



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT MANOR COTTAGE BARKHAM



**Prepared for:
Ms C Poncia
Manor Cottage
Barkham Street
Barkham
RG40 4PJ**

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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 Ms C Poncia to carry out three dusk emergence surveys at Manor Cottage, Barkham Street, Barkham, RG40 4PJ. This report is prepared to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council, the full details of which are unknown at the time of writing this report but are likely to include the construction of single and double-storey extensions.

The application site comprises a detached, two storey brick-built property all set within extensive grounds that are mainly laid to lawn with gravelled parking area at the front/side. The site itself offers suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is excellent ecological connectivity to the wider landscape.

The desk top study was conducted based upon a minimum 2km search radius and it revealed that one statutory designated site is located within, and three current European Protected Species Licence (EPSLs) for bats has been issued within 2km of the proposed development site. The surrounding habitat includes tree and hedge lined agricultural fields, copses and a freshwater lake all of which provide rich and diverse habitats suitable for a wide range of bat species and are directly connected to the site.

A search of the Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group records confirmed 9 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The preliminary ecological appraisals (bats) comprised detailed searches of the interior and exterior of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, internally or externally, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and the features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The initial site visit was carried out on by Arbtech in April 2024 and during the visit an internal and external inspection of the building took place to look for signs of bats.

Externally and internally the property was found to be in a good condition however there were raised roof tiles and missing mortar from ridge tiles. In addition, approximately 150 droppings were observed scattered below the ridge beam in both sections of the loft space indicating that bats had used the building to roost.

Full access was provided to the building and there were no constraints to the surveys.

In line with best practice guidelines, three activity surveys were recommended to provide additional evidence in support of the preliminary survey results, and the amount of effort is considered proportionate to the property and risk associated with the proposed works.

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on Sunday 11 May, Wednesday 4 June and Sunday 29 June 2025. A low number of bats were heard and seen foraging in and around the site throughout the surveys and none were seen emerging from or re-entering the property to roost.



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The evidence observed during the preliminary survey (bat droppings), indicates historical use by a low number of bats, and that the property was most probably a day roost used on an opportunistic basis and that an EPSL from Natural England (NE) is not required. However, a site-specific method statement is provided to comply with EU Article 12 and 16 which help guide works that affect a bat resting place when the species is not present in order to avoid a licence/derogation, it will be necessary, to ensure following development the “favourable conservation status” of bats is maintained and an appropriately worded ecological method statement must be conditioned to any planning consent.

With careful timing and close supervision no offence should occur, and the FCS will remain unaffected. If bats are encountered during the work, all work must stop and the project ecologist informed, and an EPSL will be required.

An ecological method statement has been included to enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *“in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application”*.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were commissioned by Ms C Poncia to carry out three dusk emergence surveys at Manor Cottage, Barkham Street, Barkham, RG40 4PJ.

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 is required.

The surveys were 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 Wokingham Borough Council, the full details of which are unknown at the time of writing this report but are likely to include single and double story extensions.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The activity surveys were conducted by Katie Holmes, Nick Powell and Robert (Bob) Brittain, 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 Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 35 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.

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.

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.



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2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Constraints/Limitations

An assessment of the building exterior was conducted on 11 May 2025, prior to the first survey being undertaken and there were no material changes to the site and no constraints or limitations to the surveys. Weather conditions were suitable for the surveys, being conducted during warm weather and with insect abundance and bats being observed foraging and in transit during the surveys.

2.2 Dusk Surveys

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the evenings of Sunday 11 May, Wednesday 4 June and Sunday 29 June 2025. The surveyors/remote cameras were stationed (as shown in Figure 1), to ensure the features identified in the preliminary roost assessment could be observed.

During the surveys bat activity was monitored using three BatLogger M bat detectors together with five Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps. A sample screenshot from the video cameras is included at Appendix 1.

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

Figure 1 – Manor Cottage, Barkham surveyor/remote camera location and frequently used flight paths of common pipistrelle bats.





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During the surveys no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the building to roost. In total 5 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. The most frequently used flight paths of common pipistrelle bats are shown in Figure 1 on page 6.

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 bat activity surveys conducted at Manor Cottage, Barkham.

Date:	11 May 2025	4 June 2025	29 June 2025
Surveyor and location	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Remote camera (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera (E) Nick Powell	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Remote camera (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera (E) Nick Powell	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Remote camera (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera (E) Nick Powell
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 14.7°C, Cloud cover 70% Humidity 64.8% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2	Temperature 14°C, Cloud cover 60% Humidity 80% Dry Wind Beaufort 0-1	Temperature 23.9°C, Cloud cover 5% Humidity 69.6% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2
Sunset	20:43	21:14	21:24
Start time	20:25	20:55	21:05
Finish Time	22:25	22:55	23:00
Duration	02:00	02:00	01:55
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 13.7°C Cloud cover 60% Humidity 79.5% Dry Wind Beaufort 0	Temperature 12.6°C Cloud cover 50% Humidity 86.2% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2	Temperature 20.5°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 84.2% Dry Wind Beaufort 0-1

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of Manor Cottage, Barkham.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
11/05/25	A	20:25 – 22:25	Y	Y	Common, soprano and nathusius's pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared (BLE)	At 20.51 (8 minutes after sunset) a common pipistrelle bat was seen and heard in transit across the front of the property from the left of the surveyor and thereafter common pipistrelle foraging and transit activity dominated until survey end with a common pipistrelle bat being seen on a couple of occasions foraging in and around the site. Soprano pipistrelle activity was limited with calls only being heard between 21.56 and 22.27. Calls from a nathusius's pipistrelle were heard at 21.34 and 22.11. A number of calls from a noctule were heard between 21.06 and 22.20, the bat was not seen. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a BLE bat.



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Table 2 continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
11/05/25	B	20:25 – 22:25	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
11/05/25	C	20:25 – 22:25	Y	Y	Common, soprano and nathusius's pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.51 a call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard and thereafter common pipistrelle activity dominated until survey end with up to 2 bats being seen foraging in the neighbouring garden to the rear of the surveyor and in the site to the right of the surveyor. Soprano pipistrelle activity was very limited with only a handful of foraging calls being heard at 22.14. Nathusius's pipistrelle calls were heard at 22.10. A noctule was seen in transit at 21.06 high above the property heading in a southwesterly direction. It was then heard foraging on a number of occasions up until 22.20.
11/05/25	D	20:25 – 22:25	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
11/05/25	E	20:25 – 22:25	Y	Y	Common, soprano and nathusius's pipistrelle and noctule	A faint call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard at 20.55 and then 2 common pipistrelle bats were seen and heard foraging along the tree line to the right of the surveyor. Sporadic common pipistrelle foraging activity continued until survey end. A transit call from a noctule was heard at 21.06 and another 10 calls from a noctule were heard up until 22.20. A call from a nathusius's pipistrelle was heard at 22.11.
04/06/25	A	20:55 – 22:55	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Bat activity during this survey was very limited with a call from a noctule being heard at 21.30. At 21.42 a brief and distant call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard, thereafter very sporadic common pipistrelle activity continued until 22.46 with a bat being seen in transit across the front of the property at 22.15. A call from a soprano pipistrelle was heard at 22.24.
04/06/25	B	20:55 – 22:55	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
04/06/25	C	20:55 – 22:55	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, and noctule	Bat activity during this survey was very limited with, at 21.30, a noctule being seen and heard in transit high above the site heading in a southerly direction. At 21.36 a distant call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard with a common pipistrelle bat being seen at 21.39 foraging in the neighbouring garden behind the surveyor. Thereafter very sporadic common pipistrelle activity continued until 22.24. A call from a soprano pipistrelle was heard at 22.23.
04/06/25	D	20:55 – 22:55	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
04/06/25	E	20:55 – 22:55	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, and BLE	As with the other 2 surveyors, bat activity during this survey was very limited with a noctule being heard at 21.30, a call from a soprano pipistrelle being heard at 22.22 and three calls from common pipistrelle being heard between 21.39 and 22.34. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a BLE bat.



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Table 2 continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
29/07/25	A	21.05 – 23:00	Y	Y	Common pipistrelle and noctule	At this location once again, bat activity during this survey was limited with common pipistrelle activity dominating from 21.41 and survey end with, at 22.32, two bats being seen in transit across the front of the property. Nine calls from a noctule being heard between 21.42 and 22.12 with the bat being seen at 21.59 high over the property.
29/07/25	B	21.05 – 23:00	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
29/07/25	C	21.05 – 23:00	Y	Y	Common pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.37 a very faint and brief call from a common pipistrelle bat was heard and thereafter up until survey end, common pipistrelle activity dominated with numerous foraging calls being heard and up to 3 bats being seen foraging in the neighbouring garden to the rear of the surveyor and in and around the site. A faint call from a noctule was heard at 21.42 and the bat was seen at 21.59 foraging high above the site, it was heard on a number of other occasions up until 22.14.
29/07/25	D	21.05 – 23:00	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity.
29/07/25	E	21.05 – 23:00	Y	Y	Common pipistrelle and noctule	At 21.42 a noctule was seen high above the site, it was heard on another five occasions but not seen again. A limited number of common pipistrelle calls were heard and recorded between 22.15 and 22.49 with a bat being seen once only, at 22.32 in transit across the site from the left of the surveyor and away to the road to the right.

4. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 4.1 The droppings observed during the preliminary roost assessment indicates that they are most likely to be from either pipistrelle *sp.* or BLE bats, both a common (widespread in the UK and Berkshire) species and there was no evidence to indicate maternity use or extended use (hibernation). The evidence indicates that the roost is historic, as there were no fresh droppings, or bats and no bats emerged or re-entered the property to roost. The roost is considered to be of low conservation significance that is important at a site level only and an EPSL from Natural England is not required.
- 4.2 The surrounding agricultural land, copses and freshwater lake provide prime roosting and foraging opportunities, and frequent transit passes by the pipistrelle bats supports these conclusions.
- 4.3 The building has a few crevice like features, and bats may return to roost at the building following the surveys, an ecological method statement must be conditioned with any planning consent. This will provide suitable ecological safeguards should bats be discovered and enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application.*



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4.4 The calls detected and recorded from the surveys provided positive identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, nathusius's pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus nathusii*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctula*, and BLE, *Plecotus auritus*, all foraging and/or transiting across the site. The findings from the surveyor's observations and bat call identification were cross referenced against the species logged in the Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group record search, providing a match for the species identified on this site.

4.5 The earliest bat heard during the surveys was a common pipistrelle at 8 minutes after sunset indicating that the bat is roosting very close by however it was seen in transit from the left of the surveyor, and it did not emerge from the building. This type of activity supports the scientific research indicating that pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset.

Whilst a limited number of calls from BLE bats were heard by the surveyors, 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 sight over hearing.

4.6 The survey conditions were good, with warm weather, an abundance of insect prey flying and the bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, considered very low for the area. This has been a common theme this season, 2025 and also recorded on social media groups.

4.7 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). The provisions set out in the ecological method statement must be implemented in order for the works to be legally undertaken and must form part of any planning conditions.

4.8 To ensure the planned development is in full compliance with European and national legislation, and national and local biodiversity planning policy an appropriate and proportionate program of mitigation and enhancement must be agreed to ensure protection and enhancements for bats.

5. Method Statement for Planning

This site-specific method statement is provided to comply with EU Article 12 and 16 which help guide works that affect a bat resting place when the species is not present in order to avoid a licence/derogation, it will be necessary, to ensure following development the "favourable conservation status" of bats is maintained.

This watching brief aims to address:

- Timing and methods of activities
- Provision of new bat roosting
- Impact on and replacement of existing roosts
- Lighting and habitat provisions as applicable



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5.1 Pre-commencement

- 5.1.1 A project ecologist or their agent must be engaged prior to commencement to provide advice should it be required. This ecological method statement must be adhered to, it provides guidance and project supervision and will ensure that best practice and compliance is adhered to. If there is a delay of greater than one year from the date of this report, further survey effort will be required. Bats are highly mobile wild animals and may be encountered within a building following negative activity survey results.
- 5.1.2 One general purpose woodcrete bat box, for example a Schwegler 1FF bat box (see www.NHBS.com) or similar design will be suitably sited on the mature tree at the rear of the site, the siting to be agreed with the project ecologist. The box could also be erected in a suitable location on the property as it will provide alternative roosting habitat for the species (pipistrelle *sp.* and/or BLE) that have roosted at the site, should it be required. The box should remain in situ even if it is unused as this will provide an overall increase in ecological features and provide a biodiversity net gain.

5.2 Method

- 5.2.1 A toolbox talk must be given to the contractors prior to commencement of works, which will include: background legislation in relation to bats; the most likely areas to expect bats (based on the survey results), good working practice and, details of what to do if a bat or additional evidence of bats is discovered. In the unlikely event that bats, or evidence of other roost locations are found, works must stop immediately, and Natural England or the project ecologist contacted immediately, and any requisite license obtained.

5.3 Timing of work

- 5.3.1 Any works that have the potential to disturb bats during the bat activity period (1 May to 31 August) for example, removing roof and ridge tiles, and must be conducted outside this period. If the works cannot be undertaken during the period 1 September to 1 May and should bats be encountered during this period or at any time during the work, then all work must stop and an EPSL will be required.
- 5.3.2 All work must be undertaken in normal working, daylight, hours, which is in accordance with best working practice and allows the project ecologist or their agent to address any issues if bat(s) are found during the demolition work.

5.4 Ecological supervision

- 5.4.1 The project ecologist or their agent must be provided adequate time to provide advice and supervision for the duration of the proposed works. A record of all site visits must be made, and photographic evidence as required.
- 5.4.2 Prior to deconstruction of any elements of the build, the building must be inspected for any new evidence of bats and the project ecologist, or their agent must be available (on-call) to provide advice should it be required.



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- 5.4.3 If, during the work, when the licenced bat worker is not on-site, and a bat is discovered that appears to be injured or distressed, then the animal should be carefully placed in a small box (e.g. shoe box) by either handling the bat with thick gloved hands or covering the bat with the box and sliding a thin piece of cardboard under to create a floor to the box. A clean piece of cloth loosely crumpled will be placed in one corner of the box (to allow the bat to crawl under and hide), a few small air holes will be put into the lid of the box, and a very shallow container (e.g. foil milk bottle top) of water will be placed in one corner of the box. The licensed bat worker must then be called without delay and all work must stop until the licensed bat worker has been consulted.

5.5 Incorporation of bat roosting to mitigate roost loss

- 5.5.1 The evidence indicates that the bat roost in the loft space is historic, as there were no fresh droppings, or bats and no bats emerged or re-entered the property to roost. The gaps in the roof tiles and missing mortar provided potential roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bat species such as pipistrelle *sp.* and BLE bat.

Planning policy requires enhancements leading to a biodiversity net gain, and the extension could host suitable crevice like features, for example integral bat boxes in the soffits at eaves level, or between the joists and combined with bat access tiles positioned on south, east or west facing elevations but not directly above a window.

Suitable alternatives would include bat access tiles at the ridge and where they provide access to the roof. Only Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes (NBCRM) that has passed the snagging propensity test should be used in relation to the bat access or bat roosts as they do not entangle bats.

5.6 Lighting proposals

- 5.6.1 Lighting: The exact lighting proposals are not known at this stage but where new external lighting is provided best practice in the form of Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night Guidance Note GN08/23 (Bat Conservation Trust and Institution for Lighting Professionals) must be followed.

Research into artificial lighting at night (ALAN) has identified a reduction in insect diversity at night and the potential to disrupt a broad range of insect behaviour patterns and in turn foraging opportunities for bats, particularly where they are bright white. It is therefore essential that any new external lighting is carefully selected, for example, all external lighting must be Light Emitting Diode (LED) and directed downward or be located at a low level. By carefully directing light downwards and using a PIR with short illumination sensor the impact of external lighting on any foraging bats can be reduced.

5.7 Post construction work

- 5.7.1 There is no requirement for post-construction monitoring of this scheme.

6. 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.



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7. Queries

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

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APPENDIX 1

Manor Cottage, Barkham Street, Barkham, RG40 4PJ
Sample screenshots from night vision cameras

A



B



C

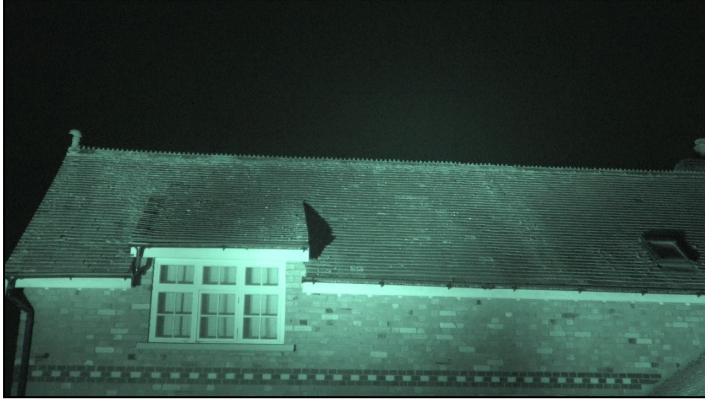




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