

Bat Scoping Survey: 24 Wickham Rd, Earley

Client Lee Norris Design

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Non-technical Summary

Background

In September 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 24 Wickham Rd, Earley RG6 3TE. Development proposals include an extension.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

The dwelling is located within a residential area. Overall, the dwelling remains in good condition and provide no features suitable for roosting bats or nesting birds. The garden is well-maintained.

The property have **negligible** suitability for roosting bats.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- A precautionary approach to development regarding bats and hedgehogs.
- Install a bird nest box.
- Exterior lighting planned sensitive to nocturnal wildlife.

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1. Background

- 1.1. In September 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 24 Wickham Rd, Earley RG6 3TE. Development proposals include an extension. (Ordnance Survey grid reference: SU 76263 70388).
- 1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.
- 1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Assess the likely presence or absence of bats.
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site.
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation.

Site Description

- 1.4. The site comprises a two-storey detached house which is in a residential area in Earley, Berkshire. The property has a maintained garden of lawns.
- 1.5. The property is adjoined on all sides by similar detached properties with maintained gardens. Adjacent to the south and east are parklands.
- 1.6. The environs are predominately residential with a mix of medium/large properties. The wider landscape includes parkland and woodland.

Legislation

- 1.7. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this

legislation the UK is obliged to fully consider bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

- 1.8. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 2.3. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 25th September 2025 by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker.
- 2.4. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.
- 2.5. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;
 - **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

- 2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

- 3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Planning Policy

- 3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which sets out the Government' planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Planning 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.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- 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 biodiversity⁶⁸; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; 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.
- 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 reasons⁷⁰ 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.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 3.3. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.



24 Wickham Rd,
Earley



- 3.4. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.



Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
24 Wickham Rd, Earley	Overview	Two-storey detached house. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied. No bats or evidence of bats were found inside or outside of the property.	Negligible Suitability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Exterior	The brick walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well-sealed. The outbuildings are simple constructed structures with no roof void or cavity walls and lacks any suitable crevices or gaps for roosting bats. The property has a small, maintained garden of lawns.	
	Interior	Areas of living accommodation are composed of well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is insulated composit of exposed timbers and type 1 bituminous sarking felt. No gaps were observed.	
	Roof	Tightly fitting flat roof tiles with no gaps observed.	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		<p>All roof verges remain well-sealed, areas of soffit and where lead flashing is used to seal roof abutments remain tightly fitted in place.</p> <p>The chimney brick work is in good condition and the concrete/ flash which seals the chimney to the roof remain well fit in place.</p>	

Birds

- 3.5. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the dwelling.

Evaluation

- 3.6. The property is located within a residential area, however, lies near to parkland and woodland with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.
- 3.7. During the scoping survey, no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed. The building is in good condition and well-maintained. All verges and soffits are in good condition and fit tightly. All tiles and ridges are sealed. The property is constructed from modern and uniform material and lacks any abiotic roosting opportunities.
- 3.8. The buildings have **negligible suitability** for roosting bats.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.
- 4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.
- 4.3. The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.4. Due to the lack of evidence of roosting bats within any aspect of the buildings on site, it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.
- 4.5. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there remains a very small possibility that bats could be encountered during the works; therefore, all works must proceed under a precautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion. Soffits and masonry will be dismantled using

