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9548: 43a CHURCH ROAD, CAVERSHAM, BERKSHIRE

BRIEFING NOTE: BAT BUILDING ASSESSMENT

Introduction

1. Ecology Solutions was instructed by Mr Daniel Pagella in December 2020 to undertake a bat assessment of the buildings present at 43a Church Road, Caversham, Berkshire.
2. The site proposals are for the demolition of the garage and construction of a two-storey extension. A planning application for the proposed extension and modification works is expected to be completed in the near future.

Methodology

3. The buildings on site were assessed for their potential to support bats in December 2020.
4. The probability of a building being used by bats as a summer roost site increases if it:
 - is largely undisturbed;
 - dates pre-20th Century;
 - has a large roof void with unobstructed flying spaces;
 - has access points for bats (e.g. along gaps at the eaves, under gaps in the roofing tiles, or along gaps within the built structure);
 - has a roof void which is not too draughty;
 - has wooden cladding;
 - has hanging tiles; and / or
 - is in a rural setting and close to woodland and water features.
5. Internal and external checks of the buildings were undertaken in order to search for signs of any use by bats. Binoculars, ladders and torches were used where necessary to inspect any inaccessible areas more closely.

Survey Results

6. There are two buildings on site. Full descriptions of the buildings are detailed below. The buildings locations and positioning are shown at Plan ECO1.

7. Building B1 is a Grade II listed brick-built residential property (see Photograph 1). There are three sections, each containing a separate loft void. B1a is a single storey section with a pitched slate tile roof with ridge tiles. The roof is in good condition with only a few gaps under the slate tiles and ridge tiles. The void of section B1a is small with a wooden frame and sarking boards (see Photograph 2). The height is approximately 1m at the apex. It is 2.5m wide and approximately 5m long. Half of the space is in use as miscellaneous storage. No access points were recorded.
8. B1b is the two-storey section with a pitched slate tile roof and ridge tiles. The majority of the roof is in good condition with a few gaps under the slate tiles and ridge tiles. Lead flashing is present at the join with B1a and surrounding the chimney. Good condition wood cladding is present in the gable at the rear of the building. The void of section B1b is larger with access to the southwestern end blocked by the water tank (see Photograph 3). The remainder of the void is used for miscellaneous storage. The void is approximately 2m at the apex, with a width of 2m and length of 8m. The loft has a wooden frame and no lining which provides access to the slate tiles. A number of potential access points are present.
9. B1c is a single storey section with a lean-to slate tile roof. The roof is in good condition with only a few gaps under the slate tiles. The loft void is 1m tall and 1m wide with a length of 8m. The loft void has a wooden frame with no lining and the slate tiles can be seen. No obvious access points were recorded. The majority of the void is used for miscellaneous storage.
10. Building B2 is a single storey garage with a pitched roof (see Photograph 4). The front of the roof has slate tiles and ridge tiles whereas the rear comprises a shallower bitumen felt section of roof. A wooden soffit is present at the front of the garage. Significant Ivy *Hedera helix* is present at the rear of the building. A small number of gaps were recorded under the ridge tiles.
11. No signs of bats were recorded during the internal surveys. The majority of the roofs are in good condition with only a number of gaps under slate tiles and ridge tiles. It is considered that building B2 and sections B1a and B1c have low potential for roosting bats. Section B1b is considered to provide moderate potential due to the higher suitability of the loft void.
12. Given that only section B1c and building B2 are to be affected by the proposed works, only these areas are considered to require further surveys.
13. Due to their low potential for roosting bats, and in line with current bat survey guidelines¹ it is recommended that section B1c and building B2 are subject to a single bat emergence survey. These surveys can be undertaken from May to August / September inclusive. Two surveyors would be required to observe the buildings from fifteen minutes before sunset to two hours after sunset, and record any bat emergence from the building and also record any bat activity in the vicinity.
14. Overall, the building and specifically the proposals are not considered likely to affect any bat roost, there is a need to complete a single emergence survey of the

¹ Collins, J. (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. 3rd Edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

areas of identified low interest. In the unlikely event that a roost is identified this would trigger the need for further surveys and a likely EPS licence from Natural England. It would be expected any mitigation would be based around timing constraints for the works and provision of alternative roosting opportunities through a suitable bat box.

Summary and Conclusions

15. In conclusion, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey, however, the buildings are considered to provide low to moderate potential for roosting bats.
16. Given that only section B1c and building B2 are to be affected by the proposed works it is recommended that these areas are subject to a single bat emergence survey to conform with current guidelines. Should evidence of a roost be identified further surveys may be required together with the work to be completed under a Natural England EPS licence with the appropriate provision of safeguards and mitigation measures.
17. It would be expected that on account of the low suitability any mitigation potentially required would be limited. If a bat roost is identified, and this is considered unlikely on account of the limited opportunities present and lack of any roosting activity recorded such mitigation would be expected to be around timing restriction and provision of alternative roosting opportunities through the provision of a bat box.

Plans

- Plan ECO1: Building Locations

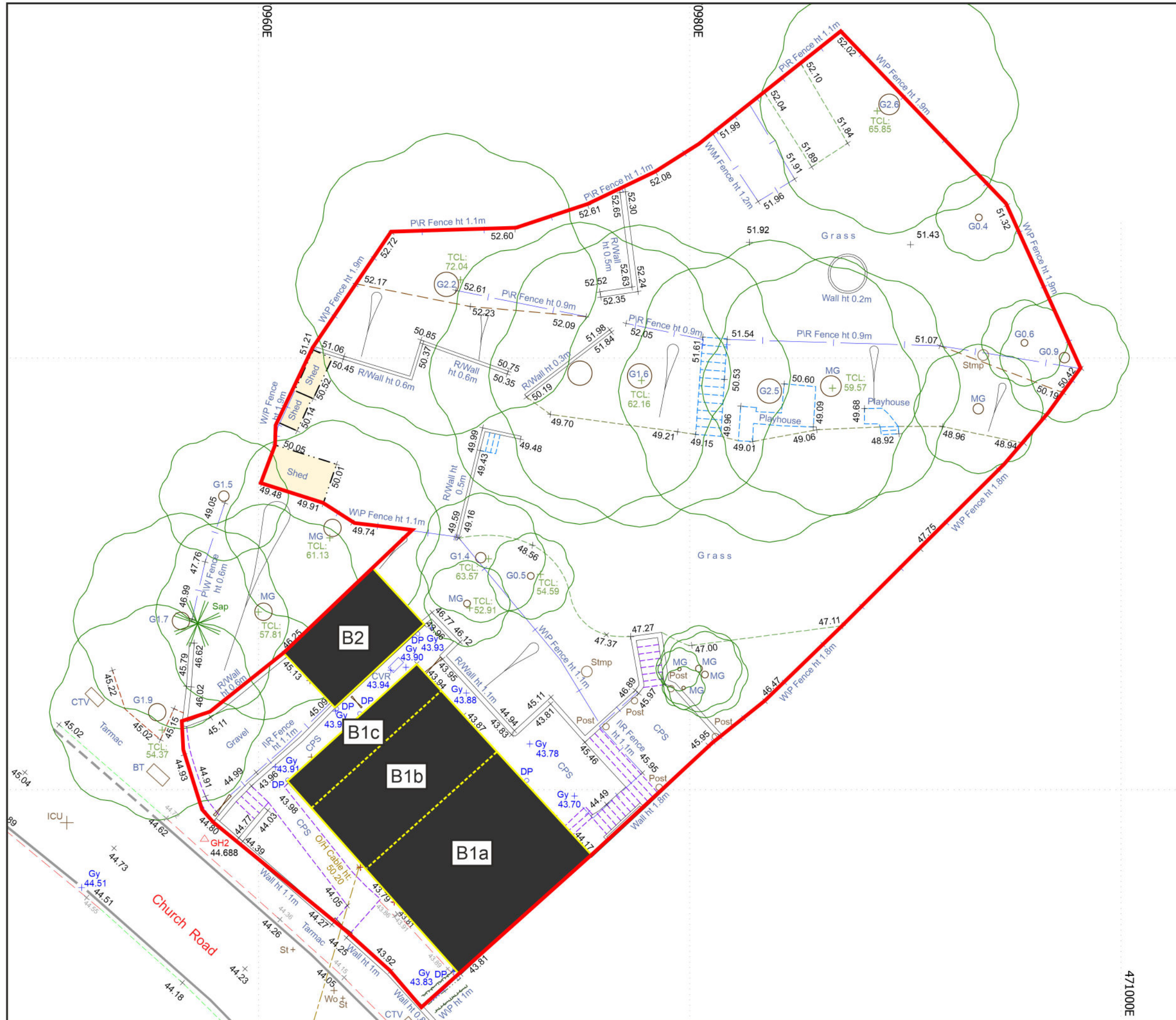
Photographs

- Photograph 1: Building B1
- Photograph 2: Loft Void within Building B1a
- Photograph 3: Loft Void within Building B1b
- Photograph 4: Building B2

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21.12.20

PLAN ECO1

Building Locations



KEY:

- SITE BOUNDARY
- BUILDING



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PLAN ECO1:
BUILDING LOCATIONS

Rev: A
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PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPH 1: Building B1



PHOTOGRAPH 2: Loft Void within Building B1a



PHOTOGRAPH 3: Loft Void within Building B1b



PHOTOGRAPH 4: Building B2





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