



19th October 2024

Our reference: 16 Copse Drive Bat PRA Report Rev 00

Dear Jim,

16 Copse Drive, Wokingham - Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

Further to your instruction, a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was completed at 16 Copse Drive, Wokingham. The site visit was completed on 24th September 2024 following a review of the location using aerial imagery and background data sources such as the MaGlc web system (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>). The assessment below has been completed with reference to the development proposals shown most clearly on your planning drawings (ref. EJD3081 series). These shows two proposals - one lawful development scheme for conversion of roof space to second floor accommodation, and one planning application project of a side extension (two storey, over existing garage). No development work is proposed outside of this extension work to the property i.e. no work affecting the garden space.

The current house is a two storey, semi-detached, family home with garage, built of typical brick and concrete tile construction. The building appears to have been constructed in approximately 1960s. There appears to have been a single storey rear / side extension previously plus maintenance and upgrades such as replacement UPVC windows. Plates 1 & 2 shows the building from the front and rear.

The ecological appraisal was completed by James Hildreth, a consultant ecologist with over 22 years professional experience, a full member of the chartered institute of ecology and environmental management (CIEEM) and a Chartered Environmentalist. James holds several protected species survey licences and most relevant to this inspection is a Natural England bat class 2 survey licence registration (2018-37686-CLS-CLS).

Plate 1 - The building shown from the front



Plate 2 - The building shown from the rear



The plot is situated on a suburban, residential street relatively centrally placed within the town of Wokingham. The immediate surroundings are other homes and garden. Notably there is a pocket of broadleaved woodland approximately 125 m to the east (Holt Copse, Joel Park). Other parks and greenspaces exist in the mostly suburban surroundings. There are four records of a Natural England bat European Protected Species Licence within 1 km of the site and two additional records within 2km.

Based on the development proposals the assessment focused on the house as there are no predicted impacts to trees or other habitats. The house was inspected internally, with access to the entire roof space being possible. The roof is a traditional, cut-timber construction with bitumen felt sarking under interlocking concrete tiles. The timbers and sarking were in good condition with no

tears, holes etc observed. The loft space has had no noticeable prior alteration, with only some additional insulation added.

No evidence of bat presence (e.g. bats present, bat droppings, urine staining or scratch marks) was found during the internal inspection. Plates 3-5 provide photographs of the internal roof space.

Plates 3-5 - Internal roof images





External inspection of the house showed a well maintained and sealed main roof structure. The plates below show how soffit boxes, ridge tiles, general roof tiles and service points were all very tightly sealed with none of the gaps that can be present which provide access for bats. The soffit boxes have clearly been well maintained and have a tight seal around the eaves of the main roof. The roof has no slipped or missing tiles or damaged or lifted flashing (which are typical access points for bats).

In addition to the main roof there is a flat roof over the garage and previous rear / side extension. This was inspected with particular attention paid to the weatherboarding as this can provide a crevice feature for individual and small numbers of bats. The inspection found no warping or other distortion of the weatherboarding and a tight seal to the brick work was consistent throughout. Therefore no entrance or crevice feature for bats was present.

Hanging tiles on the front of the house at ground floor height were checked for evidence of use by bats. No droppings or other obvious signs of bat use were found. However, there were potential access points over the porch to a small void behind the tiles. Due to this area not being affected by the proposed plans this was not investigated further. Recommendations are made regarding this towards the end of this letter report. Plates 6-8 show external views.

Plates 6-8 - external inspection images





The PRA survey found no evidence of bats (e.g. bat droppings) during the inspection.

There were no potential bat access points or potential roost features (PRFs) found in areas of the house that will be affected by the proposed plans (both lawful development and planning application schemes).

However, the gaps in hanging tiles above the porch on the front of the house do provide potential roost space for bats. Based on the location of the house with nearby woodland and records of local bat mitigation licences it is determined that this feature offers moderate bat roost potential (based on criteria in Collins, 2023¹)

On the basis that all work proceeds as per the drawings provided, no additional bat surveys are recommended. However, **no disturbance to the hanging tiles on the front of the house should take place as part of the proposed work.** If any change to the proposals requires disturbance of these tiles then further surveys will be required (at least two dusk emergence surveys with bat detectors and night vision aids in the period of May to August).

During implementation of the proposed plans (if approved), it is recommended that a suitably experienced and bat-licensed ecologist is on call should there be any unexpected discoveries of bats or other wildlife. If renovation work has not started within two years of this PRA it is recommended that an update visit is completed to check for any alterations that could provide bat access to the property. This is general good practice but specifically made in this instance due to the suitable habitats nearby and the multiple records of bat mitigation licences in close proximity.

For ecological enhancement purposes I suggest that it would be beneficial to add one bird box and one bat box to the house. Planning policy recommends biodiversity enhancement and this is a relatively cost effective and successful option.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the assessment and my recommendations in more detail please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Dr. James Hildreth.

Dr James Hildreth CEnv MCIEEM