

Bat Survey Report

2 Littlecote Drive, Reading



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1.0 Introduction

Ethos Environmental Planning has undertaken this structures assessment for bats at 2 Littlecote Drive, Reading, Berkshire (Grid Reference: SU 70357 72558) (figure 1). The site consisted of a semi-detached two-storey house and associated garage and shed.

1.1 Objectives of the assessment

The objectives of the bat survey are to:

- Identify if bats are roosting on site or have potential to roost on site;
- Identify the presence or potential presence of bats - protected species whose disturbance may require consent under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) or The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010;
- Identify any bat species which may require special mitigation during the works;
- Identify any compensation or enhancement measures required;
- Assess the need for a European Protected Species License for bats;
- Identify any areas that may require special protection during the development.

1.2 Site Location

The site was located at 2 Littlecote Drive, south-west Reading, Berkshire (Grid Reference: SU 70357 72558) (figure 1). The surrounding habitats were heavily urbanized with residential dwellings, garages, gardens and roads. A number of parks and floodplain were present in the surrounding area over 600metres south of the site and a railway line bordered by woodland was present 300 metres west of the site.

1.3 Development Proposals

The development proposals (figure 2) relate to the extension of the northern and western elevations of the main house and the removal of the garage. The proposals have the potential impact on bats as the works involve changing the existing roof structure.

Figure 1 Site location



Figure 2 Development Proposals

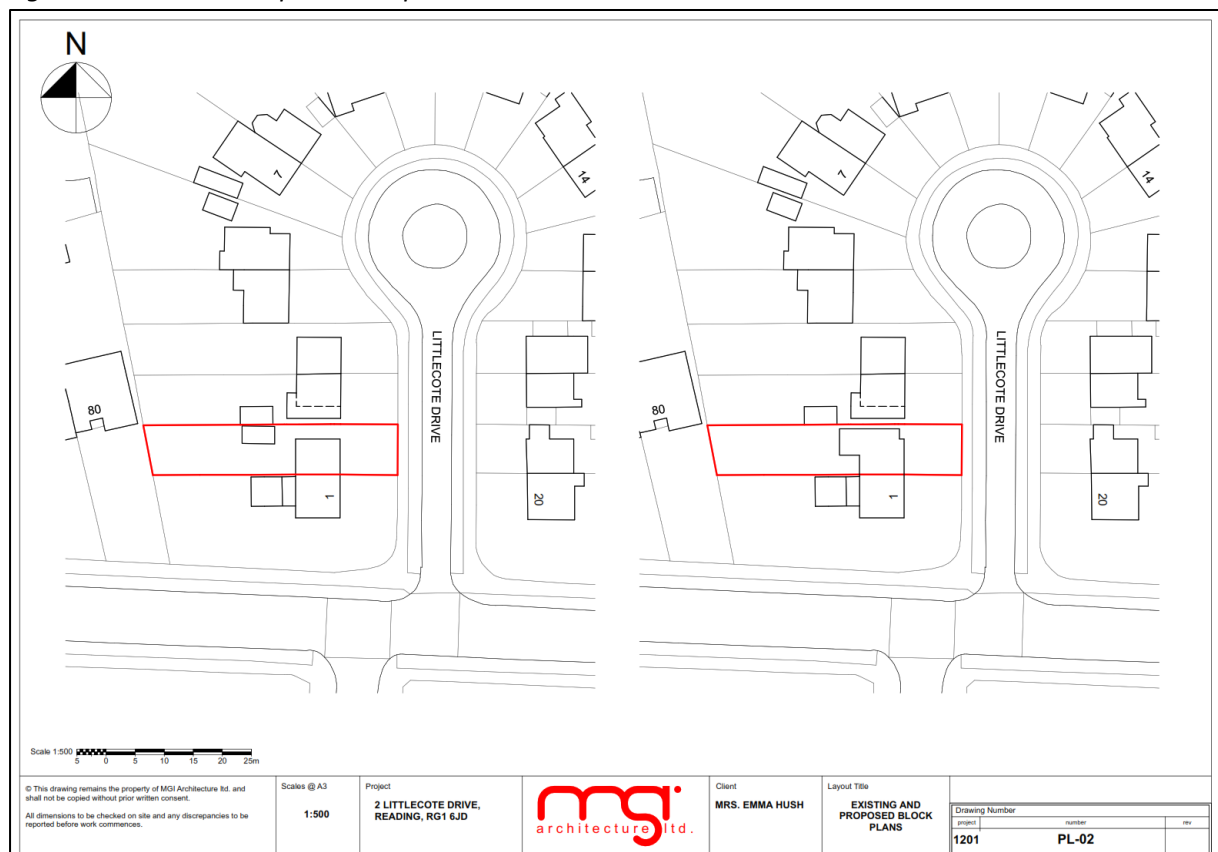
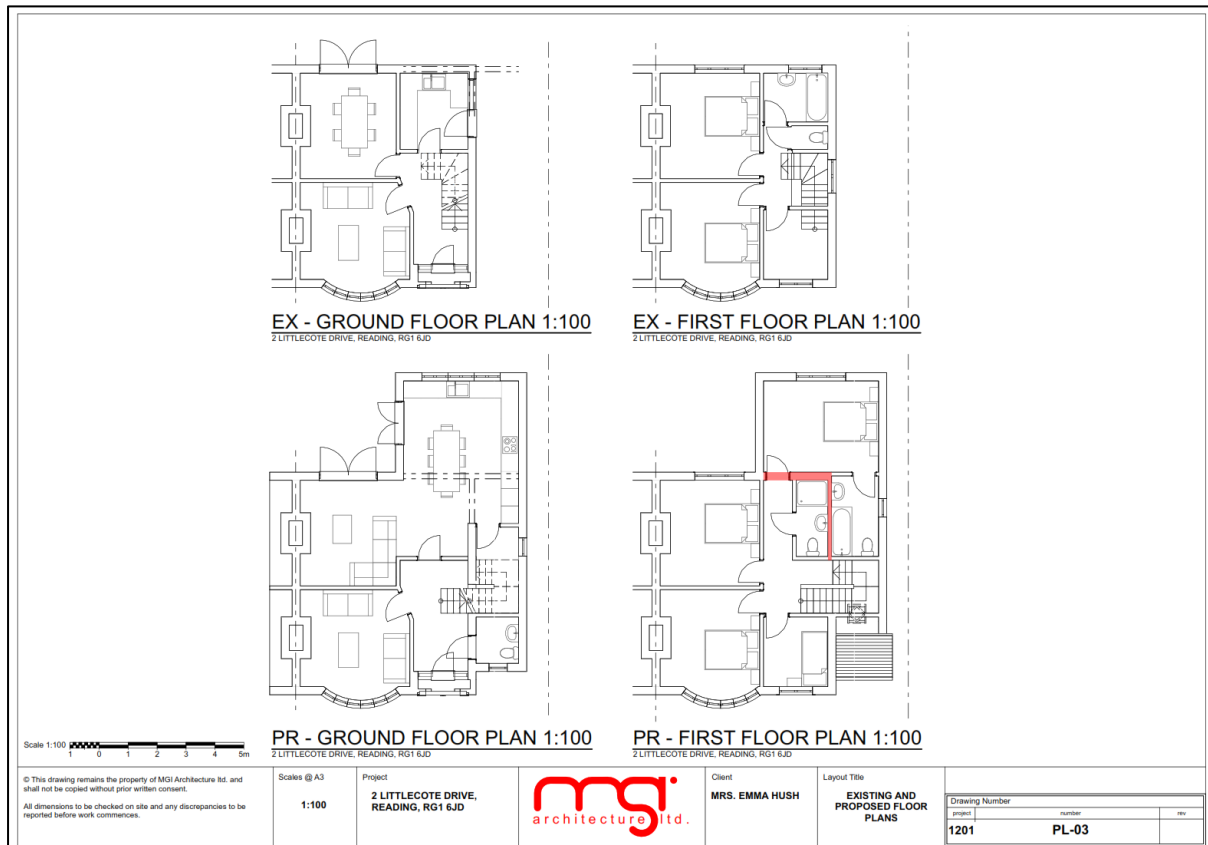


Figure 3 Development proposals



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Bat survey

The bat survey was undertaken on the 7th February 2018 by Rachel Godden, BSC (Hons), ACIEEM, a licensed bat worker (class level 2) and qualified ecologist with over 5 years of practical field ecology experience.

The methodology for the bat survey has been informed by the Bat Conservation Trust *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines 2016*.

Physical external/internal site inspection of the buildings on site were undertaken by the surveyor using the equipment described below to assist the inspection, and approximately 45 minutes of search effort was expended. A CLU-10 (1 million candlepower) searchlight fitted with a red filter was used to search dark areas for signs of bats. Pentax 0.5m Papilio (8.5x21) close focusing binoculars were used to view areas inaccessible on foot. A telescopic inspection mirror was used to look on top of structures for evidence of bats.

The physical search includes a search for live animals and a search for other signs that give an indication of past or present occupancy as outlined below. In the case of bats, typical indicators include droppings (which are characteristic and can often be speciated or at least be indicative of species type), signs of staining, urine splashing, characteristic odours, and accumulations of discarded prey remains.

2.2 Other species

The survey included an assessment of the potential for other protected species which could be impacted by the proposed extension, in particular breeding birds. A visual inspection for the presence of breeding birds was carried out and potential entry points were noted.

3.0 Survey Results

3.1 Habitats

The habitats on site are dominated by amenity lawn with a hardstanding driveway at the eastern end of the site. The habitats were assessed as being of low ecological value and had low potential for foraging bats. The wider environment was dominated by urban development with residential housing, gardens and roads which were assessed as having low potential for foraging bats. Railway tracks were present 300 metres west of the site which was bordered by woodland belts. This habitat was assessed as having high potential to support foraging and commuting bats, however, there was no clear commuting route from the site to the woodland belts. Coley Park and Holy Brook were located 640metres south of the again which were assessed to provide potential foraging, commuting and roosting habitat for bats. Again, there was no habitat link between the site and these areas.

3.2 Structures inspection for bats

The site consisted of three structures comprising the main house (B1), a garage (B2) and a shed (B3). The locations of these structures are shown in figure 4 and described below.

Figure 4 Structures Map



3.2.1 Building 1 (B1)

A two storey semi-detached house constructed from brick in very good condition. The hip roof consisted of composite tiles with two chimneys, the brickwork of which was in good condition and the lead flashing was tightly fitted. The roof tiles were in good condition tightly fitted and no gaps were noted. Wooden soffits were present which were in good condition with the exception of one area on the western elevation where a gap was present (see figure 4). The gap was inspected closely and no evidence of staining or droppings on the wall were noted and furthermore, cobwebs were present over the gap which indicated that it was not in use by roosting bats. On the eastern elevation of the house, a dormer window was present with hanging composite tiles which were tightly fitted with no gaps and wooden boards on the overhang which were noted to be in very good condition.



Photo 1: B1 Eastern elevation



Photo 2: B1 Western elevation

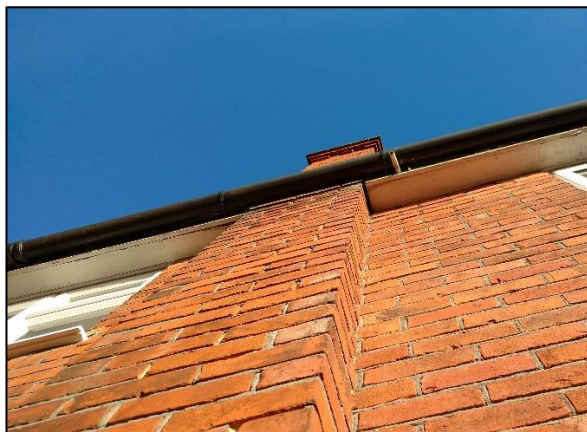


Photo 3: B1 Gap in soffit

One loft void was present in the main house constructed from wooden rafters, with wooden purling and ridge beam all of which were tightly fitted with no gaps. Felt sarking was fitted and was damaged in three places leaving gaps. The void was in frequent use for storage and the loft space was noted to be cluttered with storage items which greatly reduced potential flight space for light sampling.

No evidence of bats was found and the structure was assessed to hold low-negligible potential to support roosting bats.



Photo 4: B1 Interior void



Photo 5: B1 damaged sarking

3.2.2 Building 2 (B2)

A single storey garage consisting of concrete and brick walls with a pebbledash exterior and a slightly pitched roof of corrugated asbestos over a wooden frame with a metal roof ridge. High light levels were present inside which entered through windows on the southern elevation. The structure was noted to be in regular use by the residents at the time of survey which resulted in moderate disturbance levels within the structure.

No evidence of bats was found within the garage and it was assessed to hold negligible potential to support bats.



Photo 6: B2 Eastern elevation



Photo 7: B2 Western elevation

3.2.3 Building 3 (B3)

A wood panel shed with a pitched felt roof. The roofing felt was old but tightly fitted. The interior was composed of tightly-fitted wooden panels and no potential entry points were noted. No evidence of bats was found and the structure was assessed to hold negligible potential for bats. This structure is being retained within proposals.



Photo 8: B3 interior



Photo 9: B3 Eastern elevation

3.3 Inspection for breeding birds

The buildings on site lacked potential gaps for nesting birds to gain access to the structures and no evidence of nesting birds was observed within any of the buildings.

4.0 Discussion and Recommendations

The site is set within an urban landscape which was assessed as having low potential for foraging and commuting bats. The closest potential foraging and commuting habitat was a woodland belt either side of railway tracks located over 300metres west of the site. The site had no connections with suitable habitat within the wider environment. The site itself is also of low ecological value, and with low potential for foraging and commuting bats.

During the buildings inspection no evidence of bats was found. B1 was assessed to hold low-negligible potential to support roosting bats however, due to the poor quality of the surrounding habitats, this assessment has been downgraded to negligible potential.

Overall, it is concluded that there is no evidence of bats or birds within the residential dwelling and the proposed extension to the existing dwelling would have no impact on existing habitats or protected species. No further surveys or recommendations are made in relation to the proposed works and biodiversity and given the very urban location it is considered that the proposed extension provides little opportunity for appropriate ecological enhancements.

APPENDIX 1 LEGISLATION AND POLICY DETAILS

A1.1 Legislation - Species

This section outlines the key legislation related to the habitats and species considered within this survey report.

Bats

All British bats are protected under Section 9 Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and amendments. In addition, they are protected under the Berne Convention, they are given migratory species protection within the Bonn Convention Agreement, and are protected under Schedule 2 of the EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive).

Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010 makes it an offence to deliberately capture or kill bats, to deliberately disturb a bat, damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site of any bat. It is an offence to disturb any bat roosting site. Presence of bats does not necessarily mean that development cannot go ahead, but that with suitable, approved mitigation, exemptions can be granted from the protection afforded to bats under regulation 41 by means of a licence. Natural England (NE) is the appropriate authority for determining licence applications for works associated with developments affecting bats, including demolition of their roost sites. In cases where licences are required, certain conditions have to be met to satisfy Natural England. Before the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO), in this case NE, can issue a licence to permit otherwise prohibited acts three tests have to be satisfied. These are:

1. Regulation 53(2)(e) states that licenses may be granted by SNCO to *'preserve 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. Regulation 42(10)(a) states that a license may not be granted unless SNCO is satisfied *'that there is no satisfactory alternative'*.
3. Regulation 42(10)(b) states that a license cannot be issued unless SNCO is satisfied that the action proposed *'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'*.

In order to meet the tests, SNCO usually expects the planning position to be fully resolved as this is necessary to satisfy tests 1 and 2. Full planning permission, if applicable, will need to have been granted and any conditions relating to bats fully discharged. For test 3, the licensing body seek advice from Natural England. As well as consulting with Natural England, the licensing body may also seek information from the local authority before they will determine any licence application. The licence application process may take two months before a licence is issued.