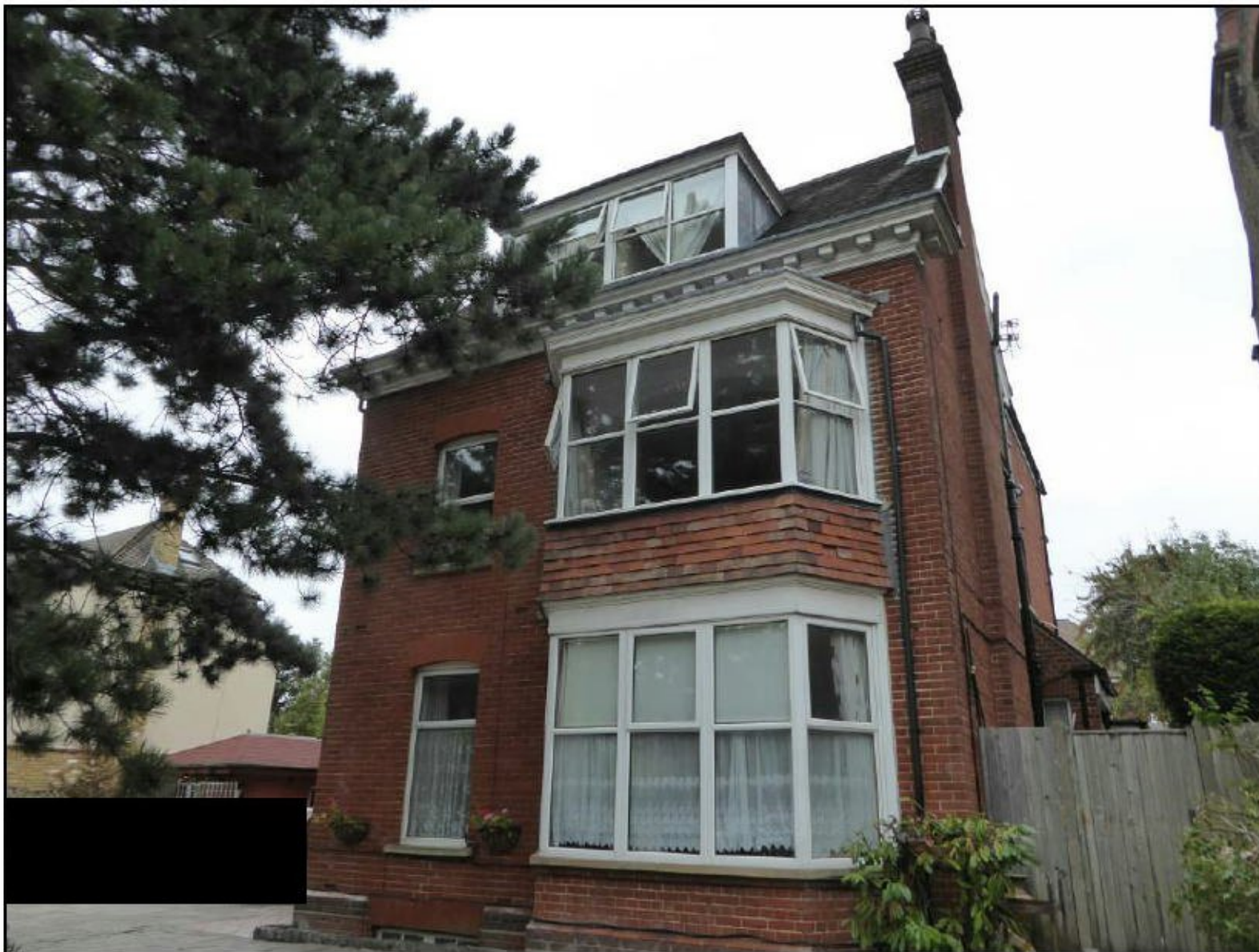




Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (BATS) AT EPSOM LODGE CARE HOME EPSOM



**Prepared for:
Epsom Lodge Care Home
1 Burgh Heath Road
Epsom
KT17 4LW**

22 September 2020

Ref: ET/PEA-20/09.09



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Appendix 1

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The validity of this report ceases at the prescribed time limit or after 12 months from the site inspection, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner.



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Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr K Middleton of Epsom Lodge Care Home to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of Epsom Lodge Care Home, 1 Burgh Heath Road, Epsom, KT17 4LW. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 12.00hrs, during daylight hours. An external and internal inspection of the building took place, to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) comprised a detailed search of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The desk top study revealed that six statutory designated sites are situated within a 2km search radius of the proposed development site.

Externally and internally, there was no evidence of bats (current or historically) within the care home. The building is in a good condition and there were no visible roosting opportunities or access points into the building which could be utilised by bats.

Due to the absence of roosting potential and the lack of evidence of bats found during the detailed inspection, it is concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats to be present within the care home. Based on the recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines prior to works, no further survey effort is required.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr K Middleton to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal of Epsom Lodge Care Home, 1 Burgh Heath Road, Epsom, KT17 4LW to support a forthcoming planning application to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the building.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the building (currently or previously).
- To add confidence where no bats are found, or to categorise the nature of a roost where evidence of bats are found.
- To establish whether further surveys, mitigation or a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) is required.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, that will seek to construct two new buildings containing flats, following the demolition of the existing care home.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats and report was completed by Emma Turnbull. Emma holds a Class 2 Bat Licence (CLS-CLS-41628) and has been surveying bats for three years. She has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, echolocation analysis and bat biology and identification.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Legislative Background

All species of British bat 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 kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as “*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*” whether or not bats are present at the time. A summary of the main legislation and planning considerations are included at Appendix 1.

Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.



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3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference TQ 21466 60323, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom, highlighted.

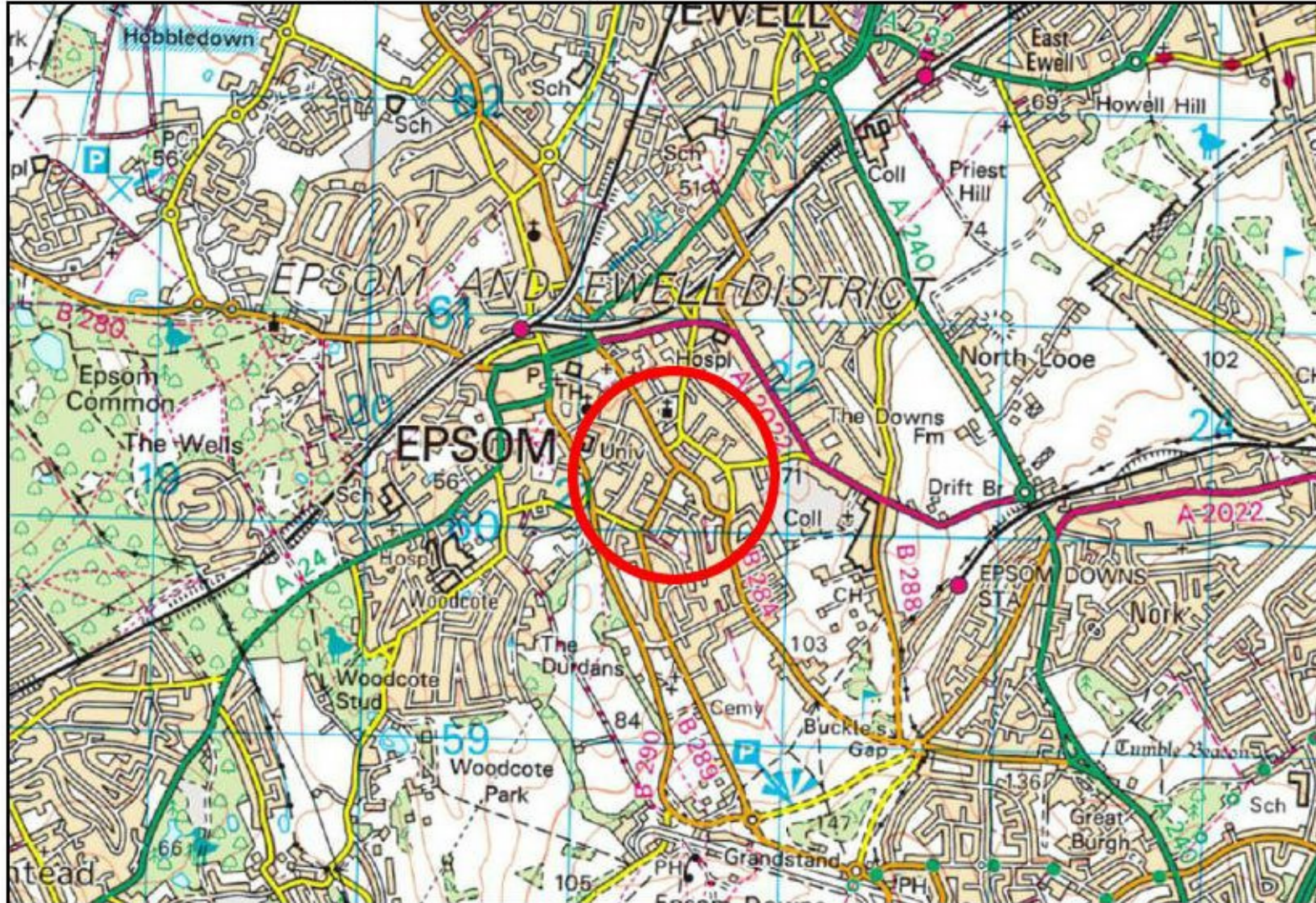
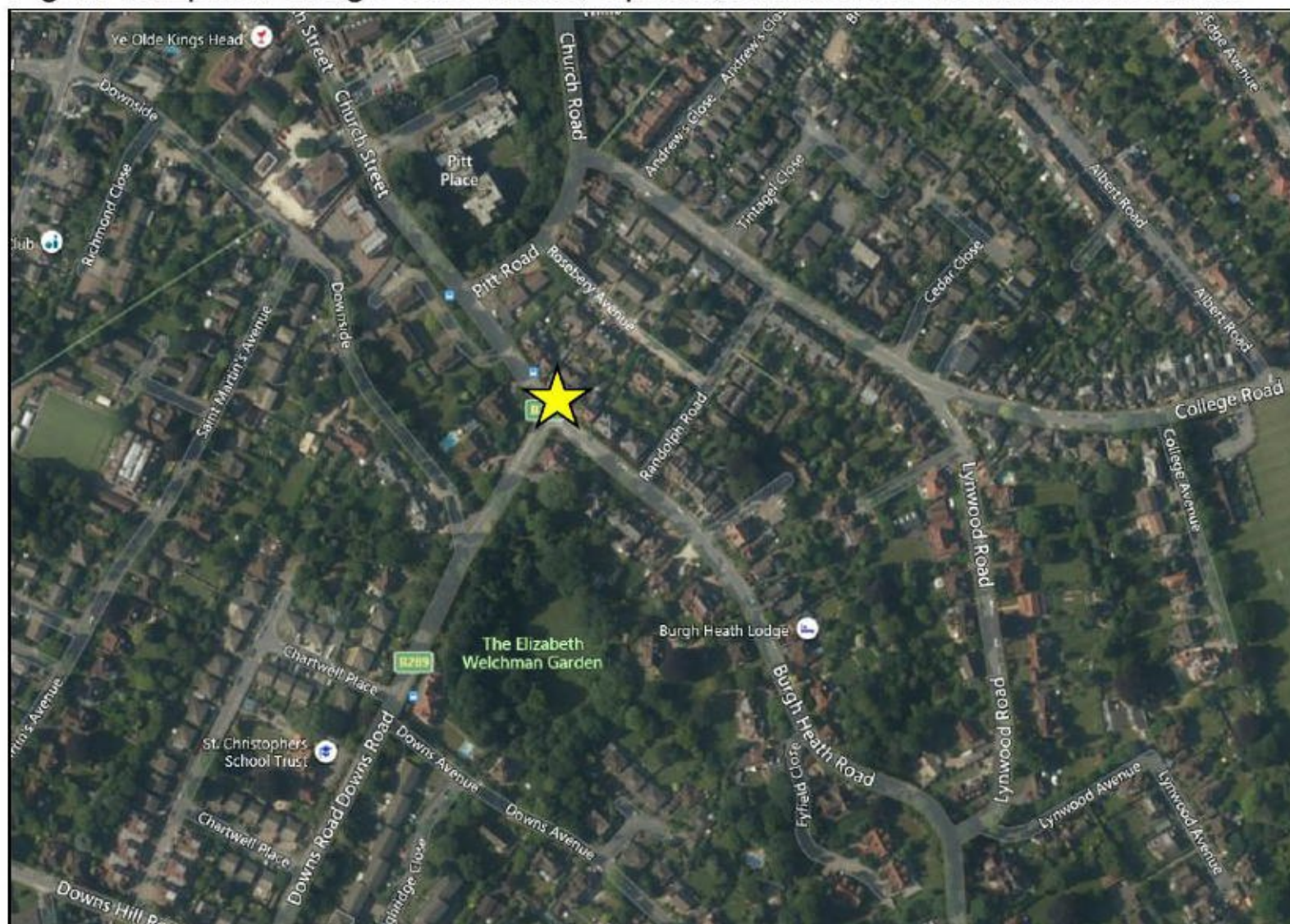


Figure 2. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The proposed development site, which is located in the town of Epsom, comprises a detached, brick-built building. The remainder of the site comprises a paved driveway and a car park, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers no foraging or commuting habitat for bats.

Figure 3. Paved driveway. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom. 09.09.2020



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

Google Earth and MAGIC maps (magic.defra.gov.uk) websites were used prior to the survey to determine the suitability of the surrounding habitat to support roosting bats and to identify any statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

The site is situated on the outskirts of the town of Epsom, adjacent to buildings of differing sizes and styles. Elizabeth Welchman Gardens lies immediately to the south of the site, which is likely to provide good habitat for bats and is within travelling distance for bats. Epsom Golf Club lies to the east of the proposed development site, Epsom Downs Racecourse to the south and Epsom Common to the west, all of which comprise grassland, woodland and wetland, which is likely to be good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats, although there is limited connectivity to the site from these areas.



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Epsom and Ashstead Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Stones Road Pond SSSI, Banstead Downs SSSI, Ashstead Commons National Nature Reserve (NNR), Ashstead Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Cuddington Meadows LNR lie within 2km of the site, although there is no ecological connectivity to these areas from the site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed that no current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, although one historical EPSL for bats was granted in 2014.

4.2 Daylight Survey

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of Epsom Lodge Care Home, 1 Burgh Heath Road, Epsom, KT17 4LW was carried out by Emma Turnbull on Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 14.00hrs. The weather conditions for the survey were sunny with a temperature of 20 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole and a ladder.

During the preliminary ecological appraisal (bats), an external inspection of the care home was carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the building – soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the building.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances.
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

Buildings or structures that were not to be affected by the current proposals or with no bat roosting potential were not inspected.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the occupant. The majority of the loft space had been converted into habitable accommodation and the remaining loft space was inaccessible. However, given that there was no access externally for roosting bats to enter these spaces, it was not thought to have been a constraint.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the building were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascia's and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The care home is a detached, brick-built building, which is in a good condition externally. The main roof of the care home is pitched and covered in close fitting tiles, none of which have slipped or are missing, see Figure 4 below. The ridge tiles are all in a good condition with no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit and the verges are all tightly sealed with no obvious gaps in the mortar. The soffits and fascia's are also in a good condition with no splits or cracks in which roosting bats could use, see Figure 5 on page 9. The small areas of hanging tiles were all tightly fitted with no gaps in which roosting bats could utilise. There are several single storey sections to the building and the lead flashing between these areas and the main building are tight to the walls, with no gaps in which roosting bats could utilise, see Figure 6 on page 9. The pitched roof sections are tiled, all of which are tightly fitted with no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 7 on page 10. There are some flat roofed sections, which are covered in bitumen felt, which are all in a good condition with no access into the building for roosting bats, see Figure 8 on page 10. There is also a conservatory on the side of the building, with glass panels, all of which are in a good condition with no cracks, see Figure 9 on page 11.

No bats or evidence of bats were recorded during the external inspection of the care home and externally there were no obvious visible features on the building which could be utilised by roosting bats.

Figure 4. Example of tightly fitted roof tiles. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom.
09.09.2020





Figure 5. Soffits and fascia's. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom. 09.09.2020



Figure 6. Example of lead flashing between the main building and single storey section. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom. 09.09.2020





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Figure 7. Pitched roofed section of building. Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom.
09.09.2020



Figure 8. Example of flat roof, Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom. 09.09.2020





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Figure 9. Example of glass conservatory, Epsom Lodge Care Home, Epsom.
09.09.2020



5.2 Internal Inspection

An internal inspection of the building was undertaken and examined for any signs of bats (as described in section 4.2).

The majority of the loft space had been converted into habitable accommodation and the remaining loft space was inaccessible. However, given that there was no access externally for roosting bats to enter these spaces, it was not thought to have been a constraint.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the building.



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6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the criteria laid out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). These criteria are listed on pages 11 and 12 with the features **highlighted in bold**.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures:

- are of a pre-20th Century construction;
- are in a lowland rural setting;
- **have woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby;**
- have large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes;
- have numerous crevices in stonework and structures;
- have an uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty;
- **have hanging tiles** or roof cladding, **especially on south-facing walls;**
- **have a roof warmed by the sun;**
- are disused or little used; largely undisturbed;
- provide appropriate hibernation conditions, such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, or fortifications; or
- Recent or **historical records of bat roosts in the general area.**

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be lower where structures:

- **are in an urban setting with little green space;**
- are subject to heavy disturbance (constant movement due to draughts and noise, also unstable microclimate);
- have a small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared);
- **are of a modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelle bats may still be present);**
- are comprised of prefabricated steel or sheet materials; (some sections);
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The combined evidence from the inspection of the care home provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions as set out in this report. There are no visible features on the building externally in which bats could roost or access the building to roost. Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the building. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed development, all work must stop, and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licenced bat ecologist.

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may have changed and bats may start roosting at the site.



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8. References

Collins, J (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), London.
HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.
HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act.
HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (1999). Bat Workers' Manual (2nd Edition). Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, Peterborough.

9. Queries

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed, in the first instance, to Urban Tree Experts:

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APPENDIX 1

In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate.
- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Planning Considerations:

Developments that compromise the protection afforded to bats or roosts under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England (NE).

NE, the government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, is responsible for issuing EPS licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations.

Three tests must be satisfied before this licence (to permit otherwise prohibited acts) can be issued:

- Reg 44(2)(e) – the derogation is “in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.
- Reg 44(3)(a) – there is “no satisfactory alternative” to the derogation.
- Reg 44(3)(b) –the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

Tests (a) and (e) can be met with the issue of planning permission for the proposed works. Test (b) is determined by NE's ecology department that requires the development of a suitable mitigation strategy that would ensure that any bats present on site, are retained at the same population level or better.