

**8 Copperfields
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 7PQ**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2742/a

April 2021



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Safa Khan to undertake a survey for the presence of bats at 8 Copperfields in Caversham, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in relation to a planning application lodged with Reading Borough Council (Planning Application Number: 201830) seeking consent for a two-storey side and rear extension, a single-storey rear extension, a loft conversion and internal alterations (refer to existing and proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**).

1.2 Legislative Background

- 1.2.1** 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'). 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.
- 1.2.2** 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;
 - **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”.

- 1.2.3** 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.
- 1.2.4** European Protected Species (EPS) 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.
- 1.2.5** 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.
- 1.2.6** 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.

1.3 Site Location and Context

- 1.3.1** The property is situated in the Copperfields cul-de-sac in Caversham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 70783 75245).

1.3.1 The setting is suburban, and the property is surrounded by residential plots consisting of lawns, driveways and garden shrubs. Broadleaved woodland is present in nearby gardens approximately 200 metres to the west and 220 metres to the northeast. Just over 300 metres to the southwest of the property, a narrow strip of woodland - called The Warren - follows a steep chalk escarpment north of the River Thames. The nearby wooded habitat and the River Thames provide high quality commuting and foraging opportunities for bat adapted to roosting in suburban environments.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the property was undertaken on the 23rd March 2021 by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18.

2.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch and looked for features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones 2004; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004).

2.1.3 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).

2.1.4 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.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 There were no significant constraints to the survey as full access was available to the interior and exterior of the property.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1** 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:

3.2 External Survey

- 3.2.1** The detached house was of modern, brick cavity wall construction and had a hipped roof with a rear hipped end and a front gable; the shared detached garage stood to the north of the house (**Photographs 1, 2 & 3**).
- 3.2.2** The house was covered in tightly overlapping roof tiles, with securely mortared ridge and hip tiles, presenting roosting bats with no discernible potential points of ingress (**Photographs 4, 5 & 6; Target notes 1, 2 & 3**). The front gable had intact verge mortar and soffits that were flush against the brickwork (**Photograph 7; Target note 4**). The lead flashing lining the chimney was fitted closely to the surrounding roof tiles and the soffits were also flush against the stack (**Photograph 8; Target notes 5 & 6**). All the soffits on the house were tightly fixed against the brickwork except for one slight gap, which was cobwebbed and of limited extent (**Photographs 9 & 10; Target notes 7 & 8**). There was a small, curved metal porch roof at the front of the house (**Photograph 11; Target note 9**). The garage had a hipped roof covered in tight overlapping tiles with intact ridge and hip mortar (**Photograph 12; Target notes 10 & 11**).
- 3.2.3** No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the property at the time of the survey.

3.3 Internal Survey

- 3.3.1** The house's roof void spanned the two-storey footprint and was accessible via a loft hatch on the first floor. The void had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 3.5 metres and was of pre-formed trussed rafter construction (**Photograph 13**). The roof was lined with intact bitumen-and-hessian felt and there were cobwebs along the ridge, which indicates a lack of void-dwelling bat activity (**Photograph 14; Target notes 12 & 13**). The floor had some central boarding and was insulated with fibreglass; the eaves were open, and the soffit boxes were visible (**Photographs 15 & 16; Target notes 14 & 15**). There were two covered water tanks in the centre of the void (**Photograph 17**). The front gable end was of breezeblock construction and had gaps over the top of the blockwork (**Photograph 18; Target note 16**).
- 3.3.2** In the garage, the preformed trussed rafters were exposed and there was miscellaneous storage on the joists (**Photograph 19; Target note 17**). The roof was lined with bitumen-and-hessian felt and the concrete floor was covered in mats (**Photograph 20; Target note 18**). Timber wall plates were sealed to the brick walls (**Photograph 21; Target note 19**). There was a gap into the garage along the top of the garage door (**Photograph 22; Target note 20**).
- 3.3.3** No signs of roosting bats were found during the internal inspection of the house or garage.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

4.1.1 The property showed no evidence of the presence of roosting bats. The cobwebs along the ridge, cluttered rafters and absence of bat droppings inside the roof void indicates that primarily void-dwelling species, such as the long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.), are highly unlikely to be present.

4.1.2 The house lacked external features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. Overall, the house is considered to be of negligible bat roost potential.

4.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

4.2.1 The proposals are for a two-storey side and rear extension, a single-storey rear extension, a loft conversion and internal alterations (refer to existing and proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**). The property showed no signs of use by bats and lacked suitable bat roost features and as such, it is considered highly unlikely the work will lead to the disturbance of bats or lead to the loss of a bat roost during the works, and therefore, a European Protected Species mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.

4.2.2 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 European Protected Species licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

5 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.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of property viewed from west.



2. Rear of property viewed from east.



3. Front of shared detached garage viewed from west.



4. Flat overlapping roof tiles (rear elevation).



5. Mortared ridge and hip tiles (northern elevation).



6. Mortared ridge and hip tiles (southern elevation).



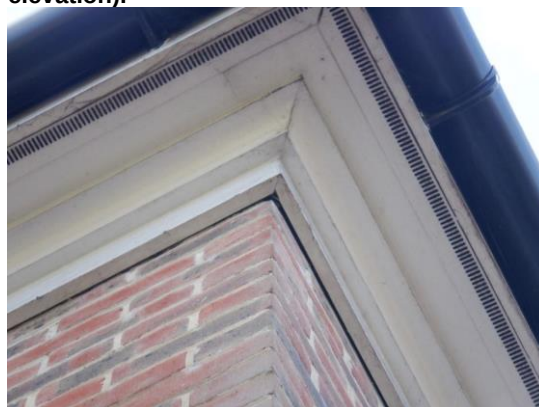
7. Intact verge mortar on front gable (front elevation).



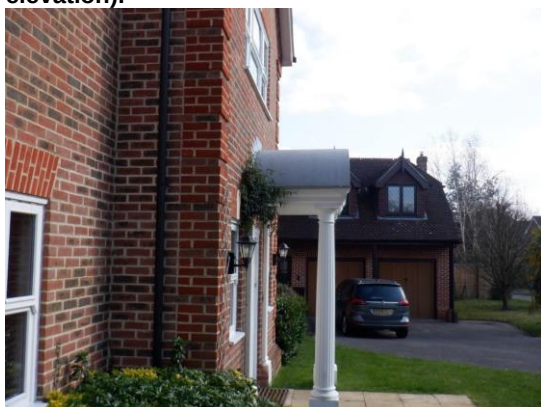
8. Soffit flush to chimney stack (southern elevation).



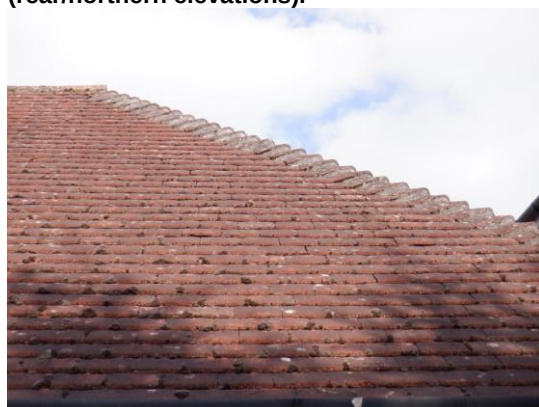
9. Soffit box tight against brickwork (rear elevation).



10. Slight gap of limited extent behind soffit (rear/northern elevations).



11. Curved metal porch roof (northern elevation).



12. Tight overlapping tiles and mortared hip tiles on garage (front elevation).



13. Roof void.



14. Intact bitumen roofing felt.



15. Fibreglass floor insulation.



16. Open eave with visible soffit box.



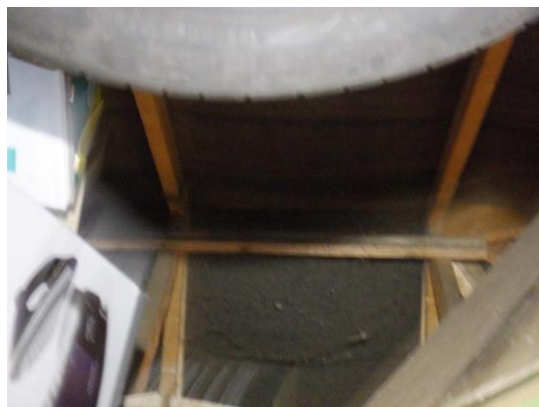
17. Covered water tank.



18. Front gable end.



19. Stored items on joists in garage.



20. Bitumen roof lining in garage.

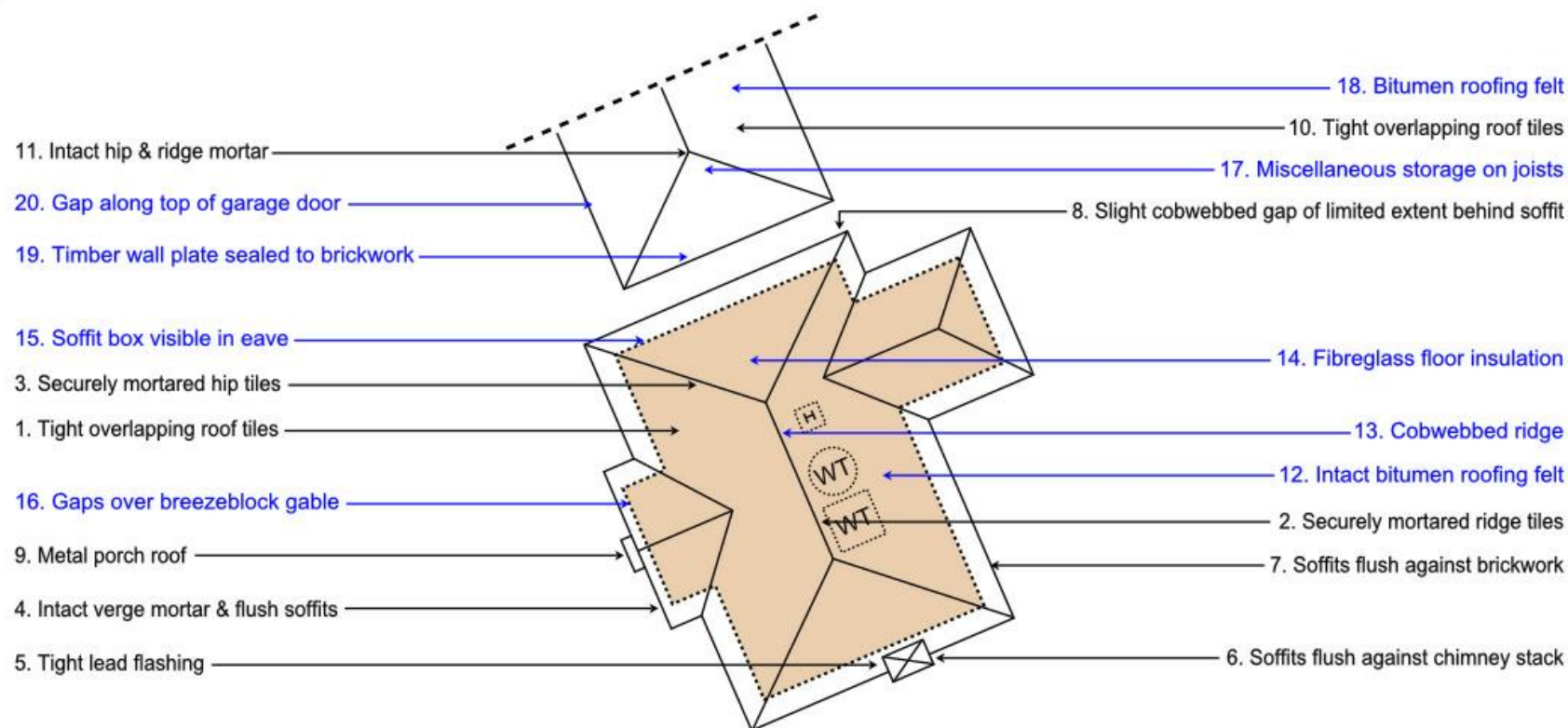


21. Tight timber wall plate on garage walls.



22. Gap along top of garage door.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



Chimney



Roof void



Loft hatch



Loft hatch



External target note



Internal target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	8 Copperfields Caversham	
CW	March 2021	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



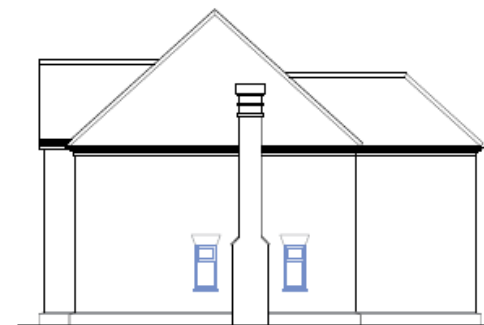
EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



EXISTING SIDE ELEVATION



EXISTING REAR ELEVATION



EXISTING SIDE ELEVATION

MISS SAFA & ANAH KHAN
DESIGN PROPOSAL @
8 COPPERFIELDS
READING
RG4 7PD

EXISTING ELEVATIONS

1:100 @ A2
AUGUST 2020
20083.S.PP-03
ANNA LUCHANOV

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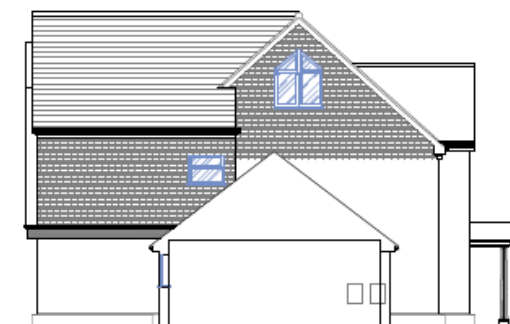
NOTE:

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SCALE 1:100



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

MISS SAFA & ANAH KHAN
DESIGN PROPOSAL @
8 COPPERFIELDS
READING
RG4 7PQ

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

1:100 @ A2
AUGUST 2020
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NOTES

1. ALL WORK TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUILDING REGULATIONS
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