

The White House, Berwick St James

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Mr & Mrs Diffey

22nd May 2024



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The views and opinions contained within the document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to works.

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Executive Summary

- **The PRA determined that the building 1 housed a CONFIRMED bat roost based on the presence of 300+ bat droppings in the roof void.**
- **Three bat emergence surveys are required to confirm which species of bats are present, in what number and how they are entering and exiting the structure.**
- In May 2024 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Mr & Mrs Diffey to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey, of a detached house in the village of Berwick St James.
- The desk-based assessment returned no SAC relating to Annex II bats within 7.5km. No EPSLs were recorded within 2km of the site.
- Mitigation and habitat enhancement measures will be informed by the results of the bat emergence surveys.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In May 2024 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Mr & Mrs Diffey to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey, of a detached house in the village of Berwick St James.

1.2. Site Location and Description

The White House, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', is at the northern edge of the village of Berwick St James in Wiltshire, (NGR SU 07291 39655). An aerial photo view of the site can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Red line boundary for the Site – building 1.



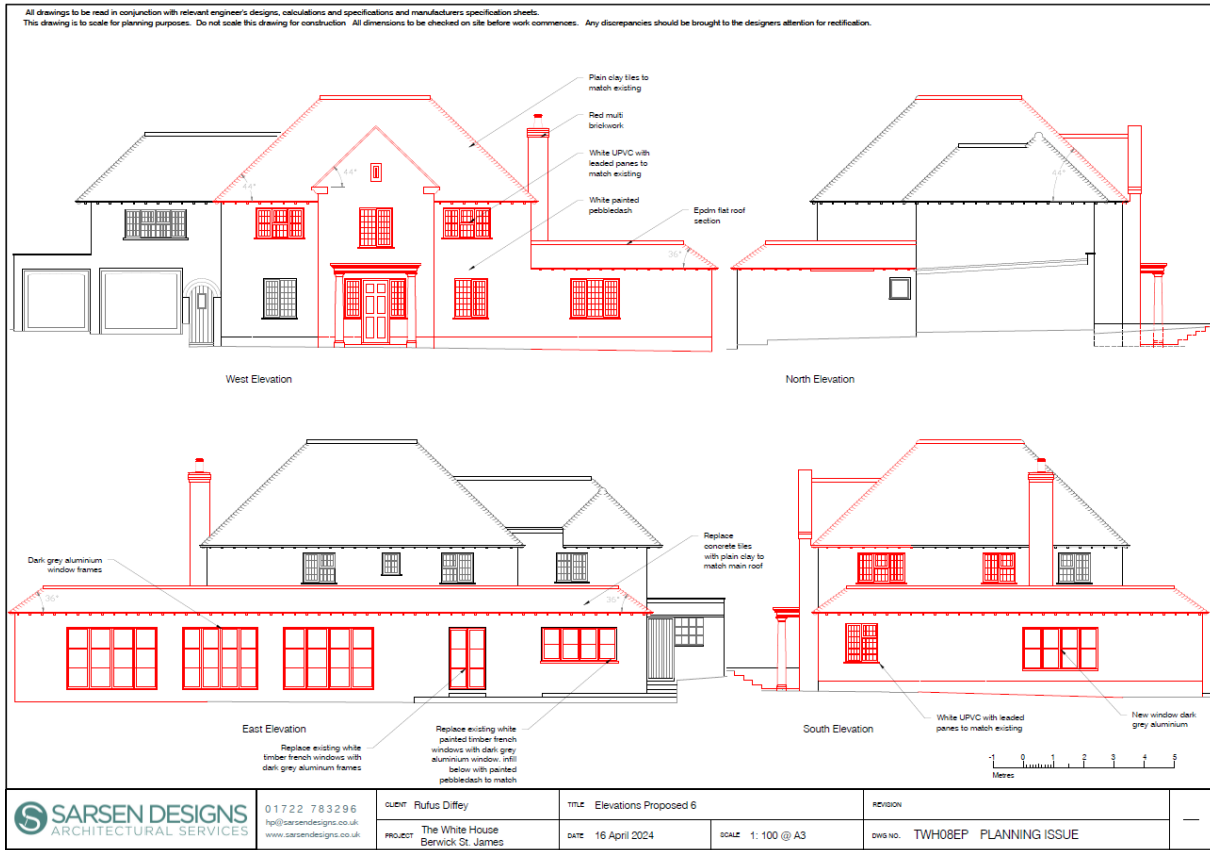
1.3. Development Proposals

The current proposal consist of the following:

- Extend the house on the eastern, southern and western elevations.

See Figure 2, below, for details of the proposed works.

Figure 2. A plan of the works proposed for the White House.



1.4. Survey Objectives

The objectives of the bat inspection survey comprise the following:

- Assess the building within the survey area for the potential for bats and birds to use it to roost.

1.5. Quality Assurance

All ecological surveys are led by Ecologists who are members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) at the appropriate level. By joining the CIEEM staff sign up to a professional code of conduct.

Methodology

2.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment

An external bat inspection was undertaken on 13th May 2024 by Daniel Ahern (Natural England licence: 2020-44508-CLS-CLS). The inspection followed methods described in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (fourth edition) (Collins; 2023).

2.2. Desk Study

A desk study was carried out with the aim of supplementing the field survey results by collating and reviewing existing ecological information relevant to the site and the local area.

Bat European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) records from within 2km of the site were obtained from the MAGIC website, in addition details of designated sites, within 7.5 km of the site, relating to Annex II bat species were also obtained from the same website.

2.3. External Inspection

The exterior walls and roof of the building were viewed from ground level and features that provide potential bat access points or roosting places were noted and referred to as potential roost features (prf). Features that were looked for include:

- cracks/holes in mortar;
- gaps between ridge tiles and ridge and roof tiles;
- gaps in soffit boxes;
- gaps under wooden cladding; and
- gaps around the eaves.

Areas where bat droppings may accumulate, such as on the ground, ledges, window sills and walls, were also inspected.

Any features that may potentially be used by bats were identified and any evidence of bat activity, as listed below, were noted.

2.4. Internal Inspection

The internal inspection comprised a thorough search of the roof void within the building, see Figure 2 below for a floor plan, for evidence indicative of past or current use by roosting bats. Direct evidence of bat presence may include:

- live bats or bat corpses;
- droppings;
- bat sounds;
- scratch marks;
- urine stains; and
- clean, cob-web free gaps around potential entrance points.

Potential access points and roosting sites were also noted.

In any roof voids, a systematic search for evidence of bat presence was undertaken, concentrating on roof beams, ceiling joists and exposed surfaces.

Any evidence was recorded.

2.5. Bat Roost Assessment

The findings of the internal and external surveys inform an assessment of the structure, classifying the bat roost potential it has. The different classifications are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat Roost Assessment Classifications

Classification	Description
NONE	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (ie a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
NEGLIGIBLE	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats; however, a small elements of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
LOW	A structure with one or more potential roost sites which could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter or protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or

	by larger numbers of bats, (ie unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
MODERATE	A structure with one or more potential roost sites which could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation space-space the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
HIGH	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and suitable surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
CONFIRMED	Evidence of bats roosting in the building or structure is recorded, bats, their droppings or feeding remains.

2.6. Equipment

The following equipment was available to use during the survey:

- close-focusing binoculars;
- P7 Lenser torch;
- camera;
- Depstech endoscope.

2.7. Limitations

The data provided by the online resources were not exhaustive. It is possible that bat species not included in the data search occur within the vicinity of the proposed development site.

The internal and external inspection survey provides a snapshot of conditions at the time of survey. Bats are mobile creatures that will move into and out of areas.

The details within this report will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue.

Results

3.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2. Desk Study

Statutory Conservation Sites

Records of Special Areas of Conservation relevant to Annex II bat species within 7.5km of the Site are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Statutory Designated Sites.

Name	Area (ha)	Designation	Description	Distance & direction from the Site
Statutory sites				
None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Key

SAC – Special Area of Conservation

Bat Species

Records of bat EPSL within 2km of the Site are presented in Table 3 below recorded within the last 30 years.

Table 3: Bat EPSL Records within 2km of the Site

EPSL Reference	Species named	Distance & direction from the Site
None	n/a	n/a

3.3. Bat Inspection Survey

The results of the building inspection are set out in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Bat inspection External & Internal Survey Results

Building	External description	Internal description
building 1 – The White House	A detached 1930s house set in its own grounds. A large pond was recorded immediately to the east of the extent of the grounds. The roof was a complex, dual pitch design, with a single gable at the western elevation. The roof was clad with machine made clay tiles which had a c20% coverage of bryophytes at the drip points. A low number of PRF were recorded across the covering. A number of PRF were recorded at the eaves where gaps in soffits and fascias were recorded. The walls were constructed from rendered brickwork. No PRF were recorded. No evidence of bats was found externally.	There was a large void in the roof. The floor was insulated with rockwool. The underside of the roof was visible throughout, it was lined with type 1F felt which was largely in good repair. Two small PRF were recorded where natural light was observed at gaps in the roof. Approximately 300+ bat droppings* were recorded on the floor, see photos 3 & 4.

*A sample of the droppings were collected and have been sent to Surescreen for eDNA analysis to confirm the species.

Results of the bat roost assessment are set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Bat Roost Potential for the Buildings Surveyed

Building	Bat Roost Potential	Reason	Recommendations
building 1 – The White House	CONFIRMED ROOST	- A low number of viable PRF were recorded in the external and internal fabric of the building. - Approximately 300+ bat droppings* were recorded on the floor of the roof void.	Three bat emergence surveys are required.

Discussion and Requirements

4.1. Discussion

4.1.1. Desk based assessment results

The desk-based assessment returned no SAC relating to Annex II bats within 7.5km. No EPSLs were recorded within 2km of the site.

4.1.2. Survey results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

A number of PRF were recorded in the roof cladding and at the eaves.

Evidence of bats roosting in the roof void was recorded, indicating that void dwelling bats are roosting in the structure. The PRFs recorded in the roof cladding indicate that crevice dwelling bats may be roosting in the external fabric of the building.

4.2. Requirements

4.2.1. Survey requirements

Following current best practice guidelines three bat emergence surveys are required to characterise the roost; the number of bats using it, confirm which species and the points of entry/exit.

These surveys must take place between 1st May and 30th August to be technically robust.

4.2.2. Mitigation & habitat enhancement

Mitigation and habitat enhancement measures will be informed by the results of the bat emergence surveys.

References

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

Photographs

Photo 1 – western elevation of building 1.



Photo 2 – eastern elevation of building 1.



Photo 3 – bat droppings adjacent to the chimney breast of building 1.



Photo 4 – bat droppings in a water tank adjacent to the chimney breast.



Photo 5 – underside of the roof in building 1.



Photo 6 – the roof void in building 1.



Legislation and Policy

Bats

All species of bat found in the UK are listed under Schedule 5 of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended 2018) and are afforded protection under Section 9(1), Section 9(4)(b&c) and Section 9(5) of the Act. Under this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally or recklessly:

- Kills or injures any bat;
- Disturbs any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstructs access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection.

Bats are afforded additional protection through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of *The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017* (as amended). Under Part 3 of this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he:

- Deliberately captures, injures or kills a bat;
- Deliberately disturbs a bat; or
- Damages or destroys a bat breeding site or resting place.

Disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, rear or nurture their young, migrate or hibernate. It also includes any disturbance likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species. Consequently, attention should be given to dealing with the modification or development of an area if aspects of it are deemed important to bats, such as flight corridors and foraging areas.

Breeding Birds

Wild birds, their nests and eggs, are afforded protection under Section 1(1) of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Under this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally:

- Kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1;
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- Takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird.