

**40 Kibblewhite Crescent
Twyford
Berkshire
RG10 9AX**

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R3024/a

February 2022



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Biggin to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of the house at 40 Kibblewhite Crescent in Twyford, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU79017667). The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for the construction of two-storey front and rear extensions (refer to proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**).
- 1.1.2** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). A survey of the interior and exterior of the house and garage was conducted on January 31st 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18.
- 1.1.3** The survey found no evidence of the presence of bats within the house and garage. The garage lacked features suitable for bats. The house's exterior mostly lacked features suitable for bats; slightly raised verge tiles provided features of low bat roost potential suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bats such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or *Myotis* species.
- 1.1.4** The survey findings show that the proposed extension of the house will have no impact on features with bat roost potential and as such is unlikely to result in bats being disturbed and/or harmed or to roosts being damaged or destroyed. Therefore, it is considered that the work can go ahead lawfully with no requirement for a European Protected Species mitigation licence (EPSML).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Biggin to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of the house and garage at 40 Kibblewhite Crescent in Twyford, Berkshire.

2.1.2 The assessment was commissioned to accompany a planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for the construction of two storey front and rear extensions to the house (refer to the proposed elevations in **Appendix 3**).

2.2 Legislative Background

2.2.1 All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

2.2.2 The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:

- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation;
- **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range"; and
- **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public

interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.

- 2.2.3** Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. The Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that an EPSML is necessary before granting planning permission.
- 2.2.4** EPSML applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days.
- 2.2.5** Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring species occupying roosts of low conservation importance may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence WML-CL21 (BMCL). The BMCL permits ‘Registered Consultants’ or accredited agents appointed by them to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.
- 2.2.6** Survey data supporting EPSML applications or the registration of the site under the BMCL must be up to date i.e., have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e., May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

2.3 Site Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The house at 40 Kibblewhite Crescent is situated on the northern side of the Crescent approximately 700m to the north east of the town centre of Twyford in Berkshire (OS grid reference SU79017667).
- 2.3.2** The house is set in an established residential area with residential homes in the immediate surroundings. In the wider area, the area is primarily residential but there is open space nearby with school playing fields are situated just over 60m to the south. Extensive open countryside is situated just under 400m to the north and just under 600m to the east. The flooded gravel pits of the Loddon Nature Reserve are just under 1km to the south west.

2.3.3 Overall, the habitats in the area surrounding the house are of moderate value to bats adapted to suburban habitats.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

3.1.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the house and the garage was conducted on January 31st 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18.

3.1.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch searching for features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones 2004; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004).

3.1.3 The following may indicate the presence of a bat roost within a building:

- Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as window sills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
- Piles of insect remains e.g., moth wings (these may be indicative of regular feeding sites used by species such as brown long-eared bat);
- Staining at roost entrances or within the roost (urine and oil from fur can leave stains on timbers when bats are gathered for long periods); and
- Bats (live or dead).

3.1.4 Residential buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations, favoured locations include:

- Under roof, ridge and hip tiles, especially when loose or lifted tiles are present, or sections of mortar are missing;
- Under sections of raised lead flashing;
- Beneath lifted barge boards;
- At the gable ends – access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof tiles;
- At the eaves – gaining access via gaps between the soffits and wall; and
- Within an enclosed roof space – long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.) for example, will often cluster at the ridge beam.

3.2 Survey Constraints

- 3.2.1** There were no significant survey constraints because full access was available to the interior and exterior of the house and the garage.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Photographs of the house and garage are presented in **Appendix 1** and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in **Appendix 2**. The survey findings from the exterior and interior of the buildings are described as follows:

4.2 External Survey

- 4.2.1** The semi-detached house is of brick, cavity wall construction with a pitched roof covered with interlocking concrete roof tiles. A conservatory is attached to the rear and a flat roofed garage is situated to the north west of the house (**Photographs 1, 2, 3 & 10**).
- 4.2.2** The concrete roof covering the roof were all in place and tightly fitted to the rear, and mostly tightly fitted to the front; however there were some slightly lifted tiles at the verge close to the ridge (**Target notes 1, 5 & 6; Photographs 4, 7 & 8**). The lead flashing around the chimney was tightly fitted to the tiles (**Target note 2; Photograph 4**).
- 4.2.3** The roof line was formed by uPVC soffits and fascias, which were tightly sealed to the roof to the front and rear (**Target notes 4 & 8; Photographs 5 & 9**), and tightly fitted to the side (south west facing) gable end (**Target note 7; Photograph 6**).
- 4.2.4** The garage's roof was covered with bitumen felt, which was tightly fitted. Timber barge boards at the roof line to the rear were in place and tight to the brickwork (**Target note 9; Photograph 11**). On the north eastern side there was an open gap between the wall and roof with some climbing plants growing through it (**Target note 10; Photograph 12**).

4.3 Internal Survey

4.3.1 The loft within the house was accessible via a hatch in the first floor ceiling and had an estimated floor to ridge height of two metres (**Photograph 13**). The roof was of 'cut and pitch' construction with a ridge board and rafters, which were heavily cobwebbed. The south west and north east facing end walls had gaps between the end rafters and walls, which were heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 14**). The floor was insulated with fibre glass, which partly filled the eaves with the remainder open to the soffits. The roof was lined with bitumen and hessian felt, which was mostly

intact and tightly fitted but had occasional small tears to the front and rear roof slopes (**Target notes 11 & 13; Photograph 15**). A cement covered chimney was heavily cobwebbed and had a section of loose bitumen felt filled with a section of breathable roofing membrane (**Target note 12; Photograph 16**). No bats or evidence of bats was visible within the loft during the survey.

- 4.3.2** The interior of the garage, which was served by a metal up-and-over door to the front and door to side, had a concrete floor and the roof was lined with sterling boards (**Photograph 17**). The roof was tight to the walls apart from the north eastern side, which had a large gap between the roof and wall (**Photograph 18**). No bats or evidence of bats was visible within the garage.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

5.1.1 The house on the whole lacked features suitable for bats with tightly fitted roof tiles, lead and soffits. Some lifted roof tiles on the front elevation provided features of low bat roost potential suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bats such as pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or *Myotis* species. Two species of pipistrelle bat: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), are widespread and abundant throughout the United Kingdom (Richardson 2000). The small *Myotis* species i.e. whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are widespread and common, but less abundant than the aforementioned pipistrelle species. Roosts supporting these pipistrelle and/or small *Myotis* bat species are considered to be of low to moderate conservation importance (subject to the type of roost present i.e., non-breeding roosts supporting individual or small numbers of bats through to maternity roosts supporting large numbers of female bats) (Mitchell-Jones 2004).

5.1.2 Taking into account the potential roost features identified and the nearby habitats, the property is considered to be of low bat roost potential for crevice-dwelling species.

5.1.3 The garage showed no signs of the presence of bats and lacked features suitable for bats and such this building is considered to be of negligible bat roost potential.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The survey findings show that the proposed extension of the house will not have an impact on any potential roost features; the verge tiles with low bat roost potential will be unaffected by the planned extension, which will be linked at the eaves, and in the absence of any indication of the presence of bats, it considered unlikely that bats or their roosts will be affected by the proposed extension. As such, it is considered that the work can go ahead lawfully with no requirement for a European Protected Species mitigation licence.

5.2.2 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the construction work, the work must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once further written advice has been received. At this point, an EPSML may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

6 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. The house viewed from the front (south east).



2. The house viewed from the rear (north west).



3. The garage viewed from the rear.



4. The tightly fitted concrete roof tiles and lead flashing around the chimney.



5. The tightly fitted uPVC soffits to the rear.



6. The tightly fitted soffits on the side (south west facing) gable end.



7. The mostly tightly fitted concrete tiles of the front (south east facing) elevation.



8. Slightly lifted verge tiles on the front elevation.



9. Tightly fitted uPVC soffits to the front.



10. The garage viewed from the front (south east).



11. Tightly fitted barge boards to the rear of the garage.



12. Open gap between flat roof and wall on the north eastern side of the garage.



13. The house loft showing cement covered chimney.



14. The cobwebbed gaps between the end rafter and walls at the gable and party wall and cobwebbed ridge.



15. One of the tears in the felt.



16. A section of breathable roofing membrane (BRM) filling a gap around the chimney.

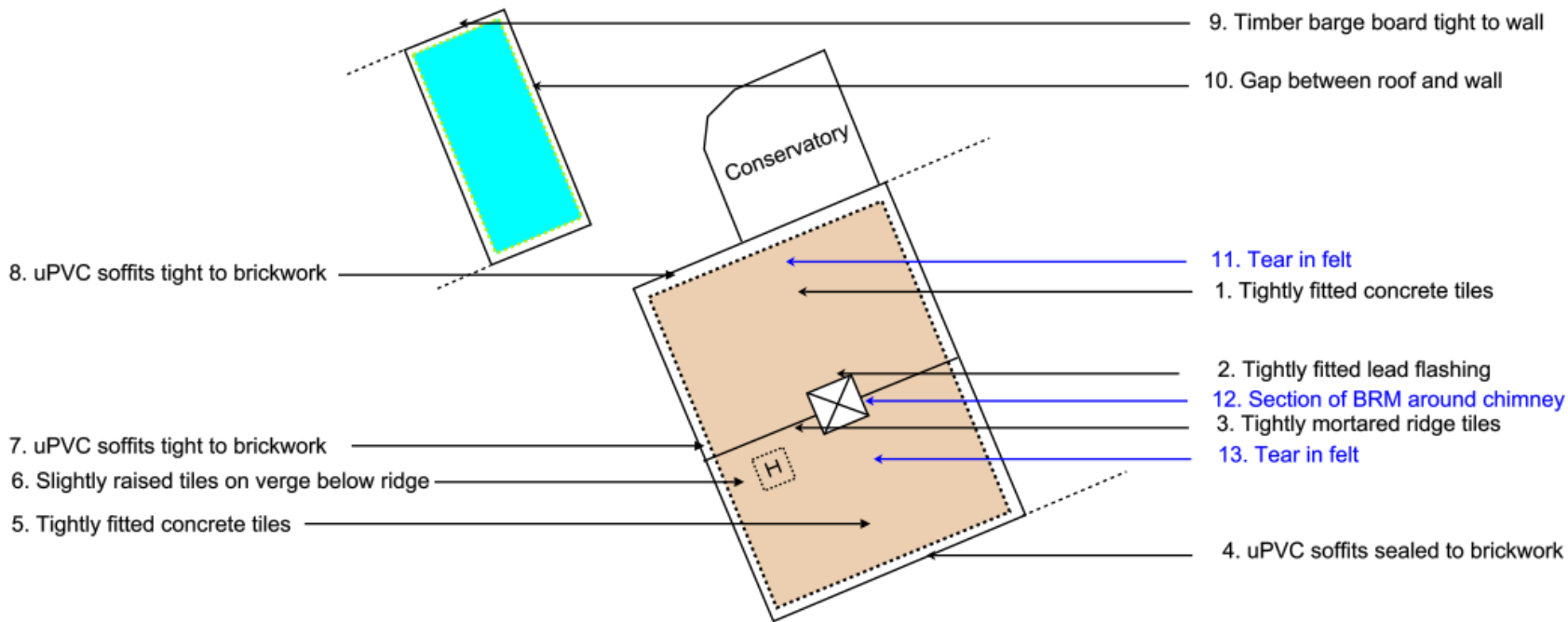


17. The garage interior.



18. Gap between wall and roof on the north eastern side.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN



 Loft hatch  Chimney  Roof void  Garage space Neighbouring building **n.** External target note **n.** Internal target note

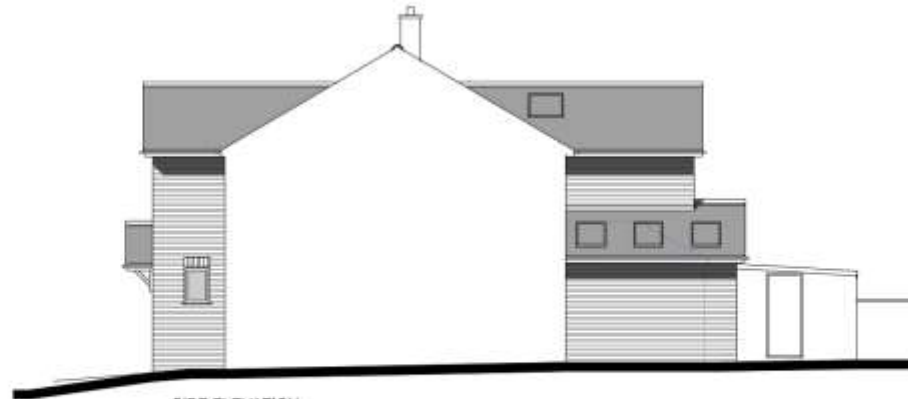
Drawn by:	Date:	Scale:	40 Kibblewhite Crescent Twyford	
JW	Feb 2022	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Plan	

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APPENDIX 3 – PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

1:100 scale Bar
This Drawing has been produced for printing onto A3 size paper.



CLIENT	Mr & Mrs T Biggin
PROJECT	40 Kibblewhite Crescent, Twyford, Reading, RG10 9AX
DRAWING	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
SCALE	1:100
DWG NO	201
REV	

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP