefore the absence of roosting bats in these areas cannot be confirmed at this stage.

5.1.2 Two species of pipistrelle bat, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), are widespread and abundant throughout the UK (Richardson 2000). Small *Myotis* species such as the Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and/or Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are widespread and common but less abundant than the pipistrelle species. Roosts supporting pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* bat species are 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).

5.1.3 Taking into account the location of the property and type of bat roost features identified, the property is considered to have low bat roost potential.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The proposals will involve the construction of a two-storey extension on the rear elevation, replacing part of the existing rear single storey extension. The works will not have an impact on the potential bat roost features identified behind gaps at the edge of the soffit box by the chimney and to the front of the house, which will remain in-situ and unaffected by the works. As such, the proposals are considered highly unlikely to lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost during the works, and unlikely to lead to the disturbance of bats, particularly disturbance that would affect the ability of bats to survive, breed, nurture young or hibernate. Therefore, a European Protected Species mitigation licence (EPSML) 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 building work, 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, a EPSML 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. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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

Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of the house viewed from the west.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the east.



3. Flat roof extension to the front of the house.



4. Interlocking roof tiles in place and tight on the roof.



5. Ridge tiles in place and mortared.



6. Newly mortared ridge tiles and verge tiles at the southern end of the roof.



7. Verge fully mortared at the northern end of the house.



8. Lead flashing and new mortar tight around the chimney.



9. Lead flashing tight around the base of the flue pipe.



10. Slight gap above a window to the rear of the house.



11. Soffits mostly tight around the eaves.



12. Gap behind the soffit box to the front of the house.



13. Flat roof covered tightly with bitumen roofing felt.



14. Internal view of the roof space.



15. Ridge cobweb free in places.



16. Large tear in roof felt.



17. Large tear in roof felt.



18. Roof tiles exposed where the sheets of felt overlapped.



19. Roofing felt loose along the ridge.



20. Roofing felt loose around the flue pipe.



21. Roof lined with fibreglass and vermiculite.



22. Eaves open in places.



23. Eaves filled in places.



24. Gaps filled with plastic at the edges of the brickwork at the southern gable end.



25. Large gap at the apex of the southern gable end.

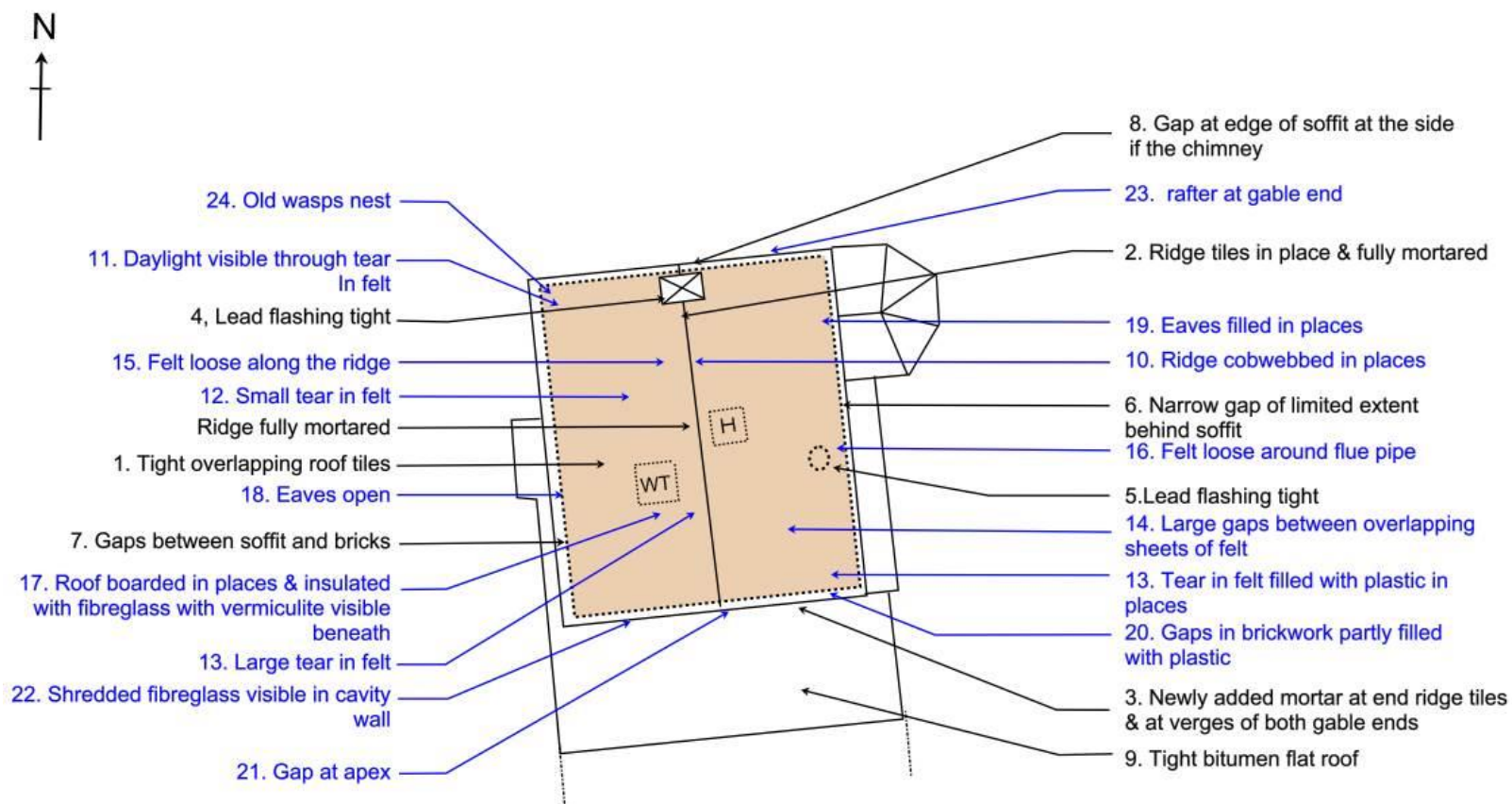


26. Shredded fibreglass visible in the southern gable end.



27. Gaps between the end rafter and brickwork at the northern gable end.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



 Chimney
  Roof Space
  Loft Hatch
  Water Tank
  External Target Note
  Internal Target Note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	20 Rosehill Park Emmer Green	
VP	February 2022	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

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