

High Gables
School Road
Barkham
Berkshire
RG41 4TR

Bat Mitigation Strategy

Ref: R2736_BMS_a)

Report Quality Control Information	
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Caroline Kinsman to undertake prepare a bat mitigation strategy for High Gables on School Road in Barkham, Wokingham. The preparation of a mitigation strategy was commissioned to meet the requirements of planning condition 4 of the planning consent granted by Wokingham Borough Council permitting the alteration of the hipped roof to a gable end and the addition of a dormer window on the rear elevation (reference 241610).
- 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).
- 1.1.3** A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was completed by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy (R2736_PRA_a). Whilst the property only had eave spaces of limited extent with no droppings observed, external crevice roost features were identified including lifted roof tiles and gaps behind the timber soffit boxes. Overall, taking into account the rural setting, the house was considered to be of moderate suitability for bats and further surveys were recommended.
- 1.1.4** Emergence surveys were conducted for the house on the 30th July and 22nd August 2024. A maximum count of three common pipistrelle bats were observed emerging from the house. The points of egress for the bats including the eaves on the eastern elevation of the house, the verge tiles above the eastern gable and the hip on the western elevation. The emergence survey findings and preliminary survey findings indicate that the house acts as a day roost for individual male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle bats. As such, the proposals will result in the permanent loss of these day roosts, which are roosts of low conservation significance.
- 1.1.5** A European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licence is required to allow the work to proceed lawfully and the survey findings establish that the site would qualify for "low impact" Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) WML-CL21 registration. A BMCL licence has been granted by Natural England on October 17th 2024 and a precautionary working method will be adopted during the building work. This will comprise the careful measures

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to be adopted when removing tiles, the steps that will be taken if bats are encountered and the responsibilities during the work.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Caroline Kinsman to undertake prepare a bat mitigation strategy for High Gables on School Road in Barkham, Wokingham. The preparation of a strategy was commissioned to meet the requirements of planning condition 4 of the planning consent granted by Wokingham Borough Council permitting the alteration of the hipped roof to a gable end and the addition of a dormer window on the rear elevation (reference 241610).

2.1.2 Emergence surveys conducted for the house on the 30th July and 22nd August 2024 confirmed a maximum count of three common pipistrelle bats emerging from the house. The points of egress for the bats including the eaves on the eastern elevation of the house, the verge tiles above the eastern gable and the hip on the western elevation. The emergence survey findings and preliminary survey findings indicate that the house acts as a day roost for individual male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle bats. As such, the proposals will result in the permanent loss of these day roosts, which are roosts of low conservation significance.

2.1.3 Therefore, the works will be undertaken under a BMCL licence registration, which was granted by Natural England on October 17th 2024. The preparation of a mitigation strategy was commissioned to meet the requirements of planning condition 4 of the planning consent granted by Wokingham Borough Council permitting the alteration of the hipped roof to a gable end and the addition of a dormer window on the rear elevation (reference 241610). The conditions are worded as follows:

4. No works affecting bat roosts shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy (or an email from Natural England that the site has been registered under the bat mitigation class licence) and the approved Mitigation Strategy have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a protected, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy NPPF Section 15 and Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23.

- 2.1.4** This report sets out a mitigation strategy to meet the requirements of condition 4.

2.2 Legislative Background

- 2.2.1** 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.

- 2.2.2** 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.

2.3 Site Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The property is a detached residential house located on the south side of School Road in Barkham, Wokingham (central OS grid reference: SU 77116 66797).

- 2.3.2** The property is in a rural setting amongst a small cluster of residential properties situated along School Road and to the south along Langley Common Road. The surrounding landscape is primarily agricultural with a patch of scrub and scattered trees 20 m to the west and parcels of deciduous woodland. The closest woodland parcel is approximately 185 m to the southwest and 300m to the east. There is a pond at Handpost Farm 135 m to the east; a suitable foraging resource for bats.

3 MITIGATION STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1** This report sets out a mitigation strategy prepared by Vicky Potts MCIEEM, registered under Natural England Class Licence CL18 and therefore an appropriately qualified ecologist. It sets out a summary of the of the approach to be undertaken under the BMCL licence.

3.2 Impact assessment

- 3.2.1** The emergence surveys confirmed a maximum count of three common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats using the property. The points of egress for the bats include the eaves on the eastern elevation of the house, the verge tiles above the eastern gable and the hip on the western elevation. These findings indicate that the house acts as a day roost for small numbers of male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats.
- 3.2.2** The survey data shows that the development proposals will result in the permanent loss of three access points for common pipistrelle (P. pipistrellus) bats for up to two day roosts i.e. one in the roof tiles and one in the eaves. Furthermore, in the absence of mitigation the works could lead to the disturbance and/or injury of bats if present at the time.
- 3.2.3** A “low impact” Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) WML-CL21 has been granted (issued on October 17th 2024) and mitigation for the impacts of the work will be required in order to avoid harming bats and the mitigations proposals detailing the strategy to be adopted are set out below.

3.3 Timing of work

- 3.3.1** The work to remove existing roof coverings to enable the extension will be timed to take place in conditions suitable for bats to be active i.e. between March and mid-November inclusive, to avoid the main bat hibernation season when there is low risk of torpid bats being present.

3.4 Approach to work and responsibilities

Responsibilities

- 3.4.1** A Registered Consultant, or one of their appointed accredited agents, will be appointed by the homeowner to work with the building contractors throughout the project and to undertake the licensable works. The ecologist will be available to provide advice throughout the work; however, the elements of the project where an ecologist will have direct impact on site will be as follows:

Toolbox talk

- 3.4.2** The ecologist will present a toolbox talk to the contractors working on site detailing the location of the confirmed and potential roosting sites, signs of bats to look out for during the work, the legislation that protects bats and their roosts, good working practices including the approach to take during the stripping of roof tiles, the measures that are required to protect bats during the work and what to do if bats are found. The toolbox talk will detail areas where an ecologist is required to inspect and/or supervise works. A copy of the licence will be available for inspection on site during all licensable works.

Ecological inspection and supervision

- 3.4.3** Any works that will disturb bat roosting features i.e. removal of the roof tiles on the rear elevation and side hipped roof, within the building will be undertaken under the supervision of the Registered Consultant and/or their accredited agents.
- 3.4.4** The extension work will be preceded by the removal of coverings i.e. hip and roof tiles at the western side of the property and roof tiles and soffits at the rear eastern end of the roof which will be carried out by a soft strip i.e. hand removal of features suitable for roosting bats.
- 3.4.5** The roof coverings will be carefully removed by gloved hands under the supervision of the Registered Consultant or their accredited agents. If bat(s) are discovered during the work, the licensed ecologist or Registered Consultant would capture the bat(s) and transfer it/them directly to a bat box erected in advance of the works.

- 3.4.6** If a bat is injured during the work, the licensed ecologist will take the bat to a bat carer within the Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire Bat Group. The bat will be returned and released on site if and when fit to do so.

Compensation and Enhancement

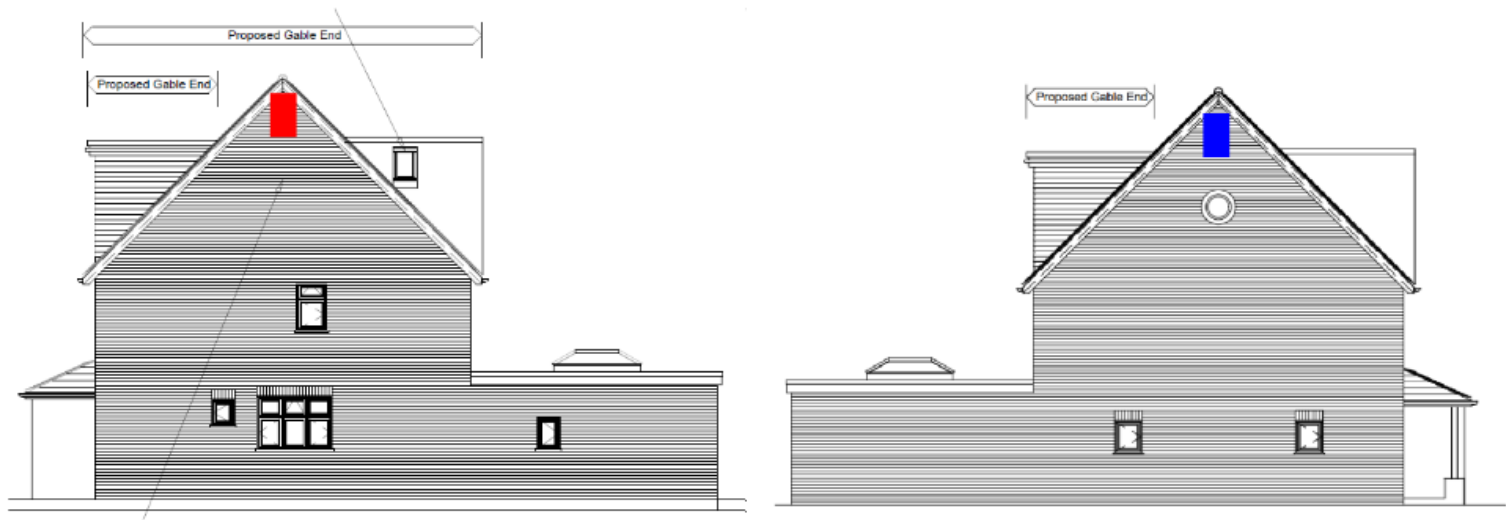
- 3.4.7** One woodcrete bat box will be fixed to a suitable mature tree or purpose-built pole on site prior to the works starting and will be in place for a minimum of five years (boxes can only be removed after the five years if no evidence of use has been found at this stage), to provide compensation for the roosts lost.
- 3.4.8** In the long-term, to enhance the property the renovated elevation will incorporate features that provide access points/roosting sites for common pipistrelle bats. For example, by incorporating an integrated bat box (such as an Ibstock enclosed bat box, Habibat bat box, or a suitable functional equivalent) at the apex of the proposed northern gable end and installing a wall mounted bat box at the eastern gable end (such as a the Low Profile Woodstone Bat Box or a Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box) (see **Appendix 1**).

4 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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

APPENDIX 1 – BAT ROOST PROVISION



Location of wall mounted bat box at the eastern gable end



Location of integrated bat box at the western gable end

Drawn by:	Date:	Scale:	High Gables, Barkham	
JM	September 2024	Not to scale	Bat Roost Provision	