

**Outbuildings at 12 Limmer Close
Barkham
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG41 4DF**

Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Ref: R2424/a

Report prepared by John Wenman MCIEEM

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Nick Blair to undertake an updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) of the outbuildings at 12 Limmer Close in Barkham, Berkshire.

1.1.2 The survey was commissioned in connection with a planning application to be filed with Wokingham Borough Council seeking consent for the demolition of the existing garden shed and summerhouse followed by the construction of replacement building to provide living accommodation.

1.1.3 Planning permission (reference 193240) was granted by Wokingham Borough Council in 2020 for a new building but was not implemented; this survey updates the survey completed by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy in 2019 to support that consent.

1.2 Legislative Background

1.2.1 All bat species in the wild in England and Wales are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
- Deliberately, 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; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

1.2.2 The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:

- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is “no satisfactory alternative” to the derogation, and;
- **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range” and;
- **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.

1.2.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. The Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that European Protected Species licensing is necessary before granting planning permission.

1.2.4 European Protected Species licence applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days.

1.2.5 Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring bat species may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) (WML-CL21) and Bat Earned Recognition Licence (BERL) (WML-CL47). The Licences permit ‘Registered Consultants’ to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.

1.2.6 Survey data supporting EPS licence applications or the registration of the site under the BMCL/BERL must be up to date i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

1.3 Site Location and Context

1.3.1 The outbuildings are situated next to the house at the north-eastern end of Limmer Close in Barkham, Berkshire (OS grid reference: SU 78499 67933).

- 1.3.2** The outbuildings are set on the northern edge of the Barkham settlement and back onto a paddock with a small coniferous woodland parcel. The surrounding landscape to the north and east comprises Fox Hill ancient semi-natural woodland; to the west is Bearwood Lakes Golf Club and to the south is The Coombes broadleaved woodland. The semi-rural surroundings provide high quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats in the vicinity.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 A desk-based study for bats was undertaken to collate and review existing information about the site and the surrounding land. The study utilised the following open access resources:

- Google Earth – satellite imagery was used to identify potential flight paths and foraging habitats for bats;
- MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species licences; and
- Pre-existing bat survey reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal to provide background information for the site.

2.2 Building Inspection

2.2.1 An updated survey of the interior and exterior of the outbuildings was undertaken by John Wenman - an ecologist registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (2025-85948-CL18-BAT) on August 11th 2026.

2.2.2 The equipment used during the inspection comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a headtorch, ladder and a Teslong NTS-500 video endoscope. The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior and interior of the structures during daylight hours to compile information on potential and actual bat access points; potential and actual bat roost sites; and any evidence of bat presence (Collins 2023).

External Survey

2.2.3 Frequently used bat access points and/or roost sites include (but are not limited to) spaces:

- behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes and barge boards;
- under lead flashing (particularly around chimneys) and roof tiles/slates; and
- in existing bat boxes.

2.2.4 It is important to note that the two most abundant and widespread bat

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species, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), typically only require gaps measuring 15mm by 20mm to gain access to a roost inside a building.

2.2.5 The external survey involved a systematic search for evidence of bats including:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining; and
- squeaking noises.

2.2.6 It should be noted that bats can be present in a building while leaving no visible signs externally and wet weather has the potential to wash any evidence away. The search for evidence was focused on (but was not limited to) the ground, windowsills, windowpanes and walls (including cladding and hanging tiles); particularly in places near to potential bat access points and/or roost sites.

Internal Survey

2.2.7 The internal survey comprised a systematic search for evidence of bats in the buildings (i.e. checking the exterior from windows) and inside the spaces.

Evidence of bats found during an internal inspection can include:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining;
- feeding remains (i.e. moth wings);
- squeaking noises;
- bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases; and
- odour.

2.2.8 It should be noted that only specimens or droppings can be relied upon in isolation to confirm the presence of a bat roost.

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2.2.9 Frequently used roosting locations within the roof include (but are not limited to):

- the apex of the gable end or dividing walls;
- ridge and hip beams;
- mortise and tenon joints;
- behind purlins; and
- between tiles and roof lining.

Survey Limitations and Validity

2.2.10 There were no significant survey limitations because PRAs can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the buildings were fully accessible.

2.2.11 It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey, particularly for bat species which typically roost in hidden crevices. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence found during a survey does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence in a building.

2.2.12 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for 12 months only (CIEEM 2019b).

2.3 Survey Constraints

2.3.1 Full access was available to the interior and exterior of the outbuildings, thus there were no significant constraints to the survey.

2.3.2 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019).

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Building Inspection

- 3.1.1 Photographs of the buildings are presented below and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in **Figure 1**. The survey findings from the exterior and interior of the garden shed (**B1**) and summerhouse (**B2**) are described as follows:

3.2 External Survey – Shed (B1)

- 3.2.1 The shed (**B1**) was an 'L'-shaped building constructed of single-skin timber panels (**Photograph 1**). The pitched roof was covered with overlapping tiles that were mostly flat and tightly fitted (**Photograph 2**). There were, however, a few gaps under uneven and/or slightly raised verge tiles that, after close endoscopic inspection, showed no evidence of use by crevice-roosting bats (**Photographs 2 & 3; Target notes 2 & 3**). Mortar was missing beneath ridge tiles in places along the roof but the gaps were superficial and did not provide bats with a suitable crevice to roost inside (**Photograph 5; Target note 4**). The verge mortar on all the shed gables was complete and intact (**Photograph 6**). No evidence of bats was visible on the building.



1. Garden shed (B1) viewed from north.



2. Mostly flat and tight overlapping roof tiles (B1).



3. Inspected gaps under uneven verge tiles at western gable end (B1).



4. Inspected gaps under slightly raised verge tiles at eastern gable end (B1).



5. Superficial gaps in ridge mortar (B1).



6. Intact verge mortar on northern gable (B1).

3.3 External Survey – Summerhouse (B2)

- 3.3.1 The summerhouse (B2) was a simple timber structure with a front veranda and pitched roof (**Photograph 7**). The walls were covered in timber shingles, which were warped in places creating superficial gaps beneath that were of limited extent and showed no evidence of bats during a close inspection (**Photograph 8; Target note 5**). The building was formed of painted timber panels that provided no opportunities for bats.



7. Summerhouse (B2) viewed from north.



8. Timber shingle roof on summerhouse with some slightly warped shingles (B2).

3.4 Internal Survey – Shed (B1)

- 3.4.1 The interior of the shed (B1) was open from the ground to the roof and used to store gardening equipment and tools (**Photograph 9**). The roof was of 'cut and pitch' construction with an exposed ridge beam and rafters and was lined with a white breathable roofing membrane (**Photograph 10**). The walls were a single-skin of timber shed panels and the timbers at the gable ends were tight (**Photograph 11**). No evidence of bats was found in the shed.



9. Garden shed interior (B1).



10. Breathable roofing membrane lining roof (B1).



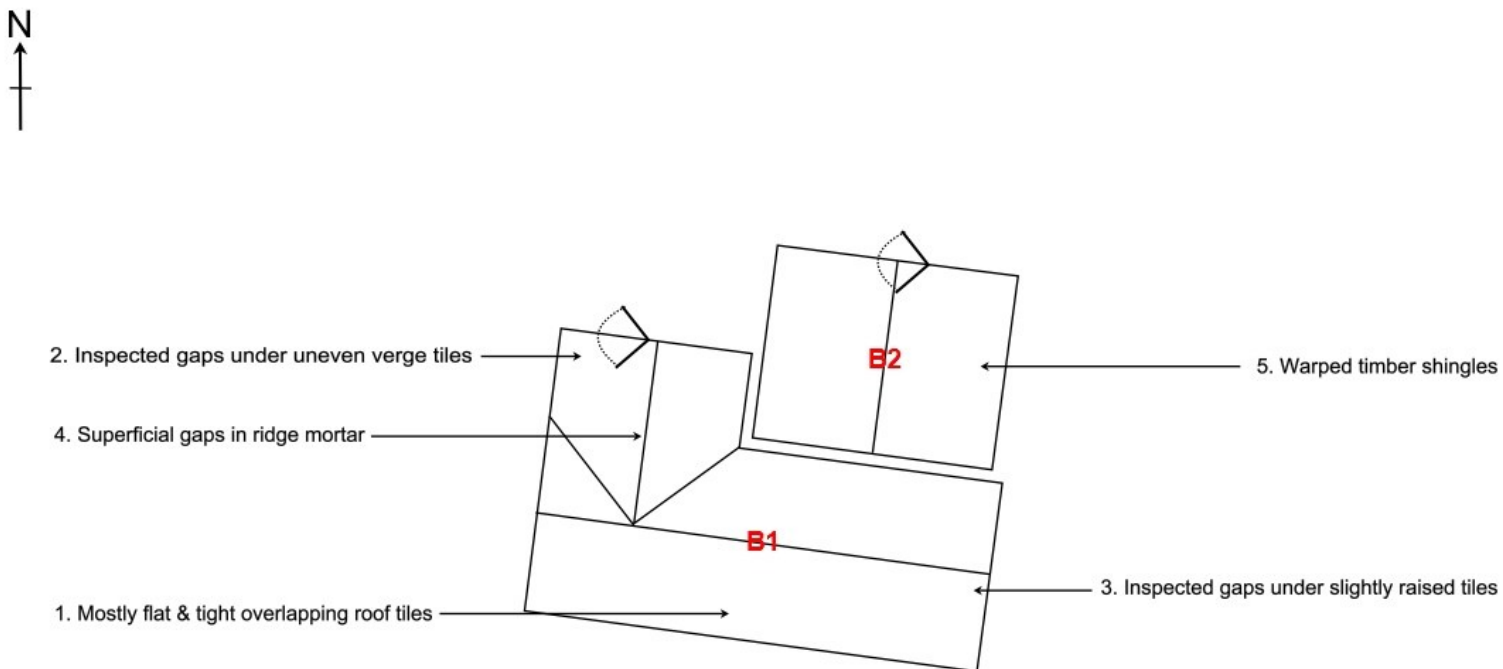
11. Single-skin shed panel walls with tight roof timbers at gable ends (B1).

3.5 Internal Survey – Summerhouse (B2)

- 3.5.1 The summerhouse had plastered walls, and ceiling, and was furnished and therefore unsuitable for bats (**Photograph 12**).



12. Walls and ceiling plastered in summerhouse (B2).



B_n Outbuilding
 ◊ Access
n. External target note
n. Internal target note

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	Outbuildings at 12 Limmer Close Barkham	
JW	Aug 2026	Not to scale	Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

Figure 1 – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Status/Potential

4.1.1 The garden shed (**B1**) had a few features of low potential (refer to **Appendix 1**) for use by crevice-dwelling bat species such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. The potential bat roost features were confined to uneven and/or slightly raised verge tiles at the gable ends on the shallow pitched roof, which after close endoscopic inspection, showed no evidence of use by crevice-roosting bats. Furthermore, bat access inside the shed was blocked by breathable roofing membrane and no bat droppings were found internally, and therefore it is considered unlikely that the shed supports roosting bats, matching the findings from 2019.

4.1.2 The summerhouse (**B2**) had superficial external features i.e. warped timber shingles, not noted in 2019, but these were unsuitable for use by crevice-dwelling bat species and there was no evidence of bats, and internally comprised living space, is therefore of negligible bat roost potential (refer to **Appendix 1**).

4.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

4.2.1 The proposed demolition of the garden shed (**B1**) will have an impact on the external features identified as potential access and/or roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. The features were considered to be low of potential and were confined to uneven and/or slightly raised verge tiles at the gable ends that, after close endoscopic inspection, showed no evidence of use by roosting bats. Therefore, in the absence of any signs of the presence of bats during the preliminary bat roost assessment, it is considered unlikely that the proposed demolition will have any impact on bats or their roosts. However, as bats are highly mobile there is a chance that bats could be present in the future, and therefore the demolition work should be subject to precautions as set out in **Section 4.3** as follows.

4.3 Precautionary Measures

4.3.1 The demolition work will be preceded by a repeat endoscopic inspection of the features with bat roost potential, i.e. gaps under uneven and/or slightly raised verge tiles, for the presence of bats by a licensed ecologist. If bats or evidence of bats is found, the work will begin only once a licensed ecologist

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has provided further written advice on how to proceed. At this point, a European Protected Species mitigation licence or confirmation of the site's registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence CL21/Bat Earned Recognition Licence CL47 (if applicable) will be required to permit the lawful demolition of the building.

5 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. CIEEM, Winchester.

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

Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Version 1.2 CIEEM, Ampfield

APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS

The categories detailed in **Table 2** below are derived from the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*' (Collins 2023) and provide guidance for assessing the potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats. These categories are applied using professional judgement and irrespective of whether the presence of a bat roost has been confirmed during a survey, as additional bat roosts could be present which have not yet been discovered.

Table 2. Categories for potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats.

Potential Suitability	Category Justification
None	A building (or structure) that has no features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of cracks, crevices or voids that could provide suitable shelter).
Negligible	A building (or structure) that has no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats, but in this case a small element of uncertainty remains as bats will occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features. This category may also be used where a bat could potentially roost due to one attribute, but it is considered unlikely due to another attribute (e.g. a feature that is subject to constant illumination from artificial lighting).
Low	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites for bats do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and/or surrounding suitable habitat to be used regularly or by large numbers (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for a maternity colony and not a classic hibernation site).
Moderate	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for regular use by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. However, these potential roost sites for bats are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status with regards to the type of roost only (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).
High	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for use by large numbers of bats more regularly and for longer periods of time due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These potential roost sites for bats are capable of supporting high conservation status roosts (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).

APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITION OF BAT ROOST TYPES

The potential suitability of a building in conjunction with any evidence of bat presence is used to provide an initial assessment of likely roost type and importance. The types of roost considered are based on the following Natural England definitions:

- Day roost – a summer resting place used by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, during the day;
- Night roost – a resting place used by individual bats on occasion, or by a whole colony regularly, during the night;
- Feeding perch – a resting place used by individual bats, or a few individuals, primarily for short periods of feeding during the night;
- Transitional roost – a place used by a few individual bats, or occasionally small groups, for a short period of time upon waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation;
- Maternity roost – a place used by small to large groups of female bats to give birth and raise their young to independence;
- Hibernation roost – a place used by individual bats, or in groups, during winter where there is a constant cool temperature and high humidity; and
- Satellite roost – a place used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding female bats found in close proximity to the main nursery colony throughout the breeding season.

The importance of a bat roost is underpinned by the conservation status of the suspected species (i.e. the distribution/rarity of a species in a specific geographic location) and the type of roost (i.e. not all roosts have the same level of importance in supporting the local bat population). Further roost characterisation surveys may be required to fully determine the importance of a confirmed roost to allow for a robust impact assessment.