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**26 Winsor Drive
Southcote
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 3EQ**

Daylight Bat Survey

Ref: R1127/a

June 2015

 **JOHN WENMAN**
ecological consultancy

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Shepherd to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the property at 26 Winsor Drive, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals to be submitted to Reading Borough Council for the proposed erection of a part second storey/part first storey side and rear extensions to the existing property.

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;

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- **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.

1.3 Site Location and Context

1.3.1 The detached property is situated on the western side of Winsor Drive in Southcote, Reading, Berkshire (OS Grid Reference: SU 697 720).

1.3.2 The house is situated within an urban, built up environment and is bordered by residential plots and their associated gardens on all sides. Scattered tree lines are present along the boundaries of Winsor Drive to the east and south. The majority of the surrounding habitat consists of residential gardens; however agricultural land is situated approximately 400 metres to the south-east of the property, and this land extends for an estimated 4 square kilometres. Furthermore, Fobney Island wetland reserve and associated lakes are situated approximately 1.3km to the east of the site and Prospect Park is situated 1km to the north-west. These local habitats in the wider vicinity offer good foraging opportunities for a range of UK bat species.

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2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Building Inspection

2.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house was undertaken on the 16th June 2015 by an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL018 and an assistant 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 (Bat Conservation Trust 2012; 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 are 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 such may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- Gaps and cracks in brick or block work, which provide access to a wall cavity or sheltered crevice;
- At the eaves behind barge boards and soffits;
- Under timber cladding, hanging tiles or roof tiles;
- At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits, or under 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 to the exterior of the building and the roof space, so there were no significant constraints to the survey.

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**; the current and proposed plans in **Appendix 3** 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 semi-detached property was of brick construction with a pebble-dashed rendered finish and a hipped roof (**Photographs 1, 2 & 3**). A bitumen felt covered single storey flat roofed extension was present to the south of the property (**Photograph 4**).

3.2.2 The flat, clay roof tiles were largely tightly fitted across the whole roof and offered no visible crevices for bats (**Photographs 5; Target Note 1**); however some tiles were found to be lifted on both the front and rear roof elevations (**Photograph 6; Target Note 2**). Mortar was in place under the verge and ridge tiles with no gaps visible (**Photograph 7; Target Note 3**), apart from some mortar missing under the end verge tile at the front (**Photograph 8; Target Note 4**). The lead flashing around the chimney to the north was also found to be tightly fitted and in place (**Photograph 9; Target Note 5**). The hipped end of the property was sealed and provided no opportunities for roosting bats.

3.2.3 The pebble-dash render around the exterior of the property was all intact with no gaps (**Photograph 10; Target Note 6**). The external soffits were wooden and these were tightly fitted to the brickwork around the whole of the house (**Photograph 11; Target Note 7**). The flat roofed single storey extension to the south had a tightly fitted bitumen flat roof and no gaps present under the wooden barge board (**Target Note 8**).

3.2.4 No evidence of bat activity was found on the exterior of the house.

3.3 Internal Survey

- 3.3.1** The property's roof space was accessed through a central loft hatch and the space had an estimated floor-to-ridge height of three metres (**Photograph 12**). The hipped roof was of 'cut and pitch' construction and was half lined with fibreglass insulation and half unlined with the tiles being exposed (**Photograph 13; Target Note 9**). The floor was insulated with fibreglass with boarding above (**Photograph 14; Target Note 10**). No daylight was visible at the eaves, which were filled mostly with fibreglass insulation.
- 3.3.2** The ridge beam within the property was cobwebbed partially with gaps being present along the ridge (**Photograph 15; Target Note 11**). These gaps resulted in the loft space being draughty.
- 3.3.3** A chimney was present on the party wall with the adjoining semi-detached house and a small water tank was present next to the chimney (**Photograph 16**).
- 3.3.4** No evidence of roosting bats was found inside the roof space.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1** The absence of any evidence of roosting bats in the roof space at 26 Winsor Drive suggests it is unlikely that the house supports void-dwelling bat species such as the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). Furthermore, externally the property had very few features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bat species and the features that did offer potential roosting opportunities, such as lifted roof tiles on the front and rear elevations will not be affected by the proposed extensions.
- 4.1.2** Taking all factors into account i.e. the availability of roosting opportunities and lack of evidence of bats found internally, it is considered highly unlikely that the house at 26 Winsor Drive supports roosting bats and therefore highly unlikely that the planned extension and alterations to the current roof will lead to the loss of a bat roost or disturbance of bats.
- 4.1.3** 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

Bat Conservation Trust (2012). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd 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. The front of the property viewed from the west.



2. The rear of the property viewed from the east.



3. The hipped end situated to the south.



4. The single storey flat roofed extension to the south.



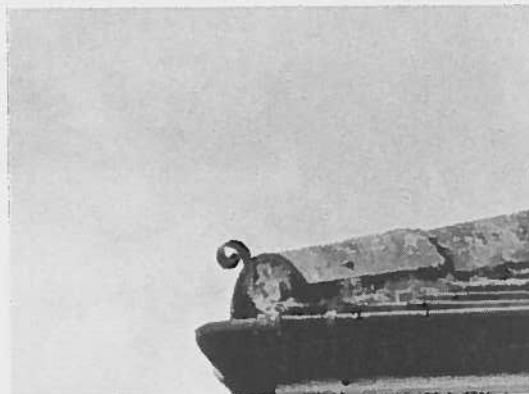
5. The tightly fitted flat, clay roof tiles.



6. Slight gaps within clay roofing tiles



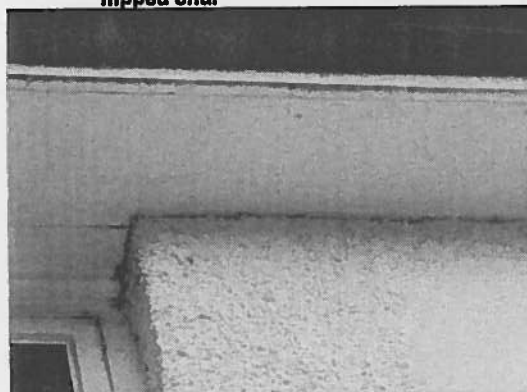
7. Tightly mortared ridge and hipped tiles.



8. Gaps in mortar under end ridge tile at hipped end.



9. Tightly fitted lead flashing present around chimney.



10. Tightly sealed pebble dash render.



11. Tightly secured wooden soffit boxes.



12. Cut and pitch roof construction within hipped roof space.



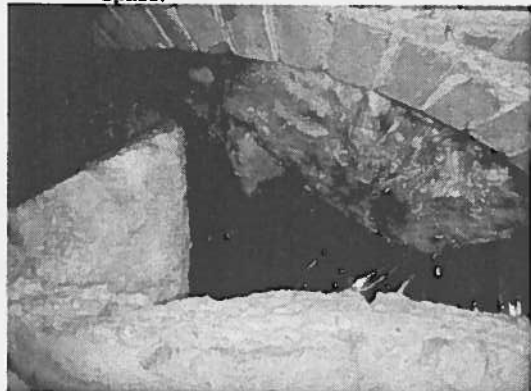
13. Areas of lined and unlined roofing tiles.



14. Fibreglass insulation throughout the roof space.

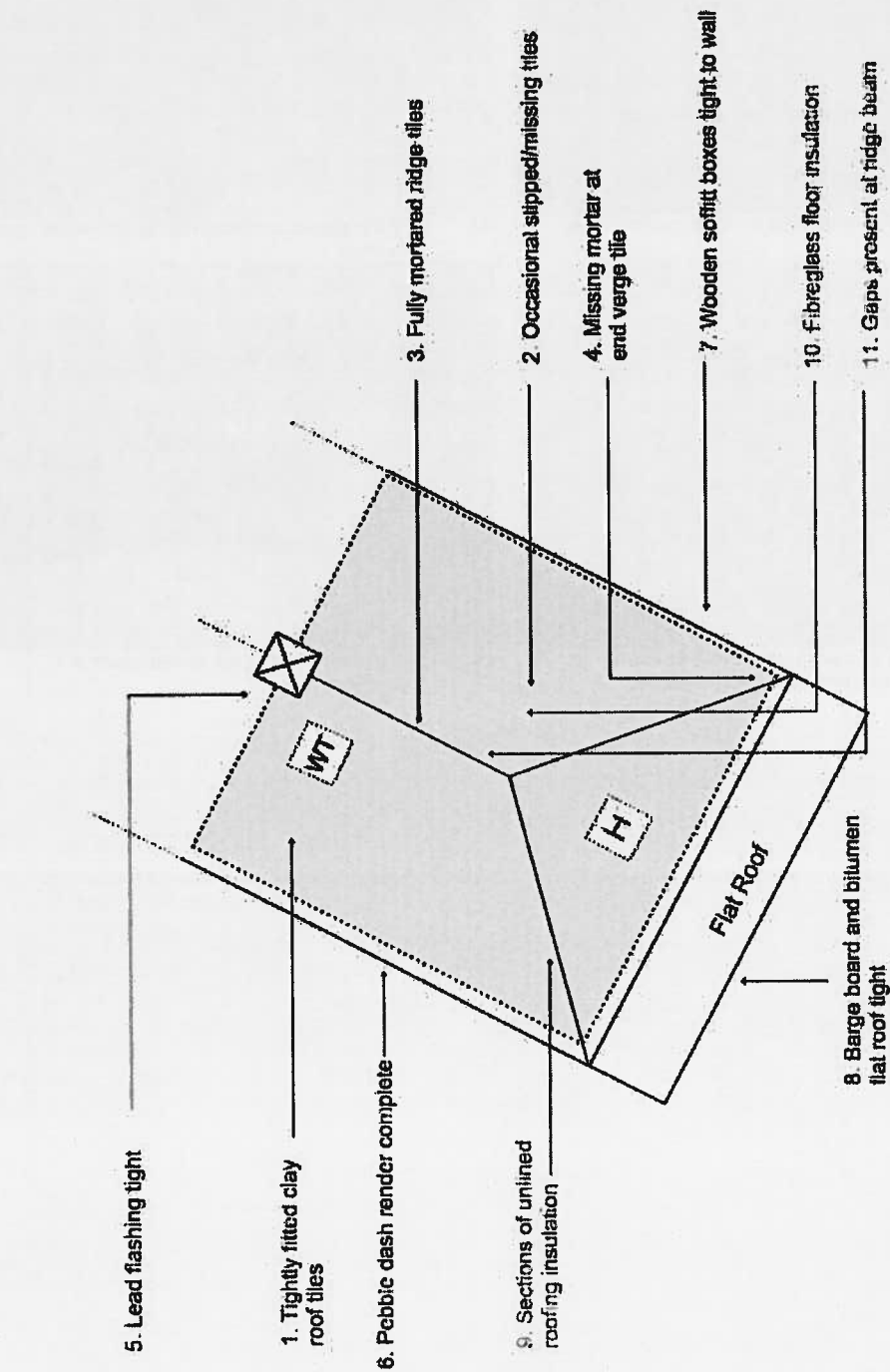


15. Lightly cobwebbed ridge beam and chimney present to the north.



16. Covered water tank underneath the chimney.

APPENDIX 2 - DAYLIGHT BAT SURVEY FINDINGS



☒ Chimney ☐ Roof space ☐ Loft hatch ☐ Water Tank **n.** External Target note **n.** Internal Target note

Drawn by: TW		Date: June 2015	Scale: Not to scale	26 Winsor Drive Reading Daylight Bat Survey Findings	JOHN WENMAN ecological consultancy
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