

Preliminary Roost Assessment

7 Courts Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 7DJ

Survey conducted 13th November 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 7 Courts Road, Earley on the 13th of November 2024.

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing garage and erect a two-storey side extension.

The Site is located on a residential street within the town of Earley, Reading and consists of a semi-detached, brick-built house with an adjacent brick-built garage, wooden shed and rear garden. 75m north of the property is a railway line and approximately 620m north-east is South Lake. Other nearby notable features include areas of woodland and recreational parks.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof and ridge tiles on the main house have been cemented at some stage, prior to the homeowners occupying the property and have no potential.

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 including bat and bird bricks have been recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site is located on a residential street within the town of Earley, Reading and consists of a semi-detached, brick-built house with an adjacent brick-built garage, wooden shed and rear garden. 75m north of the property is a railway line and approximately 620m north-east is south lake. Other nearby notable features include areas of woodland and recreational parks.

See Appendix 1 for Site Location

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to add a two-storey rear and side extension and make alterations to the existing two-storey entrance.

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 13th of November 2024 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Lisha has over 20 years of experience conducting ecology 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 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.

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 brick built semi-detached house with a garage on the side. The roof is wooden timber frame with a black bitumen liner and clay style roof tiles. The floor of the loft is mostly boarded. The soffits are wooden but not shrink back or gaps present. The lead flashing around the chimney is flat and secure against the roof.

The garage is a simple brick structure with a clay style tiled roof. The tiles have been cemented into place and cemented around the edges leaving no gaps. The wooden frame at the front has shrunk back to leave a thin gap. This could be fully inspected with a torch.

The buildings could be fully inspected and were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof and ridge tiles on the main house have been cemented at some stage, prior to the homeowners occupying the property and have no potential. The garage is a simple structure which could be fully inspected.

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 buildings could be fully inspected and were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof and ridge tiles on the main house have been cemented at some stage, prior to the homeowners occupying the property and have no potential. The garage is a simple structure which 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 including a bat brick 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 an integrated bat brick within the new porch brickwork have been recommended which would provide potential roost features for bats. The brick should be placed away from light sources.

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

7. REFERENCES

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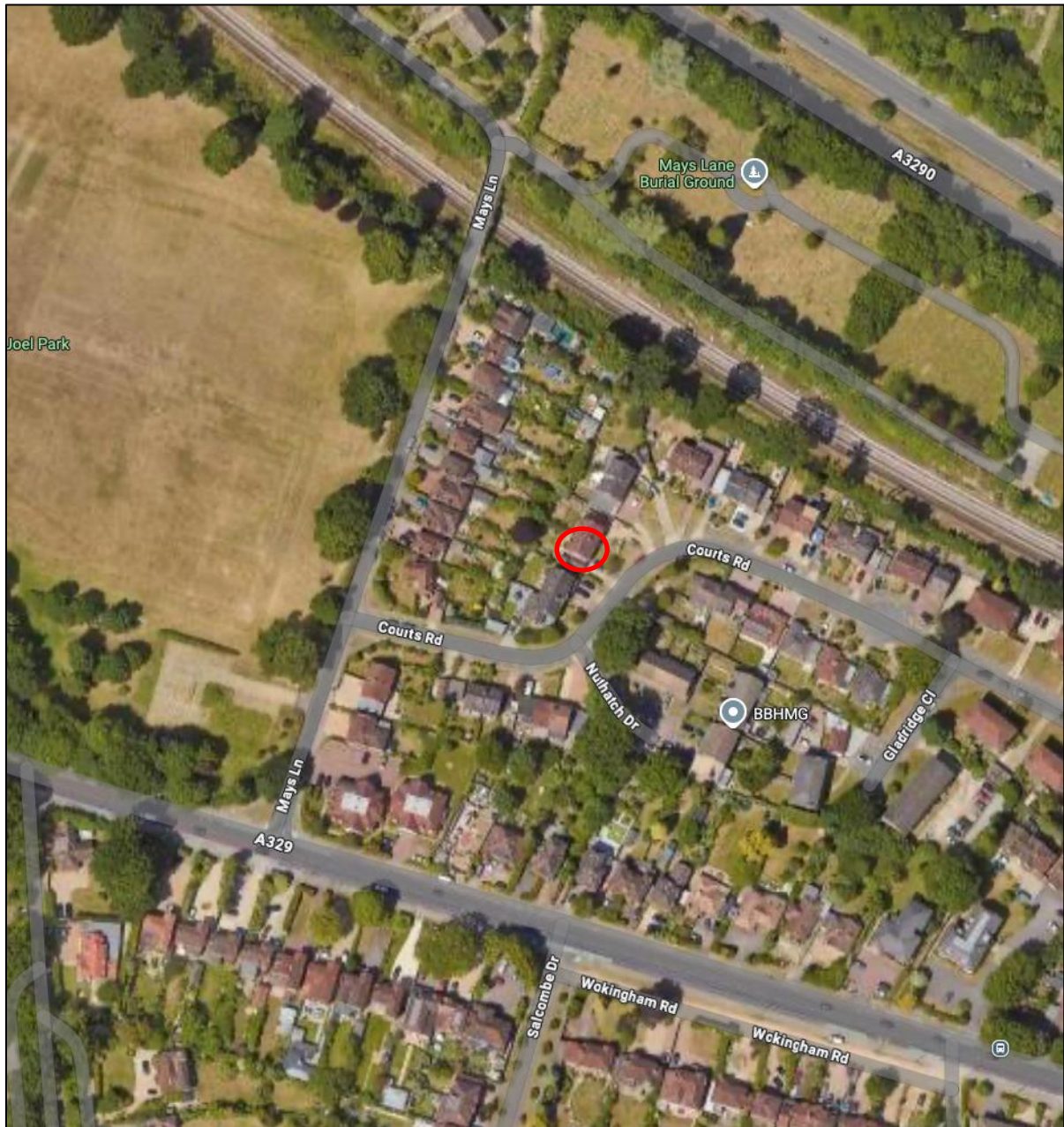
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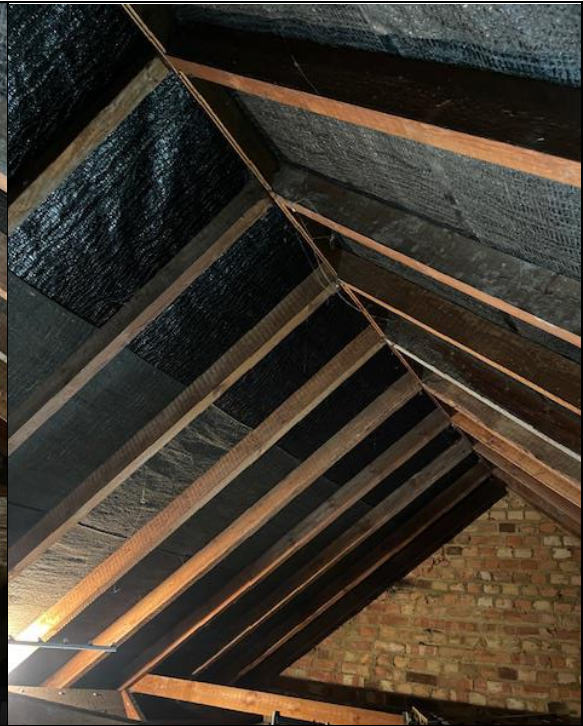
APPENDIX 1: Site Location



APPENDIX 2: Photographs



Photograph 1: Main house loft space.



Photograph 2: Main house loft space.



Photograph 3: Main house loft space.



Photograph 4: Main house loft space.



Photograph 5: Main house loft space.



Photograph 6: Main house loft space.



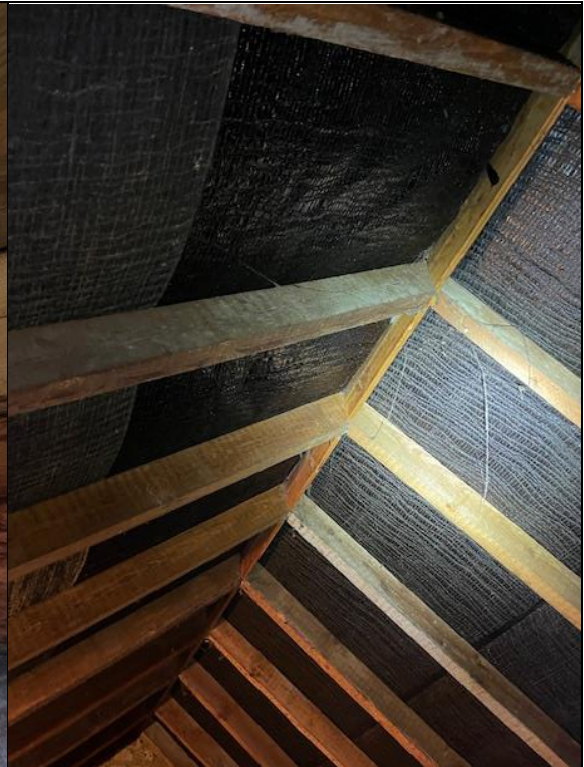
Photograph 7: Main house loft space.



Photograph 8: Main house loft space.



Photograph 9: Main house loft space.



Photograph 10: Main house loft space.



Photograph 11: Rear elevation.



Photograph 12: Roof tiles in good condition with no lifts.



Photograph 13: Side elevation patio with adjacent wooden shed.



Photograph 14: Side elevation.



Photograph 15: Adjacent brick-built garage.



Photograph 16: Garage interior and loft area.



Photograph 17: Garage interior and loft area.



Photograph 18: Garage interior and loft area.



Photograph 19: Garage interior and loft area.



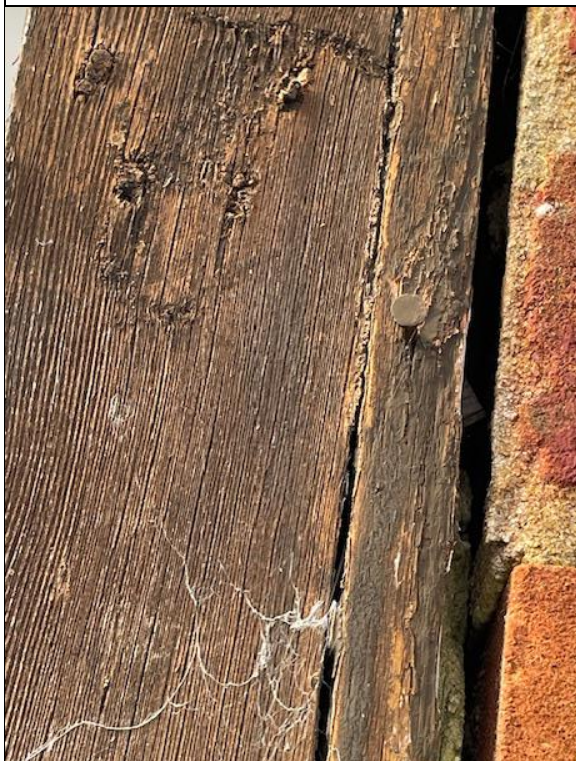
Photograph 20: Garage loft space.



Photograph 21: Brick-built garage.



Photograph 22: Gap between the wood and the mortar - could be fully inspected.



Photograph 23: Gap between the wood and the mortar on the garage.



Photograph 24: Gap between the wooden frame and the mortar on the garage.



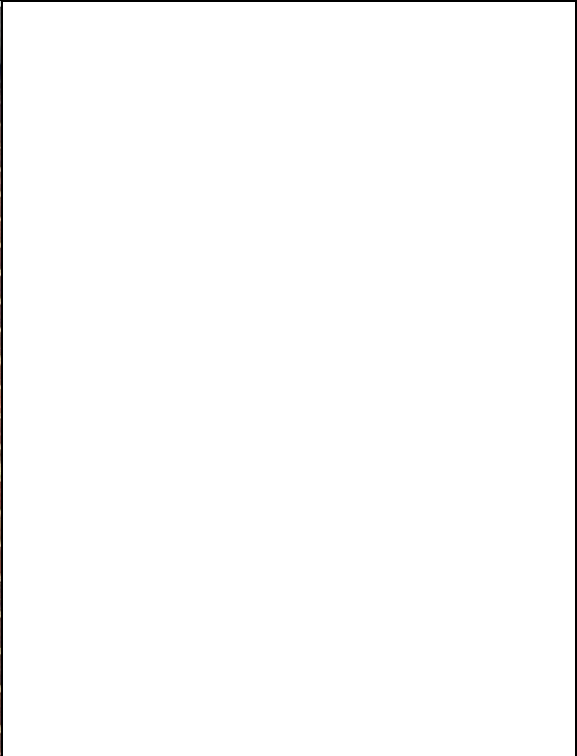
Photograph 25: Gap between the wood and the bricks on the garage- fully inspected.



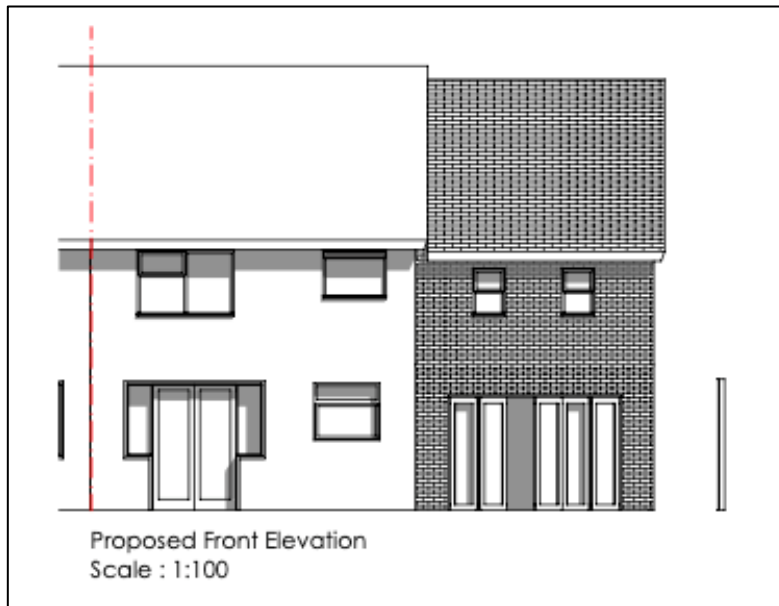
Photograph 26: Front elevation.



Photograph 27: Side elevation.



APPENDIX 3: Proposed elevations





APPENDIX 4: Biodiversity Enhancements

