

21 Dyer Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5PG

Preliminary Roost Assessment

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy was instructed by Sally Saunders to prepare a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for 21 Dyer Road in Wokingham. The PRA was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a small single storey extension to the rear of the house with alterations to the existing single storey roof.
- 1.1.2 No evidence of roosting bats was found externally or internally during the building inspection. The absence of bat droppings inside the void spaces indicates that primarily void-dwelling species, such as long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.), are unlikely to be present. Gaps were visible in the house comprising a gaps under the hip mortar and in the soffits on the single storey rear extension. The gaps were closely inspected and were ruled out as being suitable for bats as the gaps in the hip mortar were superficial and the gap in the soffit was filled with fibreglass. Considering the features noted and setting, the building is assessed to be of negligible potential suitability for bats.
- 1.1.3 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. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the development proposals to proceed lawfully.
- 1.1.4 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the works, works must stop immediately and a suitably licensed ecologist should be called to site attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed.
- 1.1.5 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for 12 months only (CIEEM 2019).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy was instructed by Sally Saunders to prepare a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for 21 Dyer Road in Wokingham.
- 2.1.2 The PRA was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a small single storey extension to the rear of the house with alterations to the existing single storey roof. Site

2.2 Location and Context

- 2.2.1 The detached house located to the western side of Dyer Road, to the west of Wokingham town centre, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 82502 69283).
- 2.2.2 The property is in a suburban setting surrounded by similar residential properties on all sides. The surrounding landscape is primarily agricultural with parcels of deciduous woodland approximately 40 m to the northeast of the property. The closest woodland parcel is approximately 50 m to the east, which is the boundary of Keephatch Park Nature Reserve. A further patch of woodland is situated approximately 70 m to the south which links to Keephatch Recreation Ground is situated approximately 242 m south west of the property. There are several ponds surrounding the site, the nearest situated approximately 153 m to the southwest, that is bordered by mature trees, and 257 m southeast of the property. A railway line runs approximately 1290 m southeast and is also bordered by mature trees creating suitable foraging resources for bats.
- 2.2.3 In the wider area there are several patches of ancient and semi-natural woodland, including Pebblestone Copse approximately 594m to the north, Pockets Copse approximately 1188m northeast and Big Wood approximately 1403m southeast of the property.
- 2.2.4 Overall, the nearby habitats provide suitable 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 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:

- Google Earth and OS maps – satellite imagery and maps were used to identify potential flight paths and foraging habitats;
- MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences; and
- Pre-existing bat 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 house was undertaken on the 1st May 2025 by Vicky Potts MCIEEM - registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no - 2016-23859-CLS-CLS) - and Lauren Hayward, Assistant Ecologist, 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, a Ridgid SeeSnake CA100 endoscopic camera, ladder and PPE (facemask, gloves etc.). 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 surrounding residential properties with scattered trees in the private gardens provide continuous habitats that could be used as a flight path connecting the property to higher foraging areas, such as the nearby woodland to the north and south and recreational grounds with ponds to the south west.

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

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

Case Reference of Granted Licence	Species on the Licence	Licensable Period	Licensable Works	Distance (m)
2020-48489-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	01/09/2020 to 31/12/2027	Damage and destruction of resting place	1314 NW
2018-34805-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared Common pipistrelle	31/05/2018 to 29/05/2023	Destruction of resting place	1486 SW
2018-37587-EPS-MIT-1	Brown long-eared Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	20/12/2018 to 20/12/2023	Destruction of resting place	1803 NE

5.1.3 There were no pre-existing bat survey reports for the property available on the Wokingham Borough Council planning portal.

5.2 Building Inspection

Overview

5.2.1 The findings from the external inspections carried out for the house are described with photographs and are annotated in a plan (see **Figure 1**), as follows:

External Survey

5.2.2 The house is a detached brick built residential dwelling with a hipped roof lined with flat roof tiles, with two front pitched roof gable ends and a sloped roof porch. A single-storey hipped roofed extension was present to the rear of the property (**Photograph 1**).



Photograph 1. Rear of the house viewed from west.

- 5.2.3 The plain roof tiles were tightly fitted and intact across the single storey roof (**Photograph 2**). The hip tiles were tightly mortared to the plain roof tiles (**Photograph 3**). However there were small gaps between the mortar and roof tiles at the base of the hip tiles (**Photograph 4 & 5; Target note 1**). These gaps were inspected using an endoscopic camera and confirmed unsuitable roosting features for bats, as they did not lead to any crevices suitable for use by bats as they were of limited extent.



Photograph 2. Intact/tight plain roof tiles on the rear elevation.



Photograph 3. Intact mortar between hip tiles and plain roof tiles on the rear extension.



Photograph 4. Small gaps at eaves between hip mortar and roof tile.



Photograph 5. Small gaps at between hip mortar and plain roof tile.

- 5.2.4 The lead flashing between the valleys of the hipped roof extension were tight to the roof tiles (**Photograph 6**). The lead flashing on the rear extension was tight to the brick work (**Photograph 7**).



Photograph 6. Tight led flashing on the hip roof of the rear extension.



Photograph 7. Tight led flashing between hipped roof and brick work of rear extension.

- 5.2.5 The uPVC soffits around the rear extension were tight to the brick work of the property (**Photograph 8**) apart from a small gap in the corner of the soffit (**Photographs 9 & 10; Target note 2**). The gap was closely inspected with an endoscopic camera, and was observed to be filled with fibreglass insulation and therefore superficial.



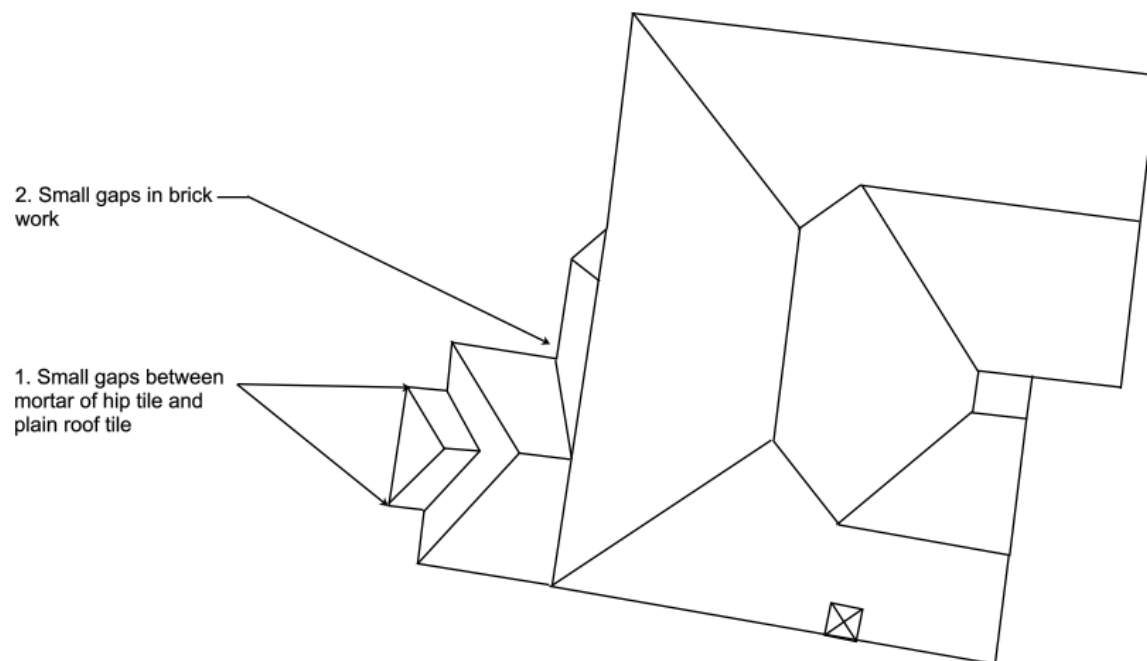
Photograph 8. Intact soffits tight to the brick of the property.



Photograph 9. Gap in the corner of the soffit box.



Photograph 10. Gap in the corner of the soffit box filled with fibreglass.



Chimney



External target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	21 Dyer Road Wokingham	
LH	May 2025	Not to scale	Figure 1 - Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

Figure 1. Building Inspection Plan.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Assessment of Roost Suitability and Presence/Absence

- 6.1.1 The suburban area surrounding the house with gardens with scattered trees provides habitat that could be used as a flight-path connecting it to higher-quality foraging habitats, such as nearby woodland to the east and woodland, ponds and recreational grounds to the south and southwest.
- 6.1.2 Furthermore, the search of granted bat mitigation licences identified three species known to be roosting within a 2km radius of the property: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) bats.
- 6.1.3 Due to the limited impacts of the proposed works, which will only impact the existing single-storey rear extension, an internal survey of the house was not carried out as this will be retained and remain unaffected by the works.
- 6.1.4 The section of the building to be impacted had no suitable/potential bat access points. The gaps beneath the hip tiles on the rear extension did not lead to crevices roost sites and showed no evidence of use by bats on close inspection.
- 6.1.5 Therefore, the property has been assigned negligible potential suitability for bats overall (see **Appendix 2** for potential suitability categories).

6.2 Impact Assessment and Recommended Actions

- 6.2.1 The proposed construction plans involve extensions to the rear single storey extension. 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. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the development proposals to proceed lawfully.
- 6.2.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the works, works must stop immediately and a suitably licensed ecologist should be called to site attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; works should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this stage, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the works to recommence lawfully.

7 REFERENCES

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

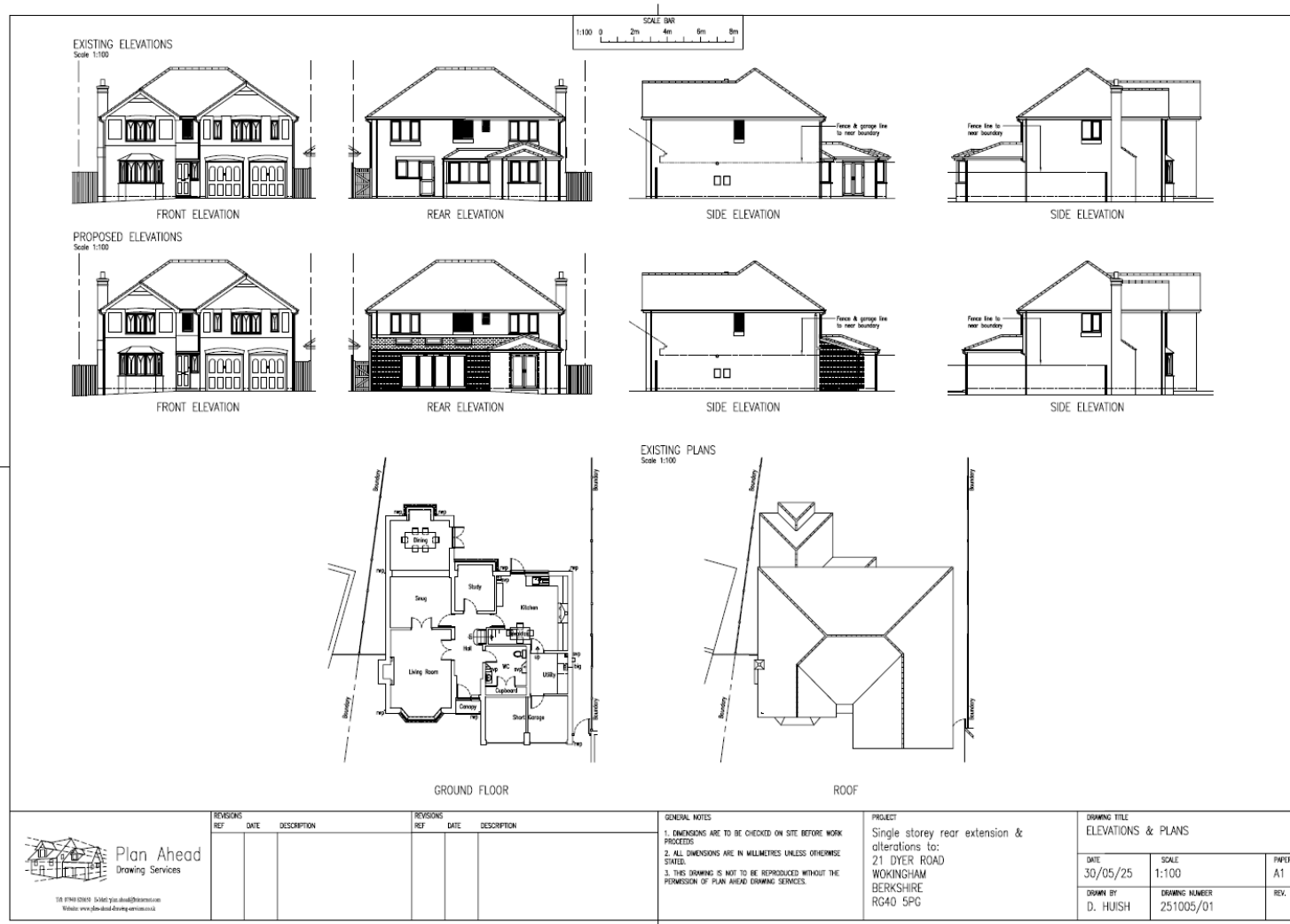
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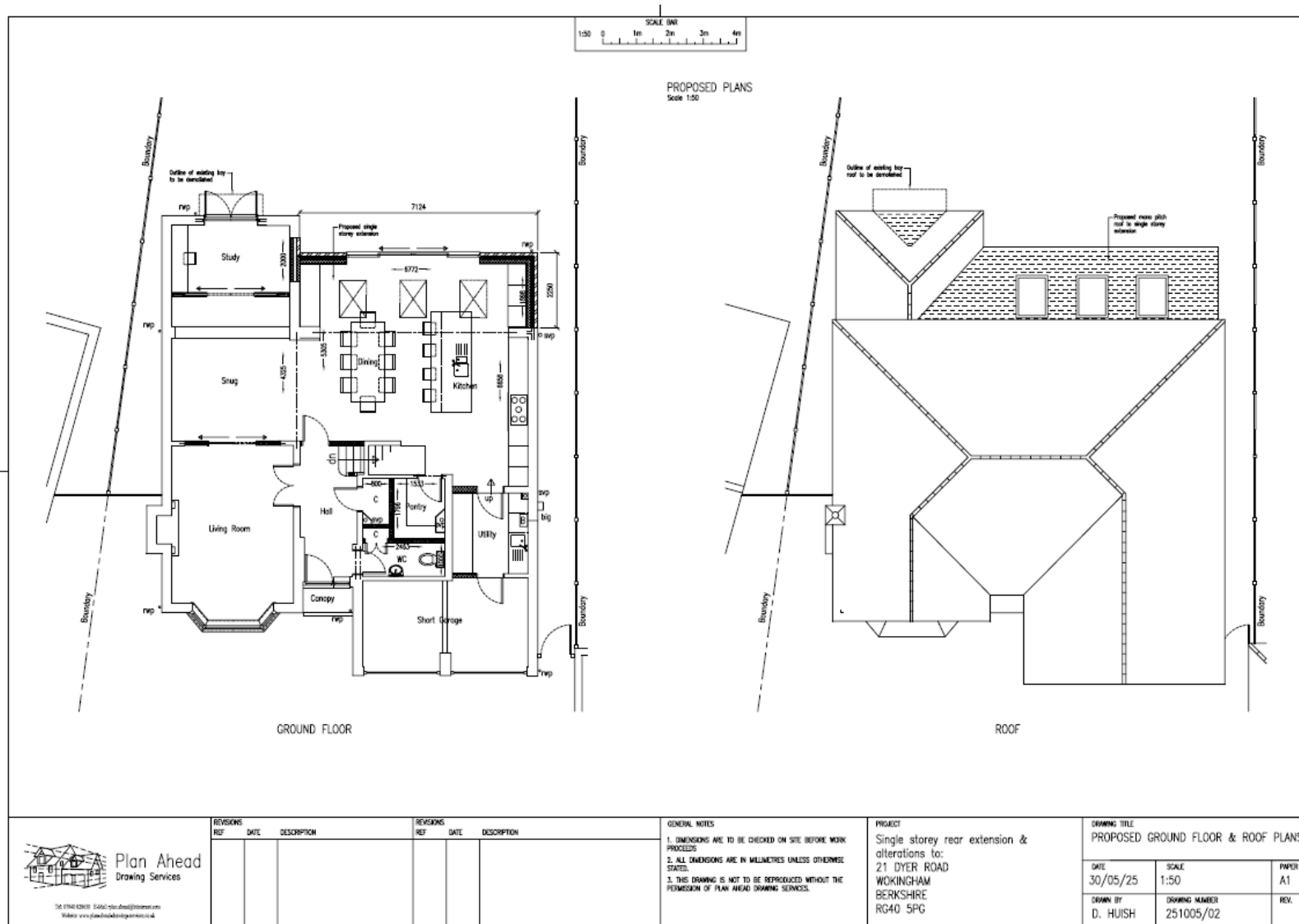
Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England,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

APPENDIX 1 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE 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 (4th 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 (4th edition)*' (Collins 2023) detailed in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. 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. 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.