



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT COOMBE HILL BARKHAM



**Prepared for:
Mr L Smart
Coombe Hill
Hayes Lane
Barkham
RG41 4TA**

8 June 2025

Ref: SPH/ESR-25/28.05



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Appendix 1

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



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr L Smart to carry out a dusk emergence survey at Coombe Hill, Hayes Lane, Barkham, RG41 4TA. The survey was undertaken at the property to provide further evidence to support the initial findings (a negative result) and conclusions from the preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) report ref SPH/NP/PEA-25/29.04, and to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works, if required. This report is prepared to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The application site comprises a detached two-storey, brick-built property with side conservatory and various outbuildings all set within extensive grounds that are laid mainly to lawn with tarmacked driveway/parking area. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is direct ecological connectivity to the wider landscape that also provides good habitat for foraging and roosting bats.

The DBW consists of a desk top study prior to the survey to review existing information about the site and its surroundings and to inform the design of subsequent bat surveys, if required. The desk top study was conducted based upon a minimum 2km search radius and it revealed that no statutory designated sites are located within, and one current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats has been granted within 2km of the proposed development site.

A search of Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group records confirmed 9 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The dusk emergence survey was conducted on Wednesday 28 May 2025. Despite favorable foraging conditions and insects flying, a low number of bats were seen and heard foraging in and around the site throughout the survey and none were seen emerging from or re-entering the property to roost.

This report confirms the findings of the survey, completed by an experienced licensed bat ecologist, in accordance with the current best practice guidance where possible, and outlines any ecological constraints or issues with the proposed works.

The combined evidence from the preliminary survey and activity survey provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. No bats or evidence of bats were observed during the PEA and no bats were seen entering or emerging from the property during the activity survey. This indicates that the property has not been used as a roost by bats and that an EPSL from Natural England (NE) is not required.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were commissioned by Mr L Smart to carry out a dusk emergence survey at Coombe Hill, Hayes Lane, Barkham, RG41 4TA.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The dusk emergence survey is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats using the building to roost.
- Estimate the size and status of any existing bat roost within the building.
- Establish where the bats are accessing the building.
- Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development.
- Determine if an EPSL and ecological method statement is required.

The survey was carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition.

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension and carry out roof alterations.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The activity survey was conducted by Katie Holmes and Nick Powell and the report was compiled by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 34 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

Katie holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-35124) and has been surveying bats for 12 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

Nick holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has been surveying bats for 3 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Constraints/Limitations

An assessment of the building exterior was conducted on 28 May 2025, prior to the activity survey being undertaken and there were no constraints or limitations to the survey. Weather conditions were suitable for the survey, being conducted during warm weather, and a low number of bats were heard and seen foraging and in transit during the survey.



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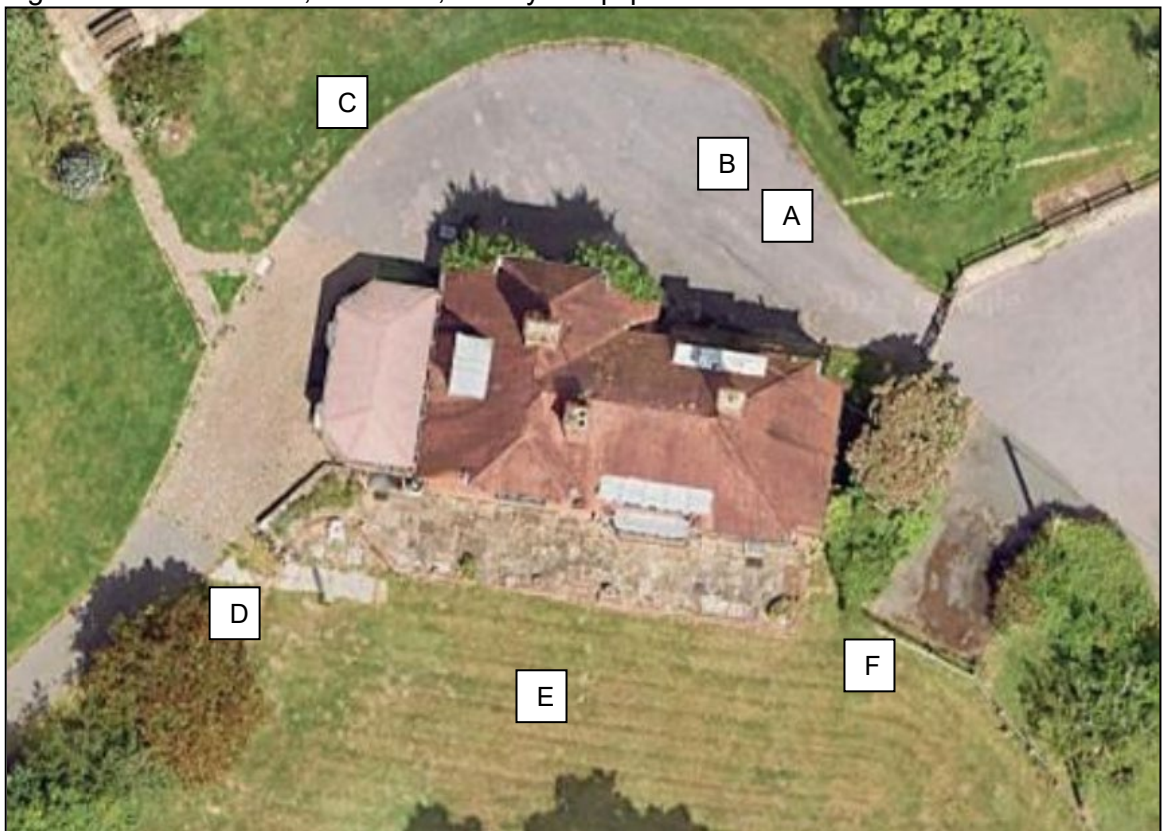
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2.2 Dusk Survey

The dusk emergence survey was conducted on the evening of Wednesday 28 May 2025. The surveyors and equipment were stationed (as shown in Figure 1 on page 5), to ensure the features identified in the preliminary bat report could be observed.

During the survey bat activity was monitored using four BatLogger M bat detectors together with six Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps. A screenshot from the video cameras is included at Appendix 1. The detectors and cameras were fitted with SD cards for recording bat activity, allowing for later analysis with Kaleidoscope Pro 3 software, MotionMeerkat and VLC media player.

Figure 1 – Coombe Hill, Barkham, surveyor/equipment locations.



During the survey no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the property to roost. In total 3 different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 on page 6. The most frequently used flight paths of bats could not be shown as a very low number were heard and only two seen during the survey.



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3. Survey Findings

3.1 Dusk Survey

The weather conditions and surveyor details from the survey can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Surveyor details and weather conditions for the bat activity survey conducted at Coombe Hill, Barkham.

Date:	28 May 2025
Survey Type	Emergence survey
Surveyor and location	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote camera (C) Remote camera/bat logger (D) Nick Powell (E) Remote camera (F) Remote camera/batlogger
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 17.4°C Cloud cover 10% patchy Humidity 66.5% Dry with Wind Beaufort 1-2 gusting
Sunset	21:06
Start time	20:50
Finish Time	22:45
Duration	01:55
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 14.3°C Cloud cover 20% patchy Humidity 76.6% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0-1

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of Coombe Hill, Barkham.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
27/05/25	A	20:50 – 22:45	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.27 (21 minutes after sunset) a transit call from a noctule was heard, the bat was heard again at 22.10. Very limited (only 13 foraging calls being heard) and sporadic activity from soprano pipistrelle bats commenced at 21.32 and continued until 22.20. Two foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard at 22.20. No bats were seen during the survey.
27/05/25	B	20:50 – 22:45	N	N	Camera only	No bats were recorded by the remote camera during the survey.
27/05/25	C	20:50 – 22:45	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Bat activity at this station was very limited with 1 noctule call recorded at 21.27, 4 soprano pipistrelle calls recorded between 21.33 and 22.05 and 5 common pipistrelle calls between 21.45 and 22.10. No bats were recorded by the remote camera during the survey.



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Table 2. Summary of bat calls continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
27/05/25	D	20:50 – 22:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	The first bat call heard was that of a soprano pipistrelle at 21.33. Thereafter soprano pipistrelle foraging activity dominated until survey end however only 25 calls were heard and recorded and a bat being seen on a couple of occasions foraging along the tree and hedge line behind the surveyor. 9 foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard between 21.46 and 22.21, the bat(s) were not seen. A solitary noctule was heard at 22.25.
27/05/25	E	20:50 – 22:45	N	N	Camera only	No bats were recorded by the remote camera during the survey.
27/05/25	F	20:50 – 22:45	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	This remote batlogger recorded the most bat activity during the survey, with the first and only call (from a noctule) recorded at 21.27. 30 calls from soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded between 21.31 and 22.35 and 16 calls from common pipistrelle bats between 21.40 and 22.25. No bats were recorded by the remote camera during the entire survey.

4. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 4.1 The calls detected and recorded from the survey provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*, foraging and/or transiting in the vicinity. The longest and most frequent calls were from both common and soprano pipistrelle bats.
- 4.2 The property has features suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost however, there is no evidence to indicate that bats have used the features. This is most probably due to a combination of effects including better foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities in the immediate landscape. As no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost and there was no evidence of bats during the PEA we conclude that the property does not support roosting bats.
- 4.3 Pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset. Noctules are also known to emerge early. As the first noctule bat call was at 21 minutes after sunset and the common pipistrelle call was heard at 26 minutes after sunset the bats are roosting close to the site. Whilst no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost, this does not mean that they will not be present in the future as bats are known to be transient and use a wide variety of crevice like features opportunistically.
- 4.4 The survey conditions were good, with warm weather, a variety of insects flying and the bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, considered very low.
- 4.5 The bat calls and field observations provide a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. Bat activity was dominated by pipistrelle bats, although only two bats were seen during the entire survey.
- 4.6 The cumulative evidence leads me to conclude that bats are not roosting at Coombe Hill and the property has a negligible potential to support roosting bats therefore an EPSL is not required.



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- 4.7 All bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5. References

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).
Bat Workers Manual – Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004.
Bat Mitigation Guidelines – Natural England 2006.
The Conservation and Habitat Regulations – 2017.

6. Queries

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

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APPENDIX 1

Coombe Hill, Barkham - Screenshots from night vision cameras

28.05.25

A



B



C



D



E



F

