

12 St Marys Road  
Sindlesham  
Wokingham  
Berkshire  
RG41 5DA

## Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report ref.: R3232\_PRA\_a

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy was instructed by Bob Owles of Cantley Design to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 12 St Marys Road in Sindlesham, Berkshire. The PRA was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a part two-storey, part single-storey side and rear extension over the existing flat roof garage.
- 1.1.2** The nearby connecting private gardens, mature tree lines and open fields provide continuous habitat that could be used as bat flight paths and feeding habitat, connecting to additional high-quality foraging habitats in the nearby area such as mixed priority woodland to the south and north.
- 1.1.3** The roof void was of a suitable size and condition for void dwelling bats, such as the locally recorded brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), however, no evidence was observed and therefore the presence of void-dwelling bats is considered highly unlikely. The property lacked any suitable external features which may provide access to crevice roost sites for crevice-dwelling bats such as the locally recorded common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). The property is considered to be of negligible potential suitability for bats (see **Appendix 1** for potential suitability categories).
- 1.1.4** It is considered highly unlikely the proposals will result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. A European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required for the planned works to go ahead lawfully.
- 1.1.5** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the work, the work will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist will advise how works should proceed; this may require a EPSML to permit the work to continue lawfully.
- 1.1.6** This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019b).

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Project Background**

**2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy was instructed by Bob Owles of Cantley Design to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 12 St Marys Road in Sindlesham, Berkshire.

**2.1.2** The PRA was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham District Council seeking consent for a part two-storey, part single-storey side and rear extension over the existing flat roof garage (see proposed plans in **Appendix 1**).

### **2.2 Site Location and Context**

**2.2.1** The property comprises a link-detached residential dwelling with an attached flat roofed garage located on the southeastern side of St Mary's Road in Sindlesham, Wokingham, Berkshire (central OS grid reference: SU 77626 69999).

**2.2.2** The property is situated within a suburban area with further residential houses and their respective gardens, which contain hedgerows and mature trees, along St Mary's Road. Bearwood Recreation Ground is situated approximately 110 metres to the south, connecting to over 240ha of mixed priority woodland and woodpasture approximately 300 metres to the south. A strip of mixed priority woodland runs parallel to the M4 approximately 140 metres to the north. Further surroundings are primarily suburban to the southwest and north, and rural to the east and west.

**2.2.3** Overall, the nearby habitats provide good commuting and high quality foraging opportunities for bats adapted to roosting in suburban environments.

### **2.3 Report Objectives**

**2.3.1** The aim of the PRA is to ascertain if there is evidence of the presence of bats and/or potential for roosting bats to be present, and therefore whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for the proposed development activities.

### **3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Relevant Legislation**

**3.1.1** In England and Wales, all bat species found in the wild are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the regulations are commonly referred to as the Habitat Regulations and hereafter referred to as such. The Habitat Regulations refer to European Protected Species (EPS) and all species of bats in the United Kingdom (UK) are EPS. Although the UK left the European Union on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and is therefore no longer tied to European legislation, the Habitat Regulations have been retained in their current format.

**3.1.2** The legal framework underpinned by the WCA and Habitat Regulations makes these specific actions an offence as follows:

- Deliberately kill, injure, capture or take a wild bat;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting; and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection.

#### **3.2 Planning Policy**

**3.2.1** The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Government planning policy, such as the ODPM Circular 06/2005, requires LPAs to account for the conservation of protected species when considering and determining planning applications.

**3.2.2** The ODPM Circular 06/2005 states that '*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.*' This policy means that in instances where there is a reasonable likelihood of bats being present and affected by a development, surveys must be undertaken to inform a mitigation strategy to be agreed prior to granting planning permission.

### 3.3 Mitigation Licensing

**3.3.1** The government's statutory nature conservation body, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences 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 derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (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.*'
- (9)(a) – there is '*no satisfactory alternative*' to the derogation; and
- (9)(b) – '*the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.*'

**3.3.2** LPAs have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the Habitat Regulations to consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting EPS before granting planning permission. If an EPS mitigation 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.

**3.3.3** The Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) scheme allows ecologists to apply to become Registered Consultants to use this licence for low conservation status roosts, i.e. roosts comprising small numbers of seven commonly occurring species. A site registration form must be completed as a condition of the licence and submitted to Natural England at least three weeks before the licensable activities are due to start; Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks of submission.

**3.3.4** Baseline survey information supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or BMCL site registrations must be up-to-date and have been completed within the current or most recent optimal season. A suitably experienced ecologist will be required to undertake a site walkover/check within three months prior to application/registration submission to confirm that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey.

## **4 SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Desk Study**

**4.1.1** A desk-based study for bats was undertaken to collate and review existing information about the site and the surrounding land. The study utilised the following open access resources:

- Google Earth – satellite imagery was used to identify potential flight paths and foraging habitats for bats;
- MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species licences; and
- Pre-existing bat survey reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal to provide background information for the site.

### **4.2 Building Inspection**

#### *Survey Details*

**4.2.1** A detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of the property was undertaken on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2026 by Meghan Porter-Smith ACIEEM – registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (Registration no. 2025-86253-CL17-BAT) - and Jake Morgan - a qualifying member of CIEEM - registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (Registration no. 2025-85343-CL17-BAT), in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins 2023). The equipment used during the inspection comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a headtorch, and a ladder. The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior and interior of the structure during daylight hours to compile information on potential and actual bat access points; potential and actual bat roost sites; and any evidence of bat presence.

#### *External Survey*

**4.2.2** Frequently used bat access points and/or roost sites include (but are not limited to) spaces:

- behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes and barge boards;
- under lead flashing (particularly around chimneys) and roof tiles/slates; and
- in existing bat boxes.

**4.2.3** It is important to note that the two most abundant and widespread bat species, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), typically only require gaps measuring 15mm by 20mm to gain access to a roost inside a

building.

**4.2.4** The external survey involved a systematic search for evidence of bats including:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining; and
- squeaking noises.

**4.2.5** It should be noted that bats can be present in a building while leaving no visible signs externally and wet weather has the potential to wash any evidence away. The search for evidence was focused on (but was not limited to) the ground, windowsills, windowpanes and walls (including cladding and hanging tiles); particularly in places near to potential bat access points and/or roost sites.

*Survey Limitations and Validity*

**4.2.6** There were no significant survey limitations because PRAs can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the building was fully accessible.

**4.2.7** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey, particularly for bat species which typically roost in hidden crevices. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence found during a survey does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence in a building.

**4.2.8** This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for 12 months only (CIEEM 2019).

## 5 SURVEY RESULTS

### 5.1 Desk Study

**5.1.1** The nearby connecting private gardens, mature tree lines and recreational grounds provide continuous habitat that could be used as bat flight paths and feeding habitat, connecting to additional high-quality foraging habitats in the nearby area such as mixed priority woodland to the south and north for any bats roosting locally.

**5.1.2** The following table lists the bat mitigation licences issued within the last 10 years within a 2km radius of the property.

*Table 1. Bat mitigation licences granted within a 2km radius of the property (Source: MAGIC).*

| Case Reference of<br>Granted Licence | Species on the<br>Licence                  | Licensable<br>Period       | Licensable Works                                | Distance<br>(m) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2020-49081-EPS-NSIP1                 | Daubenton's bat and<br>soprano pipistrelle | 03/10/2020 –<br>01/11/2025 | Damage and<br>destruction of a<br>breeding site | 2000 W          |

**5.1.3** There were no pre-existing bat survey reports held by the client or available for the property on the Wokingham Borough Council website.

### 5.2 Building Inspection

#### *Overview*

**5.2.1** The findings from the external inspection and internal inspection of the property are described with photographs and are annotated in a plan, as follows:

#### *External Survey*

**5.2.2** The link-detached house is of modern cavity wall construction with a hipped roof, a rear single-storey extension and an attached flat roofed garage (**Photographs 1 & 2**).



*Photograph 1. Front of property viewed from the northwest.*



*Photograph 2. Rear of property viewed from the southeast.*

- 5.2.3** The hipped roof was covered by overlapping concrete tiles that were flat across all elevations (**Photograph 3**). In addition, the hip and ridge mortar was fully intact (**Photograph 4**).



*Photograph 3. Flat overlapping tiles and intact hip mortar (rear elevation).*



*Photograph 4. Flat overlapping tiles and intact ridge and hip mortar (southwestern elevation).*

- 5.2.4** Whilst the lead flashing at the base of the northeast flue pipe was tight to the roof tiles, the lead flashing at the base of the southwest flue pipe was slightly lifted, however, the resulting gap was wide open with no crevice roosting feature available (**Photographs 5 & 6; Target note 1**).



*Photograph 5. Lead flashing tight to roof tiles (northeastern elevation).*



*Photograph 6. Lifted lead flashing with open gap beneath (southwestern elevation).*

- 5.2.5** The uPVC soffit along the second-storey elevation was fully sealed to the brickwork of the house (**Photograph 7**). There was a gap situated between the timber fascia and the brickwork along the single-storey rear extension, however, close inspection with a high-powered torch confirmed the feature to be heavily cobwebbed, with insulation visible in places and was deemed to be open with a lack of crevice roosting opportunities (**Photograph 8; Target note 2**). The bitumen felt was tight to the fascia across the flat roofs on the rear extension, garage and front bay window (**Photographs 9 & 10**).



*Photograph 7. uPVC soffit sealed to the brickwork (rear elevation).*



*Photograph 8. Cobwebbed gap between fascia and brickwork; open space with no crevice opportunities (rear elevation).*



*Photograph 9. Bitumen felt tight to the fascia across the flat roofed garage (southwest elevation of garage).*



*Photograph 10. Bitumen felt tight across the bay window (front elevation).*

### *Internal Survey*

- 5.2.1** The floors and ceiling of the property had mostly been stripped due to water damage caused by a broken water pipe which occurred within the month leading up to the survey visit, resulting in a modified roof void. However, the fibreglass insulation within the void was mostly still in place (**Photograph 11**). The void covered the second-storey footprint of the property with access via a first-floor loft hatch. The void was of pre-trussed construction with an approximate floor-to-ridge height of 1.5 metres and the ridge was cobwebbed throughout (**Photograph 12**).



*Photograph 11. Stripped ceiling with fibreglass insulation mostly remaining.*



*Photograph 12. Roof of trussed rafter construction.*

- 5.2.2** The roof was covered by bitumen felt that was mostly intact other than occasional small tears and overlapping sections, which had fibreglass insulation in places (**Photograph 13; Target note 3**). The eaves were mostly unblocked, allowing access to the uPVC soffit (**Photograph 14**).



*Photograph 13. Overlapping sections of bitumen felt blocked by fibreglass insulation.*



*Photograph 14. Open eaves with access to the uPVC soffit.*

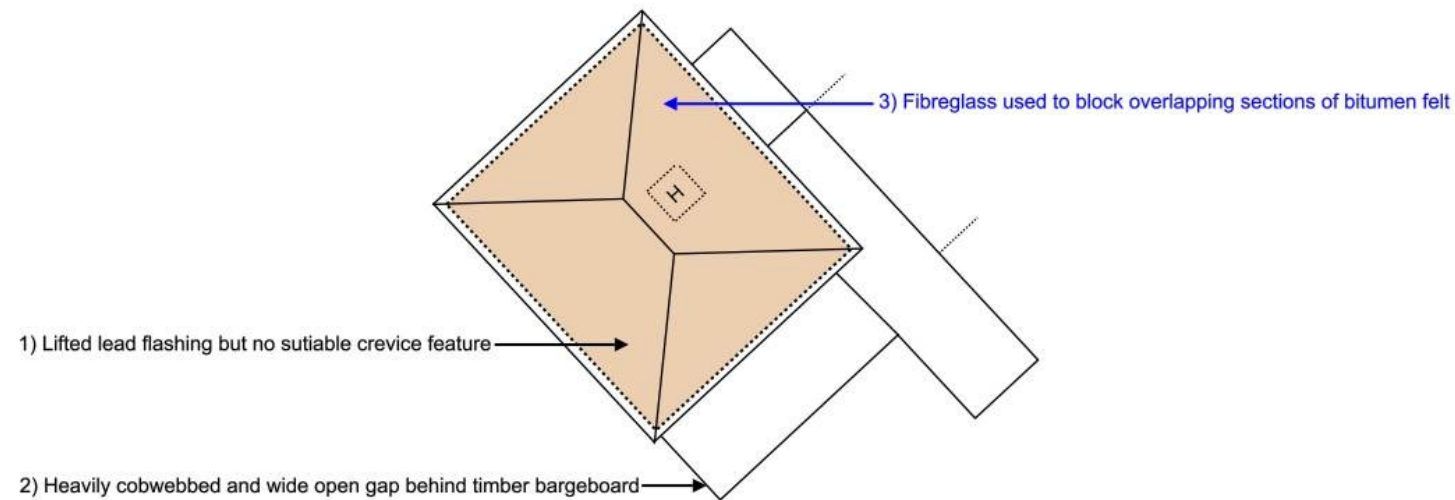
**5.2.3** There was no void within the attached garage, with the roof covered by timber boarding and plaster boarding in places, that were tight to the brickwork (**Photographs 15 & 16**).



*Photograph 15. Timber panels sealed to the painted brickwork (garage).*



*Photograph 16. Plasterboards sealed to the painted brickwork (garage).*



 Roof void  
  Loft hatch  
  External target note  
  Internal target note

|           |           |              |                                           |                                                                                       |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drawn by: | Date      | Scale:       | 12 St Marys Road, Sindlesham              |  |
| JM        | June 2026 | Not to scale | Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings |                                                                                       |

Figure 1. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment findings.

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Assessment of Roost Suitability / Presence

**6.1.1** The nearby connecting private gardens, mature tree lines and recreational grounds provide continuous habitat that could be used as bat flight paths and feeding habitat, connecting to additional high-quality foraging habitats in the nearby area, such as mixed priority woodland to the south and north, for any bats roosting locally. Furthermore, the search of granted bat mitigation identified two species known to be breeding within a 2km radius of the property: soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), situated approximately 2000 metres to the west.

**6.1.2** The property and attached garage lacked any potential bat access points or crevice roosting opportunities. Whilst the lead flashing was lifted around the flue on the southwestern elevation of the roof, the resulting feature was open and considered unsuitable for use by crevice-dwelling bats. The area surrounding the flue was able to be closely inspected during the internal survey, and was found to be open, cobwebbed and no evidence of roosting bats was observed. Furthermore, whilst a gap was situated between the timber fascia and brickwork along the single-storey rear extension, this feature was found to be heavily cobwebbed and wide open, therefore lacking crevice roosting opportunities.

**6.1.3** The roof void had been recently modified prior to the survey, however, the majority of the fibreglass insulation remained in situ and therefore any evidence of bat presence would still have been visible. Prior to modification, the void would have been of a suitable size and condition for void dwelling bats, such as the locally recorded brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), however, no evidence of this species or bat activity, were observed, and the only potential access points through gaps in bitumen felt were blocked with fibreglass insulation, the presence of void-dwelling bats is considered to be highly unlikely.

**6.1.4** The property is considered to be of negligible potential suitability for bats (see **Appendix 1** for potential suitability categories).

### 6.2 Assessment of Impacts and Recommendations

**6.2.1** The development proposals seek consent for a part two-storey and single-storey rear extension and a double storey side extension, removing the existing car port (see proposed plans in **Appendix 1**).

**6.2.2** The survey findings demonstrate that these proposals are highly unlikely to result in the

death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. A European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the development proposals to proceed lawfully.

- 6.2.3** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the work, the work will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist will advise how works should proceed; this may require a EPSML to permit the work to continue lawfully.

## 7 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. CIEEM, Winchester.

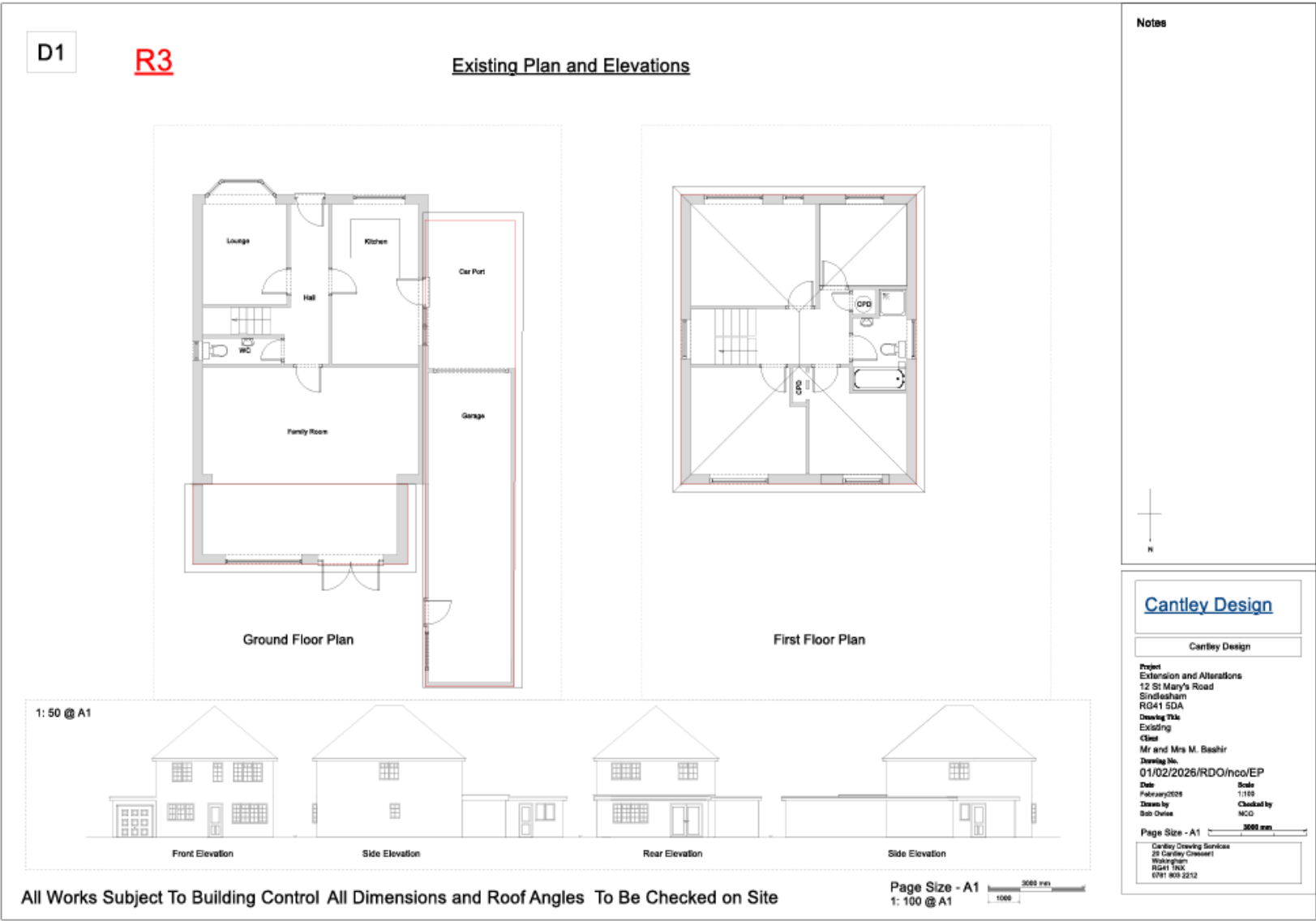
Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

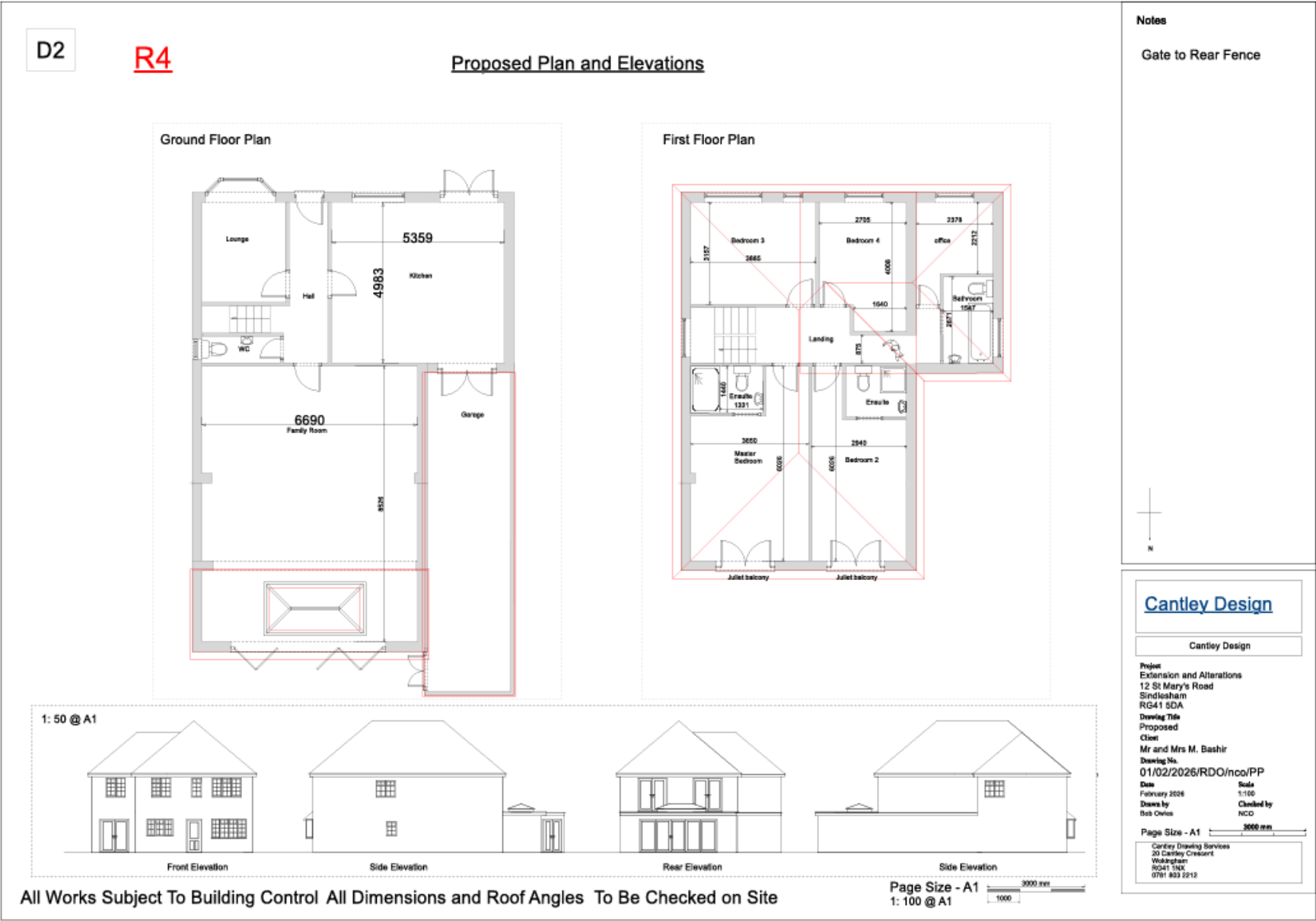
Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England,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

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

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2*. CIEEM, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS





## APPENDIX 2 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS

The categories detailed in **Table 2** below are derived from the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*' (Collins 2023) and provide guidance for assessing the potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats. These categories are applied using professional judgement and irrespective of whether the presence of a bat roost has been confirmed during a survey, as additional bat roosts could be present which have not yet been discovered.

*Table 2. Categories for potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats.*

| Potential Suitability | Category Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None                  | A building (or structure) that has no features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of cracks, crevices or voids that could provide suitable shelter).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Negligible            | A building (or structure) that has no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats, but in this case a small element of uncertainty remains as bats will occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features. This category may also be used where a bat could potentially roost due to one attribute, but it is considered unlikely due to another attribute (e.g. a feature that is subject to constant illumination from artificial lighting). |
| Low                   | A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites for bats do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and/or surrounding suitable habitat to be used regularly or by large numbers (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for a maternity colony and not a classic hibernation site).                          |
| Moderate              | A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for regular use by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. However, these potential roost sites for bats are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status with regards to the type of roost only (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).                    |
| High                  | A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for use by large numbers of bats more regularly and for longer periods of time due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These potential roost sites for bats are capable of supporting high conservation status roosts (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).                                                         |

### APPENDIX 3 – DEFINITION OF BAT ROOST TYPES

The potential suitability of a building in conjunction with any evidence of bat presence is used to provide an initial assessment of likely roost type and importance. The types of roost considered are based on the following Natural England definitions:

- Day roost – a summer resting place used by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, during the day;
- Night roost – a resting place used by individual bats on occasion, or by a whole colony regularly, during the night;
- Feeding perch – a resting place used by individual bats, or a few individuals, primarily for short periods of feeding during the night;
- Transitional roost – a place used by a few individual bats, or occasionally small groups, for a short period of time upon waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation;
- Maternity roost – a place used by small to large groups of female bats to give birth and raise their young to independence;
- Hibernation roost – a place used by individual bats, or in groups, during winter where there is a constant cool temperature and high humidity; and
- Satellite roost – a place used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding female bats found in close proximity to the main nursery colony throughout the breeding season.

The importance of a bat roost is underpinned by the conservation status of the suspected species (i.e. the distribution/rarity of a species in a specific geographic location) and the type of roost (i.e. not all roosts have the same level of importance in supporting the local bat population). Further roost characterisation surveys may be required to fully determine the importance of a confirmed roost to allow for a robust impact assessment.

## APPENDIX 4 – FURTHER SURVEY RATIONALE

In cases where no evidence of use by bats is found during a building inspection but the possibility of their presence cannot be ruled out, further presence/likely absence survey is likely to be required if the development proposals will impact potential roost sites.

Emergence surveys are carried out to establish the presence or likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures) and these are designed in accordance with the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*' (Collins 2023) detailed in **Table 2** below.

*Table 2. Recommended further survey for establishing presence/likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures).*

| Potential Suitability | Further Survey                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None                  | No further surveys are required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Negligible            | No further surveys are required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Low                   | A minimum of one dusk emergence survey visit should be undertaken in the period of May to August.<br><br>However, if all areas (including cracks, crevices and voids) can be thoroughly inspected and no evidence of use by bats is found, then emergence surveys may not be required. In cases where a complete inspection cannot be carried out, professional judgement and proportionality should be applied when assessing the impacts of the development proposals. |
| Moderate              | A minimum of two dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September, with at least one of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| High                  | A minimum of three separate dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September (inclusive), with at least two of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

In cases where the PRA and/or further survey establishes the presence of roosting bats in a building (or structure), this will likely trigger the need for roost characterisation to collect sufficient information to inform the impact assessment and mitigation strategy. The roost characterisation comprises information collected during the PRA, emergence surveys and by other methods, such as DNA analysis of bat droppings, and ultimately aims to determine the bat species roosting; the number of bats the roosts support; the roost access points; the locations of the roosts and the types of roost present. This information is crucial when applying for planning permission and/or a European Protected Species mitigation licence.