

**33 Orchard Estate
Twyford
Reading
RG10 9LA**

Preliminary Roost Assessment

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Report Quality Control Information	
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Mr Joshua Che Jian to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 33 Orchard Estate in Twyford, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The aim of the PRA is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats in the property and whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for future proposed development activities.
- 1.1.3** No external crevice roost features were observed on the existing single storey rear extension.
- 1.1.4** The proposals for a single-storey rear extension following the removal of the existing conservatory are considered highly unlikely to lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost or to the disturbance of bats and therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.
- 1.1.5** Bats are highly mobile and therefore may utilise the low suitability potential roosting sites in the future. If work should be delayed beyond 12 months after the date of this survey, the potential roosting sites should undergo a follow-up inspection by a suitably licensed ecologist prior to the work commencing.
- 1.1.6** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the work, the work must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Mr Joshua Che Jian to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 33 Orchard Estate in Twyford, Berkshire.

2.1.2 The PRA was commissioned to accompany a full planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a single-storey rear extension following the removal of the existing conservatory.

2.2 Site Location and Context

2.2.1 The semi-detached property is located at the south-eastern end of the Orchard Estate – a cul-de-sac in Twyford, Berkshire (central OS grid reference: SU 79333 76112).

2.2.2 The property is bordered by neighbouring properties and their associated gardens to the north and east. The rear of the property backs onto two ponds situated to the rear of Ruscombe Business Park, which are surrounded by deciduous priority woodland, grassland and ponds. The adjacent woodland is connected to further woodland and treelines along the railway line situated 130 metres south of the property, with open grassland present over 220m to the south of the site.

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 future 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 31st 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:

- OS maps and Google Earth – maps and satellite imagery were used to identify potential flight-paths and foraging habitats for bats;
- DEFRA Data Services Platform and MAGIC – maps were used to locate relevant designated sites, habitats and granted European Protected Species licences; and
- existing bat survey reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal.

4.2 Building Inspection

Survey Details

4.2.1 A detailed inspection of the exterior of the property was undertaken on the 5th November 2024 by John Wenman MCIEEM - registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no.: 2016-23859-CLS-CLS) - in accordance with good practice guidance (Collins 2023).

4.2.2 The equipment used during the inspections comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a headtorch, ladder and PPE (facemask, gloves etc.). The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior of the building 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

4.2.3 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.

4.2.4 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.

4.2.5 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.

4.2.6 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

4.2.7 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.

4.2.8 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.

4.2.9 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 Neighbouring gardens within the cul-de-sac, as well as woodland, scattered trees and tree lines are present within the local area and provide continuous habitat that could be used as flight paths connecting to high-quality foraging habitats for any bat(s) roosting in the property, such as the ponds to the east of the site and the parcels of deciduous priority woodland to the south.

5.1.2 Bat mitigation licences that have been granted within the last 10 years inside a 2-kilometre radius of the property are detailed in **Table 1** below.

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

Case Reference of Granted Licence	Species on the Licence	Licensable Period	Licensable Works	Distance (m)
2020-49294-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle & soprano pipistrelle	14/10/2020 – 31/08/2025	Destruction of resting place	170 E
2020-44644-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle & brown long-eared	05/02/2020 – 31/08/2020	Destruction of resting place	805 N
2019-43241-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle & brown long-eared	20/11/2019 – 30/04/2025	Destruction of resting place	1740 W

5.1.3 The client had no existing bat survey reports in their possession for the property and none had been published on the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) online planning portal.

5.2 Building Inspection

Overview

5.2.1 The findings from the external inspections carried out for the property are described with photographs and annotated in a plan, as follows:

External Survey

5.2.2 The semi-detached house had a hipped roof with a hipped roof double storey rear extension, a single storey sloped roof extension and a glass roofed conservatory on the rear elevation, and a sloped porch roof over the front entrance (**Photographs 1 & 2**).



Photograph 1. Front of property viewed from the northeast.



Photograph 2. Rear and side of property viewed from the southeast.

- 5.2.3** The hipped roofs of the property were covered by clay tiles that were flat and tight on the second-story and single storey sloped roof on the rear elevations but were slightly lifted below the hip on the front elevation, offering potential ingress opportunities for roosting crevice-dwelling bats (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target note 1**). In addition, the ridge and hip tiles were tight, and the hip and ridge mortar was intact across the roof (**Photograph 5**).



Photograph 3. Tight clay roof tiles (rear elevation).



Photograph 4. Slightly uneven roof tiles (front elevation).



Photograph 5. Intact ridge and hip tiles and mortar (rear elevation).

- 5.2.4** The lead flashing was slightly raised around the base of the chimney, offering potential ingress opportunities for bats, but the lead flashing was tight along the single-storey roof and conservatory where it joins the brickwork on the rear elevation (**Photographs 6 & 7; Target note 2**).



Photograph 6. Lead flashing slightly lifted around chimney (rear elevation).



Photograph 7. Lead flashing sealed along the conservatory roof (rear elevation).

- 5.2.5** The sloped roof over the entranceway featured occasionally uneven roof tiles (**Photograph 8; Target note 3**). Both half gables were clad with hanging tiles, that were occasionally lifted on the northern elevation, with evidence of bird droppings (**Photograph 9; Target note 4**).



Photograph 8. Occasionally uneven roof tiles (front elevation).



Photograph 9. Lifted hanging tiles (front elevation).

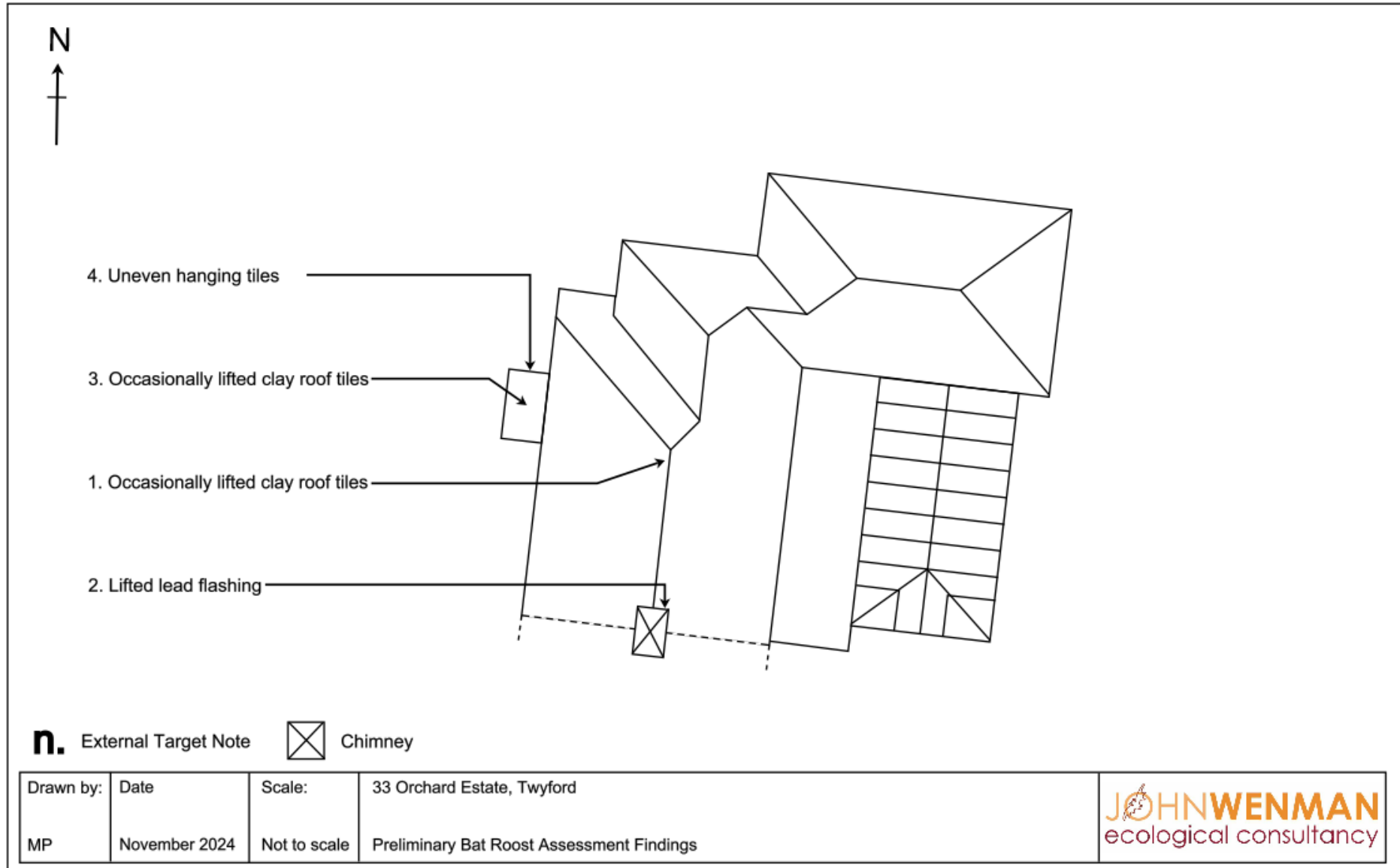
- 5.2.6** The soffit was tight to the brickwork along all elevations of the second storey roof and the small section visible on the single storey rear extension (**Photographs 10 & 11**).



Photograph 10. Intact soffit tight to brickwork (side elevation).



Photograph 11. Intact soffit tight to brickwork (rear elevation).



6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Assessment of Potential Roost Suitability

6.1.1 The suburban area surrounding the property with other gardens and tree lines and the adjacent woodland and pond to the rear of the site provides continuous habitat that could be used as flight paths connecting to high-quality foraging habitats for any bat(s) roosting in the property, such as the deciduous priority woodland to the south.

Furthermore, the search of granted bat mitigation licences identified three species known to be roosting within a 2km radius of the house: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pygmaeus pipistrellus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

6.1.1 The property had the following suitable/potential bat access points:

- Lifted clay roof tiles below hip on front elevation (**Target note 1 & 3**);
- Lifted lead flashing around chimney (**Target note 2**); and
- Gaps under uneven hanging tiles on porch roof (**Target note 4**).

6.1.2 The proposals are for a single-storey extension replacing an existing conservatory (**please note that the proposals will not be impacting the roof or roof void and therefore an internal inspection was not deemed necessary and proportionate to their scale**).

6.1.3 The potential access points offer potential roost site for opportunistic use by small crevice-dwelling bats, such as the locally recorded *Pipistrellus* species.

6.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

6.2.1 The planning proposals seek consent for a single-storey rear extension following the removal of the existing single storey and conservatory on the rear elevation – this area of work will have no impact on features with bat roost potential. There will be no impact on the roof of the house or on the features identified on the porch roof on the front elevation. The proposals are considered highly unlikely to lead to the damage or loss of a bat roost or to the disturbance of bats and therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.

6.2.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the work, the work must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once

further written advice has been received. At this point, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

7 REFERENCES

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