

Preliminary Roost Assessment

173 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JR

Survey conducted 12th January 2022

Document Control Sheet

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SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologists Lisha Price and Nick Kirke of Plan Ecology at 173 Upper Woodcote Road, Reading on the 12th of January 2022.

The proposed works include the addition of a rear two-storey extension to the property.

The Site consists of a brick-built detached house with a back garden and is located in a residential area with similar houses.

The house and garage could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential; there was no evidence of bats in the loft space or on any external features. The loft liner, roof and soffits were all in a very good state of repair with no visible gaps which could be used to access potential roost features.

As no bat potential was noted; no further surveys are recommended for bats at this time.

There are known bat roosts within 100m of the Site and it is recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

Biodiversity enhancements are encouraged in the new build section to provide bat roosting opportunities on the Site.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0845 1300 228.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site consists of a brick-built detached house with a back garden and is located in a residential area with houses of a similar footprint.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works include the addition of a rear two-storey extension to the property.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out with the aim to look for evidence of bats roosting and for the presence of structures within the buildings which hold bat roosting potential.

1.4 General Information about Bats and Buildings

Loft spaces can potentially be utilised by bat species such as e.g. Brown Long-eared bats or Serotine bats which are known to commonly roost inside loft spaces. This can generally be discovered via droppings inside the loft as the droppings will stay protected from weather elements.

External features of the building can potentially be used as roosting sites by e.g. Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* spp). Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats out of the British species, and they are known to roost inside buildings utilising areas such as cavity walls, soffits and fascia boards, and between tiles and roofing felt. It is not practical to carry out a full physical examination of such building features, which is why activity surveys have to be done during summer months (May-September) when the bats are fully active.

Access points of 1-2 centimetres only are used by bats to enter and exit their roosting sites. Most buildings will have gaps of such size in roof areas, as ventilation of the roof void would otherwise not be possible.

1. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was surveyed during the daytime on the 12th of January 2022 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS) and Nick Kirke (Natural England bat licence No. 50736-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Lisha has over 15 years of experience conducting ecology surveys.

The buildings were inspected for evidence of bats in the form of live or dead bats, droppings, urine staining and insect feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings. A careful visual search using a Clulite torch was conducted, and an endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps. The exterior of the building was surveyed for droppings on walls and window ledges.

2. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

Bat roosting potential:

The house and garage could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential; there was no evidence of bats in the loft space or on any external features. The loft liner, roof and soffits were all in a very good state of repair with no visible gaps which could be used to access potential roost features.

See APPENDIX 1 for photographs

3. ASSESSMENT

Constraints on study information

All accessible areas of the building could be surveyed without restrictions.

A biological record data search was not conducted as the results of a data search is not likely to impact on the decision-making process at this stage. However, it is known that there are bat roosts 100m from the Site.

Bat survey results are generally considered to be valid within a year of the survey date or until the next active bat season of May-September. The County Council Ecologists and/or Natural England may ask for updated surveys if the reports are older than one year.

Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitat.

The works are small and localised and will not be detrimental to foraging or commuting bats.

Legislation and policy guidance

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

The house could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential; there was no evidence of bats in the loft space or on any external features. The loft liner, roof and soffits were all in a very good state of repair with no visible gaps which could be used to access potential roost features.

There are some gaps and raised tiles on the porch at the front of the house, which have some bat roost potential, however these will not be affected by the proposed works.

As it was possible to inspect all potential roost features on the building during the survey no further surveys are recommended for bats at this time.

There are known bat roosts within 100m of the Site and it is recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

Biodiversity enhancements are encouraged in the new build section to provide bat roosting opportunities on the Site. This could include putting a bat brick within the building work or bat boxes within the garden.

See Appendix 3 for biodiversity enhancements.

Further Survey Effort

No further surveys are recommended for bats at this time.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0845 1300 228.

5. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.)(2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practise Guidelines* (3rd edn).The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones A J & McLeish A P (Ed.), 2004. *The Bat Workers' Manual*. JNCC, Peterborough, United Kingdom.

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APPENDIX 1: Photographs



Photograph 1: Western aspect.



Photograph 2: Back Garden with amenity grassland and bordered by trees.



Photograph 3: Western aspect with clay roof tiles in good condition.



Photograph 4: Wooden soffits, in good condition no shrinking.



Photograph 5: Northern aspect.



Photograph 6: Eastern aspect soffits above garage in good condition.



Photograph 7: Eastern aspect.



Photograph 8: Minor lifting in tiles on front porch (area not affected by works).



Photograph 9: Southern aspect.



Photograph 10: Black bitumen lined loft space in good condition.



Photograph 11: Loft space with fibreglass insulation.

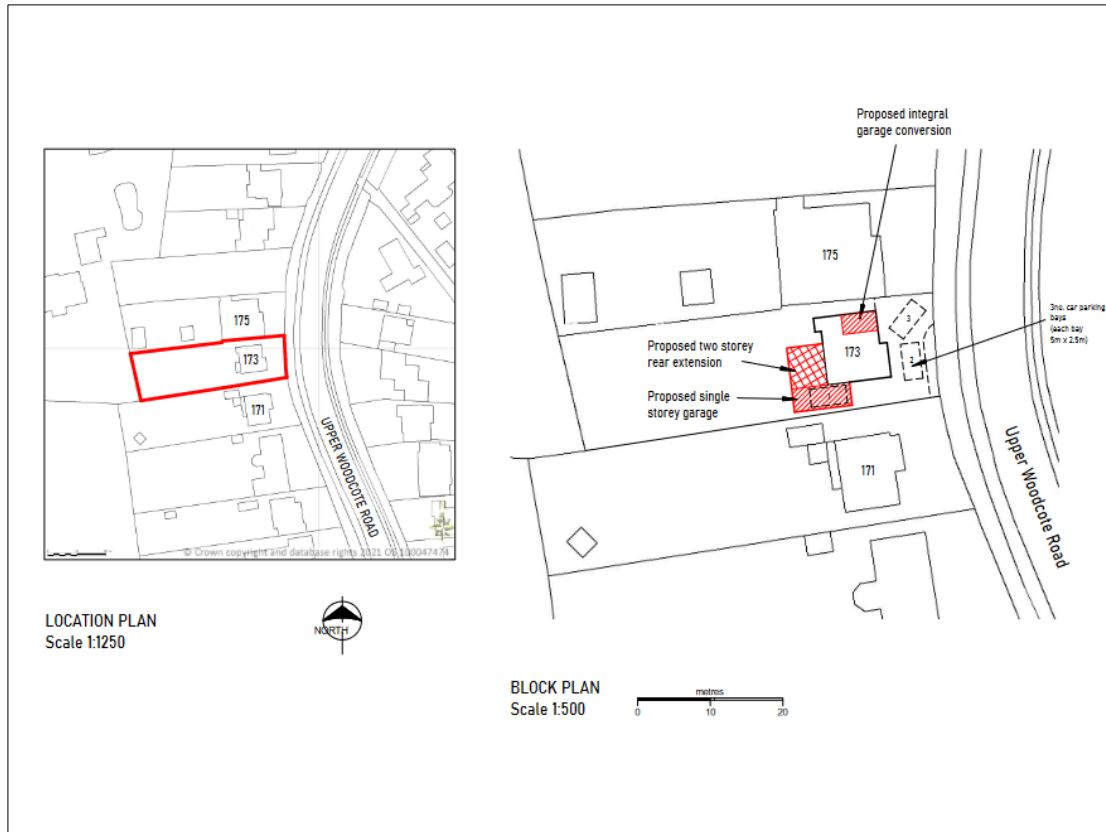


Photograph 12: Insulation lifted to check for droppings.



Photograph 13: Lining in good condition
no tears or rips and no visible gaps.

APPENDIX 2: Location



APPENDIX 3: Biodiversity Enhancements

Integrated Bat Box



The Forticrete Bat Box has been developed to be used in new build construction or renovation where there is a requirement to provide a habitat for pipistrelle bats.

Width 440mm x Height 215mm x Depth 100mm

Benefits

- The box is made of conventional cast stone front face but is backed with high grade plywood which is sawn and roughened internally to provide a haven for bats.
- The Bat Box is maintenance free due to bottom entrance.

Bat Box for Trees



Example: **Schwegler 45/2F Bat Box 2FDFP**

An excellent general-purpose bat box, the Schwegler 2F-DFP Bat Box is suitable for summer use by a wide variety of species (and particularly liked by pipistrelles). It's the ideal starter box to see if there are crevice loving bats in your area. The 2F-DFP is the same shape as the 2F but the front panel is fitted with a second inner wooden grooved panel, creating a space for crevice inhabiting bats.

Being made of woodcrete the box will last for years and provide a stable environment inside. The unit is also multi-purpose - If it remains occupied after a number of years, it is easily converted to a 2F Bat Box or 2M Bird Box by simply changing the front panel. If a cavity is required (rather than a crevice), then the 2F model is needed.

Occupants: Crevice-dwelling bats such as Nathusius' pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat and Pipistrelle Bats.

- **External Dimensions:**
- **W** 16cm diameter
- **H** 33cm
- **Weight:** 4.1kg
- **Installation:** Attach to a tree using the aluminium nail (included), or hung from a branch. The front panels can be purchased separately and are interchangeable between Schwegler models 1B, 2M or 2F and can easily be removed from the box
- **Includes** nest box, hanger and aluminium nail.

