
**22a and 22b Barkham Ride
Finchampstead**

Report for:
A1 Roberts Properties Limited
31 Barkham Ride
Finchampstead
Berkshire
RG40 4EX

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out a follow-up ecological survey of the above site. Although ecological surveys have been carried out in 2023 and 2024, in accordance with best practice a follow-up survey was completed to update the previous findings and to record any changes that may have occurred during the intervening period. This information will serve to validate the previous findings and detail proportionate and appropriate mitigation, as necessary. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The redevelopment proposals are for the construction of two residential dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings and clearance of some vegetation.

METHODOLOGY

Baseline Data

A review of the Preliminary Roost Assessment Report (dated November 2023) produced by Plan Ecology Limited and the Ecology Report (dated November 2024) produced by AAe was completed to provide baseline conditions for the site.

In addition, as certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated and a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

Bats

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention* (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe) the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹ and by an experienced and licensed ecologist². A thorough internal and external re-examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any potential access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces, where present, were accessed to check for any evidence of bats, with the building assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **None** – No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
- **Negligible** – No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
- **Low** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
- **Moderate** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
- **High** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

In addition, a careful inspection of any tree within the vicinity of the works was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground. Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **NONE** – Either no Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
- **FAR** – Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
- **PRF** – A tree with at least one PRF present.

Where possible, any tree categorised as FAR or PRF was then subject to a more detailed assessment to either confirm PRFs are present and/or fully inspect any PRFs to accurately subcategorise each tree into:

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Lead surveyor was Alan Beaumont, BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM – 2025-85745-CL18-BAT.

- **PRF-I** – is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitat.
- **PRF-M** – PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also used to record any bat calls during the inspection.

Herpetofauna

Amphibians

All amphibian species have some level of protection under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking, and intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a 'place used for shelter or protection' is prohibited, as is the destruction of these places.

Reptiles

All reptile species are protected at some level under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The more common species of reptiles, which include slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are protected by the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* by part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). This means that they are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injuring (but not 'taking') and against sale and transporting for sale.

An assessment of the site was carried out to determine its suitability for herpetofauna by recording the habitats present. In addition, any natural/artificial refugia present on the site was lifted to check for any sheltering animals or evidence of animals, such as sloughs (shed skins).

Other Wildlife

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

RESULTS

Baseline Data

The results of the previous survey completed by Plan Ecology Limited recorded no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspection of the buildings, with the buildings assessed as providing **negligible** bat roosting potential.

The results of the previous survey completed by AAe concluded that there are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site was of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded. A single off-site apple tree was assessed under the category **PRF-I**, due to the presence of a rot hole on one branch.

According to the Multi-Agency website, there are no statutory designated ecological sites located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which forms part of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 0.65 km to the south-west and the site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone³. According to the Multi-agency Website, there are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site, with the nearest HPI being a Traditional Orchard, located approximately 0.04 km to the north of the site.

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since 1999, being dominated by the existing buildings, with associated hardstanding and garden areas.

Follow-up Site Survey (Photographs 1 - 4)

The site is located off Barkham Ride in Finchampstead, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 789657 and covers less than 0.1 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing buildings with associated hardstanding and vegetation. The site is bordered by Barkham Ride to the north, the Grange Centre (small business park) to the east and Rooks Nest Farm to the south and west.

Conditions on the site remained similar to those previously recorded, with the site comprising the existing buildings with associated hardstanding and vegetation. The buildings remained in a similar condition as previously recorded.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during a careful re-inspection of the buildings, which due to their construction type and/or condition were assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities for bats. The site, being dominated by the buildings and bare/disturbed ground, provides only limited foraging opportunities for bats. A number of trees require felling, but all have been assessed under the category **NONE**, due to their age, size and/or lack of any obvious PRF's. The off-site apple tree was assessed under the category **FAR** due to the presence of a rot hole on one branch. On further investigation, the rot hole was fully investigated with no evidence of bats recorded and consequently the tree was assessed under the category **PRF-I**. **N.B. The apple tree is located off-site and consequently scheduled to be retained.**

Herpetofauna

There were no ponds on the site and therefore no breeding opportunities for any species of amphibian. The site, being dominated by buildings and associated hardstanding areas/bare and/or disturbed ground, does not provide optimal terrestrial habitat for any species of herpetofauna. In addition, despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna were seen or found sheltering under any refugia lifted during the previous or most recent site visit.

³ As the proposals are for two replacement residential dwellings, the nature of development does not meet any criteria which would trigger further consultation with Natural England (available at: [https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0101054322201¬es=11401&location=478988,165771%20%20\(IRZ%20polygon%20centre\)\)](https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0101054322201¬es=11401&location=478988,165771%20%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)))).

Other Wildlife

Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The site conditions remain similar to the previous surveys, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of bats or other protected species recorded. In addition, there are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals.

Although there are considered to be no over-riding ecological constraints to the redevelopment proposals, a series of generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, could be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026⁴.

A thorough examination of the existing buildings has been completed over a number of years (originally in 2023, repeated in 2024 and again this year, 2026), with all potential access points and/or roosting opportunities fully inspected for evidence of bats. Although no evidence of bats was recorded, with the buildings assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities and no further surveys are considered necessary, in accordance with best practice all site operatives should be given a toolbox talk so that they are fully aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts (copy has been attached at Appendix A). In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided (**N.B. a European Protected Species Licence may then be required to permit the works to continue**).

Although the trees scheduled to be felled have been assessed under the category **NONE** for roosting bats, if the off-site apple tree (assessed under the category **PRF-I**) requires felling then this should be felled by competent Tree Surgeons and in accordance with the following precautionary approach:

- all operatives will be given a toolbox talk so that they are fully aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts (copy has been attached at Appendix A);
- a re-check of any PRFs should be completed by a licensed bat surveyor immediately prior to felling;
- where possible, cross-cutting will be avoided in proximity to cavities or hollows;
- split limbs under tension will be wedged open to prevent their closure when pressure is released, potentially trapping bats;
- the tree will be felled in manageable sections, with each section carefully lowered to the ground with any openings left clear to allow any bats inside an opportunity to escape; and
- any loose bark removed carefully before each section is felled, to avoid trapping bats when the limb falls.

In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Therefore, site clearance should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect any vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2026). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'. The retention of these features will maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by local wildlife.

Where possible, any new boundary treatment should be designed to promote permeability of the site to minimise fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site, for example by strengthening/enhancing any existing boundary vegetation, planting up a series of new hedgerows and/or installing post and rail fences. If close boarded fences are required for security reasons, these should be minimised and raised slightly off the ground (c. 150-200 mm) to allow animals to pass underneath.

As part of the proposals, soft landscaping will be carried out. Where any new planting is proposed it should aim to use native species, but where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife can be used. In particular, flowering plants will be of benefit to invertebrate species and shrubs and trees may provide nesting opportunities for birds once they become established.

The site could be further enhanced by providing roosting, nesting and sheltering opportunities for a range of species and the creation of new wildlife habitats, such as some of those recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology Environment and Management's published Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Guidance, and listed below:

- Nest boxes
- Bat boxes
- Insect boxes/bee bricks
- Pollinator nest sites
- Planting wildflowers

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. Although the site currently experiences some light spillage from on-site sources and neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution.

CONCLUSION

A follow-up ecological walk-over survey has been completed on the site by an experienced and licenced ecologist. The site conditions remain largely unaltered since the previous survey completed in 2023 and 2024 with no evidence of protected species recorded. Overall, the findings of this updated survey would indicate there are no ecological constraints to the redevelopment proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted. A range of standard controls are available and deliverable to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on local wildlife with a series of controls to be implemented to avoid contravention of current legislation, which can be secured via appropriately worded conditions attached to the planning consent.

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Photograph Record Sheet



Photograph 1: Showing the existing access.



Photograph 2: Showing the front of the existing buildings.



Photograph 3: Showing the internal structure of one of the buildings.



Photograph 4: Showing a close-up inspection of the front exterior on one of the buildings.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT			
22a and 22b Barkham Ride Finchampstead			
TITLE			
Photograph Record Sheet			
 AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: 01235 536042 F: 01235 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk			
Scale	Date 23.09.26	Drg No.	Rev.
NTS	Drawn NAB	Chkd. ARB	243351/01

Appendix A
Toolbox Talk (Bats)

TOOLBOX TALK: BATS

Did you know?

- Bats are the world's only flying mammal.
- There are 17 species of bat known to be breeding in the UK, 6 of which are endangered or rare and 6 are classed as vulnerable.
- Bats can be found across the country in urban and rural locations.
- They are often sighted at dusk as they leave their roost, flying around hedgerows, woodland and waterbodies, feeding on insects.
- Throughout the year bats will often change their roost, depending upon the season.
- Usually a pregnant female will only have one baby a year, this makes colonies vulnerable to population decline.
- During the winter bats hibernate and may not wake up, even if disturbed. Therefore it's important not to work on sites with bats during these months.
- Bats may not use the same roost throughout the year, however they are legally protected with or without a bat occupying them.

Identification

- You may find bats in any number of places, they tend to prefer dark, quiet spots with good shelter, such as holes and cracks in trees, roofs and walls of buildings, under bridges, old tunnels and in caves.
- Signs of bat presence include discarded moth wings, staining around crevices and small mouse-like droppings which crumble easily.

Legislation

- All bats and their roosts are protected by UK and European Law. This makes it **illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats** or obstruct access to, damage or destroy their roosts and protects important feeding areas from damage or disturbance.
- Under law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Site Controls

- There is always a **risk** that bats, as they move between different roost sites and occupy new roosts, could be encountered during site works.
- **If any bats are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**
 1. If bats are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately** with any bat left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
 2. If any injured bats are found during the works AAe would care for them and where possible be released in the same location once recovered.
 3. During works staff must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with bats.
 4. Any roof tiles will be lifted straight up, rather than being rolled over, minimising the risk of harming bats which may be sheltering underneath.
 5. Areas must be fully checked for any bats or their evidence prior to filling any gaps and repointing any brickwork.
 6. Any lighting must be installed must avoid illuminating vegetation and or bat boxes/access points.

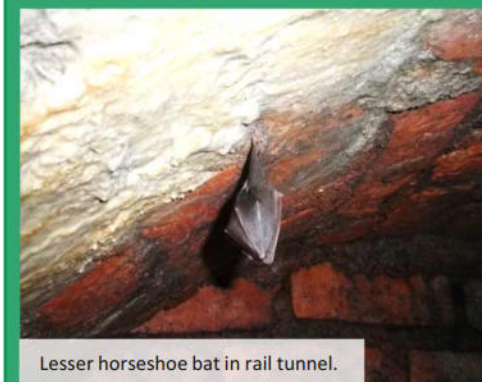
These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You're not expected to be able to identify bats or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**

Key Contacts

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX
Tel: 01235 536042



Brown long-eared bat.



Lesser horseshoe bat in rail tunnel.



Common pipistrelle bat.