

**11 Cressingham Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG2 7RT**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2269/a

July 2019



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1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background.....	3
1.2	Legislative Background.....	3
1.3	Site Location and Context.....	5
2	SURVEY METHOD.....	6
2.1	Building Inspection.....	6
2.2	Survey Constraints.....	6
3	SURVEY FINDINGS	7
3.1	Introduction	7
3.2	External Survey.....	7
3.3	Internal Survey.....	7
4	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
4.1	Assessment of Bat Roost Potential.....	9
4.2	Impact of Proposals and Recommendations	9
5	REFERENCES	11
	APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS.....	12
	APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS.....	14
	APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS	15

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Emma O'Neill to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the semi-detached house at 11 Cressingham Road in Reading, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the construction of a part single, part two-storey rear and side extension, and to carry out internal alterations.

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 affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- 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, 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;

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16/07/2019

- **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. They must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting European Protected Species before granting planning permission.
- 1.2.4** If a European Protected Species mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.
- 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), which would enable consultants registered by Natural England, or their appointed accredited agents, to carry licensable work under the Class Licence once sites have been registered in advance with Natural England. Registration forms must be submitted at least three weeks before work is due to start, and if acceptable, Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks.
- 1.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS mitigation 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 on the southern side of Cressingham Road in Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 73018 70963).
- 1.3.2** The property is bordered by further residential properties and their gardens on all sides and beyond Cressingham Road to the north west. A wooded strip is 85 metres to the south west linking to a larger area of woodland offering potential foraging habitat for bats in the local vicinity.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken by an ecologist registered under Natural England bat survey class licence CL18 on the 1st July 2019.

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);
- 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;
- 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;
- Within an enclosed roof space – long-eared bats (*Plecotus* sp.) for example, will often cluster at the ridge beam.

2.2 Survey Constraints

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

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1** Photographs of the house 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:

3.2 External Survey

- 3.2.1** The semi-detached house was of modern, cavity wall construction with a hipped roof and front and rear gable end (**Photographs 1 & 2**). The roof was covered with flat roof tiles, which were all intact and tightly fitted (**Photograph 3; Target Note 1**). There was a small group of lifted roof tiles around the chimney on the front elevation offering potential access and roosting opportunities for bats (**Photograph 4; Target Note 2**). The mortar under the hip tiles was intact and under the ridge tiles (**Photographs 5 & 6; Target Notes 3 & 4**). The mortar under the verge tiles was intact on the rear and front gable ends; some of the mortar had eroded at the apex but this was superficial and did not lead into a suitable crevice for roosting bats (**Photographs 7 & 8; Target Notes 5 & 6**). The lead flashing around the two chimneys was tight to the surrounding roof tiles (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target Note 7**).
- 3.2.2** 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 had a single roof void covering the two-storey footprint, and this was accessible via a loft hatch (**Photograph 9**). The void had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 1.5 metres and the roof was unlined (**Photograph 10; Target Note 8**). The ridge was cobwebbed, which can indicate there has been little or no bat activity at the ridge (**Photograph 11; Target Note 9**). The eaves were open into the soffit box (**Target Note 10**). The floor was partially boarded and insulated with fibreglass. There was no evidence of roosting bats around the chimney stacks inside the roof space (**Photograph 12; Target Note 11**).

3.3.2 No signs of roosting bats were found during the internal inspection of the property.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

4.1.1 Internally, no bat droppings were found inside the roof void thus confirming the highly likely absence of primarily void-dwelling species such as long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.). Externally, the house had very limited features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. These features were localised to gaps under roof tiles around the chimney on the front elevation. No evidence of roosting bats (i.e. staining or droppings) was visible on the exterior of the house or internally in the void, which was unlined and therefore had very few places in which evidence of bats could be hidden from view.

4.1.2 The survey findings show no evidence of bats roosting currently, and taking into account the local context and the potential roosting features present, the house is considered to be of low potential for future use by bats.

4.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

4.2.1 The proposed work involves the construction of a part two-storey part single-storey rear and side extension on the property. The property offered no visible opportunities for roosting bats on the rear or side elevation of the house. The only external features identified as providing potential roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bat species are to be retained unaffected by the proposals; the gaps around the chimney will be retained and undisturbed by the proposed works and therefore the work will have no impact on the long-term availability of these potential roosting features. The work is considered unlikely to lead to disturbance that would significantly affect the ability of bats to survive, breed, reproduce, nurture young and hibernate, therefore a European Protected Species 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 construction work, the work must stop immediately, and a licensed ecologist 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 mitigation

licence or confirmation of the site's registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence CL21 (if applicable) 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.

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 property viewed from the northwest.



2. Rear of the property viewed from the southeast.



3. Tight roof tiles and lead flashing around the chimney (southwest elevation).



4. Small group of lifted roof tile around the chimney on the front elevation and tight lead flashing.



5. Intact mortar under the hip tiles.



6. Intact mortar under the ridge on the front elevation.



7. Intact verge mortar at the gable ends.



8. Missing mortar at the apex of the rear gable end.



9. Roof space looking towards the rear gable end.



10. The unlined roof.

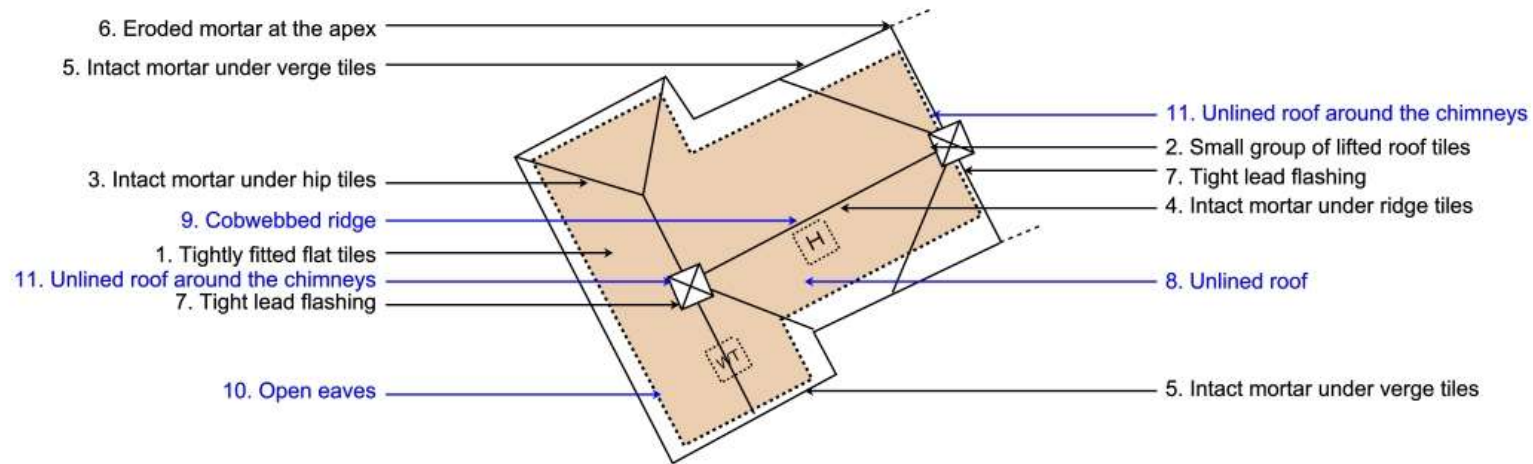


11. The cobwebbed ridge beam.



12. Unlined tiles around the chimney.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



n. External Target note **n.** Internal Target note  Chimney  Loft hatch  Roof space

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SF	July 2019	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment	

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

		 HAC DESIGNS WYKOL COURT SHALLOWFIELD READING RG2 7AL info@hac-designs.co.uk Mob: 07983296627 PROJECT: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT: 11 CRESSINGHAM ROAD READING RG2 7RT CLIENTS NAME: MR & MRS COOPER TITLE: EXISTING ELEVATIONS REVISION: <table border="1"> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> DRAWN BY: HAYDEN COOPER </td> <td> SCALE: 1:100 </td> </tr> <tr> <td> DATE: APRIL 2019 </td> <td> A3 </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> DRAWING NUMBER: 19039BC-02 </td> </tr> </table>																	DRAWN BY: HAYDEN COOPER	SCALE: 1:100	DATE: APRIL 2019	A3	DRAWING NUMBER: 19039BC-02	
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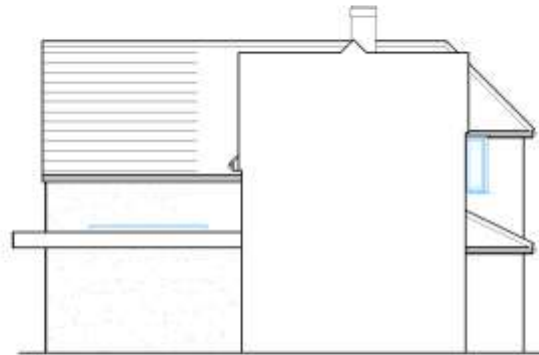
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION



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PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

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DRAWING NUMBER:
19039BC-06