TECHNICAL NOTE:
Preliminary Roost Assessment

Billingbear Lodge
Wokingham

Report for:
All Brick & Stone Limited
Unit A7 Grovelands Avenue Workshops
Grovelands Avenue
Winnersh
Berkshire
RG41 5LB

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the above property on Thursday 10 July 2025. The purpose of the survey was to assess the presence or likely absence of bats utilising the buildings and provide appropriate mitigation measures, as necessary. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The proposals are to extend the property and replace the existing single-storey extension with a two-storey requiring some internal and external modifications and replace the existing single-storey outbuilding. The works will be restricted to the existing built footprint and therefore the surrounding garden area/grounds will remain largely unaffected by the works.

LEGISLATION

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

METHODOLOGY

Baseline Data

As certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated and whether any European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 1 km of the site. In addition, a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust[1] and by an experienced and licensed ecologist[2]. A thorough internal and external examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces, where present, were accessed to check for any evidence of bats.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

[1] Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
[2] The lead surveyor was Alan Beaumont, BSc (Hons), MSc. MCIEEM - 2018-37192-CLS-CLS.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also used during the inspection to record any bat calls.

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

RESULTS

Baseline Data

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no statutory ecological designated sites located on, adjacent to or within 2 km of the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Holt Copse and Joel park Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 2.92 km to the south-west of the site. There are no Habitats of Principal Importance located on or directly adjacent to the site, with the site situated within Network Enhancement Zone 2[3]. The nearest HPI is Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland, also noted in the National Forest Inventory as Broadleaved Woodland, and Ancient Woodland – Beech Wood, located approximately 0.02 km to the west of the site.

According to the Multi-agency website, a single bat licence has been granted within the 1 km study area, which was for the destruction of a resting place and a breeding site for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) bats (reference: 2015-8658-EPS-MIT and 2015-8658-EPS-MIT-1), located approximately 0.98 km to the west of the site.

Google Earth imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 2003, with the site being dominated by the existing residential dwelling and outbuilding with associated hardstanding and garden areas.

Site Description (Photographs 1 - 4)

The site is located off Maidenhead Road in Wokingham, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 824717 and covers approximately 0.30 of a hectare. The site is bordered by Maidenhead Road to the south, The Straight Mile to the west, development (buildings and garden areas) to the north and east with farmland to the north-east.

The site comprised the residential property and outbuilding with associated hardstanding and garden areas. The building was a detached two-storey residential dwelling of masonry construction with a pitched tiled roof with two chimneys and timber soffits and fascias. At the rear there was a masonry constructed single-storey extension with a pitched tiled roof with timber soffits and fascias as well as a flat roof section connecting to the main house. The single-storey outbuilding was of masonry construction with a pitched pantiled roof and timber cladding at each gable end. Wooden soffits and fascias were recorded. Internally, there was a single attic space recorded in the main building, which appeared to have been recently relined and insulated with mineral wool. The attic space in the single-storey extension was lined with a bitumen based membrane and insulated. Internal access into the outbuilding was restricted, with the roof void/roof space not fully accessed during the survey.

[3] Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is less likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat.

Well-maintained lawns dominated the garden areas with some ornamental planting and individual trees also present.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the buildings. The main building and extension lacked any key roosting features, such as areas of tile hanging. The timber cladding on each gable end of the outbuilding was generally tightly sealed with any gaps dusty and cobwebbed with no evidence of bats recorded. The roof tiles on the buildings were generally well-aligned and tightly sealed, with only a few restricted gaps recorded. During the internal inspection of the property, the main attic space was fully accessed and not complex allowing a thorough inspection to be completed, with an accumulation of mixed-age brown long-eared type droppings recorded. During the internal inspection of the single-storey extension, some scattered brown long-eared type droppings were recorded within the roof space. There was an active wasp nest present, which restricted full access.

No droppings were recorded within the areas of the outbuilding that were accessible but it is important to note full access was not possible.

The site itself, comprising a well-maintained residential plot of restricted size, provides only limited foraging opportunities for bats. None of the surrounding established trees/vegetation will be removed to facilitate the works and, therefore, any flight-lines currently utilised by bats will be retained.

Other Wildlife

Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposals are to extend the property and replace the existing single-storey extension with a two-storey requiring some internal and external modifications and replace the existing single-storey outbuilding. The works will be restricted to the existing built footprint and therefore the surrounding garden area/grounds will remain largely unaffected by the works.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site, comprising a residential plot, is of overall limited ecological value, with the majority of the species recorded described as common or abundant and found in similar places across much of Britain, with the property considered to be a roost used by brown long-eared bats.

Although it is acknowledged that further surveys are required in order to confirm the status of the roost and provide the further details required to support the appropriate licence application to Natural England, it is important to note that a range of measures can be implemented on the site to minimise disturbance and maintain roosting opportunities for bats in the long-term, as detailed below.

In order to provide alternative/enhanced roosting opportunities for bats, four bat boxes (x4 2FN Schwegler Bat Boxes, or equivalent) will be installed on suitable trees on site. The boxes will be positioned in accordance with best practice and installed as soon as possible and prior to any works. It is important to note that the main roof space will remain largely unaffected, with any works appropriately timed and completed over a relatively short duration, with key works directly supervised by the licenced ecologist/accredited agent. Any new timbers will be treated with ‘bat friendly’ chemicals and any new roof lining will use a traditional bitumen-based felt (Type 1F) or an approved breathable membrane, which has passed a 'snag test' and has an appropriate certificate. If considered necessary, replacement/new access points will be provided in a similar location as currently being utilised by bats, with a corresponding gap provided within the roof lining (if required), to allow bats back into the attic space. Other works including the removal of the roof of the single-storey extension and demolition of the outbuilding (if confirmed to support a

roost) will be carried out carefully and under direct supervision of the licensed ecologist/accredited agent, with the following precautionary measures implemented:

- all site operatives will be given a toolbox talk on the possibility of encountering bats and the legal protection they and their roosts are afforded (copy of a toolbox talk has been attached at Appendix A for reference);
- prior to any works, the buildings (confirmed to support a roost) will be carefully re-checked by a licensed bat worker/accredited agent for any roosting bats;
- initial works will be carried out with great care. All tiles (roof and ridge) will be lifted and removed by hand, lifting them clear with two hands rather than lifting the front and rolling the tile backwards which may crush any bats beneath;
- tiles will also be checked underneath before being stacked or discarded, as bats sometimes cling to the undersides of tiles; and
- a similar soft strip of other features that bats can utilise for roosting (such as timber barge boards/lead flashing) will be completed.

Should any bats be encountered during this initial check and soft strip, they will be caught by hand by the licensed bat worker/accredited agent, checked thoroughly for any indication of damage before being placed in a bat bag. The bat will then be placed in one of the bat boxes already installed on the site. The box will have the hole loosely blocked with a piece of cloth to prevent any bats escaping, which will be removed at dusk to allow any bats to move off after dark. Should any injured or severely underweight bats be located, remedial measures will be taken, including seeking appropriate care of the bat and providing additional food in the form of mealworms.

It is considered that with the series of mitigation measures to be implemented on the site and the fact that the roof space will be fully available to bats, after the works have been completed, there should be no deleterious effects on the conservation status of the bats that are using the site and therefore favourable conservation status will be maintained.

In addition to the above specific mitigation measures, a series of generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, will be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024[4].

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Although no bird nesting material was recorded during the survey with very limited areas of potential nesting habitat to be removed/affected, a check should be carried out prior to any works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect any nearby established vegetation, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'. The retention and protection of the existing vegetation will help to maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by bats and other wildlife.

Although the works are restricted with limited opportunities to implement any enhancement measures, a series of wildlife boxes (such as bird boxes) could be installed onto the site to provide enhanced roosting and nesting opportunities.

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. As the site already experiences some lighting from on-site sources there should be no change in current light levels from the proposed works.

[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

As proportionate mitigation is available and deliverable, along with a range of enhancement measures to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on bats and local wildlife that are using the site, there are no over-riding ecological constraints to the re-development proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted at this stage, subject to appropriately worded conditions.

The findings of this initial survey will be supplemented by the bat activity surveys currently being carried out along with any additional mitigation measures that might be required.

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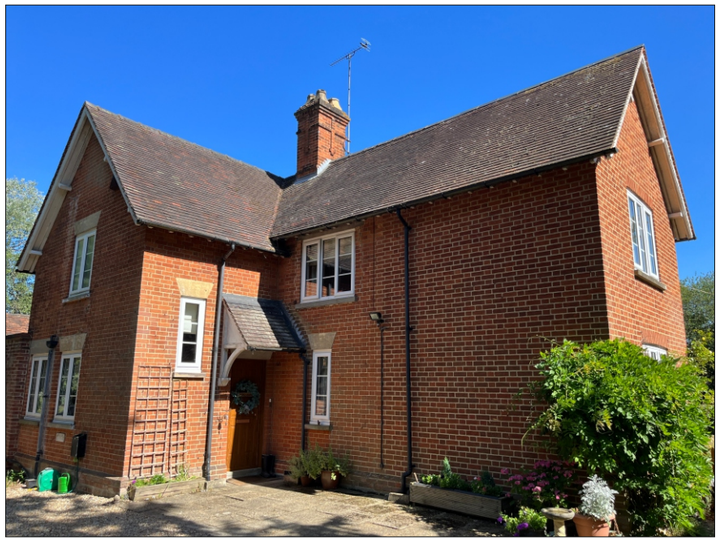
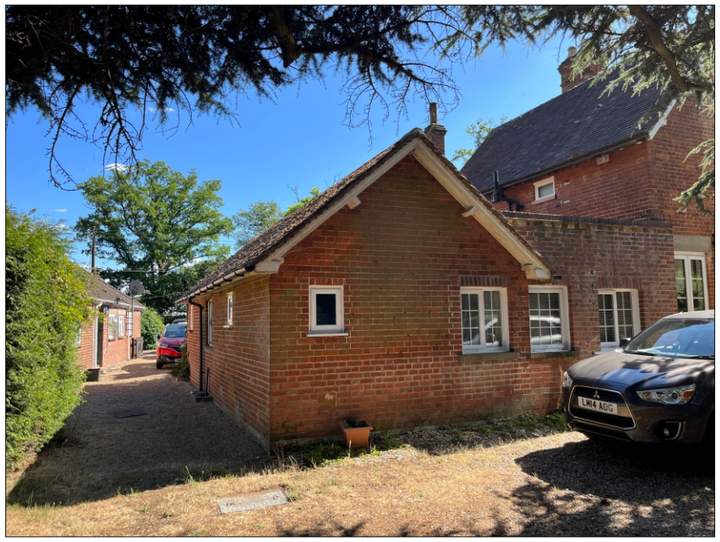
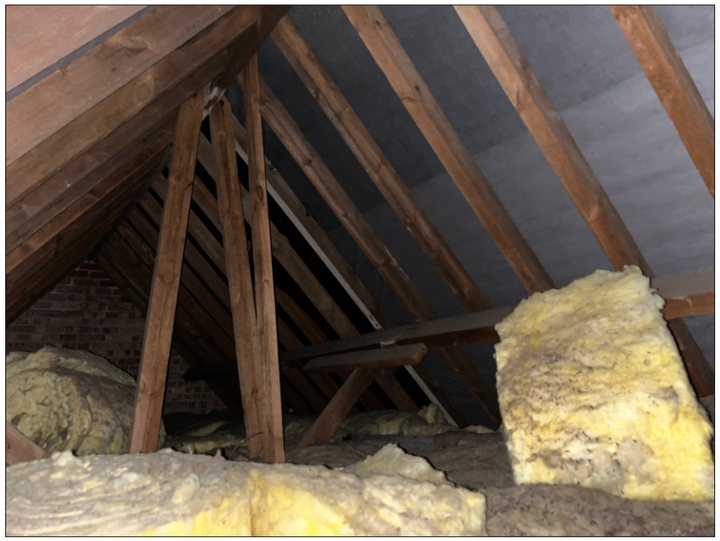
Photograph Record Sheet



Photograph 1: Showing the front of the property.



Photograph 2: Showing the single-storey extension on the main property.



Photograph 3: Showing the roof space, with some brown long-eared bat type droppings recorded.

Photograph 4: Showing the single-storey outbuilding.

Rev.	Details	Drawn / Chkd.	Date

PROJECT

Billingbear Lodge
Wokingham

TITLE

Photograph Record Sheet

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Scale	Date	Drg No.	Rev.
NTS	16.07.25	253230/01	
	Drawn: EC / Chkd.: ARB		

Appendix A
Toolbox Talk (Bats)

TOOLBOX TALK:
BATS

Key Contacts

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX

Tel: 01235 536042

Did you know?

- Bats are the worlds only flying mammal.
- There are 17 species of bat known to be breeding in the UK, 6 of which are endangered or rare and 6 are classed as vulnerable.
- Bats can be found across the country in urban and rural locations.
- They are often sighted at dusk as they leave their roost, flying around hedgerows, woodland and waterbodies, feeding on insects.
- Throughout the year bats will often change their roost, depending upon the season.
- Usually a pregnant female will only have one baby a year, this makes colonies vulnerable to population decline.
- During the winter bats hibernate and may not wake up, even if disturbed. Therefore it's important not to work on sites with bats during these months.
- Bats may not use the same roost throughout the year, however they are legally protected with or without a bat occupying them.

Identification

- You may find bats in any number of places, they tend to prefer dark, quiet spots with good shelter, such as holes and cracks in trees, roofs and walls of buildings, under bridges, old tunnels and in caves.
- Signs of bat presence include discarded moth wings, staining around crevices and small mouse like droppings which crumble easily.

Legislation

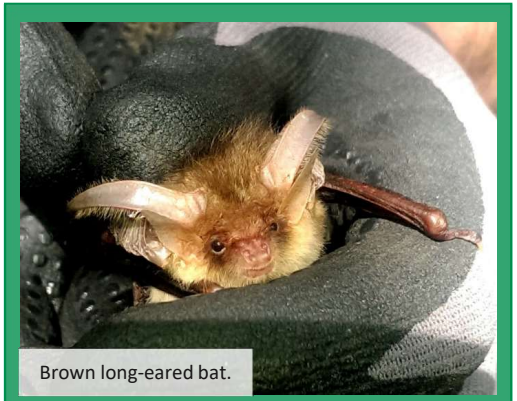
- All bats and their roosts are protected by UK and European Law. This makes it **illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats** or obstruct access to, damage or destroy their roosts and protects important feeding areas from damage or disturbance.
- Under law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Site Controls

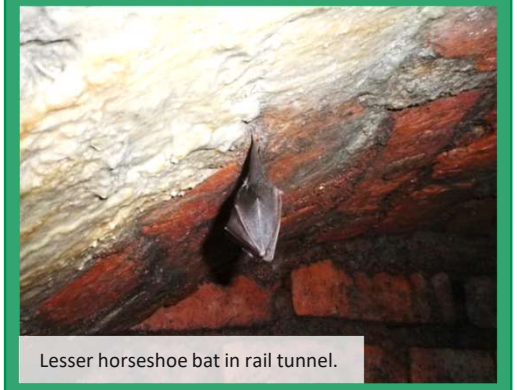
- There is always a **risk** that bats, as they move between different roost sites and occupy new roosts, could be encountered during site works.
- **If any bats are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**

1. If bats are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately** with any bat left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
2. If any injured bats are found during the works AAe would care for them and where possible be released in the same location once recovered.
3. During works staff must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with bats.
4. Any roof tiles will be lifted straight up, rather than being rolled over, minimising the risk of harming bats which may be sheltering underneath.
5. Areas must be fully checked for any bats or their evidence prior to filling any gaps and repointing any brickwork.
6. Any lighting must be installed must avoid illuminating vegetation and or bat boxes/access points.

These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You're not expected to be able to identify bats or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**



Brown long-eared bat.



Lesser horseshoe bat in rail tunnel.

Common pipistrelle bat.