



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT LEA HEATH HOUSE HURST



**Prepared for:
Ms L Mooney
Lea Heath House
Davis Street
Hurst
Reading
RG10 0TH**

21 September 2026

Ref: SPH/BAS-26/15.09



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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 Ms L Mooney to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) and three dusk emergence surveys at Lea Heath House, Davis Street, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TH. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

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 two statutory designated sites are located within, and no current European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The landform surrounding the site provides a rich and diverse habitat suitable for a wide range of bat species.

A search of the Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire Bat Group records confirmed 11 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The initial site visit was carried out on by Nick Powell on Tuesday 23 June 2026 commencing at 12 noon. An external and internal inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats.

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

The building is in a good to fair condition externally, however there are raised/moved roof tiles, lifted lead flashing and a gap in the rear soffit and these features could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats. In addition, scattered bat droppings were recorded in the loft, at the base of the northeast and middle chimney stacks, indicating that bats are or have been using the building for roosting. DNA analysis of the droppings by SureScreen Scientifics confirmed them to be those of the brown long-eared (BLE) bat, see Appendix 1.

In line with best practice guidelines, three activity surveys were recommended to provide additional evidence in support of the preliminary survey result. The amount of survey effort is considered proportionate to the building and risk associated with the proposed works.

Full access was provided to the building and there were no constraints to the surveys.

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on Sunday 2 August, Monday 24 August and Tuesday 15 September 2026. A number of bats were heard and seen foraging in and around the site throughout the surveys and none were seen emerging from or re-entering the building to roost.

The combined evidence from the PEA and activity surveys provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. The bat droppings indicate historical use by a low number of BLE bats, and that the building has been used as a day/summer roost on an opportunistic basis and that an EPSL from Natural England (NE) is not required.



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However, a site-specific method statement is provided to comply with EU Article 12 and 16 which help guide works that affect a bat resting place when the species is not present in order to avoid a licence/derogation, it will be necessary, to ensure following development the “favourable conservation status” of bats is maintained and an appropriately worded ecological method statement must be conditioned to any planning consent.

With careful timing and close supervision no offence should occur, and the FCS will remain unaffected. If bats are encountered during the work, all work must stop and the project ecologist informed, and an EPSL will be required.

An ecological method statement has been included to enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *“in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application”*.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were commissioned by Ms L Mooney to carry out a DBW and three dusk emergence surveys at Lea Heath House, Davis Street, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TH.

1.2 Survey Scope

The DBW is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the building.
- Provide information on previous bat ecological surveys/reports.
- 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 an 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 4th edition.

1.3 Proposed Works

The surveys were commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a first-floor rear extension following the demolition of the conservatory.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The DBW was conducted by Nick Powell, and the activity surveys were conducted by Katie Holmes, Adam Wilson and Nick Powell and a remote camera, and the report was compiled by Simon Holmes MSc, CEnv a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

Simon holds Bat Class 3 (CL19) and (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 36 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 13 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 4 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

Adam has completed a degree in Politics with International Relations at the University of York with an interest in Environmental Sciences and has been participating in bat surveys for the past 2 seasons. The training he has received includes basic survey techniques including transects, use of multiple detectors, video and thermal camera use, bat biology and identification and bat call analysis.



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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 2.

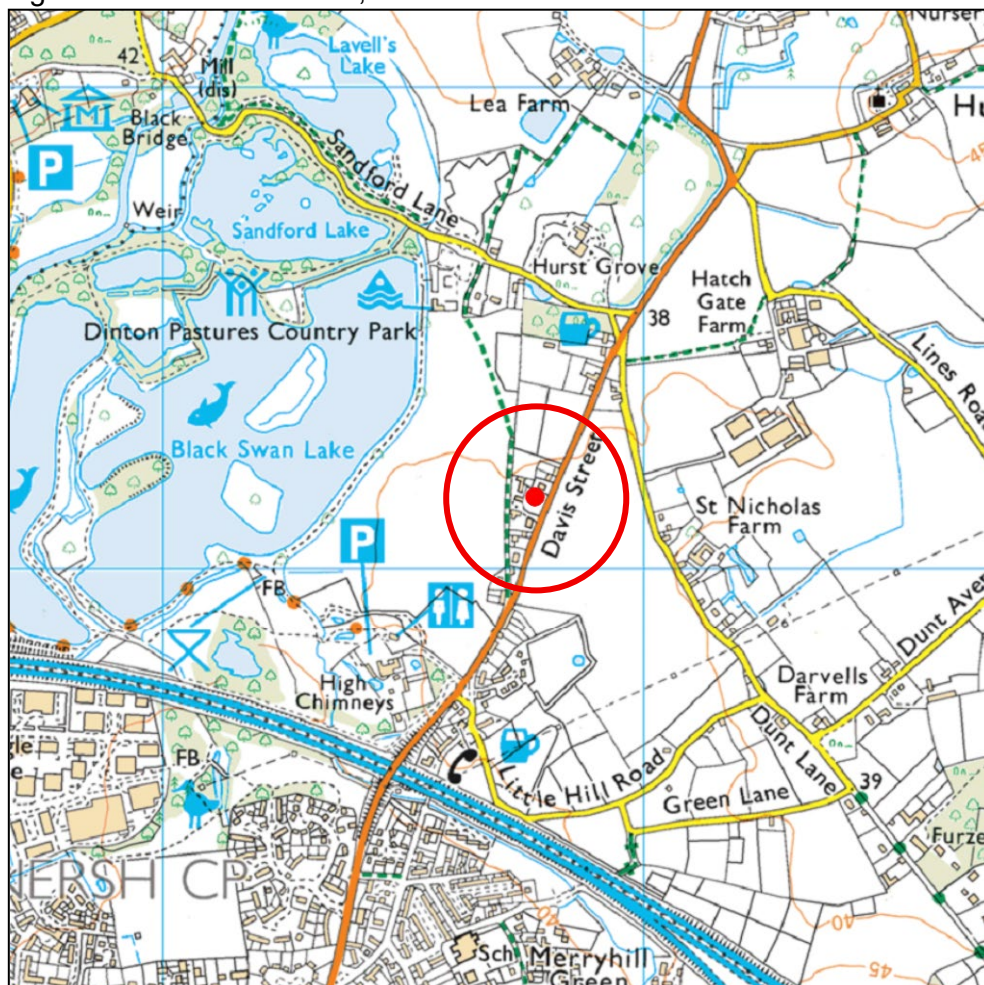
Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State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

3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The property is located at Grid Reference SU78777215, see Ordnance Survey (OS) extract at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Lea Heath House, Hurst.





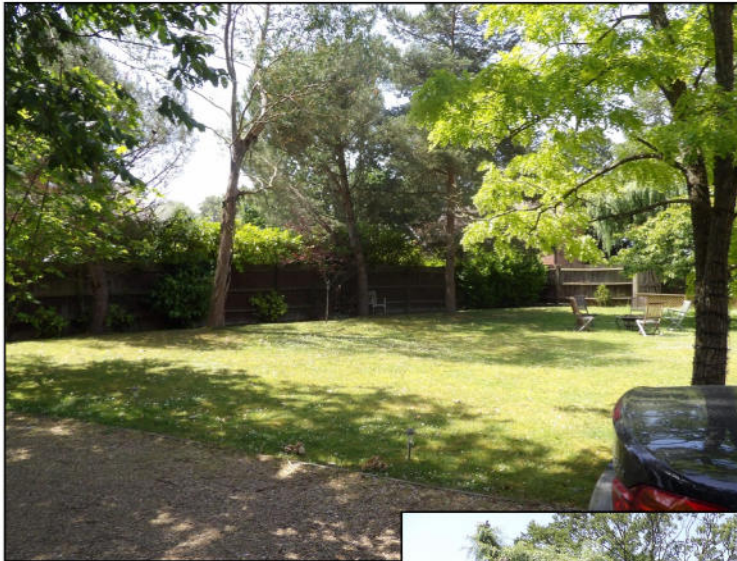
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3.2 Site Description

The site comprises a detached, brick-built two-storey property with attached double garage all set within its own grounds that are mainly laid to lawn with seating area, pool, vegetable beds and mature trees/hedgerows, see Figure 2 below. The site itself provides good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is excellent ecological connectivity to the wider landscape.

Figure 2. Grounds. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been conducted on the property. 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 or EPSLs within 2km of the site.

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 23 June 2026 commencing at 12 noon. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 34 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, an endoscope, binoculars and a ladder.

During the DBW an internal and external inspection of the property 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.
- Internal conditions – microclimate stability, draughts etc.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates or lead flashing.

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, this is not always a reliable indicator.
- 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 with no bat roosting potential, and that were unsuitable for roosting bats were not inspected in detail. This includes the attached double garage and various buildings within the curtilage of the property as they will not be affected by the proposed works.

4.3 Dusk Surveys

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the evenings of Sunday 2 August, Monday 24 August and Tuesday 15 September 2026. The surveys were at a time of year when bats are known to be active with weather conditions suitable for the bat surveys and insect prey abundant.

The surveyors/thermal monoculars were stationed around the property (as shown in Figure 3 on page 9), to ensure the features identified in the DBW could be observed. A screenshot from the thermal monoculars is included at Appendix 3.

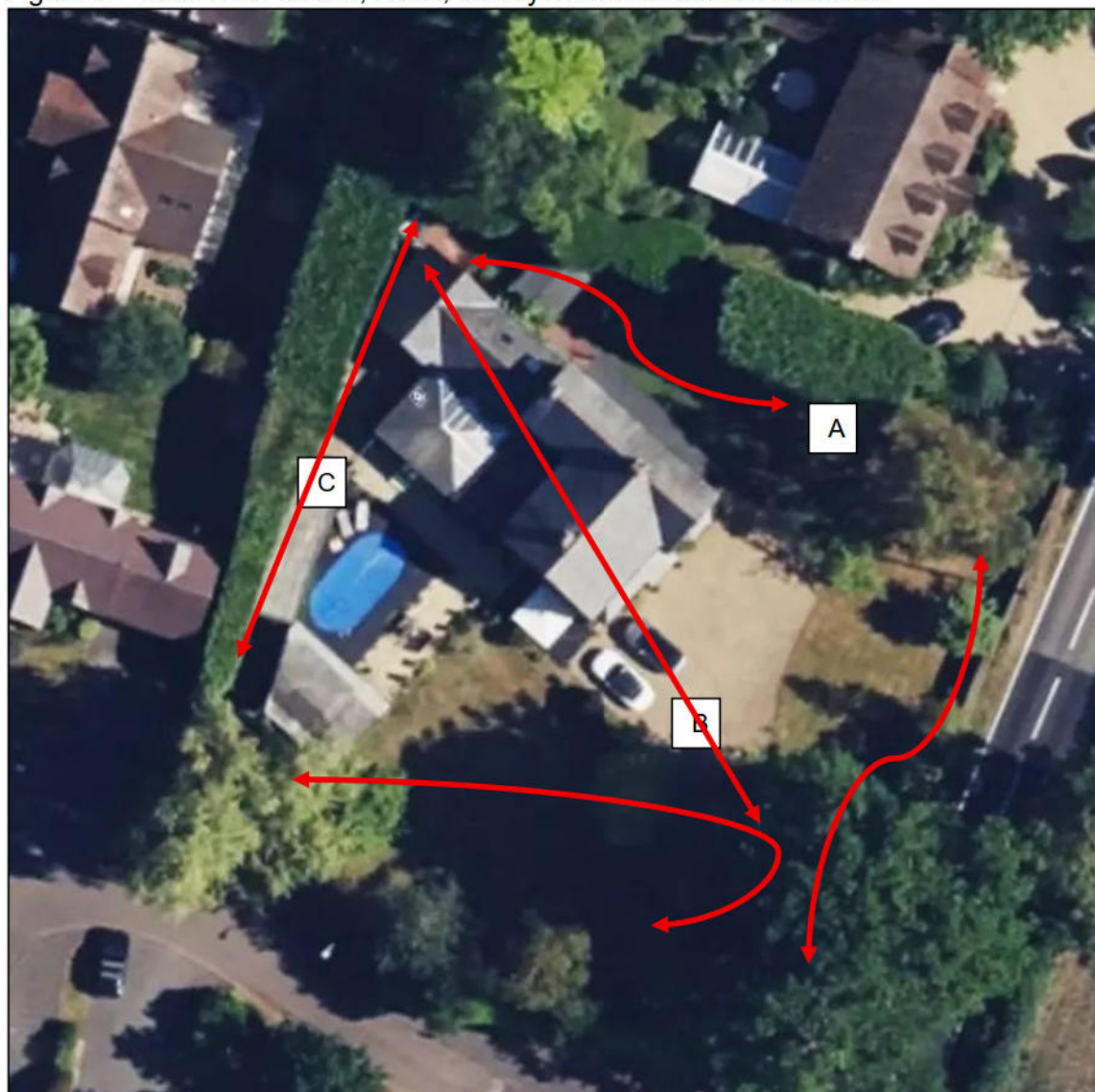


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During the survey bats activity was monitored using three BatLogger M bat detectors and three Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monoculars. The detectors/monoculars were fitted with SD cards for recording bat activity, allowing for later analysis with Kaleidoscope Pro 3 software, VLC media player and DVC-Scan.

Figure 3 – Lea Heath House, Hurst, surveyor/remote camera locations.



During the surveys no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the building to roost. In total five 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 commencing on page 17. The most frequently used flight paths of pipistrelle *sp.* bats are shown on Figure 3 above.

The weather conditions and surveyor details from the surveys can be found in Table 1 on page 10.



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Table 1 – Surveyor details/weather conditions for the bat activity survey conducted at Lea Heath House, Hurst.

Date:	2 August 2026	24 August 2026	15 September 2026
Surveyor and location	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote monocular /batlogger (C) Adam Wilson	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote monocular /batlogger (C) Nick Powell	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote monocular /batlogger (C) Adam Wilson
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 24.2°C, Cloud cover 70% Humidity 41.9% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2	Temperature 18.7°C, Cloud cover 10% Humidity 53.5% Dry Wind Beaufort 2-3	Temperature 19.3°C, Cloud cover 5% Humidity 52.4% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2
Sunset	20:49	20:07	19:18
Start time	20:30	19:50	19:00
Finish Time	22:35	22:40	21:00
Duration	02:05	01:50	02:00
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 20.9°C Cloud cover 15% Humidity 47.9% Dry Wind Beaufort 0-1	Temperature 16.7°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 63.6% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2	Temperature 15°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 69.9% Dry Wind Beaufort 0-1

4.4 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visits was made possible by the client and there were no constraints to the surveys.

5. Survey Findings

5.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The property is situated in a semi-rural area to the north of Reading in a hamlet of some 10 properties that back onto a golf club and Dinton Pastures Country Park. Agricultural land/improved grassland and woodland are located to the north, east and south and all of these areas are known to provide good habitat for bats and are well within travelling distance for bats.

Lodge Wood & Sandford Mill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Lavells Lake Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lie to the north of the site, and within 2km and there is good ecological connectivity to these designated sites. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed no current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site however, there are five expired ones.

5.2 External Inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in Section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascias, soffits and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a detached, brick-built building with rear, single-storey extensions including an attached double garage and conservatory, see side view of property and garage at Figure 4 on page 11. The cross-pitched roof of the main dwelling is covered in slate tiles, some of which have moved, and

are raised leaving gaps that could be utilised by crevice dwelling bat species or allow access into the loft for bats, see Figure 5 on page 12.



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The majority of the ridge tiles are well fitted however, near the chimney stacks they have moved and there is also raised lead flashing and these features could be utilised by bats for roosting or allow access into the loft space, see Figure 6 on page 12. There is no missing mortar from the verges (see Figure 7 on page 13), and the majority of the soffits and fascias are tight to the wall plate however, on the back wall there is a gap, see Figure 8 on page 13. The roof of the attached mono pitched element of the property is also covered in slate tiles, some of which have moved and there is raised lead flashing however, the proximity of the conservatory roof would restrict bats from utilising these features for roosting, see Figure 9 on page 14. The wooden/glass with Perspex roof conservatory on dwarf wall does not offer any roosting potential due to the construction materials, thermal properties and light ingress, see Figure 10 on page 14.

The pitched roof of the single storey extension and that over the garage will not be affected by the proposed works.

No bats or evidence of bats were recorded during the external inspection of the property or garage although there are various features on the property that provide potential crevice roosting opportunities for bats or may provide access into the loft space for bats.

Figure 4. Side view of property with attached garage. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





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Figure 5. Example raised roof tiles. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26



Figure 6. Example raised ridge tile/lead flashing. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





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Figure 7. Example sealed verges. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26



Figure 8. Example gap in soffits/wall plate. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





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Figure 9. Mono-pitched roof. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26



Figure 10. Conservatory. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





5.3 Internal Inspection

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

The main loft space in the property was accessed through a hatch, via a ladder. The space was not lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 11 below. The roof tiles are unlined, see Figure 11 below. Bat dropping were located scattered at the base of the northeast and middle chimney stacks, see Figure 12 on page 16. The loft space in the rear mono-extension was accessed from through a hatch. The space is in not lit, boarded and the roof tiles are lined with membrane, all of which is in a good condition, see Figure 13 on page 16.

Figure 11. Loft space. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





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Figure 12. Bat droppings at base of chimney stack. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26



Figure 13. Mono-pitched loft space and membrane lining to tiles. Lea Heath House, Hurst. 23.06.26





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5.4 Dusk Surveys

In total five different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. The calls detected and recorded from the surveys provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*, daubenton's, *Myotis daubentonii*, and BLE bat, *Plecotus auritus*. The longest and most frequently recorded calls and observations were from the pipistrelle *sp.* bats. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of Lea Heath House, Hurst.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
02/08/26	A	20:30 – 22:35	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule, daubenton's and BLE	At 20.36 (6 minutes after sunset) a faint call from a noctule was heard, a noctule was heard again at 21.29. At 21.13 (24 minutes after sunset) a brief call from a soprano pipistrelle bat was heard. A soprano pipistrelle was then seen at 21.15 foraging around the oak tree in the front garden and thereafter soprano pipistrelle foraging and transit activity dominated until survey end with a bat being seen on a couple more occasions foraging around the garden. Common pipistrelle activity commenced at 21.39 and continued until 22.21, the bat was never seen. A couple of calls from a BLE bat were heard at 22.31. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a daubenton's bat at 21.58.
02/08/26	B	20:30 – 22:35	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and daubenton's	Between 21.29 and survey end the batlogger recorded a noctule call, two calls from a daubenton's bat, 96 calls from common pipistrelles and 61 calls from soprano pipistrelles. The thermal camera recorded bats in transit over the property on three occasions.
02/08/26	C	20:30 – 22:35	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule, daubenton's and BLE	At 21.17 a soprano pipistrelle was seen and heard foraging around the garden and thereafter soprano pipistrelle activity dominated until survey end with a bat being seen on a few occasions foraging in and around the site. Common pipistrelle activity commenced at 21.34 and continued until 22.28, the bat was never seen. Between 21.21 and 22.31 nine calls from a noctule were heard. At 22.12 and then at 22.28 a call from a BLE bat was heard. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a daubenton's bat at 22.07.
24/08/26	A	19:50 – 22:40	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule, daubenton's and BLE	Despite good foraging conditions with insects flying, bat activity during this survey at this station was limited. At 20.37 (30 minutes after sunset) a faint foraging call from a soprano pipistrelle bat was heard with, at 20.48 a soprano pipistrelle being seen entering the site from behind the surveyor and away down the side of the property. A soprano pipistrelle was then seen again at 21.51 and 21.55 foraging up and down the tree line to the right of the surveyor and foraging/transit activity continued until 21.35. Common pipistrelle activity was very limited with, at 21.00, two bats seen entering the site and foraging up and down the tree line to the right of the surveyor for 2 minutes, a further call from a common pipistrelle was heard at 21.11 only. Between 20.36 and 20.38 foraging calls from a noctule were heard. A call from a daubenton's bat was heard at 21.09 and a couple of calls from a BLE bat were heard, at 21.25 and 21.28.



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Table 2 continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
24/08/26	B	19:50 – 22:40	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and BLE	Between 20.37 and 21.38 the batlogger recorded 61 calls from common pipistrelles, 126 calls from soprano pipistrelles and 2 calls from a BLE bat. The thermal camera did not record any bats in transit or emerging from or returning to roost at the property during the survey.
24/08/26	C	19:50 – 22:40	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule, daubenton's and BLE	Soprano pipistrelle foraging activity commenced at 20.28 (21 minutes after sunset) and dominated until survey end with sporadic calls being heard during the survey. A soprano pipistrelle was seen and heard foraging in and around the garden at 20.57 only. Sporadic and limited common pipistrelle activity was heard and recorded from 20.59 until 21.40, the bat was never seen. A couple of foraging calls from a noctule were heard between 21.25 and 21.37. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a daubenton's bat at 21.18 and a call from a BLE bat at 21.33.
15/09/26	A	19:00 – 21:00	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	At 19.44 (26 minutes after sunset) a noctule was seen and heard in transit high over the property heading in a northerly direction. At 20.00 a soprano pipistrelle was seen and heard foraging for 2 minutes around the garden/oak tree and thereafter and until survey end sporadic soprano pipistrelle foraging activity was heard until survey end with a bat seen foraging again around the garden at 20.45. Common pipistrelle foraging and transit activity dominated from 20.06 until survey end, with up to two bats being seen foraging in and around the garden and up and down the tree line to the right of the surveyor. BLE calls were heard at 20.16 and 20.17 and again at 20.42.
15/09/26	B	19:00 – 21:00	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	Between 19.59 and 20.58 the batlogger recorded eight noctule calls, 80 calls from common pipistrelles and 104 calls from soprano pipistrelles. The thermal camera recorded bats in transit over the property on a number of occasions.
15/09/26	C	19:00 – 21:00	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	At 19.44 a noctule was seen and heard in transit above the property. A faint call from aa soprano pipistrelle was heard at 19.56 with, at 19.58, a soprano pipistrelle seen and heard foraging around the garden. Common pipistrelle activity commenced at 20.07 and thereafter soprano and common pipistrelle foraging and transit activity continued until survey end with up to two bats of both species seen and heard foraging in and around the garden on numerous occasions. Three calls from a BLE bat were heard between 20.24 and 20.37.



6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the following criteria and include seasonal variation where increased or decreased probability may arise. Where features are present, they are **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 bats on the site, or 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); or
- are active industrial premises.

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

7. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 7.1 The DNA evidence confirmed the droppings observed during the preliminary survey to be those of the BLE bat, a widespread species in the UK and Berkshire and there was no evidence to indicate maternity use or hibernation.
- 7.2 The evidence indicates that the roosts are historical and most probably opportunistic, as there were no bats during the preliminary inspection and no bats emerged or re-entered the building to roost during the survey period. The roost is considered to be of low conservation significance that is important at a site level only and an EPSL from Natural England is not required.
- 7.3 Roosting and foraging opportunities in the immediate area are good with the woods and large freshwater lakes associated with Dinton Pastures Country Park to the west of the site.



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- 7.4 The building has crevice like features, and bats may return to roost at the building following the surveys, therefore an ecological method statement must be conditioned with any planning consent. This will provide suitable ecological safeguards should bats be discovered and enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application.*
- 7.5 The calls detected and recorded from the surveys provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctula*, daubenton's, *Myotis daubentonii*, and BLE, *Plecotus auritus*, all foraging and/or transiting across the site. The findings from the surveyor's observations and bat call identification were cross referenced against the species logged in Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group record search, providing a match for the species identified on this site.
- 7.6 Noctule and pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset. The earliest bats heard during the surveys were noctule at 6 minutes after sunset and a soprano pipistrelle at 24 minutes after sunset indicating that the bats are most probably roosting close to the site, but they did not emerge from the building.
- 7.7 Whilst a few calls from BLE bats were heard by the surveyors, this is not unusual as the BLE bat is commonly referred to as the 'silent' bat as the calls are difficult to detect as they are very quiet, directional and frequently of short duration they also often hunt using sight over hearing.
- 7.8 The survey conditions were good, with hot weather, a broad range of insect prey flying and the bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, average. This has been a common theme across all surveys this season, 2026 and may be heat related.
- 7.9 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). The proposed works will not impact a bat roost however the provisions set out in the ecological method statement must be implemented in order for the works to be undertaken and must form part of any planning conditions.
- 7.10 To ensure the planned development is in full compliance with European and national legislation, and national and local biodiversity planning policy an appropriate and proportionate program of mitigation and enhancement must be agreed to ensure protection and enhancements for bats.

8. Method Statement for Planning

This site-specific method statement is provided to comply with EU Article 12 and 16 which help guide works that affect a bat resting place when the species is not present in order to avoid a licence/derogation, it will be necessary, to ensure following development the "favourable conservation status" of bats is maintained.

This watching brief aims to address:

- Timing and methods of activities
- Provision of new bat roosting (enhancement)
- Impact on and replacement of existing roosts
- Lighting and habitat provisions as applicable



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8.1 Pre-commencement

- 8.1.1 A project ecologist or their agent must be engaged prior to commencement to provide advice should it be required. This ecological method statement must be adhered to, it provides guidance and project supervision and will ensure that best practice and compliance is adhered to. If there is a delay of greater than one year from the date of this report, further survey effort will be required. Bats are highly mobile wild animals and may be encountered within a building following negative activity survey results.
- 8.1.2 One general purpose woodcrete bat box, for example a Schwegler 1FF bat box (see www.NHBS.com) or similar design will be erected at least 4.5 metres above ground level on an elevation not being affected by the works, the siting to be agreed with the project ecologist. The bat box will provide alternative roosting habitat for the species (BLE) that have roosted at the site, should it be required. The box should remain in situ even if it is unused as this will provide an overall increase in ecological features and provide a biodiversity net gain (enhancement).

8.2 Method

- 8.2.1 A toolbox talk must be given to the contractors prior to commencement of works, which will include: background legislation in relation to bats; the most likely areas to expect bats (based on the survey results), good working practice (soft strip) and, details of what to do if a bat or additional evidence of bats is discovered. In the unlikely event that bats, or evidence of other roost locations are found, works must stop immediately and Natural England or the project ecologist contacted immediately, and any requisite license obtained.

8.3 Timing of work

- 8.3.1 Any works that have the potential to disturb bats during the bat activity period (1 May to 31 August) for example, removing the roof, must be conducted outside this period. If the works cannot be undertaken during the period 1 September to 1 May and should bats be encountered during this period or at any time during the work, then all work must stop and an EPSL will be required.
- 8.3.2 All work must be undertaken in normal working, daylight, hours, which is in accordance with best working practice and allows the project ecologist or their agent to address any issues if bat(s) are found during the demolition work.

8.4 Ecological supervision

- 8.4.1 The project ecologist or their agent must be provided adequate time to provide advice and supervision for the duration of the proposed works. A record of all site visits must be made, and photographic evidence gathered as required.
- 8.4.2 Prior to deconstruction of the roof, it must be inspected for any new evidence of bats, this must be done by hand working (soft strip) around the identified features and the project ecologist, or their agent must be available (on-call) to provide advice should it be required.
- 8.4.3 If, during the work, when the licenced bat worker is not on-site, and a bat is discovered that appears to be injured or distressed, then the animal should be carefully placed in a small box (e.g. shoe box) by either handling the bat with thick gloved hands or covering the bat with the box and sliding a thin piece of cardboard under to create a floor to the box.



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8.4.3 continued

A clean piece of cloth loosely crumpled will be placed in one corner of the box (to allow the bat to crawl under and hide), a few small air holes will be put into the lid of the box, and a very shallow container (e.g. foil milk bottle top) of water will be placed in one corner of the box. The licensed bat worker must then be called without delay, and all work must stop until the licensed bat worker has been consulted.

8.5 Incorporation of bat roosting

- 8.5.1 Compensation: Permanent bat roost provision for BLE bats must be created as part of the proposed scheme. The new roof must provide suitable crevice like features, for example 2 x integral bat boxes in the main roof façade for example between the joists and combined with bat access tiles. The compensation measures must be positioned on south, east or west facing elevations but not directly above a window. Suitable alternatives would include bat bricks where access is possible or bat access tiles at the ridge and where they provide access to the roof, they must incorporate a lining that has passed the snagging test for bats.

8.6 Lighting proposals

- 8.6.1 Lighting: The exact lighting proposals are not known at this stage but where new external lighting is provided best practice in the form of Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night Guidance Note GN08/23 (Bat Conservation Trust and Institution for Lighting Professionals) must be followed.

Research into artificial lighting at night (ALAN) has identified a reduction in insect diversity at night and the potential to disrupt a broad range of insect behaviour patterns and in turn foraging opportunities for bats, particularly where they are bright white. It is therefore essential that any new external lighting is carefully selected, for example, all external lighting must be Light Emitting Diode (LED) and directed downward or be located at a low level. By carefully directing light downwards and using a PIR with short illumination sensor the impact of external lighting on any foraging bats can be reduced.

8.7 Habitat loss

- 8.7.1 There is no habitat loss relating to this scheme and no requirement for habitat compensation.

8.8 Post construction work

- 8.8.1 There is no requirement for post-construction monitoring of this scheme.

9. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2003) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).

Reason, P.F. & Wray, S. (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Ampfield, CIEEM.

HMSO (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [online]. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made>

Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night [online]. Available at: <https://theilp.org.uk/resource/gn08-bats-and-artificial-lighting-pdf.html>



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10. Queries

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

Telephone: 01189 762902
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

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APPENDIX 1

Folio No: 3909-2026
Purchase Order: KH202605
Contact: Urban Tree Experts
Issue Date: 30.07.2026
Received Date: 13.07.2026

Biological Report

Technical Report



SureScreen Scientifics

Biological Sample Analysis

Summary

Most biological materials (tissue, feces, hair, blood, etc.) contain small amounts of DNA from the organism of which it originated. Using molecular methods such as PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and DNA sequencing, SureScreen Scientifics are able to analyze an unknown sample to determine which species the sample originates from our methods are optimized for the detection of species including bats (over 92% of bat species worldwide can be identified including all 18 UK bat species), mammals; bees, wasps & hornets; birds; fish; plants (from roots, leaves, stem and even dried wood) and many more species.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Sample Type	Species Name	Match(%)
B26 0605	Lea Heath House - 1		Bat Dropping	Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus)	98.44
Genetic Sequence TCGGAGGCTTCGGGACTGATTGGTGCCACTAATAATTGGAGCCCCTGATATAGCTTTTCCCCGAATAAATAACATA AGCTTCTGACTGCTTCCCCCATCTTTTCTACTACTTTTAGCTTCGTCTGCAGTAGAGGCTGGAGCAGGTACCGGTTG AACAGTCTACCCTCCTTTAGCGGGAAACCTAGCACATGCAGGAGA					
B26 0606	Lea Heath House - 2		Bat Dropping	Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus)	99.45
Genetic Sequence TCGGAGGCTTCGGGACTGATTGGTGCCACTAATAATTGGAGCCCCTGATATAGCTTTTCCCCGAATAAATAACATA AGCTTCTGACTGCTTCCCCCATCTTTTCTACTACTTTTAGCTTCGTCTGCAGTAGAGGCTGGAGCAGGTACCGGTTG AACAGTCTACCCTCCTTTAGCGGGAAACCTAGCACA					

Matters affecting result: none
Reported by: Ruby Fielding

Approved by: Alice Cunnington



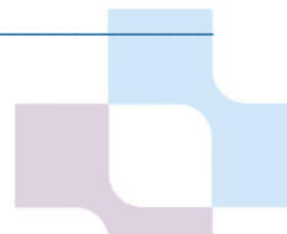
Methodology

Once samples have arrived in the laboratory, the DNA is isolated using a commercial DNA extraction kit. Using PCR, DNA (if present within the sample) is amplified using universal molecular markers designed to amplify a short fragment of the DNA of the target species group (i.e. mammal, fish, arthropod, reptile, plant etc.). If amplification is successful, the resulting DNA sequence is revealed using a process known as Sanger Sequencing in order to obtain the genetic sequence of the mitochondrial gene within the sample. The sequence results are aligned against a library of known reference sequences using bioinformatics software, which enables us to determine which species the DNA sequence from the sample matches with, informing the species identity and sequence similarity (match %).

If the initial analysis is unsuccessful, the entire process is repeated up to two additional times with a fresh reserve sample (if available) in order to obtain a species identification. If no DNA is detected after three attempts, then we can be confident that any further analysis of the sample will likely also fail to result in species identification.

Interpretation of Results

- Sample Type:** The sample you send to us can come from a variety of sources. Fecal, dropping, urine, hair, blood, carcass (skin, flesh, bone), gamete, plant matter or unknown biological material all contain DNA that we can test for in order to identify the species of origin.
- Genetic Sequence:** The unique DNA sequence obtained from the sample.
- Match (%):** How closely matched the DNA sequence from your sample is to the sequences within our reference database. This can be interpreted as a score of result accuracy, with the maximum score of 100% indicating an exact match of the sample to the indicated species' reference sequence. Lower scores (80-99%) indicate some variation between the sample and reference sequence, likely due to natural variation between individual genetic sequences and/or systematic variations generated through the sequencing process. Scores below 80% similarity should be interpreted with care and can indicate part degraded or part contaminated samples.
- Inconclusive Result:**
- Degraded sample:
- DNA is degraded and we are unable to determine species identification due to degradation of sample DNA. This can happen either before sample collection (old samples, exposure to UV etc.) or after sample collection if stored for long periods before analysis or not handled correctly.
- Inhibited/contaminated sample:
- We are unable to determine species identity due to contamination or the suspected presence of large quantities of PCR inhibitors. Contamination sources can originate from other species which could have come into contact with the samples, or human contamination during sample collection.
- Alternative Result:** Sometimes, for targets such as bat dropping analysis, other mammalian species such as rodents are detected. We find this to be a common occurrence as some bat droppings can be similar in appearance to rodent droppings. Although sometimes unexpected, repeat analyses in these cases would likely return the same results.





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APPENDIX 2

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:

Government guidance to Local Planning Authorities stipulates the need to consider biodiversity and protected species during the consideration of planning applications. The NPPF makes clear that the planning system should help minimise the impacts that development can have on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In addition, the ODPM Circular 04/2005 states *“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”*.

Policy CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (planning policy relating to the site) states *“Development which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and*

- i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts; or*
- ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided”*.

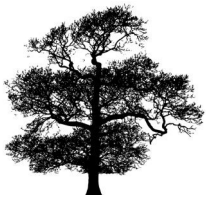
Developments that compromise the protection afforded to bats or roosts under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England (NE).

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.



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APPENDIX 3

Lea Heath House, Davis Street, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TH
Sample screenshots from the darkest point of the survey areas from thermal monoculars

A



B





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C

