

**10 Shepherds Avenue
Earley
Reading
RG6 1AY**

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report ref.: R3075_PRA_a

<i>Report Quality Control Information</i>	
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Rajinder Kalsi, of RK Designs on behalf of Mr Das to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 10 Shepherds Avenue in Earley, Berkshire. The survey was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a single-storey side extension.
- 1.1.2** The aim of the PRA is to ascertain if there is evidence of the presence of bats and/or potential for roosting bats to be present, and therefore whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for the proposed development activities. A detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of the house was undertaken on the 10th November 2025 by licenced ecologists Meghan Porter-Smith and Jake Morgan.
- 1.1.3** The property had limited bat access points to potential crevice roost sites under a slightly lifted roof tile and behind a small gap in the soffit; however, after thorough inspection, no evidence of use by bats was found and the conditions were considered to be sub-optimal for opportunistic use by individual or small groups of crevice-dwelling bats. The property has been assigned low suitability for crevice-dwelling bats and the thorough inspection of the crevice to be affected showed it to be of limited extent and confirmed an absence of roosting bats giving a sufficient level of confidence in the assessment of the proposed impacts.
- 1.1.4** The development proposals are considered highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. As such, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required for the planned works to go ahead lawfully. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the construction activities, the works must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed.
- 1.1.5** This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019b).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP instructed by Rajinder Kalsi, of RK Designs on behalf of Mr Das to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats at 10 Shepherds Avenue in Earley, Berkshire.

2.1.2 The survey was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for a single-storey side extension (see proposed plans in **Appendix 1**).

2.2 Site Location and Context

2.2.1 The detached residential dwelling is located on the eastern side of Shepherds Avenue in Earley, a suburb to the east of Reading, Berkshire (OS Grid Ref: SU 7487 7390).

2.2.2 The site is surrounded by similar neighbouring properties and associated gardens to the east, south and west, with broadleaved deciduous woodland bordering the northern boundary of the site. The woodland is present either side of the railway line situated 90m to north of the site boundary. Reading Road Allotments are present 295m to the south-east of the site, with a parcel of ancient and semi-natural woodland present to the south of the allotments within Bulmershe Park. There are areas of open water and small parcels of woodland within the Thames Valley Business Park approximately 450m to the north-west of the site. The River Thames is present approximately 950m to the north-west of the site, bordered by open grassland and tree-lined banks.

2.2.3 Overall the surrounding woodland, open water and grassland, linked by linear tree features, offer good commuting and foraging habitats for bats adapted to roosting in a suburban environment.

2.3 Report Objectives

2.3.1 The aim of the PRA is to ascertain if there is evidence of the presence of bats and/or potential for roosting bats to be present, and therefore whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for future proposed development activities.

3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

3.1 Relevant Legislation

3.1.1 In England and Wales, all bat species found in the wild are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the regulations are commonly referred to as the Habitat Regulations and hereafter referred to as such. The Habitat Regulations refer to European Protected Species (EPS) and all species of bats in the United Kingdom (UK) are EPS. Although the UK left the European Union on the 31st January 2020 and is therefore no longer tied to European legislation, the Habitat Regulations have been retained in their current format.

3.1.2 The legal framework underpinned by the WCA and Habitat Regulations makes these specific actions an offence as follows:

- Deliberately kill, injure, capture or take a wild bat;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting; and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection.

3.2 Planning Policy

3.2.1 The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Government planning policy, such as the ODPM Circular 06/2005, requires LPAs to account for the conservation of protected species when considering and determining planning applications.

3.2.2 The ODPM Circular 06/2005 states that *'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.'* This policy means that in instances where there is a reasonable likelihood of bats being present and affected by a development, surveys must be undertaken to inform a mitigation strategy to be agreed prior to granting planning permission.

3.3 Mitigation Licensing

3.3.1 The government's statutory nature conservation body, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (2)l – 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.*'
- (9)(a) – there is '*no satisfactory alternative*' to the derogation; and
- (9)(b) – '*the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.*'

3.3.2 LPAs have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the Habitat Regulations to consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting EPS before granting planning permission. If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

3.3.3 The Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) scheme allows ecologists to apply to become Registered Consultants to use this licence for low conservation status roosts, i.e. roosts comprising small numbers of seven commonly occurring species. A site registration form must be completed as a condition of the licence and submitted to Natural England at least three weeks before the licensable activities are due to start; Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks of submission.

3.3.4 Baseline survey information supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or BMCL site registrations must be up-to-date and have been completed within the current or most recent optimal season. A suitably experienced ecologist will be required to undertake a site walkover/check within three months prior to application/registration submission to confirm that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey.

4 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 A desk-based study for bats was undertaken to collate and review existing information about the site and the surrounding land. The study utilised the following open access resources:

- OS maps and Google Earth – maps and satellite imagery were used to identify potential flight-paths and foraging habitats for bats;
- MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species licences; and
- Pre-existing bat survey reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal.

4.2 Building Inspection

Survey Details

4.2.1 A detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of the house was undertaken on the 10th November 2025 by Meghan Porter-Smith - registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (Registration no. CL17 2023-11300-CL17-BAT) and Jake Morgan – registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 2025-85343-CL17-BAT in accordance with good practice guidance (Collins 2023). The equipment used during the inspection comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a headtorch, ladder and PPE (facemask, gloves etc.). The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior and interior of the structure during daylight hours to compile information on potential and actual bat access points; potential and actual bat roost sites; and any evidence of bat presence.

External Survey

4.2.2 Frequently used bat access points and/or roost sites include (but are not limited to) spaces:

- behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes and barge boards;
- under lead flashing (particularly around chimneys) and roof tiles/slates; and
- in existing bat boxes.

4.2.3 It is important to note that the two most abundant and widespread bat species, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), typically only require gaps measuring 15mm by 20mm to gain access to a roost inside a

building.

4.2.4 The external survey involved a systematic search for evidence of bats including:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining; and
- squeaking noises.

4.2.5 It should be noted that bats can be present in a building while leaving no visible signs externally and wet weather has the potential to wash any evidence away. The search for evidence was focused on (but was not limited to) the ground, windowsills, windowpanes and walls (including cladding and hanging tiles); particularly in places near to potential bat access points and/or roost sites.

Internal Survey

4.2.6 The internal survey comprised a systematic search for evidence of bats on the upper floors of the building (i.e. checking the exterior from windows) and inside the roof and eave spaces. Evidence of bats found during an internal inspection can include:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining;
- feeding remains (i.e. moth wings);
- squeaking noises;
- bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases; and
- odour.

4.2.7 It should be noted that only specimens or droppings can be relied upon in isolation to confirm the presence of a bat roost.

4.2.8 Frequently used roosting locations within the roof include (but are not limited to):

- the apex of the gable end or dividing walls;

- the top of chimney breasts;
- ridge and hip beams;
- mortise and tenon joints;
- behind purlins; and
- between tiles and roof lining.

Survey Limitations and Validity

- 4.2.9** There were no significant survey limitations because PRAs can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the building was fully accessible.
- 4.2.10** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey, particularly for bat species which typically roost in hidden crevices. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence found during a survey does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence in a building.
- 4.2.11** This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019b).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 The suburban surroundings of the site, with open recreational areas, linear tree features and wetland habitats, provides good quality foraging habitats for any bats roosting locally.

5.1.2 Bat mitigation licences that have been granted within the last 15 years inside a 2 kilometre radius of the site are detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Bat mitigation licences granted within a 1km radius of the site (Source: MAGIC).

Case Reference of Granted Licence	Species on the Licence	Licensable Period	Licensable Works	Distance (m)
2020-48353-EPS-MIT	Soprano Pipistrelle	25/08/2020 – 28/02/2026	Destruction of resting place	600 NE
2015-17476-EPS-MIT-2	Soprano Pipistrelle	01/03/2016 – 31/03/2021	Destruction of a resting place	660 NE
2020-48694-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle & Common pipistrelle	23/09/2020 – 31/12/2025	Damage and destruction of a resting place	750 NE
2018-34839-EPS-MIT-1	Soprano pipistrelle	24/04/2019 – 31/07/2023	Destruction of a resting place	805 NE
2018-38132-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle & Brown long-eared	19/11/2018 – 30/10/2020	Destruction of a resting place	1240 NE
2019-44293-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle & Brown long-eared	31/01/2020 – 30/06/2020	Damage of a resting place	1400 NE
2018-37707-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	13/11/2018 – 30/11/2023	Damage of a resting place	1580 NE

5.2 Building Inspection

5.2.1 The findings from the external and internal inspections carried out for the house are described with photographs and annotated in a plan, as follows:

External Survey

5.2.2 The property comprises of a detached brick-built house with a detached simple metal framed outbuilding with plastic sheet roof (**Photographs 1 - 3**). The hipped roof on the main house was covered in flat roof tiles throughout, with tight ridge and hip tiles and the mortar was all intact (**Photograph 4**).



Photograph 1. Front of the property viewed from the west.



Photograph 2. Rear of the house viewed from the east.



Photograph 3. Simply constructed outbuilding.



Photograph 4. Flat roof tiles and intact hip tiles and mortar (rear elevation).

5.2.3 There was a flat roofed, second-storey extension, which was covered in bitumen felt that was tight to the uPVC barge board. There was a gap below a lifted section of uPVC barge board on the northern elevation (**Photograph 5; Target note 1**). The soffit was tight to the walls on the hipped eaves of the property (**Photograph 6**). The lead flashing was tight to the brickwork above the sloped roofed porch roof on the front elevation (**Photograph 7**). There was a gap below a lifted roof tile on the sloping roof over the porch and garage at the front of the house (**Photograph 8; Target note 2**). This was able to be closely inspected and shown to be cobwebbed and of limited extent.



Photograph 5. Lifted section of uPVC barge board (northern elevation).



Photograph 6. Soffit tight to brickwork (front elevation).



Photograph 7. Tight lead flashing above sloped roof (front elevation).

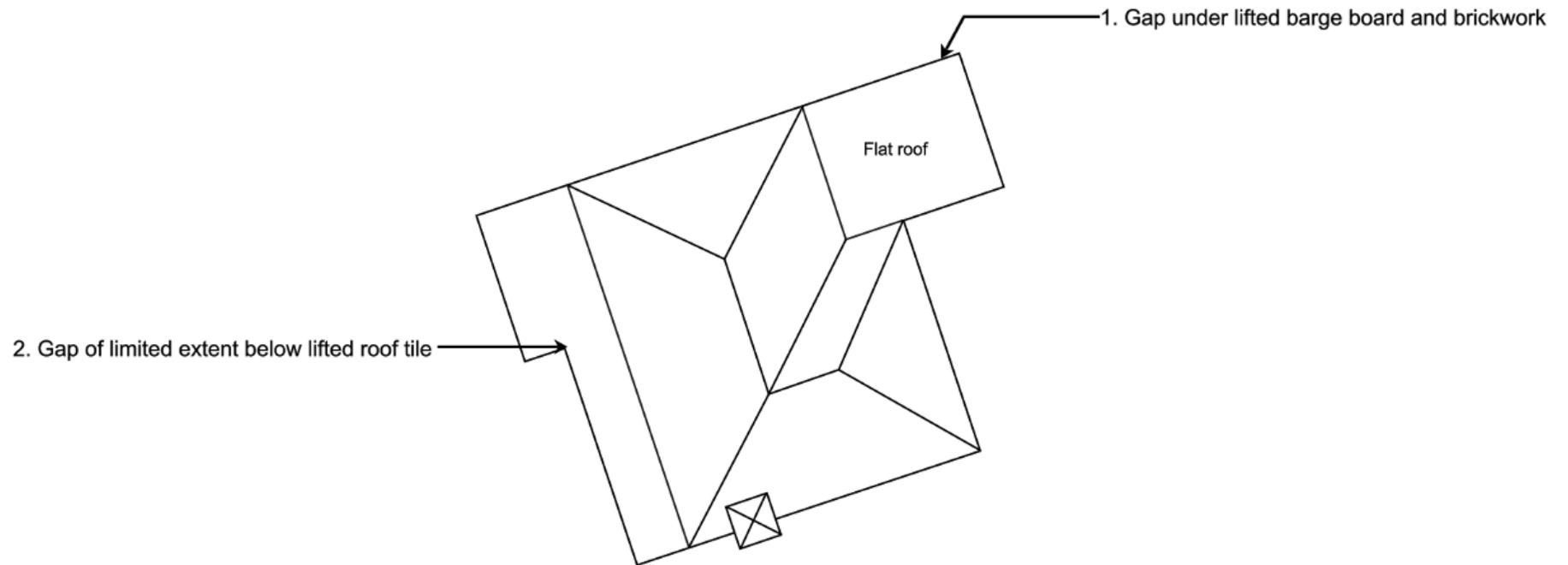


Photograph 8. Cobwebbed gap of limited extent below lifted roof tile (front elevation)

5.2.4 Internally the garage was completely boarded throughout, which was tight to the brickwork of the house and there was no access opportunities for bats (**Photograph 9**).



Photograph 9. Boarded ceiling tight to brickwork (Internal garage).



Chimney



External target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	10 Shepherds Avenue, Earley	
MP-S	November 2025	Not to scale	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

Figure 1. Plan of the Preliminary Roost Assessment Findings

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Assessment of Potential Roost Suitability

6.1.1 The suburban setting adjacent to deciduous woodland, and nearby wetlands habitats, offers good quality foraging habitats for any bats adapted to roosting in a suburban environment. Furthermore, the search of granted bat mitigation licences identified three species known to be roosting within a 2km radius of the site: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*).

6.1.1 The property had limited potential bat roosting features, comprising a gap below a lifted section of uPVC barge board on the northern elevation (**Photograph 5; Target note 1**), which offers a potential access point for individual or small numbers of crevice-dwelling bats and a low level gap below a lifted roof tile on the front elevation (**Photograph 8; Target note 2**). The property was assigned low suitability for bats overall (see **Appendix 2** for potential suitability categories), however, the low level gap was able to be closely investigated and only offered sub-optimal conditions for bats.

6.2 Assessment of Potential Roost Status

6.2.1 The potential crevice roost sites in the building were considered to be of low suitability for use by typically crevice-dwelling bat species, such as the abundant and widespread soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) bats. The presence of a maternity colony is considered highly unlikely due to the nature and scale of the features observed and furthermore, no evidence of roosting bats was found during the survey. In line with good practice guidelines (Collins 2023; refer to **Appendix 3** for further survey rationale), the thorough inspection of the low-level crevice-roost opportunity and the detailed building assessment concluded that the environmental conditions were only suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats and the lack of evidence gave a sufficient level of confidence in the absence of roosting bats.

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Potential Impacts of Development Proposals

Overview

- 7.1.1** The householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council seeks consent for a single-storey side and front porch extension. The impacts of the proposals have been assessed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy during construction and post development, as follows:

Construction Phase

- 7.1.2** The development proposals will only impact a low-level crevice feature to the front of the property, which has been ruled out as a roosting site through a thorough inspection. The potential roost feature below the barge board on the northern elevation is to be retained and unaffected during construction. Therefore, the proposed works are considered unlikely to result in the damage and/or destruction of a bat roost or cause disturbance and/or harm to bats. A European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.

Post Development

- 7.1.3** The development proposals will not result in the long-term loss or damage of a bat roost that could adversely impact local bat populations.

7.2 Recommended Actions

- 7.2.1** The development proposals are considered unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. As such, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required for the planned works to go ahead lawfully.
- 7.2.2** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the construction activities, the works must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; works should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this stage, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to recommence lawfully.

8 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019b). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. CIEEM, Winchester.

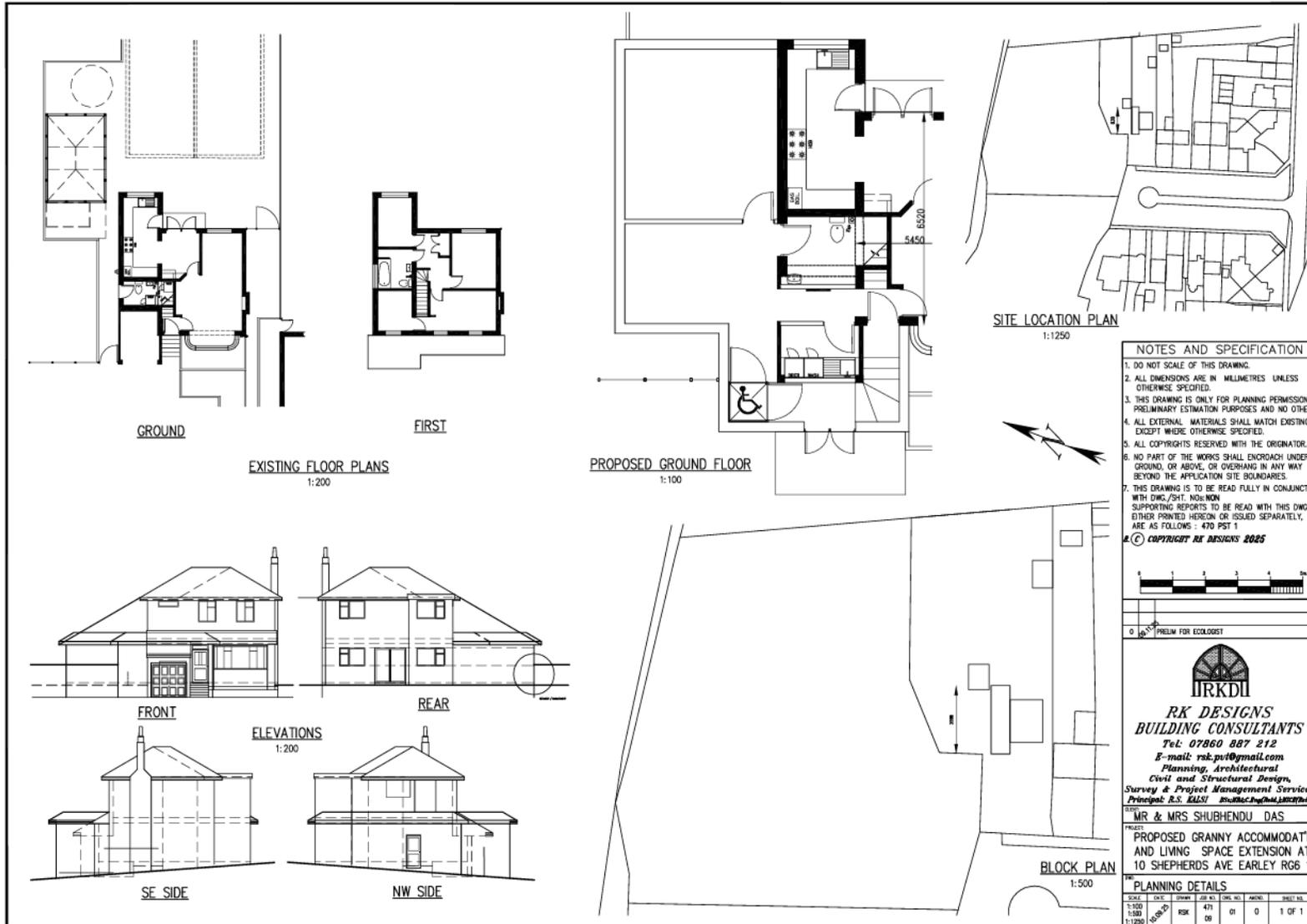
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APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED PLANS



APPENDIX 2 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS

The categories detailed in **Table 2** below are derived from the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*' (Collins 2023) and provide guidance for assessing the potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats. These categories are applied using professional judgement and irrespective of whether the presence of a bat roost has been confirmed during a survey, as additional bat roosts could be present which have not yet been discovered.

Table 2. Categories for potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats.

Potential Suitability	Category Justification
None	A building (or structure) that has no features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of cracks, crevices or voids that could provide suitable shelter).
Negligible	A building (or structure) that has no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats, but in this case a small element of uncertainty remains as bats will occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features. This category may also be used where a bat could potentially roost due to one attribute, but it is considered unlikely due to another attribute (e.g. a feature that is subject to constant illumination from artificial lighting).
Low	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites for bats do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and/or surrounding suitable habitat to be used regularly or by large numbers (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for a maternity colony and not a classic hibernation site).
Moderate	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for regular use by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. However, these potential roost sites for bats are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status with regards to the type of roost only (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).
High	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for use by large numbers of bats more regularly and for longer periods of time due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These potential roost sites for bats are capable of supporting high conservation status roosts (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).

APPENDIX 3 – FURTHER SURVEY RATIONALE

In cases where no evidence of use by bats is found during a building inspection but the possibility of their presence cannot be ruled out, further presence/likely absence survey is likely to be required if the development proposals will impact potential roost sites. Emergence surveys are carried out to establish the presence or likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures) and these are designed in accordance with the ‘*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*’ (Collins 2023) detailed in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. Recommended further survey for establishing presence/likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures).

Potential Suitability	Further Survey
None	No further surveys are required.
Negligible	No further surveys are required.
Low	A minimum of one dusk emergence survey visit should be undertaken in the period of May to August. However, if all areas (including cracks, crevices and voids) can be thoroughly inspected and no evidence of use by bats is found, then emergence surveys may not be required. In cases where a complete inspection cannot be carried out, professional judgement and proportionality should be applied when assessing the impacts of the development proposals.
Moderate	A minimum of two dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September, with at least one of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.
High	A minimum of three separate dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September (inclusive), with at least two of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.

In cases where the PRA and/or further survey establishes the presence of roosting bats in a building (or structure), this will likely trigger the need for roost characterisation to collect sufficient information to inform the impact assessment and mitigation strategy. The roost characterisation comprises information collected during the PRA, emergence surveys and by other methods, such as DNA analysis of bat droppings, and ultimately aims to determine the bat species roosting; the number of bats the roosts support; the roost access points; the locations of the roosts and the types of roost present. This information is crucial when applying for planning permission and/or a European Protected Species mitigation licence.