

Preliminary Roost Assessment

30 Wiltshire Avenue, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6NQ

Survey conducted 17th January 2025

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SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologist Lisha Price of Plan Ecology at 30 Wiltshire Avenue on the 17th of January 2025.

The proposed works seek to fully demolish the existing building and build a new detached house.

The Site consists of a cedar clad, Dutch barn style building with an adjacent rear garden, and front gravel driveway. The property is located on a residential street in Crowthorne and in the immediate vicinity there are other residences and copses of trees. The wider landscape consists of woodland such as Buckler's Forest which sits around 630m east of the site.

The site was carefully inspected and was deemed to have negligible potential. The cedar cladding around the building was tight and had no gaps. There were some gaps leading into the front porch which were fully inspected using a ladder, torch and endoscope but no bats or evidence of bats were found inside. No bats or evidence of bats was found within the loft space.

The building was deemed to have negligible bat roosting potential, and no further surveys are recommended.

Should materials need to be stored in the back garden it is recommended that they be covered overnight, and no open holes be left uncovered to avoid any fauna falling in and unable to escape.

It is also recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0345 1300 228.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site consists of a cedar clad, Dutch barn style building with an adjacent rear garden, and front gravel driveway. The property is located on a residential street in Crowthorne and in the immediate vicinity there are other residences and copses of trees. The wider landscape consists of woodland such as Buckler's Forest which sits around 630m east of the site.

See Appendix 1 for Site Location

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to fully demolish the existing building and build a new detached house.

See Appendix 3 for Proposed Works

1.3 Aims of the Survey

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out with the aim to look for evidence of bats roosting and for the presence of structures within the building which hold bat roosting potential.

1.4 General Information about Bats and Buildings

Loft spaces can potentially be utilised by bat species such as e.g. Brown Long-eared bats or Serotine bats which are known to commonly roost inside loft spaces. This can generally be discovered via droppings inside the loft as the droppings will stay protected from weather elements.

External features of the building can potentially be used as roosting sites by e.g. Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* spp). Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats out of the British species, and they are known to roost inside buildings utilising areas such as cavity walls, soffits and fascia boards, and between tiles and roofing felt. It is not practical to carry out a full physical examination of such building features, which is why activity surveys have to be done during summer months (May-September) when the bats are fully active.

Access points of 1-2 centimetres only are used by bats to enter and exit their roosting sites. Most buildings will have gaps of such size in roof areas, as ventilation of the roof void would otherwise not be possible.

2. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was surveyed during the daytime on the 17th of January 2025 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS) of Plan Ecology. Lisha has over 20 years of experience conducting ecology surveys for bats.

The building was inspected for evidence of bats in the form of live or dead bats, droppings, urine staining and insect feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings. A careful visual search using a Clulite torch was conducted. An endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps. The exterior of the building was surveyed for droppings on walls and ledges.

The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the scale negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed:

Negligible: Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. For example; a simple wooden garden shed, a corrugated iron barn or precast concrete modular garage may fit this category.

Low: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 or hibernation).

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.

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.

Confirmed: This category is used where evidence of bats such as live or dead bats or bat droppings are present, or where there are records of a bat roost in the building.

Foraging and Commuting

Habitats were assessed for their suitability for foraging or commuting bats and categorised in accordance with table 1. Foraging areas of high suitability vary between species, but generally include sheltered areas and habitats which support invertebrate prey such as woodland, scrub, hedges, watercourses, ponds, lakes, arable land with cattle manure and more species-rich or rough grassland. For commuting, well-

connected hedgerows, woodland edge, watercourses and other linear features are generally considered to be of high suitability.

Table 1: Categorisation, foraging & Commuting habitats (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Category	Description
None	No habitat features on the site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be regularly used by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Hibernation

‘Classic’ hibernation sites are often underground but may also be above ground (e.g. some ice ices and lime kilns) and they provide cool, stable and damp conditions favoured by some species for winter torpor and hibernation.

A hibernation survey requires close and systematic inspection of all cracks, crevices and voids for hibernating bats using torches, endoscopes and mirrors.

For ‘non -classic’ hibernation sites particularly those within/ behind external features of buildings or cavity walls the extent to which they can be surveyed is limited. Often only a destructive search would be definitive and also counterproductive.

3. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

Bat roosting potential:

The building is a cedar clad, Dutch style barn building. The cedar cladding around the building was tight and had no gaps. However, there were some gaps around the front porch which were inspected using a ladder, torch and an endoscope. A full inspection of the front area was made and no evidence of bats was found in this area.

The loft space could be fully inspected and had a double layer of roof liner in some places where an extension and a reroof had taken place, some liner was bitumen felt and some was a breathable membrane. There were no gaps or tears in the liner. The loft was boarded for storage in part and traditional wool felt insulation was on the floor.

The boards and soffits were wooden, there was no gapping or warping present which could create bat roost potential spaces.

The building was well built and well maintained.

No bats or evidence of bats was found and the building was deemed to have negligible bat roosting potential and no further surveys are recommended.

The Site has low bat foraging and commuting potential within the garden. The wider surrounding area has moderate bat foraging potential.

The areas to be affected by the works have negligible bat hibernation potential.

See Appendix 2 for photographs

4. ASSESSMENT

Constraints on study information

All accessible areas of the building could be surveyed without restrictions.

A biological record data search was not conducted as the results of a data search is not likely to impact on the decision-making process at this stage.

Bat survey results are generally considered to be valid within two years of the survey date or until the next active bat season of May-September. The County Council Ecologists and/or Natural England may ask for updated surveys if the reports are older than two years.

Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitat.

The works are small and localised and will not be detrimental to foraging or commuting bats.

Legislation and policy guidance

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

The site was carefully inspected and was deemed to have negligible potential. The cedar cladding around the building was tight and had no gaps. There were some gaps leading into the front porch which were checked using a ladder, torch and endoscope but no bats or evidence of bats were found inside. No bats or evidence of bats was found within the loft space.

If any bats are found to be roosting and will be affected by the planned works, it may be necessary to apply for a European Protected Species Licence (EPS) with Natural England (NE). A bat mitigation plan would also be designed from the survey results to minimise disturbance and reinstate bat roosting areas and access points.

Lighting should be designed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance note 8: 'Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK' which can be downloaded for free from the ILP website.

Further Survey Effort

As the potential features were fully inspected, and no bats or evidence of bats was found, the building was deemed to have negligible bat roosting potential, and no further surveys are recommended.

Biodiversity Enhancements

Under the National Planning Policy Framework⁷ a development must provide enhancement for biodiversity. To support this, it is recommended that one bat box (general multipurpose one such as Schwegler 2f/1FF) and one bird box (one small hole entrance) be installed on suitable trees within the Site.

1. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: Site Location



Preliminary Roost Assessment

30 Wiltshire Avenue, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6NQ

Survey conducted 17th January 2025

APPENDIX 2: Photographs



Photograph 1: Loft space.



Photograph 2: Loft space used for storage.



Photograph 3: Loft space.



Photograph 4: Loft space.



Photograph 5: Hanging tiles. Loft space.



Photograph 6: Loft space.



Photograph 7: Loft space-ventilation brick.



Photograph 8: Fibreglass insulation.



Photograph 9: Loft space.



Photograph 10: Rear elevation.



Photograph 11: Cladding tight and flat.



Photograph 12: Cedar cladding around the building.



Photograph 13: Rear garden.



Photograph 14: Hanging tiles.



Photograph 15: Side elevation.



Photograph 16: Side elevation.



Photograph 17: Front elevation.



Photograph 18: Cedar cladding.



Photograph 19: No gaps around guttering or soffits.



Photograph 20: No gaps around hanging tiles.



Photograph 21: Gaps around porch.



Photograph 22: No gaps around cladding.



Photograph 23: Side elevation and garage.



Photograph 24: Eaves space.



Photograph 13: Eaves space.



Photograph 14: Gaps around porch could be checked using a ladder, torch and endoscope.

