

**36 Chazey Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 7DS**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2838a

July 2021



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Evans to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within 36 Chazey Road – a detached house in Reading, Berkshire. The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a single 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 undertaken on the 15th June 2021 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 and an assistant ecologist.
- 1.1.3** Externally, the house possessed some features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bats in the form of gaps behind hanging tiles.
- 1.1.4** There were no suitable features for use by bats on the section of the house to be impacted and therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed works will have any impact on bats or their roosts.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Evans to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within 36 Chazey Road – a detached house in Reading, Berkshire.
- 2.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a single storey rear extension (refer to existing and proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**).

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;
 - 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 licences 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, 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 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 European Protected Species licensing is necessary before granting planning permission.

2.2.4 European Protected Species mitigation licence 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 of a full mitigation licence application.

2.2.5 Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring bat species may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21). The Class Licence permits ‘Registered Consultants’ 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 house is situated on the northern side of Chazey Road in Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 69949 75447).

2.3.2 The property is in a suburban setting surrounded with residential properties with large gardens to the east, west and south. Malpledurham Playing Fields are situated on the northern boundary, with amenity grassland,

scattered trees and patches of woodland. A strip of woodland is situated 310 metres to the south. The River Thames flows approximately 430 metres to the south.

- 2.3.3** Overall, the nearby woodlands and river provide high quality commuting and foraging habitat to bats in the vicinity.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Bat Survey

3.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken on the 15th June 2021 by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 and assistant ecologist.

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars, and a high power (1 million candle power) torch and looked for any signs of occupation by bats, and 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:

- 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);
- Bats (live or dead).

3.1.4 Residential properties may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- Under roof and ridge tiles, especially when loose or missing tiles are present or sections of mortar are missing;
- At the eaves – gaining access via gaps between the soffits and wall;
- At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof tiles;
- Within an enclosed roof space – long-eared bats (*Plecotus* sp.) for example, will often cluster at the ridge beam.

3.2 Survey Constraints

3.2.1 Full access was available to the interior and exterior of the property and therefore there were no significant constraints to the survey.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Building Inspection

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 house are described as follows:

4.2 External Survey

4.2.1 The detached house was of brick cavity wall construction and had an L-shaped pitched roof, with a gable end to the rear, a flat roof garage attached to the eastern side which extended around the front of the house (**Photographs 1, 2 & 3**).

4.2.2 The roof was covered with flat roof tiles that were mostly in place and fitted tightly, apart from some occasional gaps including by the chimney on the front elevation and under a few lifted tiles along the verge to the rear of the house where a tile had slipped (**Photographs 4 & 5; Target notes 1 & 2**). The gaps offered potential roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats. The ridge tiles were all in place and fitted tightly (**Photograph 6; Target note 3**). The timber soffit boxes were mostly tight to the eaves around the house, apart from a few gaps on the rear gable end where there was some missing mortar (**Photograph 7; Target note 4**). The front and half of the sides of the house was clad with hanging tiles, which had the occasional gaps, including around the corners, the edges of the window and where they were lifted on the front elevation, and at the eastern end of the house where there was a broken tile and at the join with the timber soffits (**Photographs 8, 9, 10 & 11; Target notes 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9**). The verges were mostly all mortared, apart from a small section at the eastern side on the rear elevation where it had cracked and the roof tiles were lifted (**Photograph 12; Target note 10**). A slight gap was present between the timber fascias and under cloaking on the rear gable end, offering potential access opportunities for bats (**Photograph 13; Target note 11**).

4.2.3 The flat roof on the garage and single storey extension was tightly lined with bitumen felt and timber barge boards (**Photograph 14; Target note 12**).

4.2.4 No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the house and garage at the time of the survey.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** There was one L-shaped roof void and was accessed through a loft hatch towards the northern end of the roof void. One raised covered water tank and an uncovered water tank were present at the eastern end of the roof void. The roof was of 'cut and pitch' construction with a ridge beam and an approximate floor-to-ridge height of two metres in the main section and one metre in the rear gable end (**Photographs 15 & 16**). The roof was lined with bitumen roofing felt, which was intact and fitted tightly fitted (**Photograph 17; Target note 13**). The floor of the main section was boarded in places and insulated with vermiculite (**Photograph 18; Target note 14**). The rear section was lined with foil covered insulation (**Target note 15**). The eaves were open in the main roof void and were filled with fibreglass in the rear gable end (**Photographs 19 & 20; Target notes 16 & 17**). The ridge was heavily cobwebbed in places, which can indicate little or no activity by void dwelling bats (**Photograph 21; Target note 18**). The two main gable ends were of block work and brick work construction with a cement filling the gaps between the felt and brick work (**Photographs 22 & 23; Target note 19**). The rear gable end was of blockwork construction and was thickly cobwebbed (**Target note 20**). Several old wasps' nests were present at the eaves and at the gable ends (**Photograph 24**).
- 4.3.2** No evidence of bats was visible to the interior of the house and garage during the survey.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

- 5.1.1** No evidence of roosting bats was found inside the roof space and therefore it is highly unlikely that the property supports primarily void-dwelling bat species such as the long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.) for example.
- 5.1.2** Externally, the house had features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. These features included the gaps under and behind the hanging tiles, which were all limited to the front and front half of the eastern and western side walls, and some gaps behind the soffits, under a roof tile by the chimney and at the verge of the two-storey rear gable end. No evidence of roosting bats (i.e., staining or droppings) was visible on the exterior of the house during the inspection.
- 5.1.3** 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 Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are widespread and common but less abundant than the pipistrelle species. Roosts supporting pipistrelle 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).
- 5.1.4** Considering the setting and the bat roosting features, the house is considered to be of moderate potential for roosting bats.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 5.2.1** The proposed works includes the addition of a single-storey flat roof extension at the rear northern side of the house. There were no suitable features for use by bats on the section of the house to be impacted and there were no signs of the presence of bats within the roof space during the preliminary bat roost assessment. Therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed works will have any impact on bats or their roosts.

5.2.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the building work, the work must stop immediately, and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; work should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this point, a European Protected Species 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.

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 south.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the north.



3. Flat roof garage attached to the eastern side of the house.



4. Roof tiles mostly tight to the rear of the house.



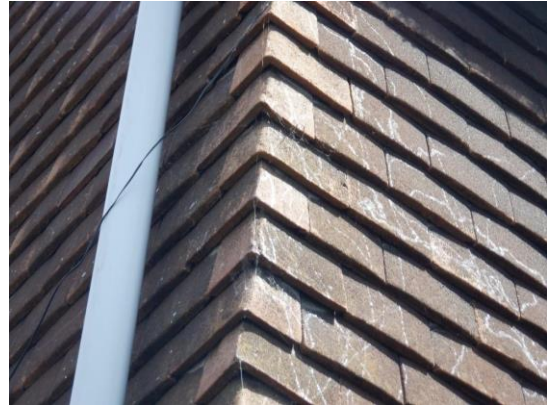
5. Roof tiles slightly lifted on the rear eastern verge.



6. Ridge tiles all in place and mortared.



7. Missing mortar along edge of the soffit box on the rear gable end.



8. Gaps under the corner hanging tiles at the front of the house.



9. Gaps behind hanging tiles at the edge of the windows to the front of the house.



10. Lifted hanging tiles at the front of the house.



11. Broken hanging tile and gap at the edge of the soffit box at the eastern side of the house.



12. Verges mortared to the rear of the house.



13. Gap between the timber fascia and under cloak at the rear gable end.



14. Bitumen felt and timber barge boards tight on the garage.



15. Internal view of the main loft space.



16. Internal view of the rear gable end.



17. Roof tightly lined with bitumen felt.



18. The floor insulated with vermiculite.



19. The eaves open in the main section of roof but old wasps' nest present.



20. The eaves filled with fibreglass in the rear section of roof.



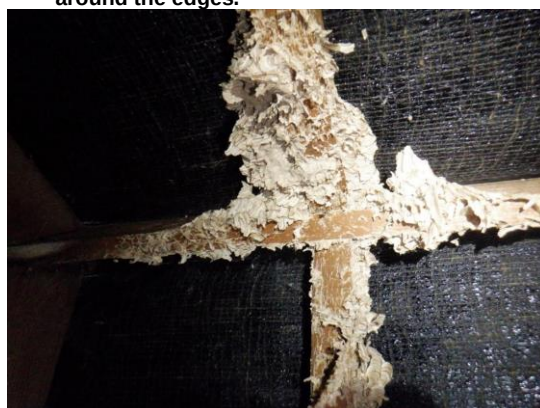
21. The ridge heavily cobwebbed.



22. The side gable ends of block work and brick work construction, with cement filling the gaps around the edges.

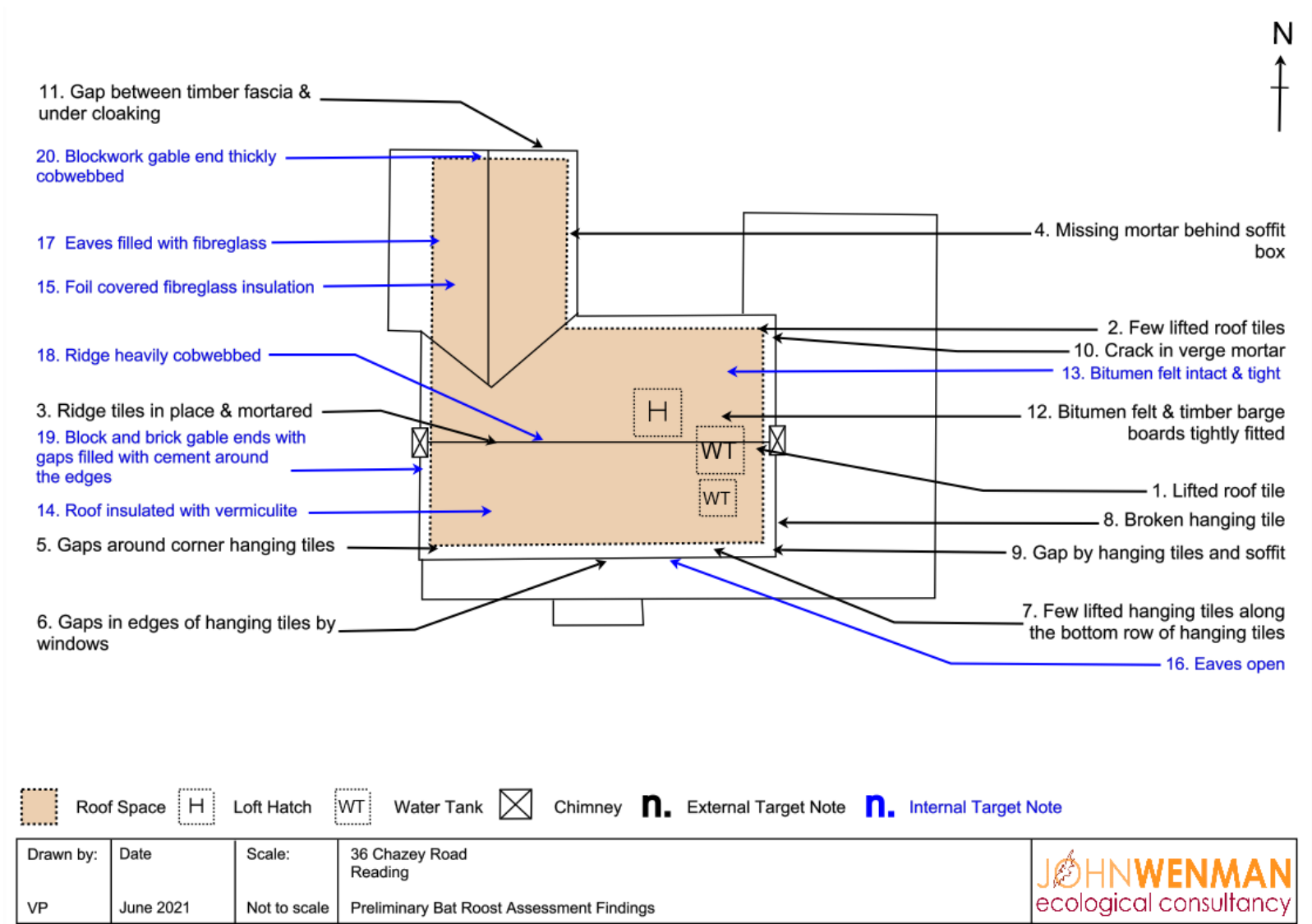


23. The side gable ends of block work and brick work construction, with cement filling the gaps around the edges.



24. Old wasps' nest along the ridge towards the western gable end.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation

A horizontal graphic scale bar with major tick marks at 0, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000mm. Below the bar is the label "SCALE : 1:50". The drawing area contains faint rectangular outlines corresponding to the grid.

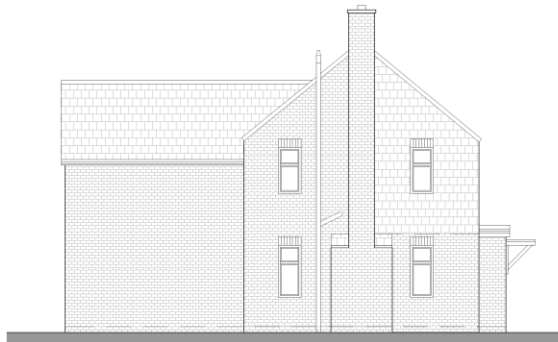
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B	20.06.21	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
A	04.06.21	JA	JIA	JBK	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL

DRAWING STATUS **For Approval**

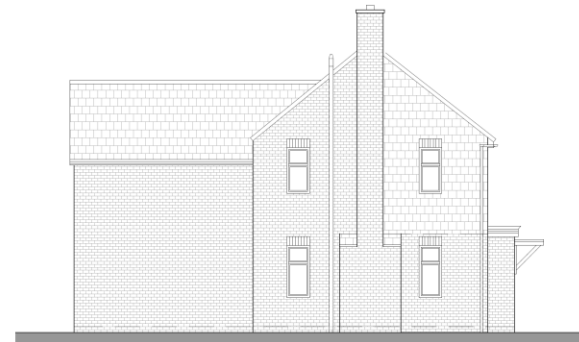


CLIENT			Mr and Mrs Evans		
PROJECT			36 Chazey Road Reading		
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DRAWN		DATE		SCALE	
JA		March 21		1:50 @ A1	
DRG NO		A-1100		REV B	
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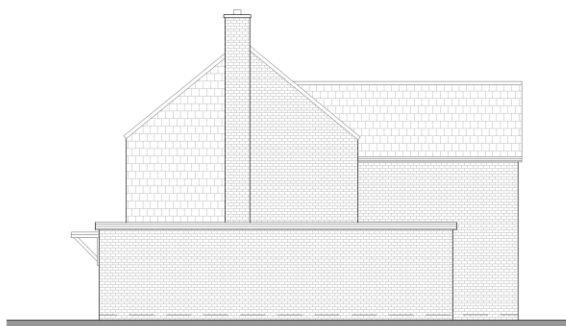
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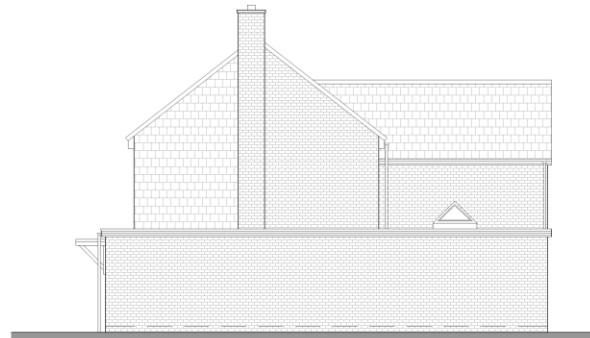
Existing Side Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Existing Side Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation

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SCALE 1:50					
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A	07/06/21	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
REV	DATE	DRN	CHKD	APPD	DESCRIPTION
DRAWING STATUS					
For Approval					

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CLIENT	Mr and Mrs Evans	
PROJECT	36 Chazey Road Reading	
TITLE	Existing and Proposed Side Elevations	
DRAWN	DATE	SCALE
JA	April 21	1:50 @ A1
DRG NO	REV	
A-1110	B	
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