Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW)
AT
5 THE SPUR
WARGRAVE



Prepared for:
Mr J Westcott
5 The Spur
Wargrave
Reading
RG10 8AT

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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 J Westcott to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]), of 5 The Spur, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8AT. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 20 October 2026 commencing at 9.15am, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal 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 no statutory designates sites are located within, and no current European Protected Species Licence (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surrounding habitat has a low potential for roosting, commuting or foraging bats, due to the dense urban development however, via the garden network this is ecological connectivity to the wider landscape that provides good roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for a wide range of bat species.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The building's suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and no bats or evidence of bats were detected, and no potential roost features were identified during the preliminary inspection. When the evidence is combined along with the data from the desk top study this results in the property being characterised as having negligible potential[1] to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines[2], no further survey effort is required.

[1] Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition.
[2] Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were instructed by Mr J Westcott to conduct a DBW of 5 The Spur, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8AT to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

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 survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a 2-storey rear and side extension.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was completed by Nick Powell, and the report was written by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.

Nick holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has been surveying bats for 4 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI-64844). He has 36 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

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 building is located at Grid Reference SU79167905, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Prom ap.

Figure 1. 5 The Spur, Wargrave, highlighted.

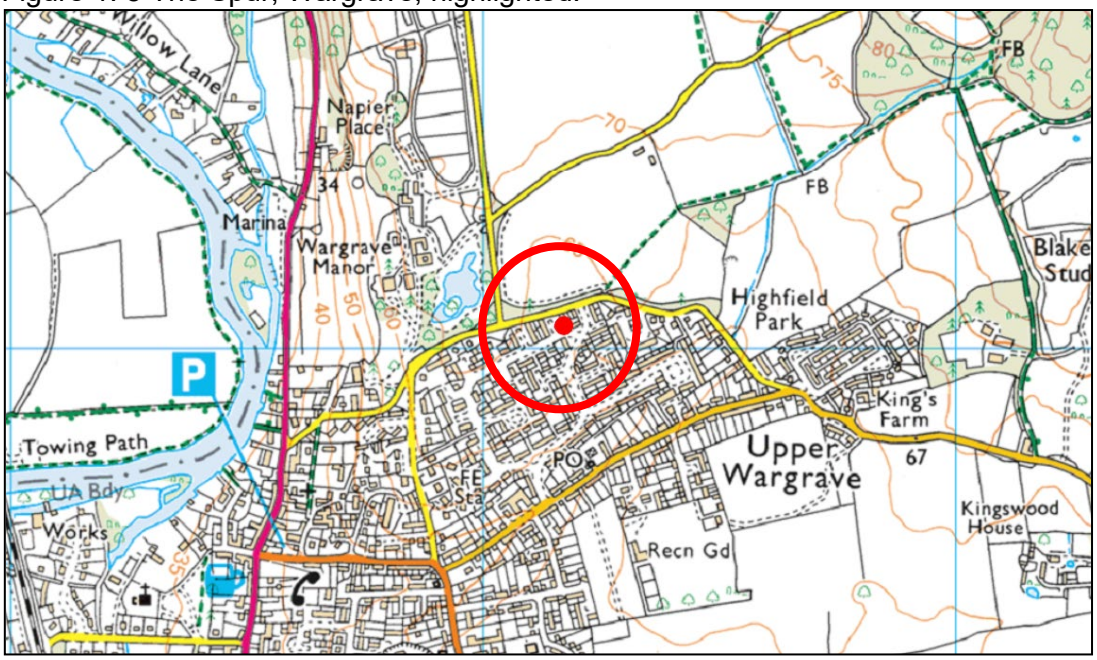


Figure 2. 5 The Spur, Wargrave, overview of the immediate area.



3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built property with attached garage/study. The remainder of the site comprises a gravelled driveway/parking area shrubs and, to the rear, the garden is mainly laid to lawn with patio area, shrubs, mature hedging and trees around the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been conducted 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. Due to suburban surroundings, the scale of the proposed development, and the very local impact that may occur, no data was sought from the local records centre at this time.

The site is situated in the village of Wargrave and is surrounded by properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. To the south lie recreational grounds, which extend to large agricultural fields, both of which are likely to provide good habitat for bats and are within commuting distance for bats. To the north and east lie large areas of farmland, woodland and parkland, all of which are likely to provide good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are connected to the site via ecological corridors. To the west lies the River Thames, which is known to provide good habitat for bats although housing developments and main roads sperate the site from the river.

No statutory designated sites lie within 2km of the proposed development site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed no current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site however there are 9 expired ones.

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW at 5 The Spur, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8AT was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 20 October 2026 commencing at 9.15am. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast with rain and a temperature of 11.5 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW, an external and internal 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.

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.
- 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 that were not to be affected by the current proposals or with no bat roosting potential were not inspected.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client and there were no constraints to the survey.

5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

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

The property is a detached brick-built 2 storey building with attached garage with rear living accommodation and rear single storey extension (see Figure 4 below), all of which is in a good condition externally. The pitched roof is covered in well-fitting interlocking tiles, none of which are broken and the ridge tiles are all tightly fitted with no missing mortar which could be utilised by roosting bats, see Figure 5 on page 9. The verges are sealed and offer no roosting potential (see Figure 6 on page 9) and the uPVC soffits and fascias are tight to the wall with no gaps that could be exploited, see Figure 7 on page 10. There are hanging tiles on the front and rear elevations (see cover photograph and Figure 4 below), all of which are tightly fitted with no gaps at all, see Figure 8 on page 10.

The mono pitched roof over the front single-story section of the property/garage with rear living accommodation is also covered in also covered in well-fitted interlocking tiles, there is no missing mortar from the hip tiles or verge and the lead flashing is flush with no gaps that can be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 9 on page 11. The combination of soffits/fascias and fascias are tight to the wall with no splits or gaps. The rear flat roof extension is covered in well fitted membrane, all of which is in a good condition with no rips or tears and offers no roosting opportunities, see Figure 11 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property and externally there were no visible roosting opportunities for bats or access into the building for roosting bats.

Figure 4. Rear view of property. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 5. Example well fitted roof and ridge tiles. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 6. Example sealed verges. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 7. Example flush fitting soffits and fascias. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 8. Example well fitted hanging tiles. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 9. Example sealed roof and hip tiles on single storey section of the property. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



Figure 10. Example welling fitted membrane on rear extension. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26



5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft space was accessed via a loft ladder through a hatch and is in a good condition internally. The loft is lit, boarded and used for personal storage but this did not hinder the inspection, see Figure 11 below. The roof tiles are lined with bitumen felt, all of which that could be seen was in a good condition with no rips or tears, see Figure 11 below. The roof tiles in the garage are lined with membrane and in the rear living accommodation and rear extension are boarded/plastered and painted and offer no roosting potential, see Figure 12 on page 13.

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 building.

Figure 11. Internal view of loft space and bitumen lining to tiles. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26





Figure 12. Example membrane and boarded ceilings. 5 The Spur, Wargrave. 20.10.26





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 and **historical records of bat roosts in the general area.**

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);
- are active industrial premises.

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

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The combined evidence from the desktop study and the internal and external inspection of the property provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. There are no visible features externally on the building which could be utilised by roosting bats or in which bats could access the building to roost and internally no evidence of bats and no potential roosting opportunities for bats.

Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the property. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop, and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licensed bat ecologist.

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may change and bats may start roosting at the site.

8. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2003) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).
Reason, P.F. & Wray, S. (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Ampfield, CIEEM.
HMSO (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [online]. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made

9. Queries

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

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Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638

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.