



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT 3 BUCKHURST WAY EARLEY, READING



**Prepared for:
Mr R Lane
c/o 3 Buckhurst Way
Earley
Reading
RG6 7RL**

23 September 2025

Ref: SPH/BAS-25/03.09



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX
Tel: 0118 976 2904
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Instruction
- 1.2 Survey Scope
- 1.3 Proposed Works
- 1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Legislative Background

3. Site Location and Description

- 3.1 Site Location
- 3.2 Site Description

4. Survey Methodology

- 4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search
- 4.2 Daylight Survey
- 4.3 Dusk Survey
- 4.4 Constraints

5. Survey Findings

- 5.1 Pre-Survey Data Search
- 5.2 External Inspection
- 5.3 Internal Inspection
- 5.4 Dusk Survey

6. Evaluation

7. Conclusion/Interpretation

8. References

9. Queries

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

©2025 Urban Tree Experts

All rights in this report are reserved. No part of it may be reproduced, edited or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature, without our written permission. Its content and format are for the exclusive use of Mr R Lane and his agents in dealing with this site. It may not be sold, lent, hired out or divulged to any third party not directly involved in this site without the written consent of Urban Tree Experts. It may be reproduced as part of a planning application.

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 R Lane to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) and a dusk emergence survey at 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley, Reading, RG6 7RL. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The DBW 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 that two statutory designated sites are located within, and no current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surrounding habitat does not provide suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging bats, due to the dense urban environment however via the garden network there is ecological connectivity to the University of Reading grounds that are known to provide suitable roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for a wide range of bat species.

A search of Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire bat group records confirmed 8 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The initial site visit was carried out by Simon Holmes on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 3.20pm, when an external and internal inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats.

The property is in a fair condition externally however, there are moved/lifted/raised roof and hanging tiles which could provide potential roosting opportunities for bats, and the presence or absence of bats could not be established.

The properties suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and potential roost features identified during the DBW. When combined with the data from the desk top study, this resulted in the property being characterised as having a low potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², a single separate dusk emergence survey is required on the property in order to establish the presence or absence of bats and the amount of effort is considered proportionate to the property and risk associated with the proposed works.

The dusk emergence survey was conducted on Wednesday 3 September 2025. A limited number of bats were seen and heard foraging in and around the site throughout the survey and none were seen emerging from or re-entering the property to roost.

This report confirms the findings of the survey, 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 DBW and activity survey 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 DBW, and no bats were seen entering or emerging from the property during the activity survey. 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.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr R Lane to carry out a DBW at 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley, Reading, RG6 7RL to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council. Following a DBW, Urban Tree Experts was commissioned to conduct a dusk activity survey upon the property in accordance with best practice guidelines.

1.2 Survey Scope

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 surveys were commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council, the final details of which are unknown at the time of writing this report.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The DBW was completed by Simon Holmes. The emergence survey was conducted by Katie Holmes and Robert (Bob) Brittain, and the report was compiled by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

Simon Holmes MSc. 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.

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.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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 1.

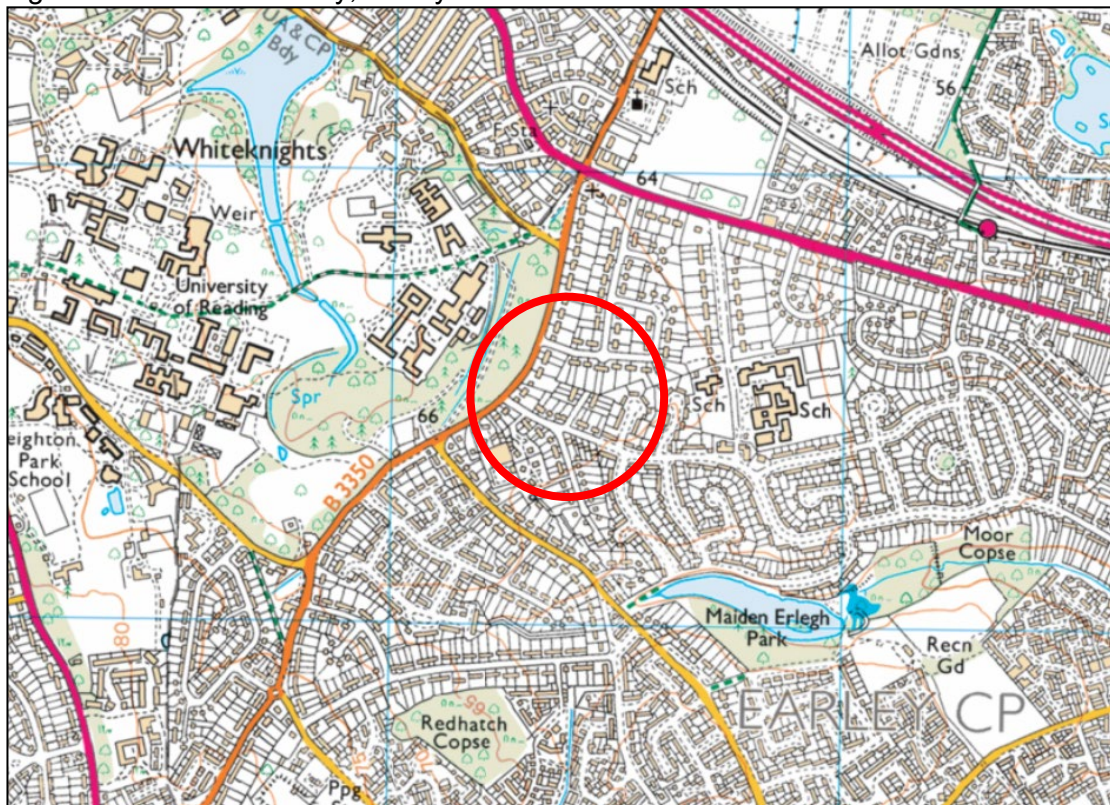
Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.

3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The property is located at Grid Reference SU74397151, see Ordnance Survey (OS) extract at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley.





3.2 Site Description

The site comprises a detached, two-storey brick-built property with integral garage. The remainder of the site comprised a gravelled front driveway/parking area with lawn with shrubs and hedges, see cover photograph. The rear garden is mainly laid to lawn with shrubs and mature hedgerows, see Figure 2 below. The site itself provides some foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is some ecological connectivity to the wider landscape via the garden network.

Figure 2. Rear garden. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client is in the process of purchasing the property and has advised that they have not been made aware of any previous bat surveys having been completed 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.

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW was carried out by Simon Holmes on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 3.20pm. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast with a temperature of 20 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, an endoscope, binoculars and a ladder.

During the DBW an internal and external inspection of the property 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 or lead flashing.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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, this is not always a reliable indicator.
- 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 with no bat roosting potential and that were unsuitable for roosting bats were not inspected in detail.

4.3 Dusk Survey

The dusk emergence survey was conducted on the evening of Wednesday 3 September 2025. The survey was at a time of year when bats are known to be active with weather conditions were suitable for the bat survey and insect prey abundant.

The surveyors/remote cameras were stationed (as shown in Figure 3 below), to ensure the features identified in the DBW could be observed. Screenshots from the darkest point of the survey areas are included at Appendix 2.

During the surveys bat activity was monitored using two BatLogger M bat detectors together with four Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps. 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 DVC-Scan.

Figure 3. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. Surveyor/remote camera locations.





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

During the survey no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the property to roost. In total 3 species of bat were recorded and identified foraging near the site. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 on page 15. The most frequently used flight paths of common pipistrelle bats is shown on Figure 3 on page 7.

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

Table 1 – Surveyor details and weather conditions for bat activity survey conducted at 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley.

Date:	3 September 2025
Surveyors and locations	(A) Bob Brittain (B) Remote camera (C) Katie Holmes (D) Remote camera
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 16.3°C, Cloud cover 25% Humidity 83.6% Dry Wind Beaufort 2-3
Sunset	19.45
Start time	19:30
Finish Time	21:15
Duration	01:45
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 15.4°C, Cloud cover 75% Humidity 87.6% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2

4.4 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visits was made possible by the client and there were no constraints during the DBW or the activity survey.

5. Survey Findings

5.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The property is situated to the north of the town of Earley and is surrounded on all sides by housing developments with properties and gardens all of similar styles and size. To the west, and with ecological connectivity via the garden network is the University of Reading grounds which provide a rich mosaic of woodland, grassland a freshwater lake. To the south-east lies Maiden Erlegh Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Laurel Park and Laurel Park Recreational ground, all of which are known to provide good habitat to support roosting, foraging, and commuting bats and are within travelling distance for bats.

Highwood LNR and Maiden Erlegh Park LNR lie within 2km of the proposed development site, and Maiden Erlegh Park is to the south-east and within commuting distance for bats. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed no current EPSL for bats has been granted within 2km of the site however there are 7 expired ones.



5.2 External Inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in Section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascias, soffits and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a detached, brick-built building that is in a fair condition externally. The majority of the cross-hipped roof with catslide section over the integral garage is covered in close fitted tiles that are in a good condition however, on the front elevation some tiles have broken/slipped (see Figure 4 below) and, on the rear elevation, under the chimney stack, some tiles are lifted, see Figure 4 below. There is no missing mortar from the ridge or bonnet tiles (see Figure 5 on page 10), or from the verge on the catslide roof section over the integral garage. At the front is a two-storey extension, the flat roof of which is covered in well fitted bitumen felt with no rips or tears (see Figure 6 on page 10) and the sides are covered in hanging tiles, some of which on the corners have moved leaving gaps, see Figure 7 on page 11. On the side (southern) elevation is a dormer window, the hipped roof of which is covered in well fitted tiles and the ridge and bonnet tiles are firmly attached (see Figure 8 on page 11) however, the sides are covered in hanging tiles, some of which have moved leaving gaps, see Figure 9 on page 12. On the rear elevation are two single storey extensions (see Figure 10 on page 12), the roofs of which are covered in tiles, some of which have moved leaving gaps, see Figure 11 on page 13. The soffits and fascias across the building are tight to the walls with no splits or gaps (see Figure 12 on page 14) and the lead flashing across the building is flush with no gaps.

No bats or evidence of bats were observed during the external inspection of the property but externally there are features on the property (moved/lifted roof and hanging tiles) which could be utilised by crevice dwelling bat species for roosting.

Figure 4. Example slipped/missing/raised roof tiles. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 5. Example sealed bonnet tiles. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25



Figure 6. Bitumen covering flat roof extension. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 7. Example moved hanging tiles on flat roof extension. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25



Figure 8. Hipped roof of side dormer. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 9. Example gaps in hanging tiles on side dormer. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley.
26.08.25



Figure 10. Rear view of property and single storey extensions. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 11. Example gaps in roof tiles on rear extensions. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25



Figure 12. Example sealed soffits/fascias. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





5.3 Internal Inspection

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

The loft was accessed through a hatch, via a ladder. The loft is not lit, not boarded and insulated and the roof tiles are lined with sarking, see Figure 13 below.

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

Figure 13. Loft space and sarking. 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley. 26.08.25





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

5.4 Dusk Survey

During the activity survey no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the property to roost.

In total 3 different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. The calls detected and recorded from the survey provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*. The longest and most frequently recorded calls and observations were from the common pipistrelle bat. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of 3 Buckhurst Way, Earley.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
03/09/25	A	19:30 – 21:15	N	Y	Common pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.08 (23 minutes after sunset) transit calls from a noctule were heard. A noctule was heard again at 20.16, 20.22 and 20.38. Between 20.16 and 21.11 a dozen foraging and transit calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard.
03/09/25	B	19:30 – 21:15	N	N	Remote camera only	The remote camera did not record any bat activity
03/09/25	C	19:30 – 21:15	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.05 (20 minutes after sunset) a brief and faint call from a soprano pipistrelle bat was heard. A faint call from a soprano pipistrelle was heard again at 20.07, no further soprano pipistrelle bat calls were heard during the survey. A noctule was heard on four occasions: 20.08, 20.16, 20.22 and 20.38. At 20.12 and 20.13 foraging calls from a common pipistrelle bat were heard with the bat being seen in the neighbouring garden to the left of the surveyor. At 20.23 a common pipistrelle bat was seen and heard in transit across the rear of the property and thereafter very sporadic foraging activity continued until 21.01, the bat was not seen again.
03/09/25	D	19:30 – 21:15	Y	N	Remote camera only	At 20.23 the camera recorded a bat in transit across the rear of the property.

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 or **historical records of bats on the site, or bat roosts in the general area.**



6. Evaluation continued

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); or
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 7.1 The calls detected and recorded from the survey provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*, foraging and/or transiting across the site. The longest and most frequent calls were from common pipistrelle bats.
- 7.2 The property has features suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost however, no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost. The surveyor observations provide a high level of confidence in the species detected during the survey at 3 Buckhurst Way.
- 7.3 Pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset. As the first common pipistrelle was heard at 20 minutes after sunset, the bat is most probably roosting in the vicinity but did not emerge from the property. 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.
- 7.4 The survey conditions were good, with warm weather, a variety of insect prey flying and the bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, considered low.
- 7.5 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 common pipistrelle bats, but only 3 bats were seen during the survey.
- 7.6 The cumulative evidence leads me to conclude that bats are not roosting at 3 Buckhurst Way, and the property has a negligible potential to support roosting bats therefore an EPSL is not required.
- 7.7 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).



Urban Tree Experts

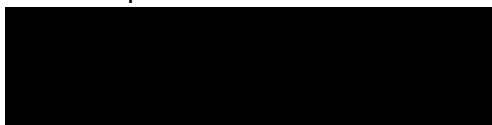
BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

8. 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.

9. Queries

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



Urban Tree Experts
Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX



Simon Holmes, MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Bat License CLS-CLS- 17637 & 17638



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

APPENDIX 1

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.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

APPENDIX 2

3 Buckhurst Way, Earley, Reading, RG6 7RL

Screenshots from the darkest point of the survey areas from night vision cameras

A



B



C



D

