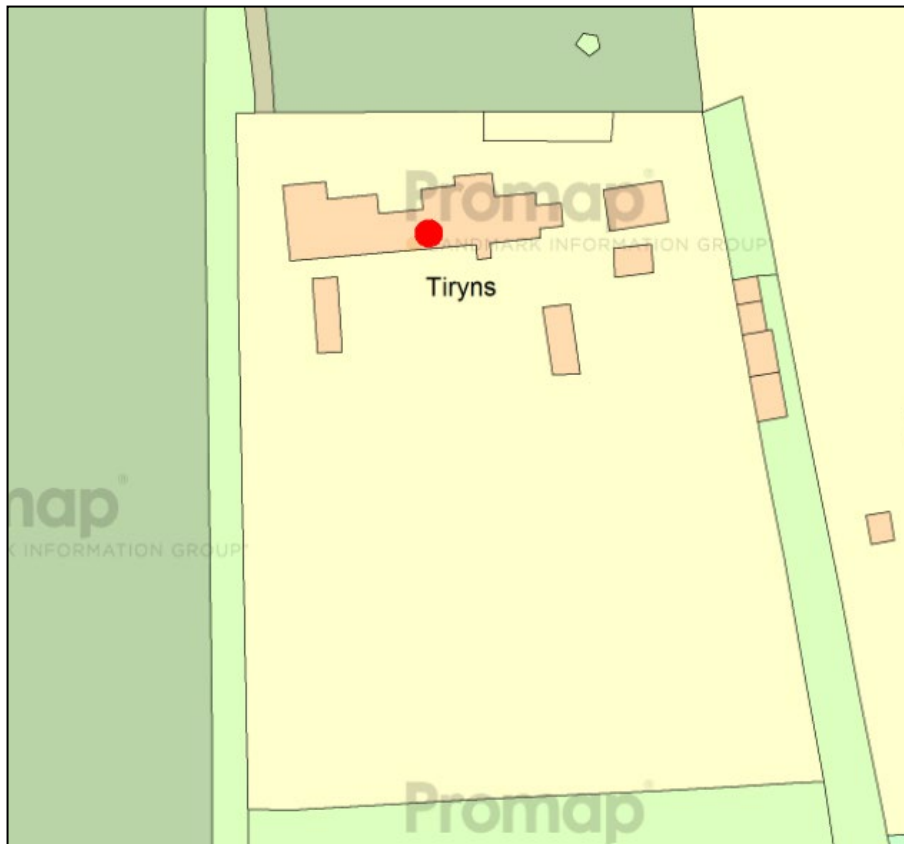




Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT TIRYNS FOREST ROAD, WOKINGHAM



Prepared for:
Mr B Mead
c/o Bowen Evans Consultancy
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5 July 2024

Ref: SPH/ESR-24/02.06



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1 Introduction	4
1.1 Instruction	4
1.2 Aims and Objectives	4
1.3 Proposed Works	4
1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience	4
2 Survey Methodology	5
2.1 Constructions/Limitations	5
2.2 Dusk Surveys	5
3 Survey Findings	6
3.1 Dusk Surveys	6
4 Conclusions/Interpretation	8
5 References	9
6 Queries	9

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

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The validity of this report ceases at the prescribed time limit or after one year from the survey, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Kirsty Vijn of Bowen Evans Consultancy, on behalf of Mr B Mead, to carry out two dusk emergence surveys at Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham RG40 5QR. The surveys were undertaken at the property to provide further evidence to support the initial findings (a negative result) and conclusions from the preliminary roost assessment conducted by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP ref R2628_PRA_a, and to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works, if required. This report is prepared to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The application site comprises a two-storey detached, brick-built property with attached single storey outbuildings. The property sits within its own extensive grounds which comprise greenhouses/lawns/mature trees and shrubs throughout and a pond. The site itself offers excellent foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity to alternative habitat for roosting, foraging and commuting bats in the wider landscape.

A desk top study was conducted prior to the surveys to review existing information about the site and its surroundings. The desk top study was conducted based upon a minimum 2km search radius and it revealed that 1 statutory designated site is located within, and two current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site.

A search of Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group records confirmed 10 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on Wednesday 8 May and Sunday 2 June 2024. A low number of bats were seen and heard foraging in and around the site throughout the surveys however, none were seen emerging from or re-entering the property to roost.

This report confirms the findings of the surveys, completed by an experienced licensed bat ecologist, in accordance with current best practice guidance where possible, and outlines any ecological constraints or issues with the proposed works.

The combined evidence from the preliminary roost assessment and activity surveys provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. No bats or evidence of bats were observed during the preliminary roost assessment and no bats were seen entering or emerging from the property during the activity surveys. This indicates that the property has not been used as a roost by bats and that an EPSL from Natural England (NE) is not required.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were commissioned by Kirsty Vijn of Bowen Evans Consultancy, on behalf of Mr B Mead, to carry out two dusk emergence surveys at Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham RG40 5QR.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The dusk emergence surveys are designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats using the building to roost.
- Estimate the size and status of any existing bat roost within the building.
- Establish where the bats are accessing the building.
- Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development.
- Determine if an EPSL and ecological method statement are required.

The survey was carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition.

1.3 Proposed Works

The surveys were commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a replacement property following the demolition of the current building.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The activity surveys were conducted by Simon Holmes, Katie Holmes, Robert (Bob) Brittain, Nick Powell and Emma Turnbull and the report was compiled by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 34 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

Katie holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-35124) and has been surveying bats for 12 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

Bob holds a Class 2 Bat Licence (CLS-11916) and has been surveying bats for 12 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

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.

Emma holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 10824 and 10825) and Possession Licence (SCI-44140). She has been surveying bats for 7 years and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, echolocation analysis, bat biology and identification and netting and ringing and is a registered bat carer.



2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Constraints/Limitations

An assessment of the building exterior was conducted on 8 May 2024, prior to the activity surveys being undertaken and there were no constraints or limitations to the surveys. Weather conditions were suitable for the surveys, being conducted during warm weather and a low number of bats were heard and seen foraging and in transit during the surveys.

A thorough and up-close inspection of the hanging tiles on the rear of the dwarf wall above the garage entrances was undertaken. In contrast to 6.1.1 page 14 of the preliminary roost assessment conducted by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP ref R2628_PRA_a, there are no gaps or lifted hanging tiles, see photographs at Appendix 1. As no features were present, this section of the building was not surveyed.

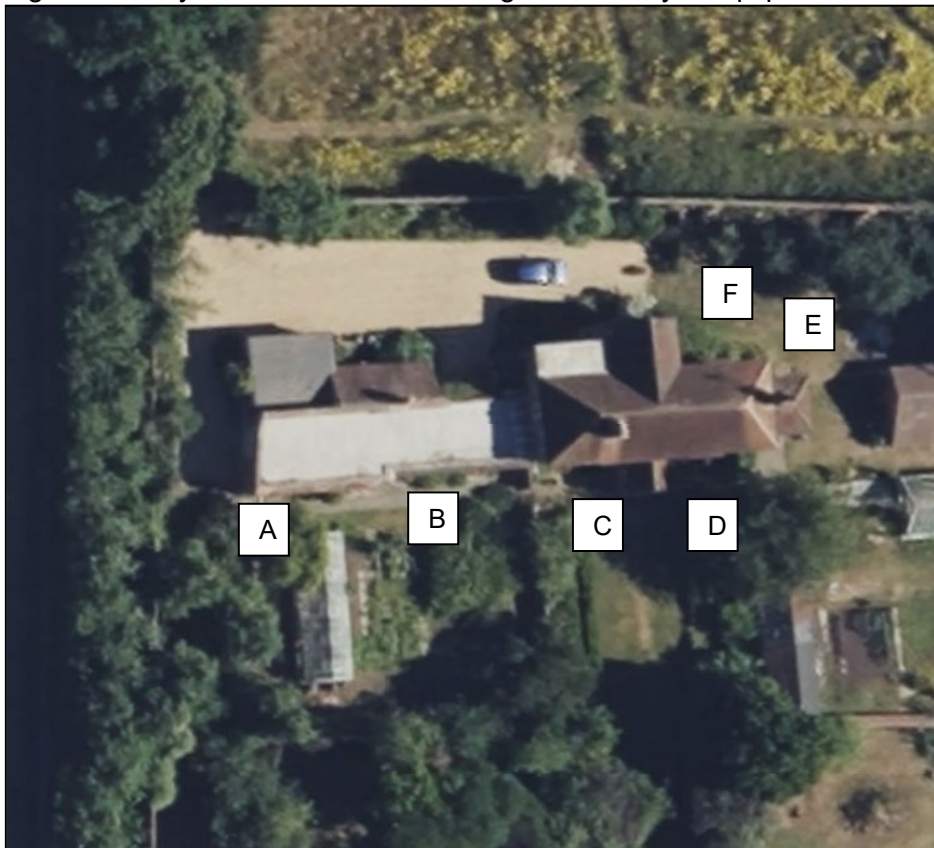
2.2 Dusk Surveys

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the evenings of Wednesday 8 May and Sunday 2 June 2024. The surveyors and equipment were stationed (as shown in Figure 1 below), to ensure the features (aside from the hanging tiles) identified in the preliminary roost assessment could be observed.

During the surveys bat activity was monitored using six BatLogger M bat detectors together with six Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps. A screenshot from the video cameras is included at Appendix 2.

The detectors and cameras were fitted with SD cards for recording bat activity, allowing for later analysis with Kaleidoscope Pro 3 software, MotionMeerkat and VLC media player.

Figure 1 – Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham, surveyor/equipment locations.





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During the surveys no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the property to roost. In total 4 different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 commencing below. As very few bats were seen during the surveys the frequent flight paths of bats cannot be shown.

3. Survey Findings

3.1 Dusk Surveys

The weather conditions and surveyor details from the surveys can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Surveyor details and weather conditions for the bat activity surveys conducted at Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham.

Date:	8 May 2024	2 June 2024
Survey Type	Emergence survey	Emergence survey
Surveyor and location	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Simon Holmes (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera/batlogger (E) Remote camera/batlogger (F) Nick Powell	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Simon Holmes (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera/batlogger (E) Nick Powell (F) Emma Turnbull
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 14.3°C Cloud cover 30% Humidity 76% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0-1	Temperature 14.1°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 66.6% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0
Sunset	20:38	21.12
Start time	20:20	20:55
Finish Time	22:15	22:45
Duration	01:55	01:50
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 11.5°C Cloud cover 20% Humidity 83% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0-1	Temperature 11.7°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 82.5% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
8/05/24	A	20:20 – 22:15	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Bat activity during this survey was very limited at all survey positions. Between 21.14 (36 minutes after sunset) and 21.49 only 5 calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard. Two calls from a soprano pipistrelle bat were heard, at 21.43 and 21.54 – being the last bat call heard during the survey. A single call from a noctule was heard at 21.33.
8/05/24	B	20:20 – 22:15	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Between 21.16 and 21.50 6 calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard. Five calls from a soprano pipistrelle bat were heard between 21.35 and 22.03 – being the last bat call heard during the survey. A single call from a noctule was heard at 21.33.



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Table 2 continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
8/05/24	C	20:20 – 22:15	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.49 (11 minutes after sunset) a common pipistrelle bat was both seen and heard in transit from behind the surveyor and round the right-hand side of the property. Another 7 foraging calls from a common pipistrelle bat were heard with the bat being seen foraging around the trees/pond behind the surveyor with the last foraging call being heard at 21.47. Between 20.50 and 20.59 a soprano pipistrelle bat was both seen and heard foraging around the trees behind the surveyor. A single call from a noctule was heard at 21.33.
8/05/24	D	20:20 – 22:15	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Camera positioned to observe the gap behind the soffit. Between 20.49 and 21.47, the batlogger recorded 8 common pipistrelle calls, 9 soprano pipistrelle calls and 1 noctule call. The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
8/05/24	E	20:20 – 22:15	N	N	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Camera positioned to observe the roof where the external inspection identified gaps under the roof tiles. Between 20.50 and 22.07, the batlogger recorded 1 noctule call, 6 soprano pipistrelle calls and 2 common pipistrelle calls. The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
08/05/24	F	20:20 – 22:15	Y	Y	Common, and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared (BLE)	At 20.50 a soprano pipistrelle bat was both heard and seen in transit to the left of the surveyor. A soprano pipistrelle was then heard again on another seven occasions until 22.08 but not seen. Three calls from a common pipistrelle bat were heard between 21.39 and 21.50, the bat was not seen. The noctule was heard on a couple of occasions, at 21.33 and 21.44. At 21.22 a single call from a BLE bat was heard.
02/06/24	A	20:55 – 22:45	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	During this survey bat activity was very limited at all the survey positions. Between 21.58 and survey end 8 calls from soprano pipistrelle bats were heard and recorded, 6 calls from a common pipistrelle bat and 3 noctule calls. No bats were seen. During data analysis, a single call from a BLE bat was revealed.
02/06/24	B	20:55 – 22:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.39 (27 minutes after sunset) a transit call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard, the bat was not heard again. Fourteen foraging and transit calls from a soprano pipistrelle were heard and recorded between 22.02 (when the bat was seen in transit from behind the surveyor and over the single storey section of the building and away) and 22.27, being the last bat call heard during the survey. A single call for a noctule was heard at 22.09.
02/06/24	C	20:55 – 22:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.33 a transit call from a noctule was heard, the bat was then heard on another 2 occasions, at 21.58 and 22.11 but never seen. From 21.34 until 22.27 a number of foraging calls from a soprano pipistrelle bat were heard with the bat being seen on a couple of occasions foraging in the trees behind the surveyor and around the garden. A common pipistrelle bat was heard foraging between 21.55 and 22.26, being the last bat call heard during the survey.



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Table 2 continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
02/06/24	D	20:55 – 22:45	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Camera positioned to observe the gap behind the soffit. Between 21.34 and 22.39, the batlogger recorded 9 common pipistrelle calls, 27 soprano pipistrelle calls and 1 noctule call. The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
02/06/24	E	20:55 – 22:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.35 (23 minutes after sunset) a faint call from a soprano pipistrelle bat was heard. A soprano pipistrelle bat was then heard on another 18 occasions when, at 21.48, the bat was seen foraging around the garden to the rear of the surveyor. Bat activity ceased at 22.40 with 4 passes from a soprano pipistrelle bat being heard and recorded. Common pipistrelle activity commenced at 21.58 and thereafter another half dozen calls from a common pipistrelle bat were heard, the bat was never seen. At 22.11 a transit call from a noctule was heard.
02/06/24	F	20:55 – 22:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.35 a call from a soprano pipistrelle bat was heard and thereafter until 22.39 (being the last bat call heard during the survey) their foraging and transit activity dominated with the bat being seen on a couple of occasions foraging along the hedgerow to the right of the surveyor and around the garden/trees to the rear of the surveyor. Common pipistrelle activity commenced at 21.56 with the bat being seen in transit to the right of the surveyor and to the garden at the rear of the surveyor, the bat was not seen or heard again. A noctule was heard once, at 22.10.

4. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 4.1 The calls detected and recorded from the surveys provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctula*, and BLE, *Plecotus auritus*, foraging and/or transiting across the site. The longest and most frequent calls were from soprano pipistrelle bats and the bat species identified during the surveys is corroborated by the bat records search results.
- 4.2 The features identified in the preliminary survey are suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost and the surrounding area provides good habitat for bats in which to forage and roost. However, no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost. The surveyors' observations provide a high level of confidence in the species detected during the surveys at Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham.
- 4.3 Pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset. As the first common pipistrelle bat call was at 11 minutes after sunset, and the flight direction of the bat was observed, the bat is most probably roosting nearby however it did not emerge from Tiryns. Whilst no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost, this does not mean that they will not be present in the future as bats are known to be transient and use a wide variety of crevice like features opportunistically.
- 4.4 The survey conditions were good, with warm weather, a broad range of insects flying. The bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, considered low with the bats appearing to favor the habitat surrounding the site rather than the property/site itself.



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- 4.5 Whilst a limited number of calls from a BLE bat were recorded, this is not unusual as the BLE bat is commonly referred to as the 'silent' bat as the calls are very quiet and difficult to detect as they prefer to hunt using their hearing and sight.
- 4.6 The bat calls and field observations provide a high level of confidence in support of the opinions as set out in this report. Bat activity was dominated by soprano pipistrelle bats.
- 4.7 The cumulative evidence leads me to conclude that bats are not roosting at Tiryns and the property has a negligible potential to support roosting bats therefore an EPSL is not required.
- 4.8 All bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5. References

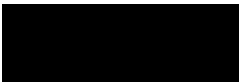
Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).
Bat Workers Manual – Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004.
Bat Mitigation Guidelines – Natural England 2006.
The Conservation and Habitat Regulations – 2017.

6. Queries

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

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APPENDIX 1

Photographs of hanging tiles on rear elevation
of single storey western extension





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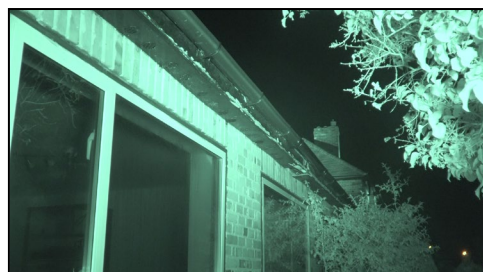
APPENDIX 2

Tiryns, Forest Road, Wokingham - Screenshots from night vision cameras

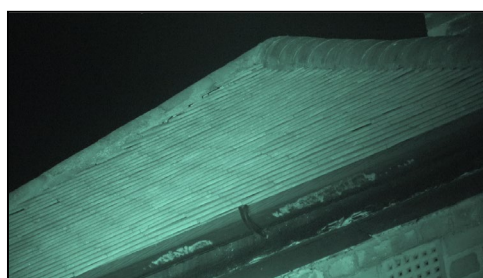
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A



B



C



D



E



F

