

147 Upper Woodcote Road
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 7JR

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared Jake Morgan; reviewed by Sarah Foot

Ref: R3486/a

November 2023



1 Diesel House, Honey Hill, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3BL
Telephone: 0118 3271810 Mobile: 07979 403099 E-mail: info@wenman-ecology.co.uk
www.wenman-ecology.co.uk

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC339057.
Registered office: 100 New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, RG45 6JP where you may look at a list of members' names.

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.1	Project Background	4
2.2	Legislative Background	4
2.3	Site Location and Context	5
3	SURVEY METHODOLOGY.....	7
3.1	Building Inspection	7
3.2	Survey Constraints	7
4	SURVEY FINDINGS	9
4.1	Introduction.....	9
4.2	External Survey	9
4.3	Internal Survey	10
5	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	11
5.1	Assessment of Bat Roost Status	11
5.2	Impact of Proposals and Recommendations	11
5.3	Indicative and Provisional Mitigation Proposals.....	12
6	REFERENCES.....	14
	APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS.....	15
	APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN	19
	APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS.....	20

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Tajinder Purewal to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of the property at 147 Upper Woodcote Road in Caversham, Berkshire. The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey extension with a mansard roof following the removal of the existing flat-roof sections, conservatory and front bay window.
- 1.1.2** 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') (as amended). A survey of the exterior and interior of the property was undertaken on the 10th July 2023 by ecologist Emma Turnbull, an experienced bat ecologist registered under Class Licence CL20 (2022-10825-CL20-BAT) and assistant ecologist Jake Morgan.
- 1.1.3** There was no evidence of roosting bats found during the internal or external survey of the house and garage. Externally, there were a number of potential bat roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. These comprised gaps beneath lifted roof tiles along the verges and on the front bay window, lifted hanging tiles on the rear gable, lifted waney edge timbers on the dormer and front gable, and damaged sections of the timber soffit. The property is considered to currently have moderate suitability for roosting bats.
- 1.1.4** The survey findings demonstrate that these proposals could result in the destruction of a bat roost and in the absence of mitigation, lead to disturbance and/or harm of bats if present at the time of the works. Further survey work is required to confirm the status of bat roost(s) within the property and if present identify the access points used, and therefore confirm whether the work will result in the loss of a roost(s) and/or lead to bats being disturbed or harmed. Subject to further survey findings, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence or if applicable, the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) may be required to permit the work to proceed lawfully.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Tajinder Purewal to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of the property at 147 Upper Woodcote Road in Caversham, Berkshire.

2.1.2 The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for a two-storey extension with a mansard roof following the removal of the existing flat-roof sections, conservatory and front bay window.

2.2 Legislative Background

2.2.1 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') (as amended). 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; and
- Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

2.2.2 The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:

- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation;
- **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”.

2.2.3 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 applications where survey findings show that an EPS mitigation licence is necessary before granting planning permission.

2.2.4 EPS mitigation licence application can be submitted once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on EPS mitigation licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

2.2.5 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') Bat Mitigation Class Licence WML-CL21 (BMCL). The BMCL permits 'Registered Consultants' or accredited agents appointed by them to carry licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.

2.2.6 Survey data supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or the registration of the site under the BMCL 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.

2.3 Site Location and Context

2.3.1 The property is situated to the west of Upper Woodcote Road at the junction with Blagrove Lane in Caversham, Reading (OS grid reference: SU 69724 75978).

2.3.2 The dwelling is surrounded by other residential properties and their associated gardens comprising scattered trees, shrubs and mown lawns. The landscape directly bordering the western boundary of the property is rural and falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It consists of a golf course, ancient

woodland and parkland, and the River Thames is situated just over 900m to the south of the property.

- 2.3.3** Overall, the proximity of the Chiltern AONB, rural landscape and River Thames offers high quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats in the local vicinity.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the exterior and interior of the property was undertaken on the 10th July 2023 by Emma Turnbull, an experienced bat ecologist registered under Class Licence CL20 (Registration number: 2022-10825-CL20-BAT) and assistant ecologist Jake Morgan.

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars, a high power (1 million candle power) torch looking for signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2023; Reason & Wray 2023; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004).

3.1.3 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); and
- Bats (live or dead).

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

3.2 Survey Constraints

3.2.1 Full external and internal access was available throughout the survey and therefore there were no significant constraints. The weather conditions were wet with air

temperatures of 7°C.

- 3.2.2** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roosting locations during a survey and therefore an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1** Photographs of the detached property 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 property and garage are described as follows:

4.2 External Survey

- 4.2.1** The detached property featured rendered walls and a pitched roof with single-storey extensions to the rear and northern side of the property. There was a conservatory at the rear, a bay window at the front and a dormer window on the northern side elevation. A flat-roofed garage was attached on the southern side elevation (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 4.2.2** The roof was covered in interlocking clay roof tiles that were occasionally lifted on all elevations, particularly along the front and rear verges offering potential roosting opportunities for bats (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target note 1**). Furthermore, whilst the ridge tiles and mortar were fully intact on all elevations, the verge mortar was crumbling on the single-storey section at the rear (**Photographs 5 & 6; Target notes 2 & 3**). The lead flashing at the base of the chimney was mostly sealed to the roof tiles, however, whilst the lead flashing along the northern dormer window was also sealed to the tiles, a slight gap was situated between the dormer and the flashing offering a potential access opportunity for roosting bats (**Photographs 7 & 8; Target notes 4 & 5**).
- 4.2.3** The waney edge timbers on the dormer window and apex of the front gable end were occasionally lifted (**Photographs 9 & 10; Target note 6**). The hanging tiles on the rear gable were occasionally lifted, as well as on the eastern facing gable of the existing side extension (**Photographs 11 & 12; Target note 7**). The timber soffit was mostly sealed to the rendered walls of the property, however, it was slightly damaged at the northeastern and southwestern corners of the property (**Photograph 13; Target note 8**). The bitumen felt flat-roof on the northern elevation was sealed to the timber fascia and rendered walls, and the flat-roof of the attached garage was

fully intact (**Photograph 14; Target note 9**). The clay roof tiles on the front bay window were occasionally lifted (**Photograph 15; Target note 10**).

- 4.2.4** No evidence of roosting bats was found during the external survey of the property and garage.

4.3 Internal Survey

- 4.3.1** The property had one roof void that covered its second-storey footprint, accessible via a loft hatch on the second floor and had an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 0.75m.
- 4.3.2** The void was heavily insulated with fully intact expanding foam over a bitumen felt layer that was sealed tightly to the internal timbers (**Photograph 16; Target note 11**). In addition, the ridge and eaves were all covered by expanding foam with no access available and light cobwebbing along the ridge (**Photographs 17 & 18; Target notes 12 & 13**). Furthermore, the chimney was also sealed off by the expanding foam with a large wasp nest pressed against its base (**Photograph 19; Target note 14**). Both gables were insulated with expanding foam, however, a large gap was situated at the apex of the eastern gable in which bird nesting material was observed (**Photograph 20; Target note 15**).
- 4.3.3** The attached single-storey garage had an open roof that was of solid brickwork construction. The roof was lined with timber boards that were fully intact and sealed to the brickwork walls (**Photograph 21; Target note 16**). The timber soffits of the main house were seen within the garage and were sealed to the internal rendered wall (**Photograph 22; Target note 17**).
- 4.3.4** No evidence of roosting bats was found during the internal survey of the property and garage.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Status

5.1.1 There was no evidence of roosting bats found during the survey of the property and attached garage. Externally there were potential roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species, such as the pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and smaller *Myotis* species, including gaps beneath lifted roof tiles along the verges and on the front bay window, lifted hanging tiles on the rear gable, lifted waney edge timbers on the dormer and front gable, and damaged sections of the timber soffit.

5.1.2 Two species of pipistrelle bat, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), are widespread and abundant throughout the United Kingdom (Mathews et al. 2018). Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are widespread and common but less abundant than the aforementioned pipistrelle species (Mathews et al. 2018). Roosts supporting these pipistrelle (*Pipistrelle* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* bat species are considered to be of site to county level 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 (Reason & Wray 2023).

5.1.3 Taking into account the lack of any evidence of roosting bats and the number of potential roosting sites, in conjunction with the surrounding high suitability commuting and foraging habitat, the property is considered to currently have moderate suitability for roosting bats.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The planning proposals involve a two-storey extension with a mansard roof following the removal of the existing flat-roof sections, conservatory and front bay window (see existing and proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**). The survey findings demonstrate that these proposals could result in the destruction of a bat roost and in the absence of mitigation, lead to disturbance and/or harm of bats if present at the time of the works. Further survey is required to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within the if any other roosts/species are present.

5.2.2 Further survey will comprise two evening emergence survey visits. The surveys will be conducted in the bat active season between May and September inclusive, with

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024

at least one survey undertaken in the optimal period for recording maternity roosts, i.e. mid-May to August (Collins 2016).

- 5.2.3** Subject to further survey findings, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence or if applicable, the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) may be required to permit the work to proceed lawfully. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued by Natural England if the three licensing tests (detailed in **Paragraph 2.2.2**) have been met by the proposals.
- 5.2.4** To meet one of the licensing tests, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the 'favourable conservation status' of bats using the property is maintained throughout and after the completion of the work by employing mitigation measures during the work, by providing compensatory roosts in the short-term and ensuring that roosting sites are retained on site in the long-term. Indicative and provisional mitigation proposals are summarised in Section 5.3 below. **N.B. the preparation of a detailed mitigation strategy necessary for the submission of an EPS mitigation licence should be based on the findings of the further survey.**

5.3 Indicative and Provisional Mitigation Proposals

- 5.3.1** If further survey demonstrates that an EPS mitigation licence is required, under the terms of the licence or BMCL (if applicable), the commencement of work affecting bat roost(s) would 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. **N.B. the current survey information does not indicate that a maternity roost is present.**
- 5.3.2** Replacement roosting opportunities would be provided so that they are available to bats in the short-term, i.e. before and during the work by erecting woodcrete bat boxes suitable for the species/roosts present on a mature tree or a purposeful erected pole before the work starts.
- 5.3.3** A 'soft strip' approach to the work affecting bat roosts would be adopted, i.e. the careful removal of hanging tiles or roof coverings used by roosting bats by gloved hands and with hand-held tools under the supervision of a licensed ecologist or the Registered Consultant if working under the BMCL. 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.

- 5.3.4** In the long-term, replacement access and/or roosting opportunities may need to be created and/or reinstated in the house as part of the licence. Access and roosting opportunities should be created corresponding to the positioning of roosting sites identified during the emergence surveys.

6 REFERENCES

Collins, J (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

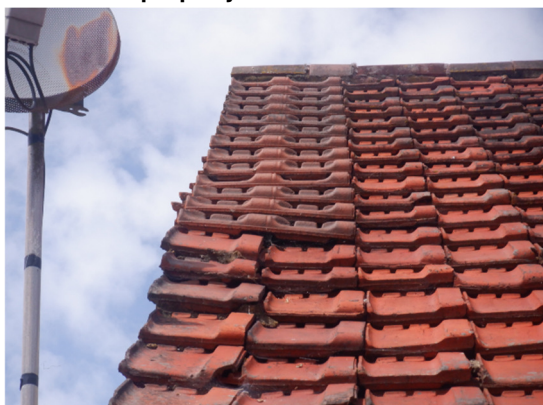
APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of property viewed from the east.



2. Rear of property viewed from the west.



3. Lifted interlocking roof tiles along the rear verge, viewed from the south.



4. Lifted interlocking roof tiles along the front verge, viewed from the north.



5. Fully intact ridge tiles, viewed from the southwest.



6. Crumbling verge mortar, viewed from the west.



7. Lead flashing tight to the brickwork chimney and roof tiles, viewed from the southwest.



8. Slight gaps between lead flashing and dormer window, viewed from the north.



9. Lifted waney edge timbers on the dormer window, viewed from the northeast.



10. Lifted waney edge timbers on the front gable, viewed from the east.



11. Occasionally lifted hanging tiles on the rear gable, viewed from the southwest.



12. Occasionally lifted hanging tiles on the eastern gable of the existing side extension, viewed from the east.



13. Damaged timber soffit, viewed from the north.



14. Bitumen felt flat roof sealed to timber fascia, viewed from the east.



15. Occasionally lifted clay roof tiles on the front bay window, viewed from the southeast.



16. Roof void heavily insulated with expanding foam over bitumen felt.



17. Lightly cobwebbed ridge heavily insulated with expanding foam.



18. Eaves blocked by expanding foam.



19. Large wasp nest situated at the base of the chimney.



20. Large gap within eastern gable with bird nesting material.

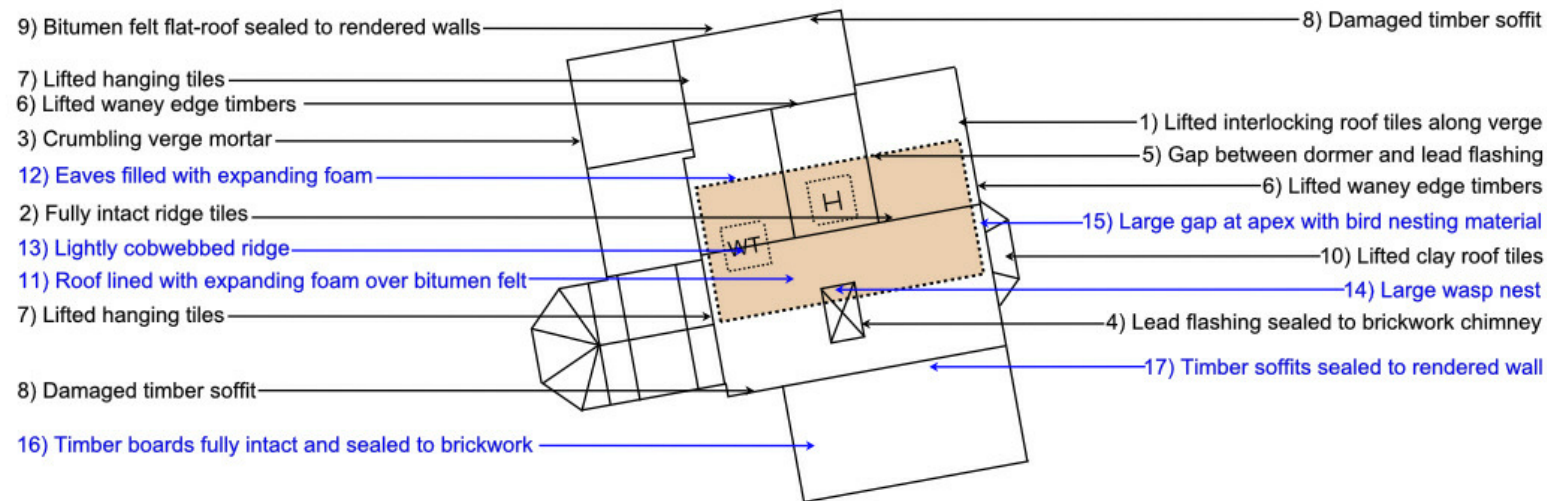


21. Garage lined with timber boarding that's sealed to the brickwork.



22. Timber soffit sealed to the internal rendered wall.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



 Chimney

 Roof Void

 Loft Hatch

 Water Tank

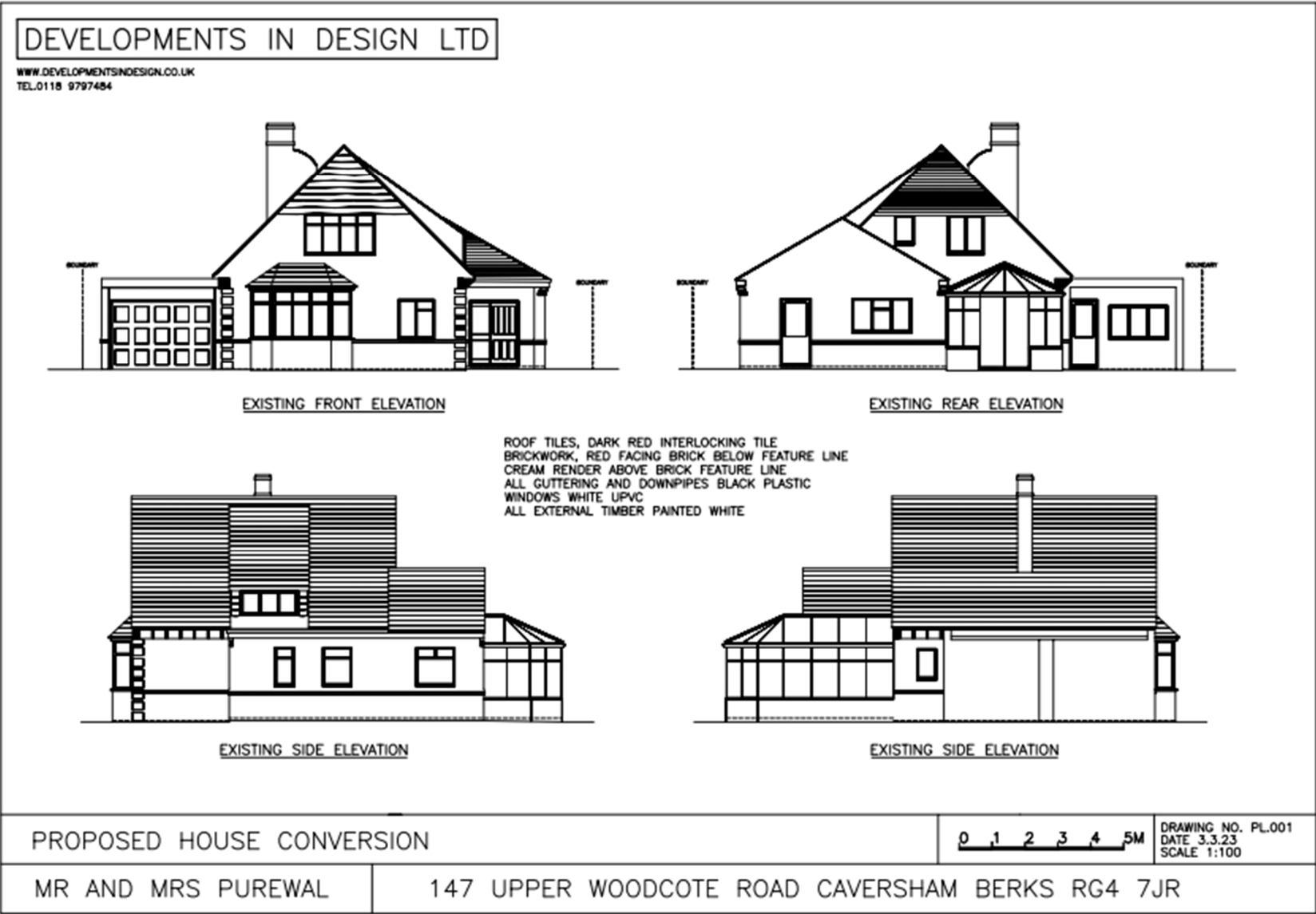
 External Target Note

 Internal Target Note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	147 Upper Woodcote Road Caversham	
JM	November 2023	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024

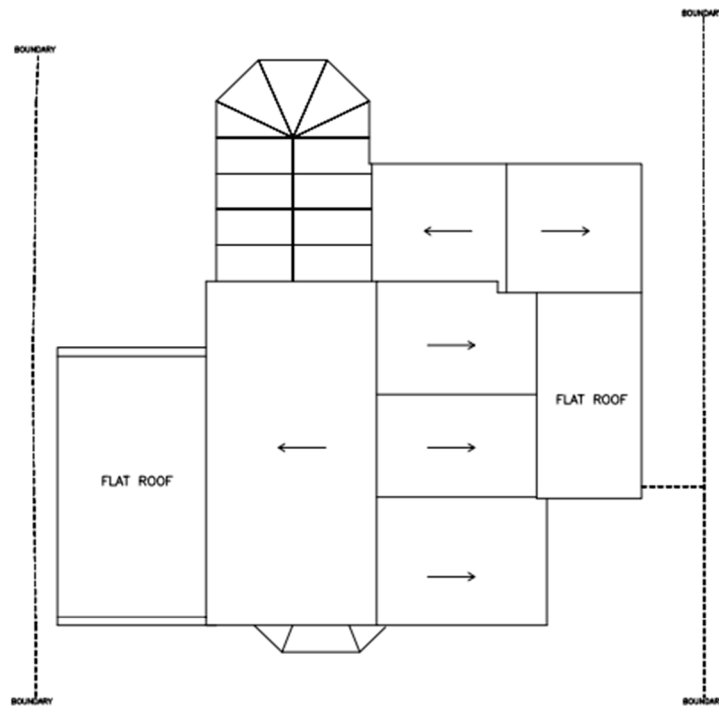
APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS



John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024

DEVELOPMENTS IN DESIGN LTD

WWW.DEVELOPMENTSINDESIGN.CO.UK
TEL.0118 9797484



EXISTING ROOF PLAN

PROPOSED HOUSE CONVERSION

0 1 2 3 4 5M

DRAWING NO. PL.007
DATE 3.3.23
SCALE 1:100

MR AND MRS PUREWAL

147 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD CAVERSHAM BERKS RG4 7JR

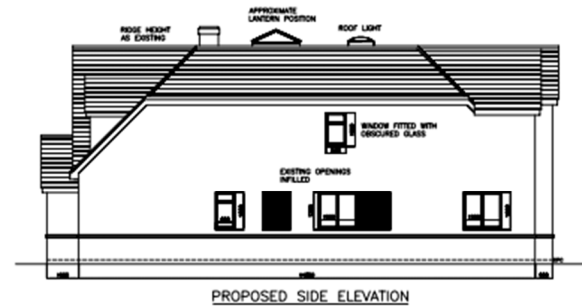
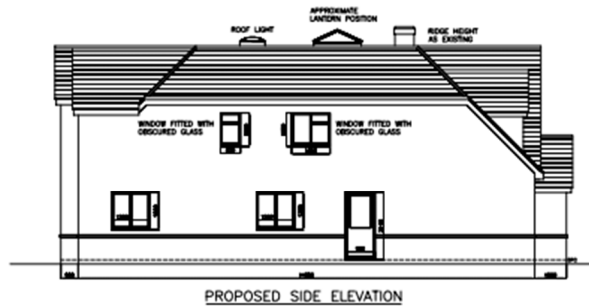
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024

DEVELOPMENTS IN DESIGN LTD

WWW.DEVELOPMENTSINDESIGN.CO.UK
TEL 0118 9797484



ROOF TILES, DARK RED PLAIN TILES
BRICKWORK, RED FACING BRICK BELOW FEATURE LINE
CREAM RENDER ABOVE BRICK FEATURE LINE
ALL GUTTERING AND DOWNPIPES BLACK PLASTIC
WINDOWS GREY UPVC
ALL EXTERNAL TIMBER CLAD WITH WHITE UPVC



PROPOSED HOUSE CONVERSION

MR AND MRS PUREWAL

147 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD CAVERSHAM BERKS RG4 7JR

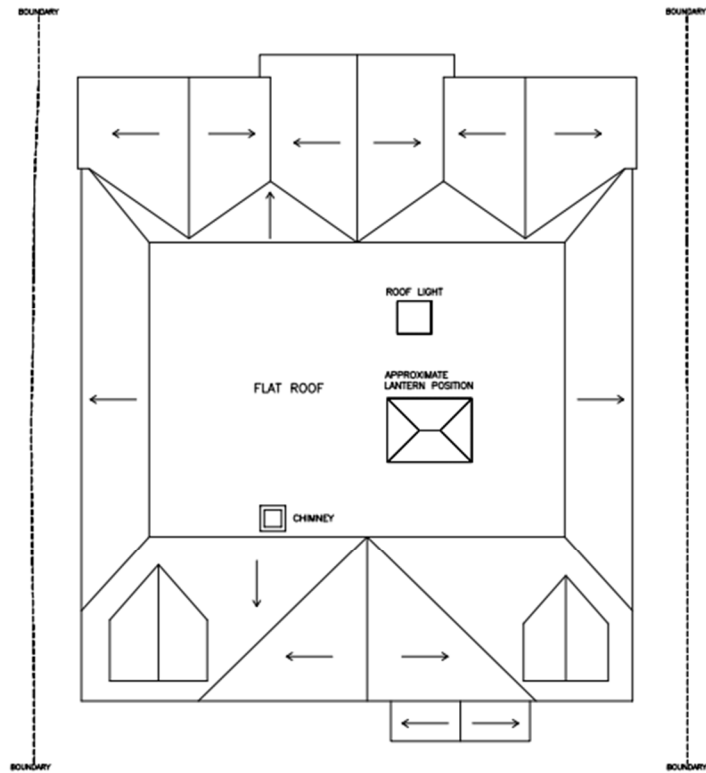
0 1 2 3 4 5M

DRAWING NO. PL.002
DATE 3.3.23
SCALE 1:100

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024

DEVELOPMENTS IN DESIGN LTD

WWW.DEVELOPMENTSINDESIGN.CO.UK
TEL.0118 9797484



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN

PROPOSED HOUSE CONVERSION

0 1 2 3 4 5M

DRAWING NO. PL.008
DATE 3.3.23
SCALE 1:100

MR AND MRS PUREWAL

147 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD CAVERSHAM BERKS RG4 7JR

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy
20/05/2024