

Preliminary Roost Assessment

33 Duffield Road, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4RL

Survey conducted 10th December 2024

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: 33 Duffield Road, Woodley
Project Ref: 963
Report Title: Preliminary Roost Assessment
Date: 15/12/2024

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SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologist Lisha Price of Plan Ecology at 33 Duffield Road, Woodley on the 10th of December 2024.

The proposed works seek to remove the existing conservatory and build a single-storey extension onto the rear elevation. The two dormer windows on the rear elevation will also be removed and a larger apex with new windows will be built.

The Site is located on a residential street within the town of Woodley and is surrounded by other residences and copses of trees. Approximately 150m north of the site is a west-east running rail line, to the rear of which is a golf course. The wider landscape consists of arable and pastoral fields north of the property and Ashenbury Park and Aldermoor Local Nature Reserve which sit around 550m west of the property.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential in the areas which will be affected by the proposed works. The cladding on the dormer windows has some gaps. However, these gaps were inspected using an endoscope and found evidence of bats.

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

As no potential bat roosting features were identified, no further surveys are recommended at this time.

Should materials need to be stored in the back garden it is recommended that they be covered overnight, and no open holes be left uncovered to avoid any fauna falling in and unable to escape.

It is also recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0345 1300 228.

Biodiversity enhancements of bat panels have been recommended to be placed on the house away from light sources.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site is located on a residential street within the town of Woodley and is surrounded by other residences and copses of trees. Approximately 150m north of the site is a west-east running rail line, to the rear of which is a golf course. The wider landscape consists of arable and pastoral fields north of the property and Ashenbury Park and Aldermoor Local Nature Reserve which sit around 550m west of the property.

See Appendix 1 for Site Location

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to remove the existing conservatory and build a single-storey extension onto the rear elevation. The two dormer windows on the rear elevation will also be removed and a larger apex with new windows will be built into a two-storey building.

See Appendix 3 for Proposed Elevations

1.3 Aims of the Survey

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out with the aim to look for evidence of bats roosting and for the presence of structures within the buildings which hold bat roosting potential.

1.4 General Information about Bats and Buildings

Loft spaces can potentially be utilised by bat species such as e.g. Brown Long-eared bats or Serotine bats which are known to commonly roost inside loft spaces. This can generally be discovered via droppings inside the loft as the droppings will stay protected from weather elements.

External features of the building can potentially be used as roosting sites by e.g. Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* spp). Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats out

of the British species, and they are known to roost inside buildings utilising areas such as cavity walls, soffits and fascia boards, and between tiles and roofing felt. It is not practical to carry out a full physical examination of such building features, which is why activity surveys have to be done during summer months (May-September) when the bats are fully active.

Access points of 1-2 centimetres only are used by bats to enter and exit their roosting sites. Most buildings will have gaps of such size in roof areas, as ventilation of the roof void would otherwise not be possible.

3. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was surveyed during the daytime on the 10th of December 2024 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Lisha holds a class 2 bat licence and has over 18 years of experience carrying out bat surveys.

The buildings were inspected for evidence of bats in the form of live or dead bats, droppings, urine staining and insect feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings. A careful visual search using a Clulite torch was conducted in the loft space. An endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps.

The internal area of the structure was accessed for a detailed assessment. The bat roost assessment was undertaken with survey methodology based on current BCT Guidelines. The assessment noted bat presence or evidence of their presence/roosting location as well as noting the condition of feature below and the possible access points:

- Sarking (wooden/felt/other).
- Insulation.
- Roof construction (modern truss, king post, queen post).
- Ridge beam and the floor below.
- Any areas of missing mortar on chimney breasts or gable walls.
- Any gaps in beams/mortice joints/roof timbers/where beams meet.

An external inspection of each structure was systematically inspected during daylight, with any potential roosting features (PRF) suitable for bats being noted such as weatherboarding, hanging tiles, soffit boxes, gaps in brickwork, cracks, crevices, lifted lead flashing slipped or broken tiles and missing mortar below ridge tiles. PRFs located at height were viewed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Any potential bat access points were inspected for signs of bat presence such as:

- Bat droppings on the ground outside, on the floor inside or stuck to walls.
- Other evidence of bats such as feeding remains.
- Suitable entry and exit points around cladding, eaves, flashing, under tiles or gaps in mortar.
- Live bats, bat corpses or skeletons.
- Oily marks (from fur) or localised clean spots around possible access points and roost areas.

The building was examined internally and externally to identify structural features that hold bat roosting potential.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

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Survey conducted 10th December 2024

The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the scale negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed:

Negligible: Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. For example; a simple wooden garden shed, a corrugated iron barn or precast concrete modular garage may fit this category.

Low: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost Sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).

Moderate: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.

High: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

Confirmed: This category is used where evidence of bats such as live or dead bats or bat droppings are present, or where there are records of a bat roost in the building.

Structures were also assessed for hibernation suitability using the categories in the BCT Guidelines. ‘Classical sites’ for hibernation would include underground sites such as cellars and caves, that allow stable weather conditions of temperature and humidity (cool and damp) throughout the winter period. Most structures come under the ‘non-classical site’ category but should also be considered for hibernation, especially for void dwelling bats such as brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus*, which may linger in derelict buildings where conditions may remain stable without heating of the building in winter. In addition, *Pipistrellus* species are crevice-dwelling bats which may also benefit from small gaps within a cavity wall under the same circumstances and are known to use large concrete structures such as tower blocks for hibernation which would be considered a non-classical site.

Foraging and Commuting

Habitats were assessed for their suitability for foraging or commuting bats and categorised in accordance with table 1. Foraging areas of high suitability vary between species, but generally include sheltered areas and habitats which support invertebrate prey such as woodland, scrub, hedges, watercourses, ponds, lakes, arable land with cattle manure and more species-rich or rough grassland. For commuting, well-connected hedgerows, woodland edge, watercourses and other linear features are generally considered to be of high suitability.

Table 1: Categorisation, foraging & Commuting habitats (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Category	Description
None	No habitat features on the site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be regularly used by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

4. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

Bat roosting potential:

The house is a detached brick building with a loft space lined with a breathable membrane. The house has dormers on the rear with a cladded front and barge boards. The house is well maintained and all roof tiles and trims are in good condition without lifts or gaps.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential in the areas which will be affected by the proposed works. The cladding on the dormer windows is tight and the roof tiles around the dormers are flat with no lifting. Any gaps were checked with a ladder, endoscope and torch but none were considered as suitable potential roost features.

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

5. ASSESSMENT

Constraints on study information

All accessible areas of the building could be surveyed without restrictions.

A biological record data search was not conducted as the results of a data search is not likely to impact on the decision-making process at this stage.

Bat survey results are generally considered to be valid within a year of the survey date or until the next active bat season of May-September. The County Council Ecologists and/or Natural England may ask for updated surveys if the reports are older than two years.

Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitat.

The works are small and localised and will not be detrimental to foraging or commuting bats.

Legislation and policy guidance

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

The house is a detached brick building with a loft space lined with a breathable membrane. The house has dormers on the rear with a cladded front and barge boards. The house is well maintained and all roof tiles and trims are in good condition without lifts or gaps.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential in the areas which will be affected by the proposed works. The cladding on the dormer windows is tight and the roof tiles around the dormers are flat with no lifting. Any gaps were checked with a ladder, endoscope and torch but none were considered as suitable potential roost features.

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

As no potential bat roosting features were identified on the areas to be affected by the proposed works, no further surveys are recommended at this time.

It is also recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

Biodiversity enhancements including a bat shelter have been recommended.

Further Survey Effort

No further surveys are recommended for bats at this time.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0345 1300 228.

Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued in March 2012 (Updated 2021), states that 'development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

Proposed ecological enhancement are provided below....

- Minimising light and noise pollution on the site. In particular minimising the hours the construction site is lit.
- Placing two bat shelters on the sides of the building have been recommended which would provide potential roost features for bats. The panels should be placed away from light sources.

Details of proposed biodiversity enhancement have been illustrated in Appendix 4.

7. REFERENCES

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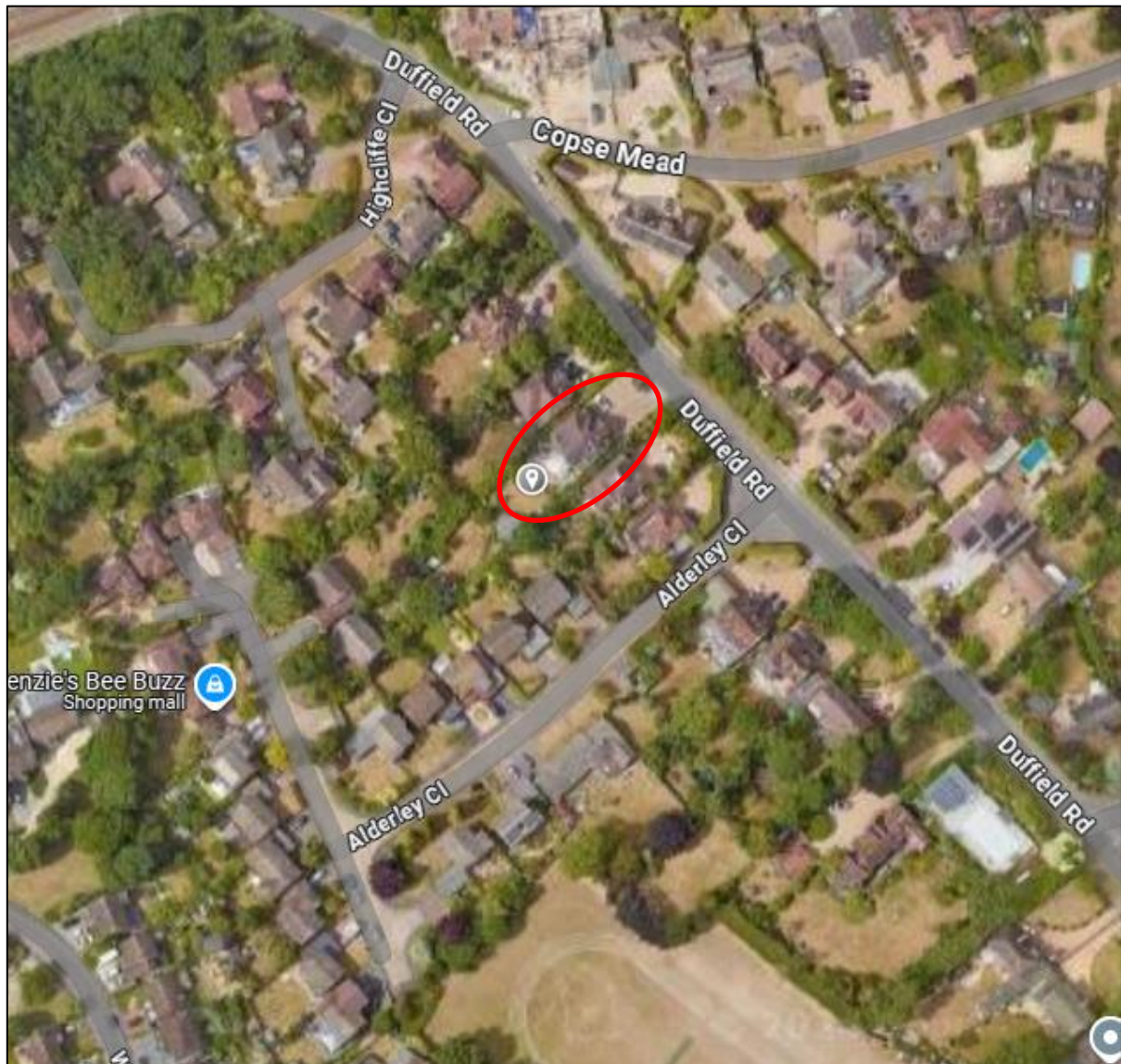
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APPENDIX 1: Site Location



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APPENDIX 2: Photographs



Photograph 1: Loft space.



Photograph 2: Loft space.



Photograph 3: Loft space.



Photograph 4: Loft space.



Photograph 5: Loft space.



Photograph 6: Rear elevation.



Photograph 7: Rear dormer windows with wooden cladding.



Photograph 8: Rear dormer windows with wooden cladding.



Photograph 9: Rear garden and shed.



Photograph 10: Rear elevation with conservatory and patio.



Photograph 11: Rear dormer windows.



Photograph 12: uPVC guttering.



Photograph 13: Rear dormer windows.



Photograph 14: Rear dormer windows.



Photograph 15: Front elevation.



Photograph 16: Rear elevation.



Photograph 17: Side elevation.



Photograph 18: Rear elevation wooden cladding.



Photograph 19: Rear elevation.



Photograph 20: Front elevation.



Photograph 21: Front elevation dormer window.



Photograph 22: Hanging wall tiles on the front elevation. Unaffected by works.



Photograph 23: Side elevation.

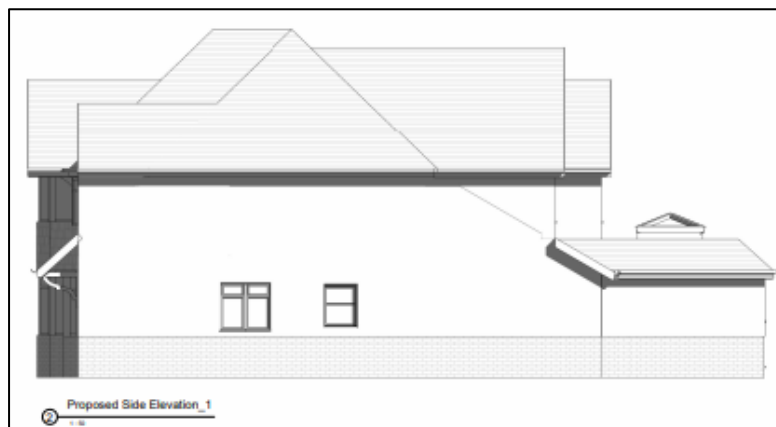
APPENDIX 3: Proposed elevations



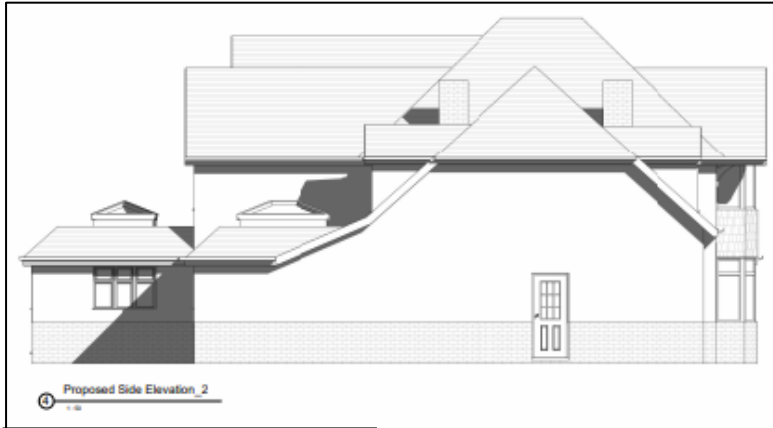
Front elevation



Rear elevation



Side elevation



Side elevation

APPENDIX 4: Biodiversity Enhancements

Unitura Low-Profile Bat Shelter

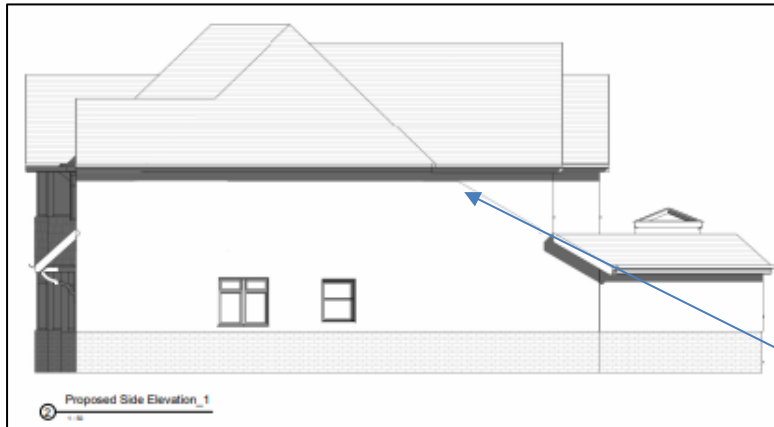


About this product

These low-profile bat shelters are an ideal solution to encouraging bats to roost on the exterior of a building. Made from woodconcrete, these shelters are designed to be long-lasting and provide a thermally stable space for the bats to use year-round. The open-bottom design makes the need to maintain them minimal and the inclusion of a compressible foam band around the perimeter of the shelter makes them uniquely weather-resistant within this design of bat roost, forming a draught and water-resistant seal to the wall of the structure to which you are securing them.

You can choose from either the standard which comes in a two-layer configuration forming 2 crevices within the same box or the extended which provides 1 large-dimension crevice.

MULTI-MONTI fixings are included and are designed to be used without a Rawl plug. The screw anchor is approved for installation in cracked and uncracked concrete. It is also suitable for a whole range of other building materials, such as: Clinker, Natural stone (e.g. marble), Sand-lime brick, Hollow concrete block and Solid brick.



Bat shelters could be fitted onto the side elevations away from light sources and windows.

