

**47 FERNBANK ROAD, ASCOT**

**PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT**



A Report to: Landmark Group

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**MMECOLOGY**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

In July 2023, Landmark Group commissioned MMEcology to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at 47 Fernbank Road in Ascot. This survey is required to inform a planning application associated with the demolition of the existing dwelling on site and erection of a replacement dwelling.

To fulfil the above brief, it was necessary to assess the potential for the existing dwelling on site to support roosting bats. Therefore, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken on 14 July 2023. This report details the results of the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

## 1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a detached, single-storey, vacant dwelling, located within the developed area of north Ascot. The site is located at National Grid Reference SU 90591 69252.

The dwelling is set within an urban setting, surrounded by residential buildings and their private gardens to north, west and south. Immediately to east is Fernbank road, beyond which is further dwellings with their associated gardens. Approximately 160m west of the site is Jubilee Recreation Ground, along with a block of woodland approximately 185m north-west of the site. Residential buildings, wooded blocks and grass fields form the wider landscape. Figure 1 shows the location of the application site within the wider landscape.

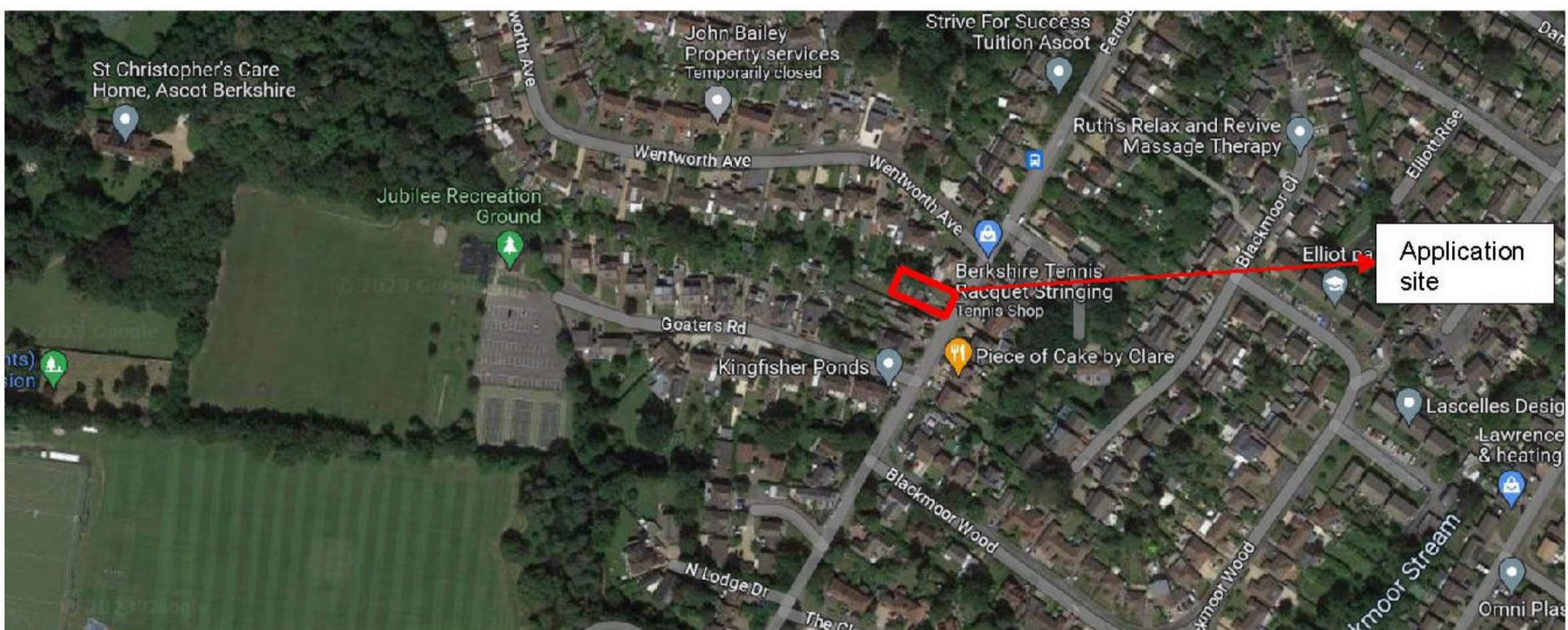


Figure 1. Aerial imagery showing the site in the wider landscape (Source: Google maps)

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

In line with the specifications detailed in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016), a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the building on site was conducted. The Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was conducted on 14 July 2023 by Maral Miri, Principal Ecologist, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv, Natural England Level 2 bat class licence holder. A visual assessment was undertaken to determine the presence of any Potential Roost Features (PRFs), together with a general appraisal of the suitability of the site for foraging and commuting. Example of PRFs include behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes, lead flashing and between tiles and the roof lining.

Any accessible PRFs were inspected using binoculars, a torch and endoscope for evidence of possible bat presence. Buildings were surveyed externally and internally.

Based on the PRF's present, the building on site was assessed using the suitability classes detailed within the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016), as detailed in table below:

Suitability	Description
<b>High</b>	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.
<b>Moderate</b>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
<b>Low</b>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.

### 3. SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1 EXTERNAL INSPECTION

The vacant dwelling on site is a detached, single-storey, brick building with pitched roofs covered by slates. To the rear is a single-storey extension with a flat roof, covered by roofing felt. The brickwork is in a good condition with no cracks, areas of missing mortar or holes present. The roofing felt is also in a good condition with the edges being well-sealed.



Figure 2. View of the front and rear elevations of the dwelling



Figure 3. View of the side elevations

The roof slates are generally in a good condition and tightly fitted; however, a number of minor gaps are present below the roof slates. A brick chimney breast is present along the southern elevation. Any soffits along the eaves are tightly fitted, with no gaps present.



Figure 4. Example of tightly fitted roof slates



Figure 5. Example of slightly lifted roof slates



Figure 6. Example of slightly lifted roof slates



Figure 7. Example of slightly lifted roof slates



Figure 8. Example of tightly fitted soffit and the well-sealed eaves

A total of two ventilation grills are present within the side gables. The garden is laid to lawn.



Figure 9. View of the ventilation grill (left) - View of the garden (right)

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the external inspection of the dwelling.

A number of potential entry points and roosting features for bats in the form of slightly lifted roof slates were recorded at the time of survey. As such, based on the external inspection, the dwelling on site is considered to be of moderate potential for bats.

### 3.2 INTERNAL INSPECTION

Internally, a single loft void is present. The floor to apex height is approximately 1m. The central part of the loft is boarded, and the floor is insulated with Micafil Vermiculite Loose Fill loft insulation. Black felt sarking is present between the rafters and the roof slates, which was in a good state of repair at the time of survey, with no cuts, tears or areas of sagging present. Two of the gables are of brick construction, with another gable of breezeblock construction.



Figure 10. View of the loft



Figure 11. View of the brick and breezeblock gable-ends





Figure 12. View of the roofing felt between rafters and slates



Figure 13. View of the loose fill insulation

During the internal inspection, no evidence of roosting bats in the form of bat droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks, etc. was recorded. This however could be attributed to the presence of roofing felt being in good condition.

## **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

Demolition and replacement of the existing dwelling is proposed.

### **4.2 SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT**

The external inspection of the dwelling confirmed the presence of a number of potential features providing entry points into roosting areas for bats, in the form of minor gaps under roof slates. The dwelling is therefore considered to be of moderate potential for roosting bats.

### **4.3 POTENTIAL IMPACT ON BATS**

As the dwelling on site has been confirmed to have moderate potential for roosting bats, if present, the proposal is likely to result in the disturbance, potential killing/injury of bats and loss of a roosting site.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The dwelling on site has been identified to moderate potential for roosting bats. Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016) recommends that for structures with moderate potential, two dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys are undertaken during the bat active season to determine the presence/likely absence of bats. Peak bat survey season extends from May to August.

If the survey work confirms presence of roosting bats, then a Natural England European Protected Species licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence will be required to enable the proposals. Prior to a licence being issued, planning permission must be granted and relevant conditions relating to protected species must be discharged.

## REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed). (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.