Preliminary Roost Assessment

22 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, RG40 4EU

Survey conducted 14th November 2023

Document Control Sheet

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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 22 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead on the 14th of November 2023.

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing building and build two detached houses in its place.

The Site consists of a detached building made from uPVC sheet materials; it is located within the village of Finchampstead. The surrounding area is mostly rural, comprising of wooded areas pastural and pastural and arable fields. However, the landscape directly to the east of the site is more built-up, consisting of residential streets.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. There were no gaps around the roof tiles and all other features were tight with no gaps.

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 including a bat, bird and bee bricks have been recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site consists of a detached building made from uPVC sheet materials and is located within the village of Finchampstead. The surrounding area is mostly rural, comprising of wooded areas pastural and pastural and arable fields. However, the landscape directly to the east of the site is more built-up, consisting of residential streets.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing building and build two detached houses in its place.

See APPENDIX 2 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.

The building was 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 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 buildings are simple single storey structures with some hanging wall tiles which could be checked fully using a torch and endoscope as they were low level, there were no gaps sufficiently sized and positioned for bat roost potential. The roof was has no gaps or lifts present. There are wooden soffits and bargeboards which were all fully accessible for inspection using a torch and endoscope, there were no gaps or warping or lifted areas to the wood to create suitable bat roosting areas.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. There were no gaps around the roof tiles and all other features were tight with no gaps.

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 building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. There were no gaps around the roof tiles and all other features were tight with no gaps.

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 including a bat, bird and bee bricks 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.
- Bat bricks, bird nesting bricks and bee bricks have been recommended on each of the new builds.

Details of proposed biodiversity enhancement have been illustrated in Appendix 3.

5. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: Photographs

Photograph 1: Front elevation.

Photograph 2: Side elevation.

Photograph 3: Front elevation – no gaps around roof tiles.

Photograph 4: Front elevation.

Photograph 5: Front elevation – hanging wall tiles.

Photograph 6: Side elevation.

Photograph 7: Front elevation.

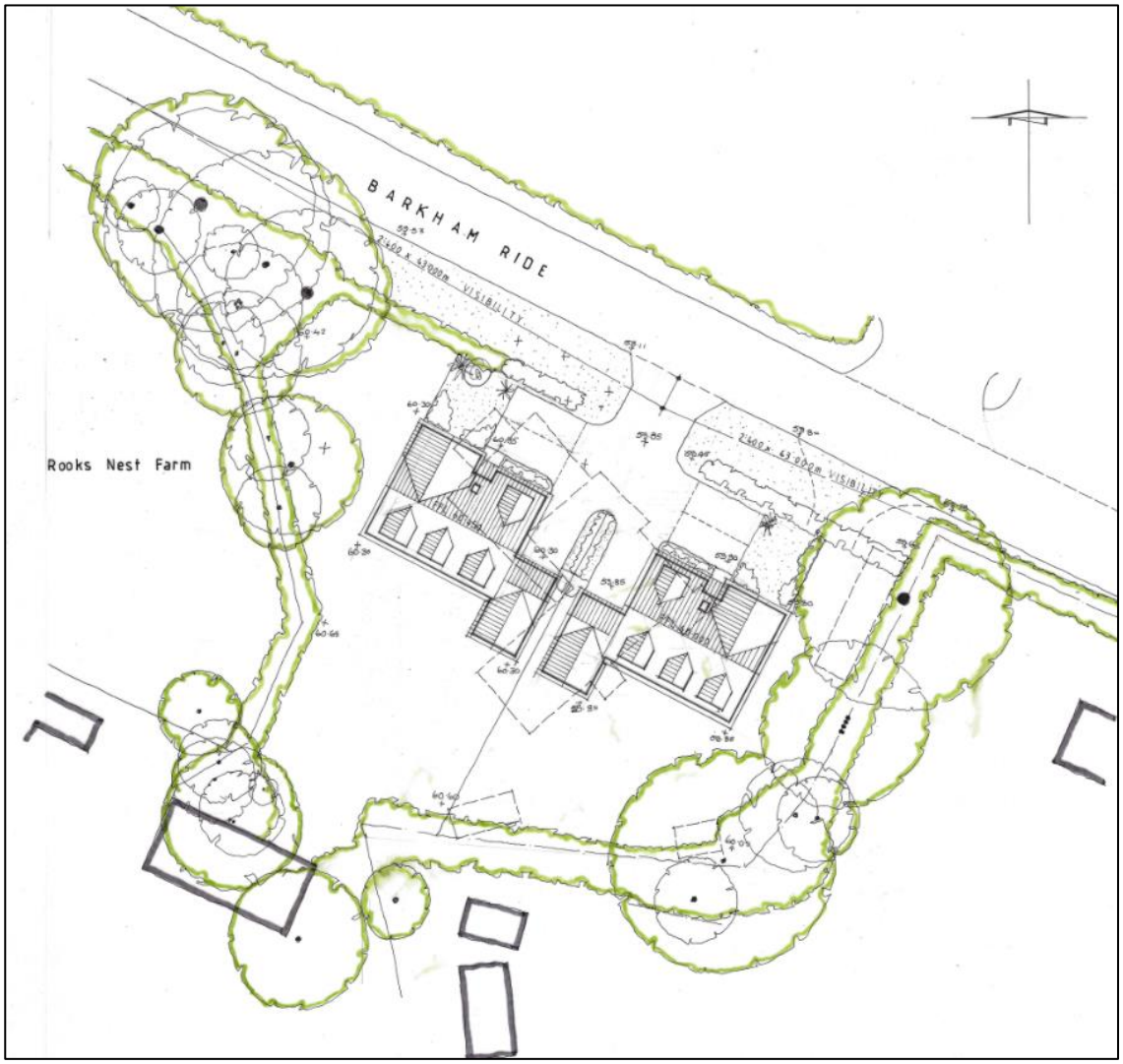
Photograph 8: Site next to building covered in shrubs.

Photograph 9: Rear elevation.

Photograph 10: Rear elevation.

Photograph 11: Rear elevation.

APPENDIX 2: Proposed elevations



APPENDIX 3: Biodiversity Enhancements

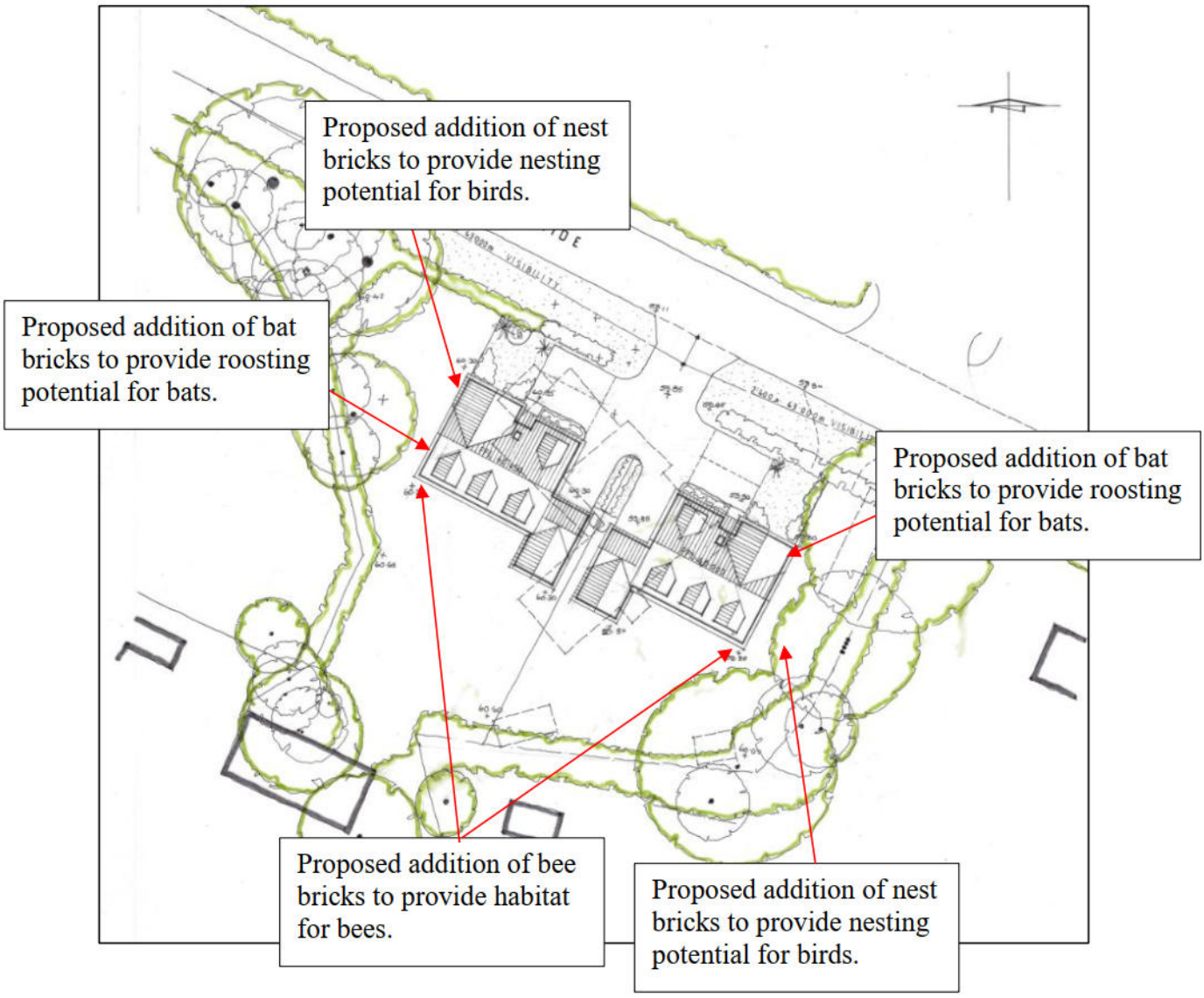
Woodstone Built in Open nest box

Forticrete Bat brick

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

£78.99

- 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 nest bricks to provide nesting potential for birds.
Proposed addition of bat bricks to provide roosting potential for bats.
Proposed addition of bat bricks to provide roosting potential for bats.
Proposed addition of bee bricks to provide habitat for bees.
Proposed addition of nest bricks to provide nesting potential for birds.