

**103 & 105 Addington Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 5PZ**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2148/a

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1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background.....	3
1.2	Legislative Background.....	3
1.3	Site Location and Context.....	4
2	SURVEY METHOD	6
2.1	Bat Survey	6
2.2	Survey Constraints.....	6
3	SURVEY FINDINGS.....	7
3.1	Building Inspection.....	7
3.2	External Survey – 105 Addington Road	7
3.3	External Survey – 103 Addington Road	7
3.4	Internal Survey – 103 & 105 Addington Road.....	8
4	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
4.1	Assessment of Bat Roost Potential.....	9
4.2	Further Survey	9
4.3	Impact of Proposals and Recommendations	10
4.4	Mitigation and Compensation Proposals.....	11
5	REFERENCES.....	12
	APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS	13
	APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS.....	18
	APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS.....	19

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Charlie Sandhu to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the end terraced house and bungalow at 103 & 105 Addington Road in Reading, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be lodged to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the construction of two additional terraced houses (refer to plans 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 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;
- **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 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 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.

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 end terraced house and bungalow are located along Addington Road at the junction with Erleigh Road in Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 73225 72728).

- 1.3.2** The properties are situated within the urban setting of Reading town. The surrounding residential and commercial properties comprise small gardens and driveways that contain hard standing, closely-mown lawns, shrubs and scattered trees. To the south, approximately 350 metres away, lies Reading University Whiteknights Campus consisting of parkland (UK Priority Habitat as defined under the NERC Act 2006), mixed deciduous woodland (UK Priority Habitat) and Whiteknights Lake. Approximately 400 metres to the west, there is a school with small patches of woodland and open playing fields and 430 metres to the northeast, Reading Old Cemetery and Palmer Park have wooded strips and open grassland. The Kennet and Avon Canal is less than 1 km to the north of the properties.
- 1.3.3** Although the setting is urbanised, the nearby university campus, and small pockets of woodland and open grassland, provide suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats adapted to urban environments.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Bat Survey

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 and an assistant ecologist on 17th January 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 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).

2.1.3 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).

2.1.4 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.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 The properties lacked internal spaces to assess and full access was available to the exterior, thus there were no significant constraints to the survey.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 Photographs of the site 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 – 105 Addington Road

3.2.1 The end terraced house was of traditional single-skin wall construction with a pitched roof and front skylight (**Photographs 1 & 2**). The roof was covered with overlapping slate tiles that were mostly flat and tightly fitted; however, there were occasional gaps offering potential access for roosting bats (**Photograph 3; Target note 1**). On the front elevation there was a lifted slate next to the skylight and on the rear elevation there was an area of slipped slates (**Photographs 4 & 5; Target notes 2 & 3**). In addition, gaps were visible beneath ridge tiles on the front elevation and the ridge was open at the eastern gable end (**Photographs 6 & 7; Target notes 4 & 5**).

3.2.2 The lead flashing around the chimney was tightly fitted to the slates; except for the top corner where it was slightly lifted (**Photograph 8; Target note 6**). On the front elevation, the uPVC soffit box was wide open at the gable end and there was also a narrow gap between the soffit box and the wall (**Photographs 9 & 10; Target notes 7 & 8**). Although the rear barge board was tight against the wall, there was a gap above the board at the gable end (**Photograph 11; Target note 9**). In addition, a gap was present behind the arched brickwork above the right-hand window on the eastern gable end offering a potential crevice roosting opportunity for bats (**Photograph 12; Target note 10**).

3.3 External Survey – 103 Addington Road

3.3.1 The bungalow had a hipped roof with a rear pitched gable end and a flat roofed extension (**Photographs 13 & 14**). There was also a wooden flat-roofed structure joining the bungalow to the end terraced house (**Photograph 15**). The hipped and pitched sections of roof were covered with flat and tightly fitted interlocking roof tiles; the ridge and hip mortar was completely intact offering no access opportunities for roosting bats (**Photographs 16, 17 & 18; Target notes 11 & 12**). There was a gap under

the roof tiles at the top of the roof valley that could offer an access opportunity for roosting bats (**Photograph 19; Target note 13**).

- 3.3.2** The verge tiles on the rear gable end were fully mortared (**Photograph 20; Target note 14**). The lead flashing around the chimney was slightly lifted on the front elevation which could offer access for roosting bats (**Photograph 21; Target note 15**). There were gaps under the lead flashing in the roof valley, and the roof timbers and felt were exposed (**Photograph 22; Target note 16**).
- 3.3.3** There were several gaps at the eaves level of the bungalow: the two front windows had small tiled roofs and there were cobwebbed gaps into the space between the tiled roofs and the main roof (**Photographs 23 & 24; Target notes 17 & 18**); there was a gap into the soffit box near the left-hand window (**Photograph 25; Target note 19**); and a gap was present in the rendered wall on the rear elevation (**Photograph 26; Target note 20**). The eastern flat-roofed extension had a bitumen felt roof with a barge board that was tightly fitted to the brickwork (**Photograph 27**).
- 3.3.4** No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the house or bungalow at the time of the survey.

3.4 Internal Survey – 103 & 105 Addington Road

- 3.4.1** The end terraced house had undergone a loft conversion and thus lacked an internal roof space. The bungalow lacked an internal roof space also.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

4.1.1 No evidence of roosting bats was found during the roost assessment of the end terraced house and bungalow; however, both properties possessed a number of external features suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species. The features identified on the end terraced house included: gaps beneath ridge tiles, a lifted slate tile and lifted lead flashing around the chimney; a gap into the open end of the ridge and open end of the soffit box; and a narrow gap behind the soffit box and at the top of the rear barge board. The features identified on the bungalow included: gaps under slightly lifted lead flashing around the chimney; gaps in the roof valley; and gaps at eaves level in association with the front windows and on the rear elevation. Therefore, despite a lack of bat roosting evidence (droppings etc.), the presence of bats utilising exterior features cannot be ruled out at this stage.

4.1.2 Two species of pipistrelle bat: the 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 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).

4.1.3 Taking into account the absence of bat evidence, the foraging habitat within close proximity and the number of external features identified, the end terraced house has been assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential and the bungalow is considered to have low - moderate bat roosting potential.

4.2 Further Survey

4.2.1 Further survey of the two properties should be carried out to determine if bats are present or likely to be absent, and the surveys should comprise of at least two emergence and/or re-entry surveys; a third survey will be required if bats are shown to be present in either of the buildings in order to characterise the roost. The surveys should be completed within the period

between May and September inclusive with at least one of the surveys carried out in the peak season for recording maternity roosts i.e. mid-May to August, and at least two weeks should separate the surveys (Collins 2016).

4.3 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 4.3.1** The proposals include the demolition of the existing bungalow followed by the construction of two additional terraced houses onto the gable end of the existing end terraced house (refer to plans in **Appendix 3**). The survey findings show that the proposals would have an impact on features with potential for crevice-roosting bats on both buildings. Further survey work will determine the presence or likely absence of any roosts, and to determine whether the proposals will result in the loss or disturbance of those roosts. Additionally, any bat(s) present at the time of the works could be harmed and/or disturbed.
- 4.3.2** Subject to the findings of further survey, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence or registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (if applicable) may be required to allow the planned work to go ahead lawfully. An EPS licence or confirmation of the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence can be issued by Natural England if the three licensing tests (detailed in 1.2.2) have been met by the proposed work and can be sought once all necessary planning consents for the proposals have been granted and any wildlife related conditions discharged.
- 4.3.3** To secure a licence or site registration, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the 'favourable conservation status' of the local bat population would be maintained by mitigating the impact of the building work on bats, and by maintaining bat roosts during the course of the work, and following its completion. There would be scope to mitigate the impacts during the work, and retain roosts in the longer term, and as such it is considered that the proposals will retain the 'favourable conservation status' of the bat population as long as the mitigation and compensation proposals detailed in section 4.4 below are followed.

4.4 Mitigation and Compensation Proposals

- 4.4.1** The demolition work will be preceded by emergence and re-entry surveys as detailed in section 4.2 above. If further survey shows a EPS licence is required, under the terms of the licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence (if applicable), the start of the work affecting the bat roost(s) should be timed to avoid the periods when bats are most susceptible to disturbance i.e. winter hibernation season for all roosts (mid-November to February) to avoid disturbing torpid bats, and outside of the peak summer breeding season (May to mid-September) where evidence of a maternity roost is recorded.
- 4.4.2** Replacement roosting opportunities should be provided so that they are available to bats in the short-term i.e. prior to and during the work by erecting woodcrete bat boxes suitable for the species present on nearby mature trees or poles before the work starts.
- 4.4.3** A 'soft strip' approach to the work should be adopted i.e. the careful removal of the roosting features such as roof tiles, ridge tiles, soffits and lead flashing by gloved hands and with hand-held tools under the supervision of a licensed ecologist, or the Registered Consultant if working under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence. In the event that bats are discovered during the course of the work, the licensed ecologist or Registered Consultant would capture the bat(s) and transfer it/them directly to one of the bat boxes erected in advance of the works.
- 4.4.4** In the longer term, as part of the licence, replacement roosting opportunities may need to be incorporated into the terraced houses. For example, roosting opportunities for bats could be provided by installing ridge access points, and/or integral bat boxes/tubes into the new brickwork. If any roost features are to be incorporated into the new properties, the roofs should **not** be lined with a breathable roofing membrane because they have been found to be harmful to bats and a bitumen-based Type 1 roofing felt or wooden sarking should be used.

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 house viewed from the south.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the north.



3. Overlapping slate tiles mostly flat and tightly fitted (rear elevation).



4. Lifted slate tile next to skylight (front elevation).



5. Slipped slate tiles (rear elevation).



6. Gaps beneath ridge tiles (front elevation).



7. Ridge open at the gable end (eastern elevation).



8. Lead flashing slightly lifted at the top corner of chimney (rear elevation).



9. End of uPVC soffit box wide open (eastern elevation).



10. Narrow gap behind uPVC soffit (front elevation).



11. Gap at top of barge board at gable end (rear elevation).



12. Gap behind arched brickwork above right-hand gable end window (eastern elevation).



13. Front of the bungalow viewed from the south.



14. Rear of the bungalow viewed from the north.



15. Timber extension joining to the end terraced house (rear elevation).



16. Flat and tightly fitted interlocking roof tiles (front elevation).



17. Ridge mortar intact (front elevation).



18. Hip tiles with mortar intact (front elevation).



19. Gaps under roof tiles at the top of the roof valley (rear elevation).



20. Verge mortar at rear gable end intact (rear elevation).



21. Slightly lifted lead flashing around chimney base (front elevation).



22. Gaps under lead flashing in the roof valley; exposed timber and roof felt (rear elevation).



23. Cobwebbed gap behind roof of right-hand window (front elevation).



24. Cobwebbed gap behind roof of left-hand window (front elevation).



25. Gap behind soffit near left-hand window (front elevation).

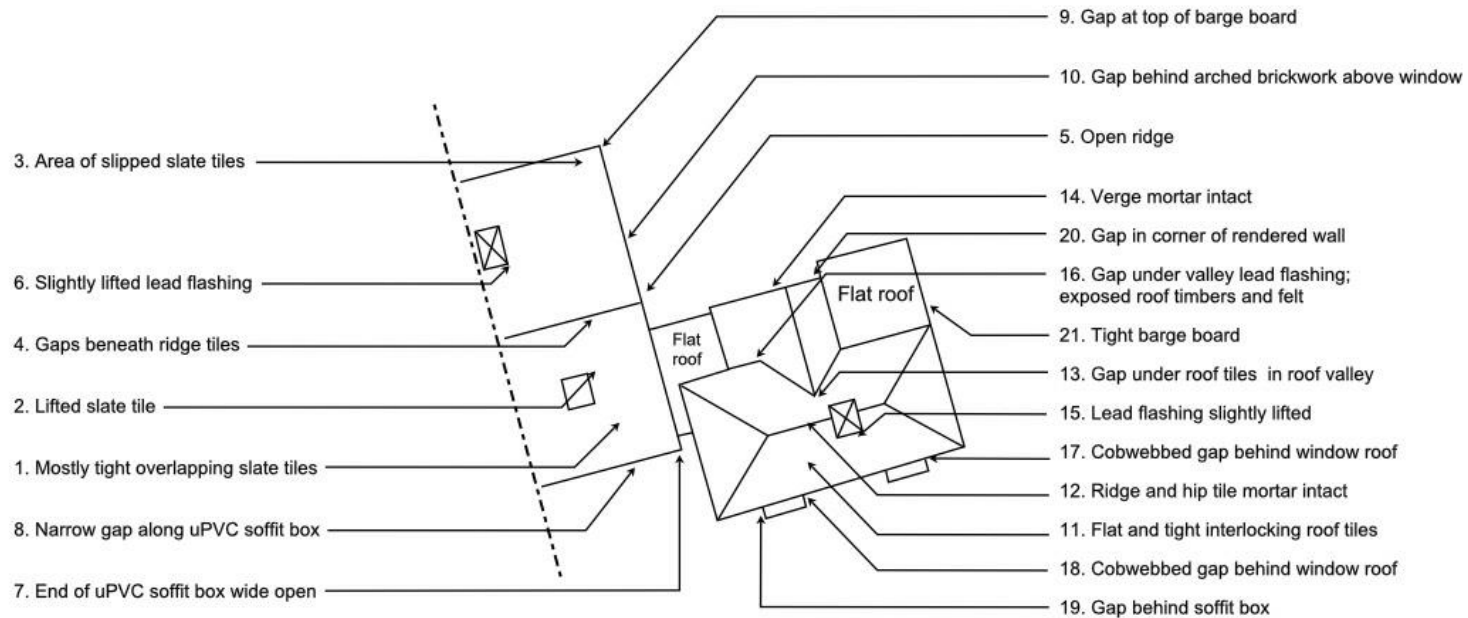


26. Gap in rendered wall (rear elevation).



27. Barge board tight to brickwork of eastern flat-roofed extension (rear elevation).

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



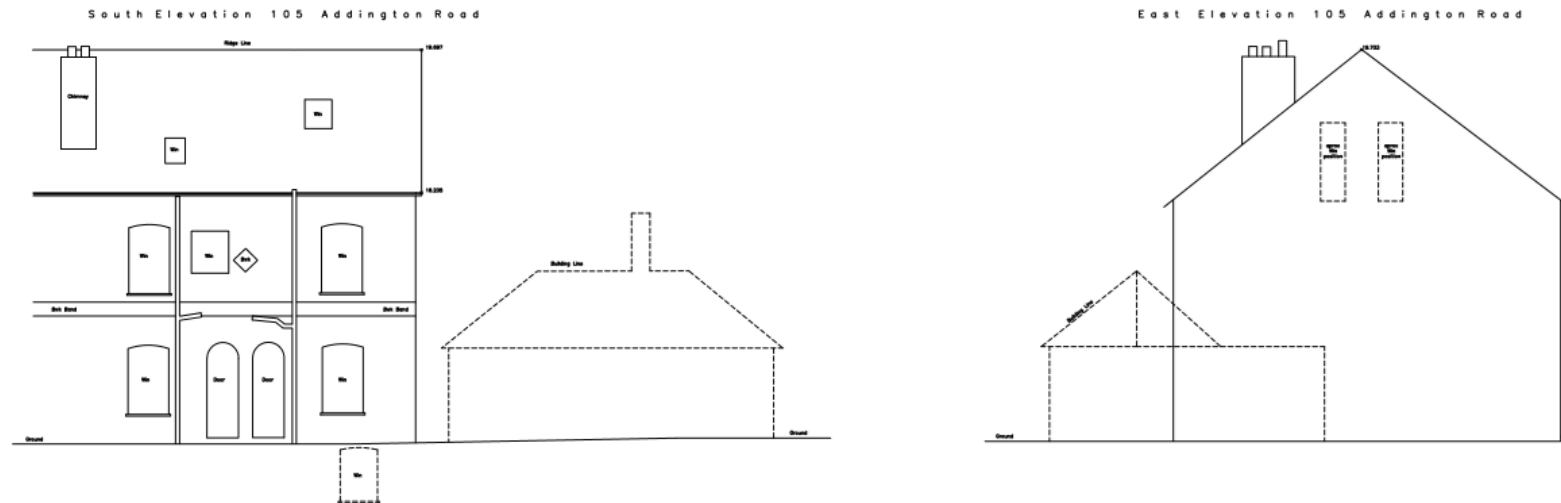
☐ Skylight
 ☒ Chimney
 n. External Target Note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	103 & 105 Addington Road Reading	
CW	Jan 2019	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment	

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS

Existing Elevations:



Proposed Elevations:

