



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 21 LANGHAMS WAY WARGRAVE



**Prepared for:
Ms E Theron
21 Langhams Way
Wargrave
Wokingham
RG10 8AX**

31 August 2024

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-24/20.08



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
Worcestershire
WR15 8NX
Tel: 0118 976 2902
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Instruction
- 1.2 Aims and Objectives
- 1.3 Proposed works
- 1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Legislative Background

3. Site Location and Description

- 3.1 Site Location
- 3.2 Site Description

4. Survey Methodology

- 4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search
- 4.2 Daylight Survey
- 4.3 Constraints

5. Survey Findings

- 5.1 External Inspection
- 5.2 Internal Inspection

6. Evaluation

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Interpretation
- 7.2 Contingency plan

8. References

9. Queries

Appendix 1

©2024 Urban Tree Experts

All rights in this report are reserved. No part of it may be reproduced, edited or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature, without our written permission. Its content and format are for the exclusive use of Ms E Theron and her agents in dealing with this site. It may not be sold, lent, hired out or divulged to any third party not directly involved in this site without the written consent of Urban Tree Experts. It may be reproduced as part of a planning application.

This report is valid for 12 months from the site inspection. The lifespan of this report may be subject to change if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Ms E Theron to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]), of 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8AX. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 20 August 2024 at 12 noon, during daylight hours. An external and internal inspection of the property and attached garage took place to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal 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 Licence (EPSL) for bats has been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surrounding landform, which is made up of urban development and infrastructure systems, has a low potential to support foraging bats however there is good ecological connectivity via back gardens to a broad range of habitats including allotments, a recreational ground and tree/hedge lined agricultural land.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The buildings suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and potential roost features identified on the property during the preliminary inspection. When combined with the data from the desk top study, this resulted in the property being characterised as having a low potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², a single separate dusk emergence survey is required on the property in order to establish the presence or absence of bats. If bats are recorded roosting during this survey, further survey effort and mitigation will be required in order for the proposed development to proceed legally.

¹ Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition.

² Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Ms E Theron to conduct a DBW of 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave, RG10 8AX to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

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 survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council for “Householder application for proposed erection of a first-floor front, side and rear extension, followed by an additional first floor rear extension along with changes to fenestration and garage conversion to facilitate a study room and W/C”.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was undertaken by Nick Powell and the report written by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.

Nick Powell. Nick commenced surveying bats in 2022 and holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has received training in bat ecology and surveying, bat detector use, acoustic monitoring/sonogram analysis, architectural terms for bat workers, bats and development, H & S awareness for bat workers, legislation for bat workers, British bats their ecology and conservation, surveying trees for bats, Bat ID and handling, bat biology.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI-64844). He has 35 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

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 1.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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

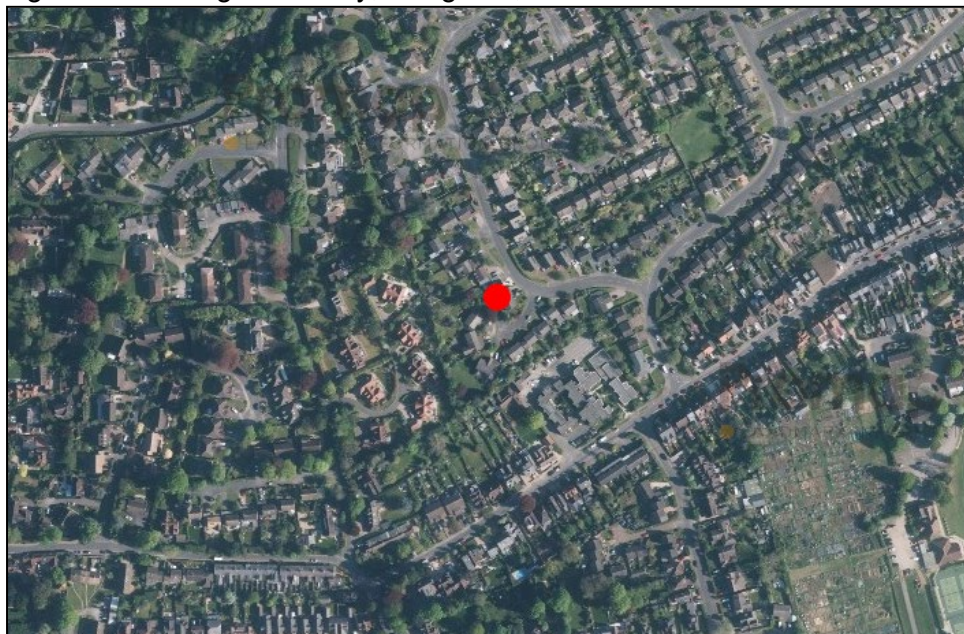
3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU 7901 7874, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Promap.

Figure 1. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave, highlighted.



Figure 2. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave, overview of the immediate area.





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built 2 storey property with attached garage. The remainder of the site comprises a paved driveway/parking area with lawn and flower beds, see cover photograph. The rear garden is mainly laid to lawn with mature trees/shrubs, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity via back gardens to a broad range of habitats including allotments, a recreational ground and tree/hedge lined agricultural land.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been undertaken on this 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. Due to the urban areas, scale of the proposed development, and the very local impact that may occur, no data was sought from the local records centre at this time.

The site is situated in the center of Wargrave, a large village in Berkshire. It is surrounded by properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. To the southeast lies an area of allotments and the open space associated with Wargrave recreation ground/cricket club/lawn tennis club which in turn connect to agricultural fields and Mumbery Hill Nature Reserve. Further afield to the northeast lies a large expanse of grassland with scattered trees and to the west the River Thames, both of which are known to contain good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats although there is limited connectivity to the site due to the built environment. Beyond these areas lie farmland, woodland and grassland, all of which are likely to contain good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats, some areas of which are connected to the site via ecological corridors.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

No statutory designated sites lie within 2km of the proposed development site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed one current and ten historical EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, the details of the current one are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Current EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site

EPSL reference	Licence end date	Species on licence
2019-43232-EPS-MIT	06/2025	Soprano pipistrelle

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8AX was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 20 August 2024 at 12 noon. The weather conditions for the survey were variable with sunny spells and occasional rain showers, and a temperature of 18 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW an internal and external inspection of the property and attached garage 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.

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.
- 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 that were not to be affected by the current proposals or with no bat roosting potential were not inspected.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client. A thorough inspection of the loft space could not be conducted due to the low ridge height, storage of belongings and lack of boarding.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

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

The property is a detached, brick-built building with an attached garage. The pitched roof is covered in interlocking tiles, all of which are well fitted with none missing or broken, see Figure 4 below. The ridge tiles and verges are all in a good condition with no gaps which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 5 on page 9. To the rear is a single storey brick build extension, the flat roof of which is covered in bitumen felt with no rips or tears, see Figure 6 on page 9. The tiles covering the front porch, mono pitched roof and false pitched roof to the front of the garage are all tight with no gaps, as are the verges and lead flashing, see Figure 7 on page 10. There are hanging tiles on both the front and rear elevations, the majority of which are well fitted however, on the rear elevation, a few of the tiles have moved leaving gaps that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 8 on page 10. The flat roof section of the garage is covered in well fitted bitumen felt with no rips or tears, see Figure 9 on page 11 and the uPVC soffits and fascias are tight to the walls with no gaps that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 10 on page 11.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property but the raised hanging tiles on the rear elevation offer potential roosting opportunities for bats and the presence or absence of bats cannot be determined without further survey effort.

Figure 4. Example roof tiles. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 5. Example of sealed verges. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24



Figure 6. Single storey rear extension and bitumen covered flat roof. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 7. Example of sealed tiles/valleys/lead flashing on front porch/mono pitched roof. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24



Figure 8. Gaps in hanging tiles on rear elevation. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 9. Example of sealed bitumen felt on garage roof. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24



Figure 10. Example of sealed soffits/fascias. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft of the property was accessed via a ladder and was in a good condition internally. The loft is being used for personal storage and is cluttered. It was not lit, is partially boarded and deeply insulated, see Figure 11 below. The roof tiles are lined with bitumen felt, some of which was torn but given the good state of the roof tiles externally this was not considered a significant constraint, see Figure 11 below.

The attached garage was also inspected internally. The garage is used for storage and is in a good condition, see Figure 12 on page 13. A membrane covers the tiles on the false pitched section with the flat section being boarded and had no cracks or splits which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 13 on page 13.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the loft space or garage and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities for bats within these spaces.

Figure 11. Example loft space & bitumen felt. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 12. Internal view of garage. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24



Figure 12. Example membrane on false pitched section of garage roof and example flat roof section of garage. 21 Langhams Way, Wargrave. 20.08.24





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 and historical records of 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);
- are active industrial premises.

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

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The property and attached garage are in a good condition internally and externally and there were no bats, live or dead, and no droppings or other evidence to indicate that bats have used the dwelling to roost. However, on the rear elevation, there are raised hanging tiles which may provide potential roosting opportunities for bats and the presence or absence of bats could not be determined.

When the evidence is combined, the raised hanging tiles, surrounding habitat being suitable for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, and records of bats roosting nearby it is concluded that the property has a low potential to support roosting bats. Based on the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, it is recommended that one dusk emergence survey is undertaken on the property, between May and August, in order to establish the presence/ absence of bats. One surveyor will be required in order to cover the potential roosting features (hanging tiles).



7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the activity survey, two further activity surveys will be required along with an EPSL from Natural England.

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey effort will need to be repeated as the condition of the building may alter and as bats roost opportunistically, they may start roosting at the site.

8. References

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

HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations as (amended).

HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. 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

Urban Tree Experts
Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX


Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

APPENDIX 1

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.