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11 KNOWLE CLOSE, CAVERSHAM

Preliminary Roost Assessment

August 2026

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PROJECT: 11 Knowle Close, Caversham

CLIENT: Gary Cousins

REPORT REF: SWE-P25-0392-R1

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Alterations to existing dwelling

REPORT SCOPE: Preliminary Roost Assessment

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PROPORTIONALITY STATEMENT

Section 5.5 of BS42020¹ states –

“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.”

In addition, paragraph 45 of the National Planning Policy Framework² states –

“Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions, and should be reviewed at least every two years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.”

Paragraphs 98 and 99 of Government Circular 06/2005³ also state –

“98. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat...”

99. It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development.”

In accordance with these standards, the surveys and information detailed in this report are considered to provide an assessment of the potential impacts on ecological receptors proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to each from the proposed development. The assessment is not intended to be exhaustive or assess receptors that have been scoped out based on professional judgement, nor can this reasonably be requested in support of an application.

¹ BSI Standards Publication – BS42020:2013 - *Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development*

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) – *National Planning Policy Framework*. Last updated February 2025

³ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (16 August 2005) *Government circular: biodiversity and geological conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system*



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sam Watson Ecology (SWE) was appointed by Gary Cousins to carry out a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of a site known as 11 Knowle Close, Caversham (approximate central grid reference SU 69978 75815). The survey was commissioned to support an application for consent to carry out alterations to the existing dwelling.
- 1.2 The site is located in Caversham in the borough of Reading, Berkshire. It is joined on all sides by other existing residential development and associated gardens. Beyond this, the Mapledurham playing fields, which include an area of deciduous woodland, are approximately 100m south and there is a golf course c.330m west. The River Thames is also c.770m south at its closest point.

Site location indicated by red line





2.0 METHODS

Preliminary roost assessment

- 2.1 In order to investigate the potential use of the existing building by bats for roosting, an internal and external survey was carried out on 31st July 2026. The methodology used was based on that outlined in the 4th edition of the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidance⁴. Internally, it involved checking contained areas within the building, such as the roof void, for evidence of bats including droppings, feeding remains, staining, and any bats themselves. Following this, features on the exterior of the building that bats could potentially exploit for roosting were also identified. Such features can include: gaps behind fascia/barge boards and soffits; loose, missing or hanging coverings such as roof tiles and lead flashing; cracks in brickwork or panelling; and where weatherboarding has warped allowing potential access behind.
- 2.2 An assessment of the overall suitability of the building to support roosting was then carried out based on the presence, number and suitability of interior and exterior features that bats might use for roosting.
- 2.3 The survey was carried out by Samuel Watson, who is registered on Natural England's Bat Survey Class Licence WML-CL18 registration ref: 2025-85612-CL18-BAT.

⁴

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



3.0 LEGISLATION

3.1 All bat species and their roosts are afforded full protection under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Regulation 43 of these states:

“43.— (1) A person who—

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,*
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,*
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or*
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an*

animal, is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

(a) to impair their ability—

- (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or*
- (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or*

(b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.”

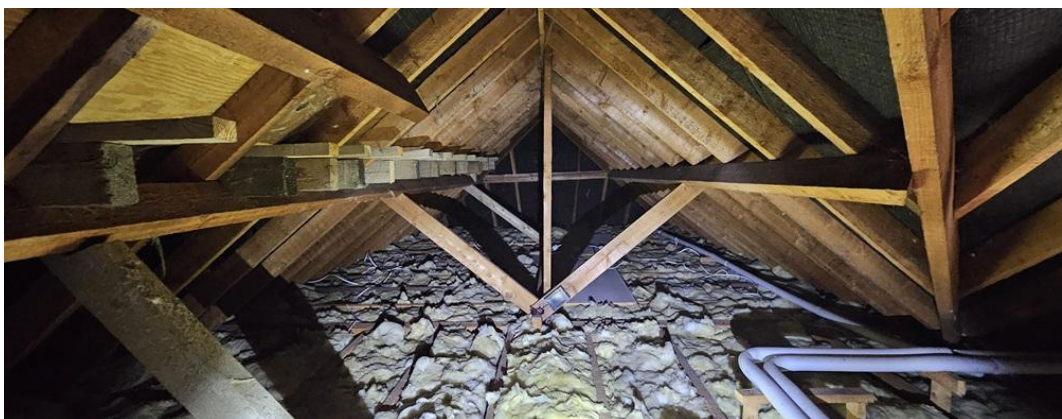
3.2 It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection, and to obstruct access to such a place.



4.0 RESULTS

Internal survey

- 4.1 The existing dwelling is a single-storey bungalow with a multi-pitched roof. There are two enclosed roof voids internally, the largest of which is over the main part of the house. The roof here has a king-post and braced purlin truss design that creates a relatively open and uncluttered void that is c.2.5m high at the ridge, with a lower c.1.5m void at the southern end. The roof tiles were noted to be lined with type F1 roofing felt and there was a heavy build-up of cobwebs along each internal ridge beam.





- 4.2 A second void is present at the northern end of the house. This has a clear-span truss which is c.1.2m high. The tiles here were also lined with type F1 felt, and there was a build-up of cobwebs throughout the void.



- 4.3 In addition to the two voids, the garage has a pitched roof, but this lacks a contained void, being open to the roof. There is also a small area of flat roof linking the garage to the main house, and a glass conservatory on the east elevation.





External survey

- 4.4 Externally, the building has concrete roof tiles, which appeared to be in good repair with no missing or slipped tiles noted, and the ridge and hip tiles complete and well mortared. Similarly, the exterior walls are rendered and lack significant cracks or gaps. The soffit box is also well sealed.





Result

- 4.5 Overall, the building was assessed to have negligible roosting potential, and no evidence of bats was found, and no roosts were identified.



5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 No evidence of bats roosting within 11 Knowle Close was found during the PRA, and no roosts were identified. The building was also assessed to have negligible roosting potential. On this basis, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would have a direct impact on bats, and no requirement for further survey or for the proposal to be carried out under a derogation licence has been identified at the current time.