



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT 31 HURST PARK ROAD TWYFORD



Prepared for:
Ms C Webb
31 Hurst Park Road
Twyford
RG10 0EZ

25 September 2024

Ref: SPH/ESR-24/16.09



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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 Webb to carry out two dusk emergence surveys at 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, RG10 0EZ. The surveys were undertaken on the property to provide further evidence to support the initial findings (a negative result) and conclusions from the preliminary bat roost assessment conducted by GS Ecology dated 16 September 2024 ref ECO3603, and to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works, if required. This report is prepared to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The application site comprises a garage link attached two-storey property with rear, single storey extension. The remainder of the site at the front comprises a driveway/parking area and small lawn. The rear garden is mainly laid to lawn with a decked seating area. The site itself offers some foraging and commuting opportunities for bats and there is ecological connectivity via back gardens to the wider landscape that provides good habitat for foraging and roosting bats.

A desk top study was conducted prior to the first emergence 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 revealed that seven 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.

A search of Berkshire bat group records confirmed 11 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on Tuesday 20 August and Monday 16 September 2024. A number of bats were seen and heard foraging in and around the site throughout the surveys however none were seen emerging from or re-entering the property to roost.

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

The combined evidence from the preliminary bat roost assessment and activity surveys provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. No bats were observed during the preliminary bat roost assessment and no bats were seen entering or emerging from the property during the activity surveys. The bat dropping found stuck on the rear elevation barge board is most probably from a bat exploring that area and does not confirm roosting has occurred. This indicates that the property is not and has not been used as a roost by bats and that an EPSL from Natural England (NE) is not required.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts were commissioned by Ms C Webb to carry out two dusk emergence surveys at 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, RG10 0EZ.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The dusk emergence surveys are designed to:

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

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

1.3 Proposed Works

The surveys were commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to convert the garage into habitable accommodation and construct a rear, first floor extension.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The activity surveys were conducted by Nick Powell, Katie Holmes and Simon Holmes, and the report was compiled by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

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

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

Nick Powell. Nick commenced surveying bats in 2022 and holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has received training in bat ecology and surveying, bat detector use, acoustic monitoring/sonogram analysis, architectural terms for bat workers, bats and development, H & S awareness for bat workers, legislation for bat workers, British bats their ecology and conservation, surveying trees for bats, Bat ID and handling, bat biology.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Constraints/Limitations

An assessment of the property's exterior was conducted on the 20 August 2024, prior to the first activity survey being undertaken and there were no constraints or limitations to the surveys. Weather conditions were suitable for the surveys, being conducted during warm weather and when bats were heard and seen foraging and in transit during the surveys.



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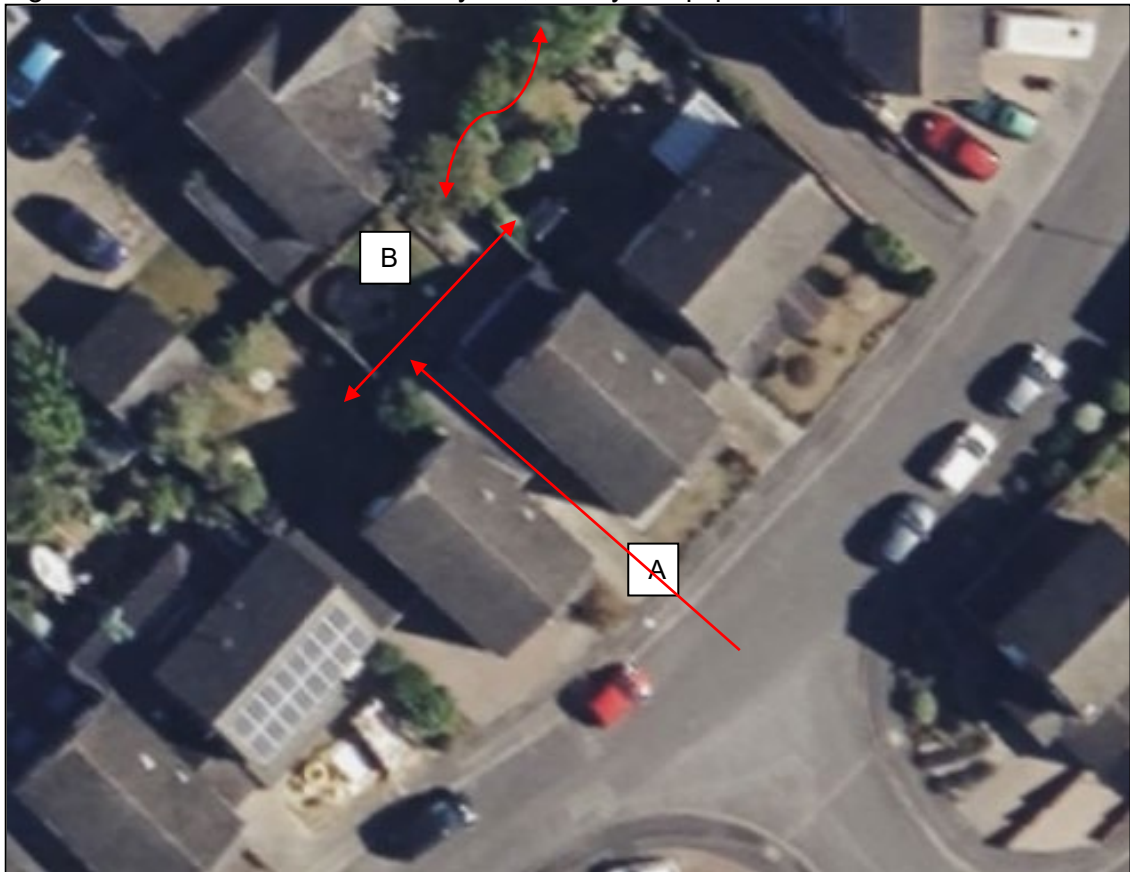
2.2 Dusk Surveys

The dusk emergence survey was conducted on the evenings of Tuesday 20 August and Monday 16 September 2024. The surveyors and equipment were stationed (as shown in Figure 1 on page 5), to ensure the features identified in the preliminary bat roost assessment could be observed.

During the surveys bat activity was monitored using 2 BatLogger M bat detectors together with 2 Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps. A screenshot from the video cameras is included at Figure 2 commencing on page 6.

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

Figure 1 – 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, surveyor/equipment location.



During the surveys no bats were seen emerging from and/or returning to the property to roost. In total 4 different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 commencing on page 7. The most frequently used flight paths of soprano pipistrelle bats are shown by the red arrows on Figure 1 above.



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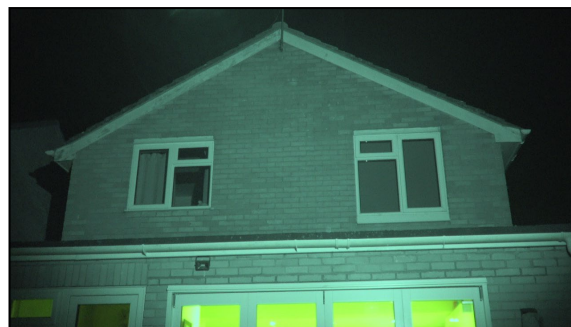
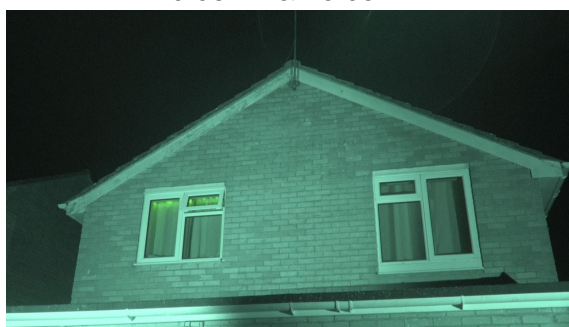
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Figure 2 – 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, screenshot from night vision cameras.

Position A: 20.08.24 & 16.09.24



Position B: 20.08.24 & 16.09.24



3. Survey Findings

3.1 Dusk Surveys

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

Table 1 – Surveyor details and weather conditions for the bat activity surveys conducted at 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford.

Date:	20 August 2024	16 September 2024
Surveyor and location	(A) Nick Powell (B) Katie Holmes	(A) Nick Powell (B) Simon Holmes
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 17.3°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 57.2% Dry with Wind Beaufort 2 gusting 3	Temperature 17.2°C Cloud cover <10% Humidity 64.3% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0
Sunset	20:15	19:15
Start time	20:00	19:00
Finish Time	21:45	21:00
Duration	01:45	02:00
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 15.4°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 66.1% Dry with Wind Beaufort 1	Temperature 13.8°C Cloud cover 0% Humidity 76.9% Dry with Wind Beaufort 0



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Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of 31 Hurst Park Road, Twyford.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
20/08/24	A	20:00 – 21:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Despite insects flying, bat activity was extremely limited during this survey. At 20.49 a soprano pipistrelle bat was both seen and heard in transit from the right of the surveyor and over the garage towards the back garden. Thereafter only another 3 calls from soprano pipistrelle bats were heard until 21.26, being the last bat call heard during the survey. Only 5 foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats were heard between 21.01 and 21.02, the bat was not seen. A brief and faint call from a noctule was heard at 21.10, the bat was not seen.
20/08/24	B	20:00 – 21:45	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle	At 20.46 a common pipistrelle bat was both seen and heard in transit across the back garden and away to the right of the surveyor followed, at 20.49 with a soprano pipistrelle bat being seen in transit over the garage from the front to the back garden and away to the left of the surveyor. Thereafter limited and sporadic common and soprano pipistrelle foraging activity was heard and recorded until 21.43, the bats were not seen again.
16/09/24	A	19:00 – 21:00	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared (BLE)	At 19.46 2 soprano pipistrelle bats were both seen and heard entering the site from the road opposite the property and thereafter they proceeded to foraging in a loop around the front of the property and neighbouring properties until 19.57. A number of further foraging and transit calls from soprano pipistrelle bats were heard and recorded until 20.51, the bats were not seen again. Common pipistrelle activity was very limited from 20.09 with, at 20.55, 2 bats being seen foraging around the front of the property. A number of foraging calls from a noctule were heard between 19.41 and 20.14, the bat was never seen. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a BLE bat.
16/09/24	B	19:00 – 21:00	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	At 19.20 (5 minutes after sunset) a soprano pipistrelle was both seen and heard in transit entering the rear garden from the left of the surveyor and exiting to the right. At 19.31, a soprano pipistrelle bat entered the site from the right of the surveyor and commenced foraging in the garden. Soprano pipistrelle foraging and transit activity dominated until survey end with up to 3 bats being seen. Common pipistrelle activity was very limited with foraging calls being heard at 20.07, the bat(s) were not seen. 2 foraging calls from a noctule were heard at 20.32, the bat was not seen. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a BLE bat.

4. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 4.1 The calls detected and recorded from the survey provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*, and brown long-eared, *Plecotus auritus*, all foraging and/or transiting across the site. The longest and most frequent calls were from soprano pipistrelle bats.



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- 4.2 The property has features suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost however, there is no evidence to indicate that bats have used the features. The dropping observed during the preliminary survey is most probably from a bat that was exploring the area and does not constitute a roost.
- 4.3 Whilst there are features suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost, they have not used the property and this is most probably due to a combination of factors including better foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities in the immediate landscape. As no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the property to roost and there was no evidence of roosting bats during the preliminary bat roost assessment, we conclude that the property does not support roosting bats and an EPSL is not required.
- 4.4 Pipistrelle bats are one of the first emerging bat species after sunset, frequently emerging within 20 minutes after sunset. As the first soprano pipistrelle call was heard 5 minutes after sunset, and the flight direction of the bat observed, the bat is roosting locally 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.
- 4.5 Whilst only a single call from a BLE bat was recorded, this is not unusual as the BLE bat is commonly referred to as the 'silent' bat as the calls are very quiet and difficult to detect as they prefer to hunt using sight and hearing.
- 4.6 The survey conditions were good, with warm weather, and a variety of insects flying, however the bat calls and field observations were, in our opinion, considered low to average and this is consistent with other activity surveys this season.
- 4.7 The bat calls and field observations provide a high level of confidence in support of the opinions as set out in this report. Bat activity was dominated by soprano pipistrelle bats, a common and abundant species.
- 4.8 The cumulative evidence from the preliminary bat roost assessment and activity surveys leads me to conclude that bats are not roosting at 31 Hurst Park Road and the building has negligible potential to support roosting bats, therefore an EPSL is not required.
- 4.9 All bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5. References

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



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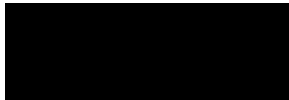
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6. Queries

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

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