

**Catkins
2 Betty Grove Lane
Sindlesham
Berkshire
RG41 5DR**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared by Jake Morgan; reviewed by Sarah Foot (Dec 22)

Updated by John Wenman (Sept 23)

Ref: R3311/b

September 2023



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Tilson to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of Catkins on 2 Betty Grove Lane – a semi-detached property in Sindlesham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 76602 69474). The assessment was commissioned in connection with a planning application to be lodged with Wokingham Borough Council for a single-storey rear extension.
- 1.1.2** All British bat species are fully protected in England 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 interior and exterior of the property was undertaken on the 22nd November 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 and an assistant ecologist; an endoscopic inspection of the single storey extension was completed by an ecologist registered under Class Licence CL18 on September 26th 2023..
- 1.1.3** Approximately 750-1000 medium-sized bat droppings of a size and shape most typical of those deposited by long-eared species (*Plecotus* sp.) were observed throughout the roof void, the majority of which were located at the southwest gable. Externally, whilst no evidence of roosting bats was observed, the property had numerous potential roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and small *Myotis* species including gaps behind lifted, damaged or missing roof tiles, particularly along the southwest verge, and gaps between the lead flashing around the chimneys and the roof tiles. The tiles of the single storey roof had crevices suitable for bats, but no evidence of bats or use by bats was visible during a close inspection and therefore it is unlikely that it supports bats.
- 1.1.4** The proposed extension will not damage or destroy the long-eared bat roost within the main roof or affect the associated crevice features, and the work to link the surveys show the extension to the existing single storey roof is unlikely to affect bats or their roosts. Furthermore, the work is unlikely to lead to the disturbance of bats, particularly if precautions are adopted. Therefore, it is considered that the work can go ahead lawfully without the requirement for a mitigation licence if non-licenced precautions are adopted.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Tilson to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of Catkins on 2 Betty Grove Lane – a semi-detached property in Sindlesham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 76602 69474).

2.1.2 The bat roost assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a single storey rear extension (refer to existing and proposed plans and elevations in **Appendix 3**).

2.2 Legislative Background

2.2.1 All British bat species are fully protected in England 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 significantly affect 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 Mitigation Licences (EPSML) 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 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. The Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that an EPSML is necessary before granting planning permission.
- 2.2.4** EPSML applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days.
- 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 Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21). The Class Licence permits ‘Registered Consultants’ or accredited agents appointed by them to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the 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 licence applications or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation 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.

2.3 Site Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The semi-detached property is located on the northeast side of Betty Grove Lane off Mole Road in Sindlesham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 76602 69474).
- 2.3.2** The property is set in a semi-rural area amongst other residential properties on Betty Grove Lane with gardens, scattered trees and agricultural buildings; immediate surroundings are primarily agricultural fields. The northwest boundary of the site’s garden borders approximately 1.1ha of woodland, connecting to a further 12.4ha of mixed woodland approximately 200m to the southwest. The river Loddon passes approximately 570m to the northwest with parcels of mixed

woodland, floodplain grazing marsh and semi-improved grassland running along the bank, the closest of which being 400m to the northwest. The river and associated suitable habitats will be used as a commuting route for bats. Furthermore, over 226ha of mixed woodland, wood pasture, reed beds and playing fields are situated 480m to the southeast with Bear Wood Lake 790m to the southeast.

- 2.3.3** Overall, the nearby surroundings offer high quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats adapted to a semi-rural environment.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the property was conducted on the 22nd November 2022 by Conor Watson – an ecologist registered under the Natural England Class Licence WML-CL17 (registration number: 2020-44817-CLS-CLS) and Jake Morgan – an assistant ecologist. An endoscopic inspection of the single storey extension was carried out by John Wenman – registered under Natural England Class Licence CL18 (registration number 2016-23859-CLS-CLS) – on September 26th 2023.

3.1.2 The original survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch, searching for features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones 2004; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004). The endoscopic inspection was carried out with a Ridgid SeeSnake CA100 video endoscope and a high power torch.

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 windowsills, 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;
- Under sections of raised lead flashing;
- Beneath hanging 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** There were no significant survey constraints because full internal and external access was available throughout the survey, which was carried out in good weather conditions. It must 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 an absence of bats.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1** Photographs of the 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 are described as follows:

4.2 External Survey

- 4.2.1** The semi-detached property had a pitched roof and was of modern cavity wall construction with rendered walls on the second-storey. There was a front porch and single-storey rear extension (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 4.2.2** The clay roof tiles on the main roof were frequently lifted, damaged or missing on both the front and rear elevations, particularly along the southwest verge where the tiles were uneven (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target notes 1 & 2**). Furthermore, the curved roof tiles on the existing rear extension were also frequently lifted or damaged (**Photograph 5; Target note 3**). The mortar along the ridge and hip tiles on the main roof was fully intact and the verge mortar on the southwest gable was intact (**Photographs 6 & 7; Target notes 4 & 5**). In addition, the verge mortar and ridge tiles were fully intact on the existing rear extension (**Photograph 8**).
- 4.2.3** Whilst the lead flashing was tight to the front chimney and the mortared tiles to the rear chimney, gaps were situated between the top row of roof tiles and the lead flashing (**Photographs 9 & 10; Target note 6**). The timber soffit was tight to the rendered wall of the main house on all elevations and the timber fascia was tight to the existing rear extension (**Photographs 11 & 12; Target notes 7 & 8**). Two bird boxes were situated on the southwest side elevation with a third bird box on the rear wall (**Photograph 13; Target note 9**).
- 4.2.4** The verge mortar was fully intact along the front porch (**Photograph 14**). Whilst the moss-covered clay roof tiles on the porch were occasionally lifted, the lead flashing was flush to the roof tiles and rendered wall (**Photograph 15; Target notes 10 & 11**).
- 4.2.5** The flat roof section connecting to the existing rear extension was lined with bitumen felt which was tight to the brick wall (**Photograph 16; Target note 12**).
- 4.2.6** No evidence of roosting bats was observed during the external inspection of the

property.

4.3 Internal Survey

4.3.1 The roof was accessed via a loft hatch, covering the two-storey footprint of the property with an approximate ridge height of 3 metres.

4.3.2 The roof was lined with Type 1F bitumen felt which was mostly intact, however, sections of felt were missing by the northeast party wall where the clay roof tiles were visible (**Photographs 17 & 18; Target notes 13 & 14**). Slight gaps were also situated between the bitumen felt and the ridge which was tightly sealed against an internal block wall within the southeast corner of the void (**Photograph 19; Target notes 15 & 16**). The bitumen felt against the southeast chimney was loose with roof tiles visible behind (**Photograph 20; Target note 17**). The roof was partially boarded over fiberglass insulation which filled most eaves other than in the southwest section (**Photograph 21; Target notes 18 & 19**). The northeast party wall was half exposed and was of brick and blockwork construction with end rafters sealed to the wall (**Photograph 22; Target note 20**). The southwest gable end was of blockwork construction with gaps between the end rafters and gable, particularly at the apex (**Photograph 23; Target note 21**).

4.3.3 Approximately 750 - 1000 medium-sized bat droppings were scattered throughout the entirety of the roof void with the highest density concentrated on the southwest gable wall (50-100 droppings) and at its base (300-400 droppings) (**Photographs 24, 25 & 26**). In addition, approximately 200 – 300 medium-sized droppings were situated at the base of the northeast party wall, under the unlined section of the roof (**Photograph 27**).

4.4 Endoscopic Survey

4.4.1 No bats or evidence of bats was visible during the close endoscopic inspection (**Photographs 28 & 29**).

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential/Status

5.1.1 Internally, the observation of approximately 750 - 1000 medium-sized bat droppings – resembling those typically deposited by long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp, indicates that the roof void is likely to have been used as a well-used day roost by small numbers of non-breeding brown long-eared bats or a small brown long-eared maternity roost. Potential access points were identified to likely be along the southwest gable end, particularly under the uneven roof tiles on the verge. The bat droppings found at the party wall indicate that there is likely to be further droppings in the neighbouring attached property so a full assessment of the status of the roost is not possible from droppings alone.

5.1.2 Brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) are a widespread species found throughout the UK and roosts occupied by small numbers of non-breeding or breeding individuals are considered to be of low-moderate conservation importance; however, they are a species of principal importance for conservation (as defined within Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) and any loss of roosts may have an adverse impact on the status of local populations (Mitchell-Jones 2004).

5.1.3 In addition, externally the property had features suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species such as gaps behind lifted, damaged or missing roof tiles, particularly along the southwest verge, and gaps between the lead flashing around the chimneys and the roof tiles. Droppings from crevice-dwelling bats can be hidden from view between roof tiles and roof linings or within cavity walls.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The proposals will involve a single storey rear extension and installation of a new window in the side wall, and replacement of existing windows. These proposals will not have an impact on the roof void used by roosting brown long-eared bats and will not have an impact on the clay roof tiles of the main roof where numerous potential roosting features for crevice dwelling species were identified. Therefore, the proposals will not damage or destroy the brown long eared bat roost or crevice roosting features.

5.2.2 The small rear extension will connect partly to the lower part of the exiting single storey roof, which had curved tiles with gaps of sufficient size for use by crevice dwelling bat species; however, the close endoscopic inspection combined with the earlier findings shows it is unlikely this small roof is used by bats and therefore

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unlikely that the work will damage or destroy bat roosts, or lead to the disturbance of bats occupying roosts

5.2.3 The works are unlikely to lead to the disturbance of bats occupying the main roof void, and particularly any disturbance that would affect the ability of bats to survive, reproduce, nurture young, hibernate or migrate, particularly if precautionary measures are adopted as set out in 5.3 below. Therefore, it is considered that it can go ahead lawfully without the requirement for a mitigation licence.

5.2.4 The extension will include skylights, which could lead to some additional light spill from the property that could affect bats during some periods of their activity; however, if mitigation measures are employed, it is considered unlikely that this would have a significantly adverse impact on bat activity if the design mitigates the potential impact after dark i.e. through the installation of blinds to the skylights.

5.3 Precautionary Mitigation Measures

5.3.1 A licensed ecologist will brief the building contractors before work begins in a toolbox talk. The talk will cover the location of bat roosts within the house, the legislation protecting bats and their roosts, methods to be employed to minimise the risk of harming or disturbing bats and what to do if bats are discovered during the work. The ecologist will provide a written note of the briefing to be available on site throughout the building work.

5.3.2 The licensed ecologist will complete an updated inspection of the existing single storey roof for bats and signs of use by bats before tiles are removed. The tiles will be lifted by gloved hand, and bats are discovered during the work, it will stop immediately. Work will only recommence when the licensed ecologist has provided further written advice, and if necessary, a mitigation licence has been obtained.

6 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 property, viewed from the southeast.



2. Rear of the property, viewed from the north.



3. Frequently lifted, damaged or missing clay roof tiles, viewed from the southeast.



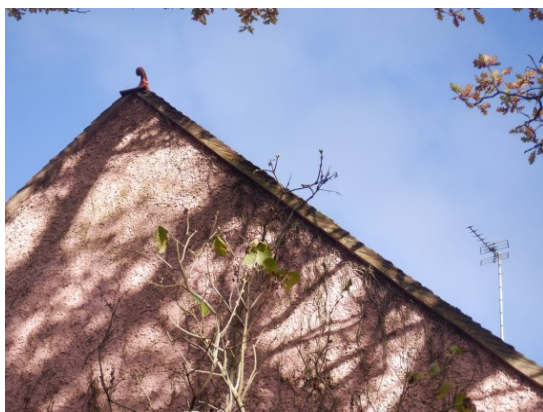
4. Uneven row of clay roof tiles along the southwest verge, viewed from the southeast.



5. Frequently lifted clay roof tiles on the existing rear extension, viewed from the west.



6. Mortar along the hip & ridge tiles fully intact, viewed from the southeast.



7. Verge mortar fully intact along the southwest gable.



8. Verge mortar and ridge tiles fully intact on the existing rear extension, viewed from the west.



9. Tight lead flashing but gap between clay roof tiles and lead flashing to the rear of the chimney, viewed from the southeast.



10. Gap between clay roof tiles and lead flashing to the rear of the chimney, viewed from the west.



11. Timber soffit flush to the rendered wall of the main house, viewed from the southeast.



12. Timber fascia flush to the wall of the existing rear extension, viewed from the west.



13. Two bird boxes on the southwest side elevation.



14. Verge mortar fully intact on front porch, viewed from the southwest.



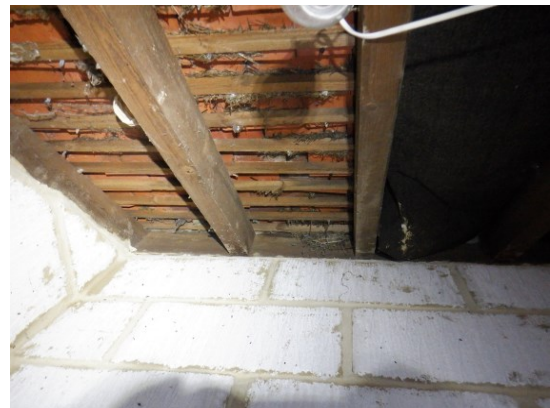
15. Occasionally lifted clay roof tiles under moss with lead flashing flush to the rendered wall, viewed from the southeast.



16. Bitumen felt tight to the brick wall of the flat roof section, viewed from the northwest.



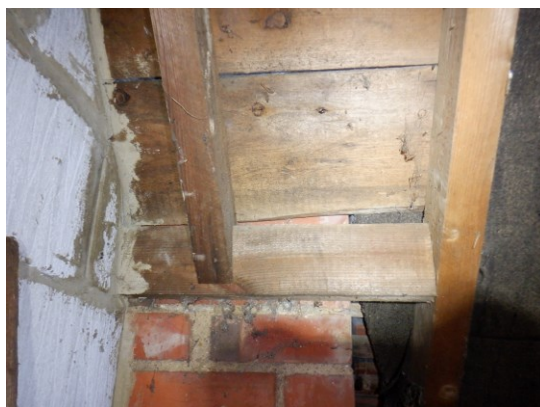
17. Type 1F bitumen felt mostly intact throughout the roof void.



18. Section of unlined roof with clay roof tiles visible.



19. Slight gaps between bitumen felt and ridge which are both connected to an internal blockwork wall.



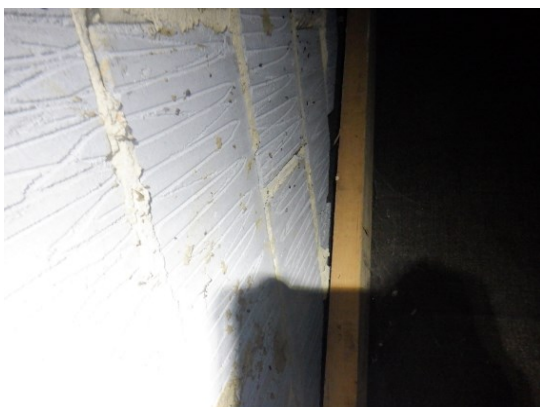
20. Bitumen felt loose against southeast chimney with roof tiles visible.



21. Open eaves within the southwest section of the roof void.



22. End rafter sealed to the northeast party wall.



23. Gaps between southwest blockwork gable and end rafter.



24. Medium-sized bat droppings scattered throughout the roof void.



25. Approximately 50 - 100 medium-sized bat droppings on the southwest gable wall



26. Approximately 300 - 400 medium-sized bat droppings at the base of the southwest gable wall.



27. Approximately 200 - 300 medium-sized bat droppings at the base of the northeast party wall.

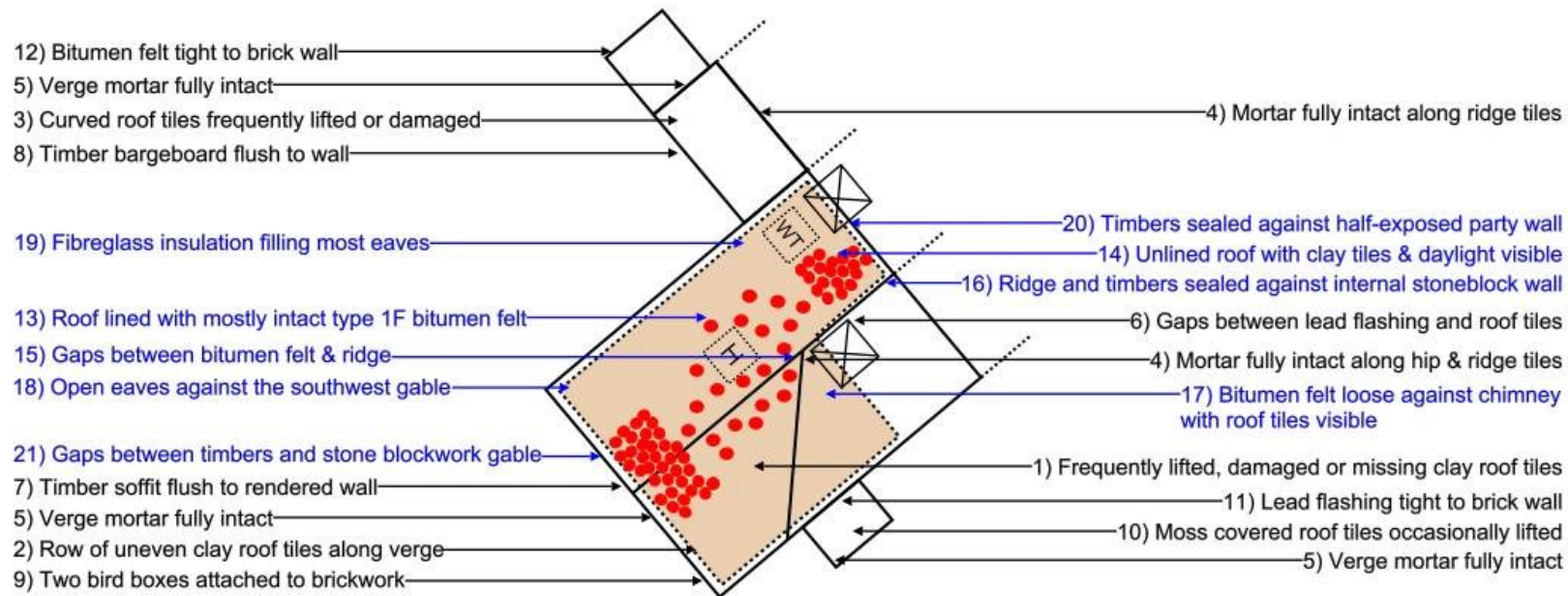


28. The single storey extension to be extended (Sept 23).



29. Gaps beneath curved tiles inspected (Sept 23)

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



● Medium-sized bat droppings



Chimney



Roof Space



Loft Hatch



Water Tank



External Target Note



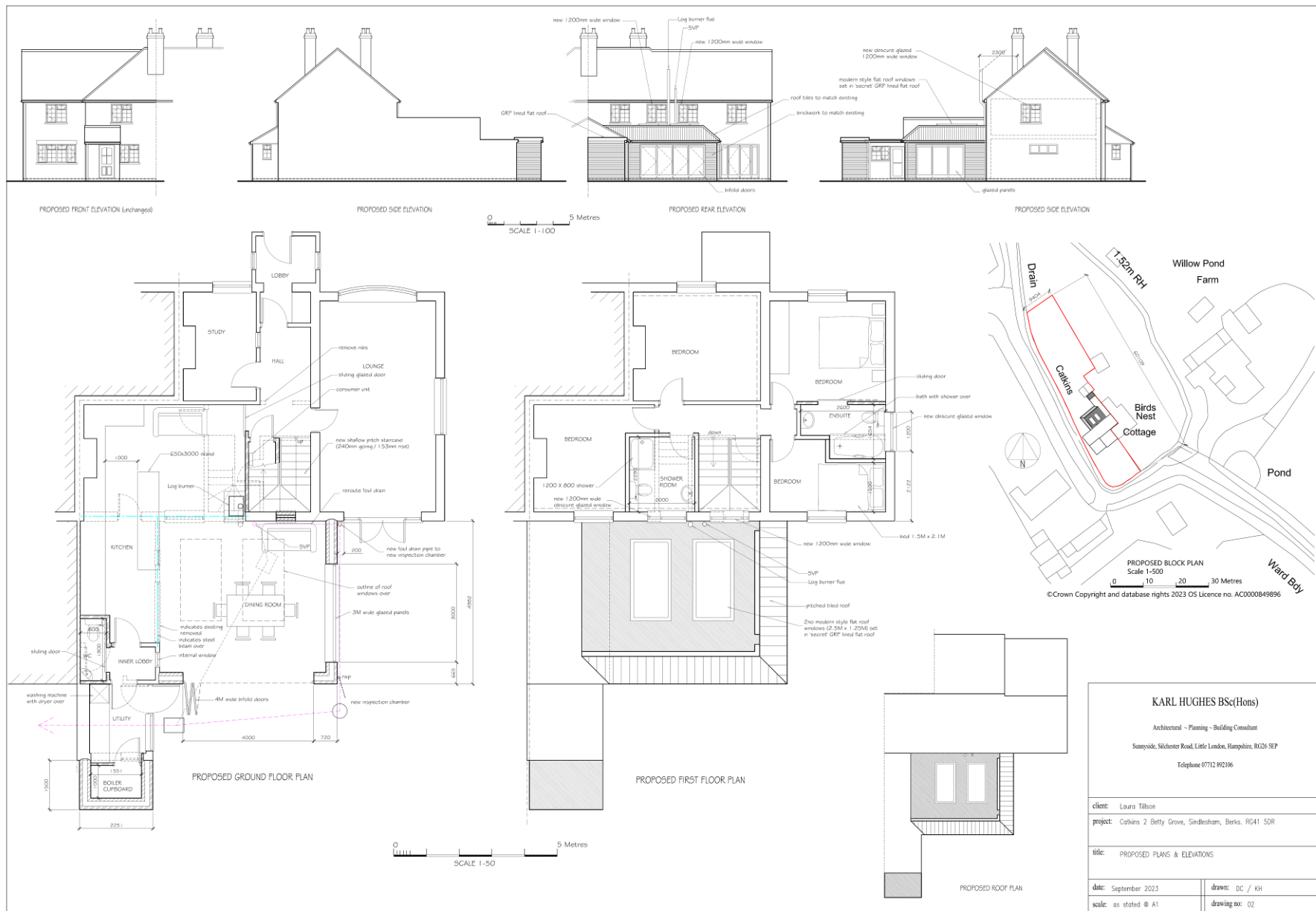
Internal Target Note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	Catkins, 2 Betty Grove Lane Sindlesham	
JM	December 2022	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



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