

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	253072
Address:	67 Lowther Road, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG41 1JB.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed garage conversion to create habitable accommodation plus erection of a single storey front extension to form porch along with changes to fenestration.		
Type of Development:	Other Householder		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☒ No objection
- ☒ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

I have read the Preliminary Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, Ref R3123_PRA_a and reviewed the plans and elevations submitted in support of the application.

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from Natural England. A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time. All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to damage or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built.

The PRA external inspection recorded gaps in hanging tiles under the windowsill on the front elevation, under the top course and at the uPVC porch roof join. According to the Ecologist, these features provide suitable access to optimal conditions often favoured by crevice-dwelling bats. There was a large access gap from a broken soffit on the northern gable end, likely providing access for the nesting bird into the roof void. The Ecologist notes, 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. It is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey.

Evidence of crevice-roosting species is typically hidden from view in areas such as gaps between tiles and internal linings/insulation. Not recording evidence of bats during a survey does not equate to evidence of bat absence.

The internal inspection describes that a large main roof void that is partly separated by the old external cavity wall. The original section roof was lined with paper backed insulated liner, which had multiple gaps and tears exposing the roof tiles. Bird nesting material was visible within the old external wall cavity

The development proposals for the property involve seeking consent for a single storey porch extension and change of use of existing garage to a habitable room. I support the assessment that

due to the potential crevice roost features and surrounding habitats, the property has a moderate potential for crevice-dwelling bat roosts.

I am satisfied the PRW methodology and survey effort for the Ecologist to conclude that the development proposals to extend the property to the front, do not impact the potential features identified, and are therefore unlikely to result in injury or disturbance of bats or the damage or destruction of a bat roost, or obstruction of access. A European Protected Species mitigation licence would not be required for the works proposed to the ground floor to go ahead lawfully

Removal and repair of the northern elevation soffit may result in the death, injury or disturbance of nesting birds, if carried out during the bird nesting season (February to September), construction works could also obstruct access to and result in the disturbance of nesting birds. The Ecologist advises that future development proposals that may impact the dwelling roof or front elevation hanging tiles will directly impact the roost features identified and furthermore, these construction works could obstruct access to and result in the damage/destruction of bats roosts and lead to direct/indirect disturbance, injury and/or death of bats, which may have the potential to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of a bat species.

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. I therefore request that I17 and I19 are included in the decision notice.



Photograph 12. Gap under windowsill leading behind hanging tiles (TN4).



Photograph 13. Gap under top course of hanging tiles (TN4).



Photograph 14. Gap at hanging tile and uPVC porch join (TN5).



Photograph 16. Broken soffit on northern elevation (TN6).



Photograph 3. Lifted tile on front elevation (TN1).



Photograph 4. Raised curve in roof tiles at extension line.

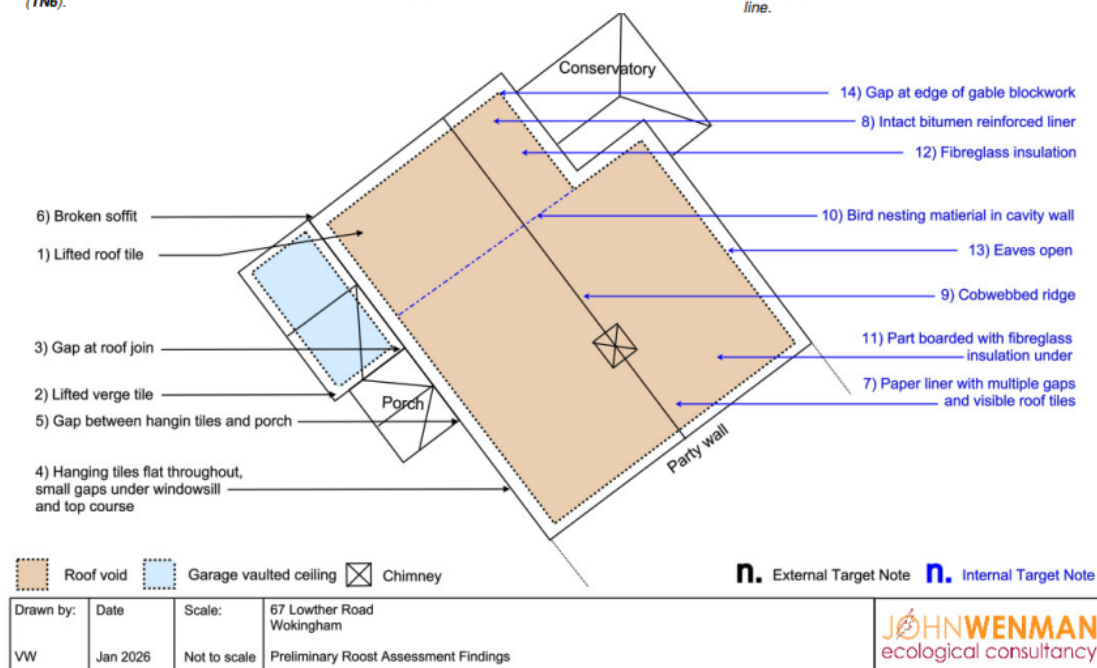


Figure 1. Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey Findings

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Informative Bats are a protected species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

Informative This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent for protected species. required under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The applicant is advised to contact an ecological consultant for further advice before works can proceed Natural England with regard to any birds and bats that have been recorded on the site.

Date:	25/02/26	Signed:	T Cuss
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