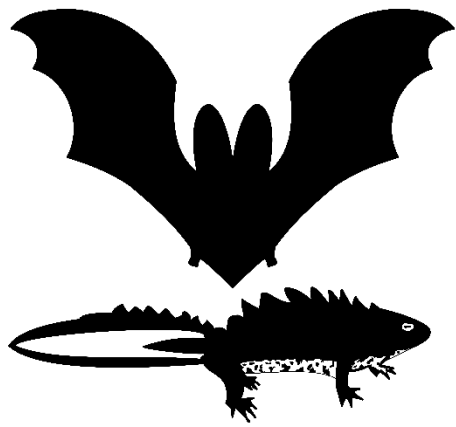




AEWC^{Ltd}

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Bat Assessment Report

77 Elm Road

**Earley
Reading
Berkshire
RG6 5TB**

Emily Partridge

22-217
March 2023

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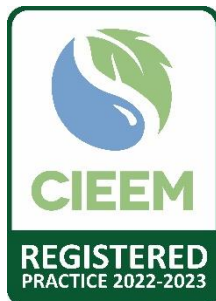
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Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Jamshed Miah to undertake a daytime bat assessment at 77 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 5TB at grid reference SU 73756 70883 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 17th March 2023 by Emily Partridge, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The proposal is for two-storey extension works to the northeast and northwest elevations.
- The daytime assessment identified negligible potential for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable bat access and roosting features and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.
- Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. Additional external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.
- Additional work lighting which may be required during the development must be positioned to ensure that it shines onto the area of works with minimal spread into the wider area.
- In the unlikely event bats are found on site during works the procedure detailed within section 6 of this report must be followed.

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Jamshed Miah to undertake a daytime bat assessment at 77 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 5TB to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The bat surveys and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).
- 1.3 No ecological surveys are known to have been carried out for the site previously. Bat assessment was therefore required to ascertain whether bats, or potential for bats, is present at the site and represents a constraint to the proposed development.
- 1.4 This report details the results of the bat assessment and outlines recommendations in relation to bats and the proposed development of the site.

Aims and objectives

- 1.5 The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Identify the potential of the building on the site to support roosting bats;
 - Identify whether bats are present using the buildings on site;
 - Estimate the size and status of any existing bat roost within the building;
 - Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development schedule; and
 - Provide information for use in the design and development of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

Site Location

- 1.6 The proposed development site is located at 77 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 5TB at central grid reference SU 73756 70883. The site is located in the town of Earley and is immediately surrounded by residential properties on all sides with Elm Road running parallel to the eastern boundary. The wider landscape largely comprises commercial and residential development with areas of woodland, and recreational and agricultural fields. Three areas of deciduous woodlands lie in close proximity to the site and are located approximately 220m west, 250m north, and an area of ancient and semi-natural deciduous woodland is located approximately 270m east of the site. See Figures 1 and 2.



FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

1.7 The building subject to survey is a brick-built dwelling located within an amenity garden.

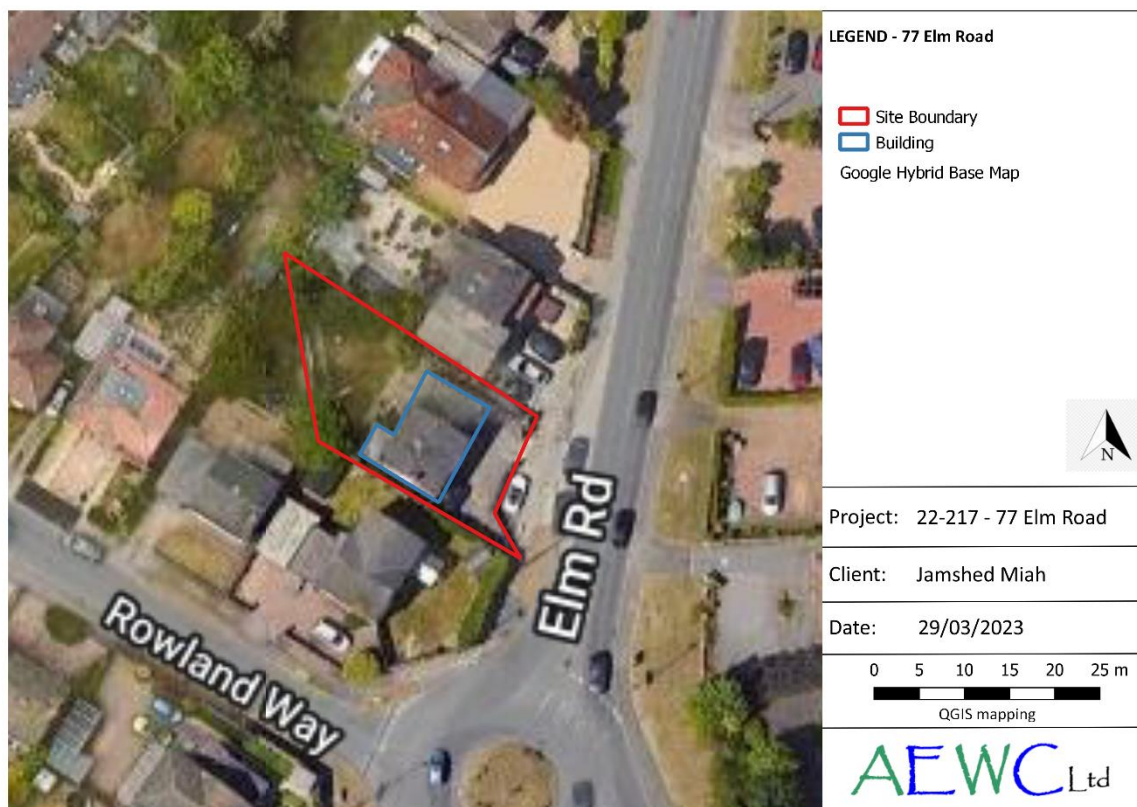


FIGURE 2: SHOWING THE BUILDING SUBJECT TO SURVEY.

Legislation

- 1.8 All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
 - possess;
 - intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
 - sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.
- 1.9 A roost is defined as ‘any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection’. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.
- 1.10 Any disturbance of a bat occupying a roost can lead to prosecution. Disturbance can be caused by noise, vibration and artificial lighting. Penalties for breaking the law can include fines of £5,000 per bat, imprisonment and the seizure of equipment.
- 1.11 Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, Bechstein’s, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Development proposals

- 1.12 The proposal is for two-storey extension works to the northeast and northwest elevations.



FIGURE 3: SHOWING THE EXISTING (LEFT) AND PROPOSED (RIGHT) PLANS.

2 Methods

Daytime Assessment

- 2.1 A detailed bat building inspection was undertaken on the 17th March 2023 by Emily Partridge, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- 2.2 A systematic internal inspection of the building was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. Additionally, an external search around the perimeter of the building was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with a high-powered torch and ladder as appropriate.
- 2.3 The buildings suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats; these include the presence of a roof void, the presence of access points into the building (including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and fascias, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.
- 2.4 The buildings suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lanes or an area of woodland.

- 2.5 All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. Features of potential value to bats were surveyed not only for the presence of bats but also for signs that could indicate use by bats, such as:
- bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
 - staining of access points used by bats to enter the structure; and
 - feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings.
- 2.6 Taking account of these architectural, habitat features and signs of presence, the building was then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat survey later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

3 Constraints/Limitations

- 3.1 Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with so many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites. It should be noted that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.
- 3.2 Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason, bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during daytime assessment.

4 Results

Daytime Assessment

- 4.1 The building subject to survey is a two-storey, brick-built dwelling within a single-storey garage on the northeast elevation. The main house supports a gabled roof with clay roof tiles and the garage supports a bitumen felt covered flat roof. Externally the building was recorded to be tight fitting with no gaps suitable for bat access noted.
- 4.2 Internally a single roof void is present above the two-storey section of building. The void is wood framed with bitumen felt lining. The void is fitted with electric lighting and is in active use for storage. Cobwebbing was recorded at the apex throughout the void and no evidence of bats or potential bat access points were observed.



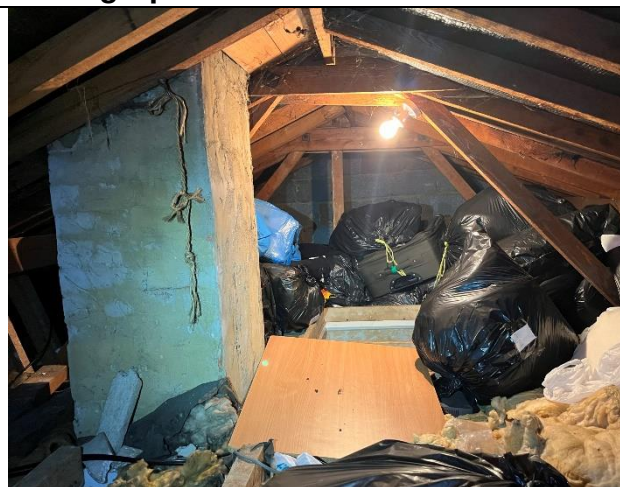
Photograph 1: The front elevation.



Photograph 2: The rear elevation.



Photograph 3: Tight fitting roof tiles and soffits.



Photograph 4: The roof void.

5 Evaluation, Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 Initial observations consider the local area suitable for bats due to roosting and foraging opportunities in the local buildings and woodland.
- 5.2 The daytime assessment identified negligible potential for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable bat access and roosting features and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.
- 5.3 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance to bats within the local area. Additional external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.
- 5.4 Additional work lighting which may be required during the development must be positioned to ensure that it shines onto the area of works with minimal spread into the wider area.

5.5 In the unlikely event bats are found on site during works the procedure detailed within section 6 of this report must be followed.

6 Procedure to follow in the event a bat is found on site at unsupervised times.

- 6.1 Bats are present within the vicinity of the site and may be found at any location on, in or around the buildings. Bats are protected species, and these procedures must be followed to avoid committing an offence.
- 6.2 If a bat is found at any location around the site DO NOT TOUCH unless necessary for the safety of the bat.
- 6.3 If the bat was uncovered in a roosting location carefully replace covering ensuring the bat is not crushed or harmed. If this is not possible cover the animal with a loose covering.
- 6.4 Stop all work at that area and the immediate vicinity. Work may continue at other areas around the site.
- 6.5 Call the AEWC Ltd bat licensed project ecologist Annika Binet 07528 956486, call the office on 08452 505585, or licensed ecologists Daniel Whitby 07764813002 or Brigitte de Coriolis 07545130203.

7 References

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