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**BAT SCOPING SURVEY**

**At**

**Elmbridge**  
Oxford Road  
Wokingham  
Berkshire  
RG41 2YJ

**NGR: SU 80113 68964**

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|---------------|---------------------------------------|
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ycobella Cox'.

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Date:          | 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 |
| UES reference: | UES03203/03                 |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Environmental Services Ltd (UES) carried out a bat scoping survey of Elmbridge, Wokingham in January 2021 (report reference: UES03203/01), during which the building was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, with 23 bat droppings being identified beneath the ridge beam, centrally located within the loft void. As such, two further presence / absence surveys were recommended. However, works were undertaken in 2021 in absence of the further surveys having been conducted.

Therefore, UES was commissioned to conduct an updated bat scoping survey which was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 for the retrospective planning application concerning the erection of a single storey extension and associated removal of a conservatory and chimney on the northern aspect of the building, as well as the replacement of the boxed soffits. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the building to support roosting bats, based on a site-specific survey and habitat assessment. The building was searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023).

Elmbridge is situated in an area which provides moderate quality habitat for bats. The area is suburban, with large areas of residential housing and well-lit roads but the nearby areas of ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, amenity grassland and waterbodies will support a variety of insects on which bats can forage. The nearby mature trees and residential buildings will provide a number of roosting opportunities. However, the presence of well-lit busy roads reduces the foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area, particularly for light-averse species.

The building has been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, this is based on the presence of several external PRFs which are suitable for roosting bats such as raised roof tiles as well as gaps underneath hipped and hanging tiles.

Six old bat droppings were found associated with the same roost characterised in 2021, with a further bat dropping of an equivalent age identified near the access hatch. These droppings are old and therefore assumed to have been present within the loft since 2021, with no new droppings being found. The roost is considered to have been retained; however, the replacement of the boxed soffits has potentially modified the access points.

**The building is considered to have moderate potential to support roosting bats, with droppings being identified within the loft. As such, if any further work with a direct impact upon the roof or loft void is to take place, further bat presence / absence surveys comprising of two visits would be required in order to determine whether bats are using the building for roosting purposes, and if so, to determine the species and number of bats. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season of May to September inclusive, with at least one of the surveys conducted within the peak bat survey season of May to August inclusive.**

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which give visual representations of the survey results.



# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications**

This report is compiled and written by Osian Shirley MSci, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Ysobella Cox BSc MBiol, UES Senior Ecologist. Ysobella is licensed by Natural England to survey all species of bats by observation using an artificial light under licence number 2025-85177-CL17-BAT (level 1). Ysobella is listed as an accredited agent on the bat survey licence of Toby Hart (2025-85916-CL19/20-BAT (level 3 & 4)). As such, she has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using an endoscope to survey for bats.

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

## **1.2 Survey objectives**

UES was commissioned in February 2026 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the building for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

## **1.3 Completed development and previous survey information**

The works included the demolition of a single storey conservatory as well as a chimney stack associated with the northern aspect of the building, followed by the erection of a single storey extension, which took place in 2021.

A bat scoping survey was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 by Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM. This bat scoping survey identified the building as being of moderate potential to support roosting bats, and recorded the condition of the building prior to the works having taken place (see report reference: UES03203/01).

## **1.4 Structure of the report**

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which give visual representations of the survey results.



## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 General**

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

### **2.2 Building survey**

The building on site was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023). This was conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 by Ysobella Cox and Osian Shirley.

#### **2.2.1 External inspection**

The external inspection of the building on site was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- |                           |                                                 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| • Roof and ridge tiles    | • Gaps under felt                               |
| • Lead flashing           | • Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding |
| • Eaves                   | • Gaps in brickwork and mortar                  |
| • Boxed soffits           | • Air bricks                                    |
| • Fascia and barge boards | • Grills                                        |
| • Window sills and panes  | • Vents                                         |
| • Walls                   |                                                 |



### **2.2.2 Internal inspection**

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

### **2.3 Survey limitations**

The survey was carried out in February at a time when bats are spending increasing amounts of time in torpor within hibernation sites. For this reason, exposed droppings from summer roosts may not be evident as they are likely to have decomposed or have been washed away.

Internal field signs should still be evident at this time of year, as should droppings in sheltered locations.



## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Habitat assessment

Elmbridge is located near the centre of Wokingham. The habitats on site include one residential dwelling with associated garden space, external and separate study room, and hardstanding driveway. The garden is bordered immediately to the west by a small collection of broadleaved trees.

The immediate surrounding area is suburban comprising large areas of residential housing and associated large mature gardens. Approximately 200m west of the site boundary is a large area of amenity grassland, small blocks of deciduous woodland and Elm Brook. Windmill Pond is also located approximately 625m north-west of the site boundary. These habitats and the mature gardens will provide moderate quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area. However, the surrounding suburban area is affected by light pollution due to street lighting, which reduces the suitability for foraging and commuting bats, especially light-averse bat species such as brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus* and *Myotis* species. Roosting opportunities are also of moderate quality in the local area, due to the presence of mature trees and residential buildings. Furthermore, Holt Copse & Joel Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 250m north-east of the site boundary. The site is designated for the presence of ancient semi-natural woodland and a large noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bat roost. Connectivity from the site to the LNR is of moderate quality due to the presence of allotments, mature gardens and a vegetated railway track. However, the nearby roads are well-lit which reduces the suitability for commuting bats.

In the wider surrounding area, habitats are similar in composition, with the suburban residential areas of Emmbrook to the north, Dowlesgreen to the east, Limmerhill to the south and Woollahill to the west. The residential areas are interspersed with areas of amenity grassland and woodland. These habitats and the mature gardens will provide moderate quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats while the buildings and mature trees will provide roosting opportunities.

### 3.2 Building survey

#### 3.2.1 External inspection

The building is a detached two-storey residential dwelling with a hipped multi-wing 'L plan' roof structure, featuring concrete roof tiles and ornate clay ridge tiles (see Photograph appendix, Photographs 1 & 2). The roof is generally in good condition; however, some areas of raised tiles are present on the eastern aspect which may provide a potential roosting feature (PRF) for bats (Photograph 3). A further PRF was identified where mortar has eroded underneath the hip tiles on the eastern aspect, with a further gaps present on the hip tiles of the southeastern aspect (Photographs 4 & 5).

The roof also features 8 dormers: 3 on the eastern aspect, 3 on the western aspect and 2 on the northern aspect. The dormers feature pitched rooves with concrete tiles and ornate clay ridge tiles, as well as hanging clay tiles on the fronts, as well as sides on some of the dormers. The dormers feature well sealed boxed soffits which were installed in 2021 (Photograph 6). The dormer at the eastern aspect has raised lead flashing and gaps under the hanging tiles (Photographs 7 & 8). The south-facing northeastern dormer has a similar gap underneath the hanging tile at its apex (Photograph 9). Beneath this dormer, the lead flashing above the porch where it meets the wall is raised in several spots, and there is also a gap next to the plastic weatherboarding above the front entrance at the eastern aspect (Photograph 10 & 11).



The building features boxed soffits which were installed in 2021 and are well sealed, with no cavities present. The building is constructed of redbrick which is tightly sealed, although a single mortar crevice was noted on the western aspect which may provide a small PRF (Photograph 12).

A single storey extension which was erected in 2021 is present on the northern aspect of the building (Photograph 13 & 14). The extension features a flat roof, rendered walls and large glass windows and doors with redbrick accents. The extension structure is well sealed and does not offer any roosting opportunities for bats.

**No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspection.**

### **3.2.2 Internal inspection**

The building contains a 'L-plan' loft void which is of a hipped roof design supported by a timber truss design consisting of rafters and purlins, featuring good condition bitumen felt roof lining (Photograph 15). Five vents are present which provide a potential access point to the loft, with light ingress visible; with four located along the southern wing and one located along the northern wing (Photograph 16). Conditions within the loft are cool and dry, with cobwebs present throughout, as well as two disused wasp nests being identified.

The loft space is accessible through a hatch on the first floor. It is used for storage and is predominantly cluttered on the eastern section of the northern wing, near to the entrance hatch. The remainder of the loft is lined with mineral wool (Photograph 17).

Approximately 6 bat droppings were found beneath the ridge beam on the southern wing; at the identical location to the 23 droppings identified during the initial survey in 2021 (see report reference: UES03203/01) (see Appendix 1 – Site plan and Photograph 18). As the droppings are old it is considered that they are a remainder from the same droppings identified during the 2021 survey. An additional single bat dropping of an equivalent age was identified near the access hatch (Photograph 19)

**A low number (7) of old bat droppings were found within the loft space during the internal building inspection.**



## **4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Evaluation of results**

#### **4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats**

Elmbridge is situated in an area which provides moderate quality habitat for bats. The area is suburban, with large areas of residential housing and well-lit roads but the nearby areas of ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, amenity grassland and waterbodies will support a variety of insects on which bats can forage. The nearby mature trees and residential buildings will provide a number of roosting opportunities. However, the presence of well-lit busy roads reduces the foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area, particularly for light-averse species.

#### **4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats**

The building has been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, this is based on the presence of several external PRFs which are suitable for roosting bats such as raised roof tiles as well as gaps underneath hipped and hanging tiles. Furthermore, seven bat droppings were identified within the loft space, which has access points including the ventilation slits. The low number and age of the droppings indicates that the building was occasionally used by a single or low numbers of bats, which were likely to have been males, non-breeding females or juveniles.

#### **4.1.3 Assessment of degradation of roosting habitat since 2021**

The work which was conducted in 2021 without the recommended two bat presence / absence surveys has resulted in the loss of the chimney, as well as the original boxed soffits. In the original bat scoping survey, the chimney was found to be in excellent condition, with no associated features and tightly sealed lead flashing. As such, the removal of the chimney is not considered to have resulted in any loss of bat roosting habitat.

The southern and eastern boxed soffits were found to be tightly sealed during the 2021 survey, whilst the remaining boxed soffits along the eaves and dormers of the northern and western aspect were noted to contain occasional slight gaps (Photograph 20). As the boxed soffits have now been replaced, and upon thorough inspection are now tightly sealed, these relatively few access points are considered to have been lost.

The conditions of the internal loft void remain unchanged since the first survey, with the original roosting area unaltered and the majority of the external access points and PRFs present in their original condition. As bat presence / absence surveys were not undertaken, it is unclear which access points bats were utilising to gain entrance into the loft void.

In conclusion, the roosting area remains in unaltered condition, however, the loss of the boxed soffits may have modified the access points into the loft void. As such, the roost is considered to have been retained, but potentially with modified access points.

### **4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures**

The building is considered to have moderate potential to support roosting bats, with droppings being identified within the loft. As such, if any further work with a direct impact upon the roof or loft void is to take place, further bat presence / absence surveys comprising of two visits would be required in order to determine whether bats are using the building for roosting purposes, and if so, to determine the species and number of bats. These surveys should be



undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season of May to September inclusive, with at least one of the surveys conducted within the peak bat survey season of May to August inclusive.



## 5 CONCLUSION

The building has been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, this is based on the presence of several external PRFs which are suitable for roosting bats such as raised roof tiles as well as gaps underneath hipped and hanging tiles. Furthermore, seven bat droppings were identified within the loft space, which has access points including the ventilation slits. The low number and age of the droppings indicates that the building was occasionally used by a single or low numbers of bats, which were likely to have been males, non-breeding females or juveniles.

The roost originally identified by UES in 2021 has been retained, however, the replacement of the boxed soffits has potentially modified the access points.

As the building has been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, if any further work with a direct impact upon the roof or loft void is to take place, further bat presence / absence surveys comprising of two visits would be required in order to determine whether bats are using the building for roosting purposes, and if so, to determine the species and number of bats. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season of May to September inclusive, with at least one of the surveys conducted within the peak bat survey season of May to August inclusive.



## 6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). *The Bat Workers Manual*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) JNCC



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 – Site plan**



## Elmbridge, Wokingham

### Site plan

-  Building
-  Roosting area in which six historical droppings were identified during the survey.
-  Single historical dropping identified near loft hatch.





## Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs

**Elmbridge, Wokingham**

Close aerial photograph

— Building



**Elmbridge, Wokingham**

Wide aerial photograph



Building location





## Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Southeast aspect of the building.



Photograph 2 – Western Aspect of the building.



Photograph 3 – Raised roof tiles on the eastern aspect.



Photograph 4 – Small sections of missing mortar under hip tiles on the eastern aspect.



Photograph 5 – Gaps along the hip tiles at the southeastern aspect of the building.



Photograph 6 – Well sealed boxed soffits on the dormers.



Photograph 7 – Example of raised hanging tiles associated with one of the dormers.



Photograph 8 – Example of raised lead flashing on the dormer at the northern aspect of the building.



Photograph 9 – Raised end tiles on northeastern dormer.



Photograph 10 – Raised lead flashing between the porch and eastern aspect window.



Photograph 11 – Gap beside plastic weather boarding above front door.



Photograph 12 – Mortar crevice within brickwork at wall plate on the western aspect of the building.



Photograph 13 – Single storey extension present on northern aspect of the building.



Photograph 14 – Single-story extension on northern aspect of the building.



Photograph 15 – Internal loft design.



Photograph 16 – Ventilation slit which may provide a potential access point into the loft.



Photograph 17 – Section of loft used for storage, with disused wasp nest present.



Photograph 18 – Area where five historical droppings were identified.



Photograph 19 – Single bat droppings identified near access hatch.



Photograph 20 – Photograph from the original scoping survey conducted on 05.01.21, showing slight gaps between the wall plate and the boxed soffits.



## **Appendix 4 – Statutory and planning context**

## Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

## Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019 (known as the “Habitats Regulations”). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions ‘have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’ (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

## Birds

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

## Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

- 174.** Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 179.** To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity<sup>61</sup>; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation<sup>62</sup>; and
  - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity
- 180.** When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons<sup>63</sup> and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.