

**83 Upper Woodcote Road
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 7JR**

Daylight Bat Survey

Ref: R1892a

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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	Building Inspection.....	6
2.2	Survey Constraints.....	6
3	SURVEY FINDINGS	7
3.1	Building Inspection.....	7
3.2	External Survey.....	7
3.3	Internal Survey.....	8
4	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
5	REFERENCES	10
	APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS.....	11
	APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS	14

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Weldon to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the house at 183 Upper Woodcote Road in Caversham, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for the proposed construction of a single storey side extension, and a part single and part two-storey rear extension (Planning application reference: 180181)

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 2010 ('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 53(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;

- **Regulation 53(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 53(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 9(5) 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 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 Low Impact Class Licence, which would enable consultants registered by Natural England 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 licence applications or the registration of the site under the Low Impact 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 detached house is situated on the western side of Upper Woodcote Road in Caversham, Berkshire (OS Grid Reference: SU 69685 76276).

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1.3.2 The house is situated on the western outskirts of Caversham and to the north west of Reading town centre, with further residential properties and their associated gardens to the north, south and west. In the wider area, the greens, ponds and patches of woodland of a golf course are situated 70 metres to the northwest, 150 metres to the west and 120 metres to the southwest. The River Thames is situated just under 1.2 kilometres to the south. School playing fields are situated 480metres to the south and open countryside comprising arable fields are situated 630 metres to the north east. The habitats in the wider area are likely to provide good foraging and roosting opportunities for a range of bat species adapted to urban environments.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken on the 9th December by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL018 and assisting ecologist.

2.1.2 The search was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch. Signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines were looked for (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, hipped roofed buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- At the eaves behind barge boards and soffits;
- Under timber cladding, hanging tiles or roof tiles;
- Under lead flashing, roof and ridge tiles;
- Within an enclosed roof space – species such as brown long eared bat for example will typically cluster around the ridge beam or at gable ends.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 Full access was available around the exterior to the house, however access was restricted to parts of the interior of the roof space due to stored items in the eastern facing hipped roof towards the front southern end of the house.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Building Inspection

- 3.1.1** The external and internal bat survey findings are detailed on a plan with target notes in **Appendix 2** and photographs of the site are shown in **Appendix 1**. There follows a description of the external and internal survey findings:

3.2 External Survey

- 3.2.1** The house was detached with a half-hipped roof covered in flat roof tiles. Three hipped roofed dormer windows were present to the front of the house and two were present to the rear of the house. A single-storey sloping roof was present along the rear of the house and a hipped roof porch was present to the front of the house (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 3.2.2** The flat roof tiles were all in place and mostly fitted tightly, apart from the occasional uneven tiles in particular to the front of the house just below the ridge where the tiles were curved, under the windows to the front and rear of the house and where they were lifted towards the verge to the rear of the house, providing a potential roosting opportunity for bats (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target notes 1 & 2**). There were also a couple of missing roof tiles including below the window to the front of the house, below a pipe to the rear of the house and just below the ridge to rear of the house (**Photographs 5, 6 & 7; Target notes 3, 4 & 5**). The mortar under the ridge and hip tiles was mostly all in place, apart from a gap where mortar was missing under a hip tile at the junction with the ridge on the rear roof elevation (**Target note 6**). Lead flashing was fitted tightly around the junction of the windows with the roof, apart from the central window to the front of the house where it was lifted (**Photograph 8; Target note 7**). The soffit boxes around the eaves of the house were sealed tightly to the external walls (**Photograph 9; Target note 8**).
- 3.2.3** No evidence of bat activity was found on the exterior of the house.

3.3 Internal Survey

- 3.3.1** The house's roof was of traditional 'cut and pitch' construction with an exposed ridge beam and rafters (**Photograph 10**). The roof space was accessed through a loft hatch and had an estimated roof to floor height of 2.5 metres. A covered and raised water tank was present towards the centre of the roof space. The roof was mostly lined with bitumen felt, with a small, more recent extension towards the northern end, which was lined with breathable roofing membrane. The roof lining was intact and fitted tightly (**Photographs 11 & 12; Target notes 9 & 10**).
- 3.3.2** The ridge was cobwebbed lightly (**Photograph 13; Target note 11**). The floor was insulated with fibreglass insulation, which did not extend as far as the eaves, which were open to the space (**Photograph 14, Target note 12**). No evidence of bat activity was found inside the roof space.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1** The house showed no evidence of the presence of bats. The property had only a few external features: the gaps under curved and lifted roof tiles to the front of the house, the lifted verge tiles to the rear of the house, the slight gap under lead flashing on the front elevation, and gaps under a hip tile to the rear of the house, which could be suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species such as *Pipistrellus* species. These features showed no evidence of roosting bats and furthermore the features identified are to be retained unaffected by the planned extension, which will affect a small corner of the rear roof slope and lower sections of brickwork unsuitable for bats. Only a small section of the roof tiles on the rear elevation of the house are to be affected by the extension which were fitted tightly, and therefore the works to extend are considered highly unlikely to have any impact on bats or their roosts.
- 4.1.2** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the building work, the work should stop immediately and a licensed ecologist 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 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.

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 west.



2. Rear of the house viewed from the east.



3. Row of curved roof tiles visible just below the ridge at the front of the house.



4. Lifted roof tiles towards the verge at the front of the house.



5. Missing and lifted roof tiles below the window at the front of the house.



6. Missing roof tile by a pipe at the rear of the house.



7. Missing roof tile to the rear of the house.



8. Lead flashing lifted by the central window at the front of the house.



9. Soffit boxes tight around the eaves of the house.



10. Internal view of the roof space showing the junction between more modern extension and original section of the roof.



11. The main section of the roof lined with bitumen felt.



12. The northern end of the roof space lined with breathable membrane.

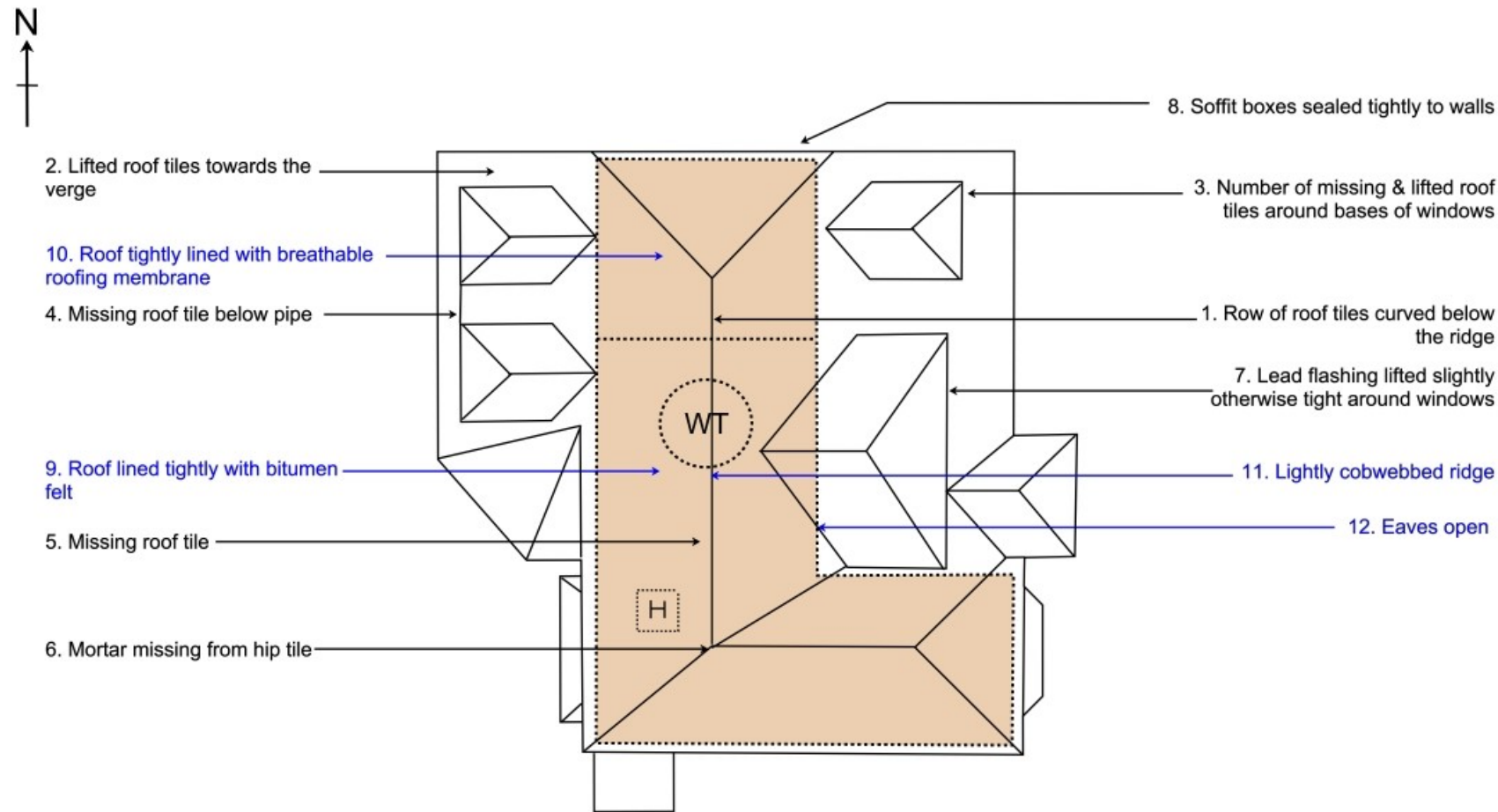


13. The ridge lightly cobwebbed.



14. The roof space insulated with fibreglass which did not extend as far as the eaves.

APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS



☒ Chimney H Loft hatch WT Water Tank Roof space n. External Target note n. Internal Target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	183 Upper Woodcote Road Caversham	
VP	Apr 2018	Not to scale	Daylight Bat Survey Findings	