



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 2 ARDWELL CLOSE CROWTHORNE



**Prepared for:
Mr D Tyler
2 Ardwell Close
Crowthorne
RG45 6BA**

25 July 2025

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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.



Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr D Tyler to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]), at 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne, RG45 6BA. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 15 July 2025 at 12.30pm, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property and attached double 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 six statutory designated sites are located within, and four current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate area surrounding the site has a low level of habitat suitable for roosting, commuting and foraging bats, due to the dense nature of the urban environment however, there is ecological connectivity to the wider landscape via the garden network.

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 based upon the potential roost features identified during the preliminary survey, when combined with the data from the desk top study, resulted in the property being characterised as having a low potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², one dusk emergence survey is recommended on the property in order to determine the presence or absence of roosting bats from within the building and inform appropriate mitigation if required. If bats are seen emerging from or re-entering the building during the survey, two further activity surveys and an EPSL will be required in order for the 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).



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr D Tyler to conduct a DBW at 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne, RG45 6BA 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 that will seek to construct a two-storey side extension following demolition of the existing single-storey garage and a single storey rear extension, see plans at Appendix 1.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

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

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

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 (CL20) Bat Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). 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 2.



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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built and partly painted property with attached double garage, see cover photograph. The remainder of the site comprises a tarmacked driveway/parking area with lawn and hedgerows, and a large rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn, with seating area and some shrubs and mature trees on the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity to alternative habitat for foraging and commuting bats in the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has owned the property for 8 months and has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been undertaken 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. Due to the suburban area, 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 application site is situated in the village of Crowthorne and is surrounded on all sides by properties and gardens of similar sizes and styles. To the north lies East Berkshire golf club and to the south large areas of woodland and recreational grounds, all of which are likely to provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are within travelling distance for bats. Large areas of woodland, farmland and waterbodies lie in close proximity to the site, all of which are likely to provide good habitat for bats and there is ecological connectivity from the site to these areas via the garden network.



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Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA), Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Wellington College Bog SSSI, Heath Lake SSSI, Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Ambarrow Court LNR and Edgbarrow Woods LNR lie within 2km of the proposed development site, although there is poor ecological connectivity from the proposed development site to these designated sites. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed four current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, the details of which 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
2020-45340-EPS-MIT	09/2025	Brown long eared
2020-48238-EPS-MIT	07/2026	Common pipistrelle and brown long eared
2017-31639-EPS-MIT	10/2027	Common pipistrelle
2018-37292-EPS-MIT	10/2028	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne, RG45 6BA was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 15 July 2025 at 12.30pm. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 24.6 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW, an 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 undertaken due to the lack of boarding and thick insulation but given the good condition of the roof tiles externally this was not considered a significant constraint to the survey.

5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

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

The property is a two-storey detached brick-built building that is in a good condition externally. The pitched roof is covered in closely fitted tiles, none of which are missing or broken, see Figure 4 below. The ridge tiles are all tightly fitted and had no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit, and the verges are all sealed with no missing mortar, see Figure 5 on page 9. The lead flashing around the chimney was all tightly fitted with no gaps in which bats could utilise for roosting (see Figure 6 on page 9) and the uPVC soffits and fascias are all tightly fitted to the walls and have no visible gaps in which bats could use for roosting, see Figure 7 on page 10. There is an area of hanging tiles at the front of the property with a number of gaps in the hanging tiles (see Figure 8 on page 10) in which crevice dwelling bats could utilise for roosting. At the rear of the property are a double storey and single storey flat roof extensions (see Figure 9 on page 11), the rooves of which are covered in bitumen felt, all of which is tightly fitted, with no rips or tears in which roosting bats could exploit and the fascias are flush to the walls, see Figure 10 on page 11.

The attached double garage is also brick-built and in a good condition externally, see Figure 11 on page 12. The roof is flat and covered in bitumen felt, all of which is tightly fitted, with no rips or tears which could be used by roosting bats, see Figure 12 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property or garage and externally there were no visible roosting opportunities for bats or access into the buildings for roosting bats.



Figure 4. Tightly fitted roof and ridge tiles. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 5. Example sealed verges. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 6. Example of flush lead flashing. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





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Figure 7. Example uPVC soffits and fascias. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 8. Example of gaps in hanging tiles. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





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Figure 9. Rear view of property and extensions. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 10. Roof and uPVC soffits/fascias on rear extension. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





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Figure 11. Double garages. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 12. Bitumen covering the garage roof. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft was accessed through a hatch via a loft ladder and is in a good condition internally. The loft is used for storage, lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 13 below. A thorough inspection of the loft space could not be undertaken due to the lack of boarding and thick insulation but given the good condition of the roof tiles externally this was not considered a significant constraint to the survey. All of the roof tiles that could be seen are lined with bitumen felt, none of which is ripped or torn and had no bat roosting features internally, see Figure 14 on page 14.

The attached garages were also inspected internally. The garages are being used for storage, are cluttered but in a good condition. The ceiling is timber lined and had no cracks or splits in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 15 on page 14.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the property or double garage and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities for bats within the buildings.

Figure 13. Example of loft space. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





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Figure 14. Example of bitumen lining. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25



Figure 15. Limber lined ceiling of garages. 2 Ardwell Close, Crowthorne. 15.07.25





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 combined evidence from the desktop study and internal and external inspection of the property provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report.

The property is generally in a good condition internally and externally, however the gaps in the hanging tiles on the front elevation provide crevice like features suitable for bats to roost and we were unable to determine their presence or absence. Best practice protocol requires further survey effort to determine the presence or absence of bats.

The building's suitability to support roosting bats was assessed based upon the potential roost features identified during the preliminary survey and then combined with the data from the desk top study, resulting in the property being characterised as having a low potential to support roosting bats.



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Based on recommendations in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition, Table 7.2, structures with low potential to support roosting bats require one dusk emergence survey to be undertaken between May and August in order to establish the presence or absence of roosting bats within the building and to inform appropriate mitigation if required. One surveyor equipped with night vision camera, lighting and bat detector will be required for this survey, in order to cover the potential bat roosting features.

NB: If bats are recorded entering or emerging during the activity survey, further survey effort and a derogation licence from Natural England, presently referred to as an EPSL, will be required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop, and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licensed bat ecologist.

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 should be repeated as the condition of the buildings may change and bats 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.

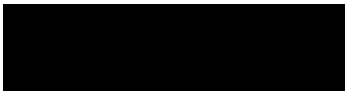
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

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

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APPENDIX 1



SK09 - Proposed Front Elevation
Scale 1:100



SK11 - Proposed Rear Elevation

Scale 1:100



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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.