

Preliminary Roost Assessment

58 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2NS

Survey conducted 14th November 2023

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: 58 Finchampstead, Wokingham
Project Ref: 811
Report Title: Preliminary Roost Assessment
Date: 22/11/2023

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Contents

Preliminary Roost Assessment 1

SUMMARY4

1. INTRODUCTION5

 1.1 Site Description.....5

 1.2 Proposed Works5

 1.3 Aims of the Survey5

 1.4 General Information about Bats and Buildings5

1. METHODOLOGY 7

2. RESULTS8

3. ASSESSMENT9

4. RECOMMENDATIONS10

5. REFERENCES12

APPENDIX 1: Photographs.....13

APPENDIX 2: Location Plan16

APPENDIX 3: Proposed Plans17

APPENDIX 4: Biodiversity Enhancements.....18

SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologist Nick Kirke of Plan Ecology at the garages at 58 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham on the 14th of November 2023.

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing detached house, shed and outbuilding and build four detached houses on the Site.

The Site consists of a brick build house with a tiled roof and accessible loft space, a green house, an outbuilding and a timber clad shed with trees surrounding the area and areas of shrubbery. Immediately outside of the site there are residential and commercial areas whereas the wider landscape comprises of arable and pastoral fields and copses of trees.

The buildings could all be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The outbuildings were simple structures without features. There are no gaps in the cladding or around the roof tiles of the house and the loft could be fully inspected.

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 0845 1300 228.

Biodiversity enhancements have been recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site consists of a brick build house with a tiled roof and accessible loft space, a green house, an outbuilding and a timber clad shed with trees surrounding the area and areas of shrubbery. Immediately outside of the site there are residential and commercial areas whereas the wider landscape comprises of arable and pastoral fields and copses of trees.

See APPENDIX 2 for Site Location.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing detached house, shed and outbuilding and build four detached houses on the Site.

See APPENDIX 3 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.

1. METHODOLOGY

The survey was undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was surveyed during the daytime on the 14th of November 2023 by Nick Kirke (Natural England bat licence No. 2020-50736-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Nick has 9 years of experience carrying out ecological 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, and an endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps. The exterior of the building was surveyed for droppings on walls and window ledges. The loft of the house was also inspected.

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

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.

2. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

Bat roosting potential:

The house is a brick building with interlocking tiled roof and wooden soffits. The house is in a good state of repair with no missing or lifted tiles and no gaps or warping in the soffits. The lead flashing on the roof is well constructed and fitted with no lifting. The loft could be fully inspected and was clad with a timber liner.

The outbuildings are simple structures without any suitable features for bats, they are single storey and could be subject to a full inspection.

The buildings could all be fully inspected and were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The outbuildings were simple structures without features. There are no gaps in the cladding or around the roof tiles of the house and the loft could be fully inspected.

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

See APPENDIX 1 for photographs.

3. 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 two years 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 one year.

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.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

The buildings could all be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The outbuildings were simple structures without features. There are no gaps in the cladding or around the roof tiles of the house and the loft could be fully inspected.

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.

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 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 0845 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.
- Integrated bat bricks on the new builds can provide additional roosting potential to the Site.
- Integrated nesting bricks on the new builds can provide additional bird nesting potential to the Site.
- Integrated bee bricks on the new builds can provide additional habitat for bees on the Site.

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

5. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.)(2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practise Guidelines* (3rd edn).The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones A J & McLeish A P (Ed.), 2004. *The Bat Workers' Manual*. JNCC, Peterborough, United Kingdom.

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Russ, J. 1999. *The Bats of Britain and Ireland*. Alana Books, Alana Ecology Ltd. United Kingdom.

APPENDIX 1: Photographs



Photograph 1: Timber clad shed.



Photograph 2: Bare ground.



Photograph 3: Rear elevation of house.



Photograph 4: Interlocking roof tiles in good condition no lifting or gaps.



Photograph 5: Well fitted tight soffits without gaps.



Photograph 6: Loft fully inspected.



Photograph 7: Timber clad roof liner



Photograph 8: Loft space of house.



Photograph 9: Tight fitted lead flashing.

APPENDIX 2: Location Plan



Preliminary Roost Assessment

16.

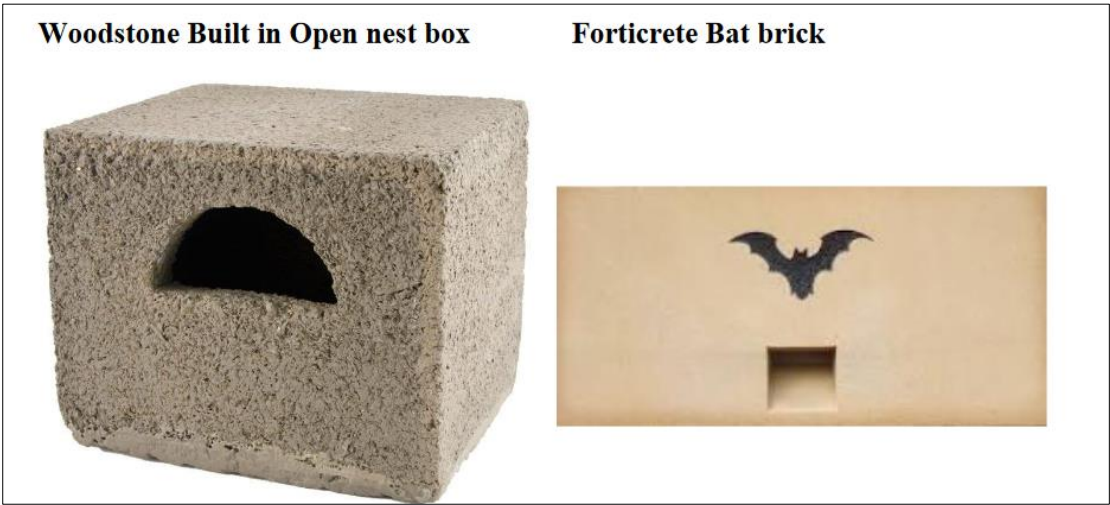
58 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2NS

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APPENDIX 3: Proposed Plans



APPENDIX 4: Biodiversity Enhancements





Bee Brick Nester Hotel Solitary Bee Hive House 21.5cm x 10.5cm x 6.5cm Red

£78.99

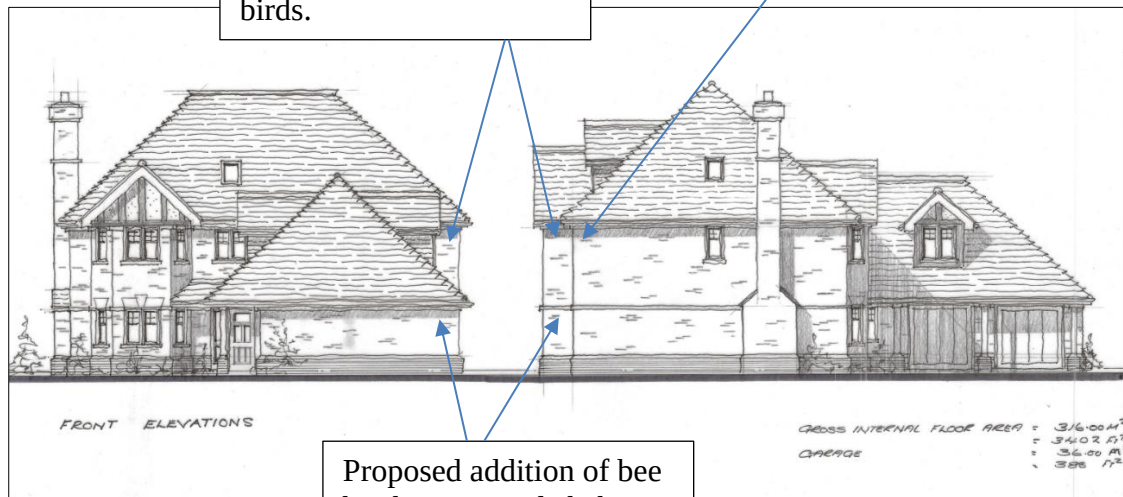
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- ✓ Bee Brick 21.5cm x 10.5cm x 6.5cm
- ✓ The bee brick is a beautiful, stylish product which makes a great gift or a satisfying treat for yourself, great to introduce kids to learning more about the world about them.
- ✓ Each bee brick has cavities where the bees will lay their eggs, sealing the entrance with mud or chewed up vegetation.
- ✓ The bee brick can be used in urban spaces and places where there may not be alternative nesting sites for bees
- ✓ The bee brick won the Soil Association's 2014 Innovation Award, sponsored by the Duchy Future Farming Programme.



Proposed addition of bird nesting bricks to provide nesting opportunities for birds.

Proposed addition of bat bricks to provide roosting potential for bats



Proposed addition of bee bricks to provide habitat for bees onsite.