

Bat Surveys Report: 42 Wellesley Dr, Crowthorne

Client Mrs L Grierson
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Non-technical Summary

Background

In October 2023, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 42 Wellesley Dr, Finchampstead, Crowthorne RG45 6AL. Development proposals include extension and roof remodeling.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds. Two additional emergence surveys were also undertaken.

Results

The dwelling is located within a residential area. Overall, the dwelling remains in good condition, however, few bat droppings were found under the wall hanging tiles, which provide features suitable for roosting bats. The garden is well maintained.

The bat emergence surveys confirmed likely absence of roosting bats.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- Precautionary approach to be taken in relation to bats.
- Install two bat boxes and a house sparrow nest terrace.
- Exterior lighting planned sensitive to nocturnal wildlife.

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1. Background

- 1.1. In October 2023, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 42 Wellesley Dr, Finchampstead, Crowthorne RG45 6AL. Development proposals include extension and roof remodeling. (Ordnance Survey grid reference: TQ 02866 83016). Development proposals include demolition and replacement.
- 1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.
- 1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Assess the likely presence or absence of bats.
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site.
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation.

Site Description

- 1.4. The site comprises a detached bungalow which is in a residential area in Crowthorne, Bracknell Forest, Berkshire. The garden of the property comprises well-maintained lawns.
- 1.5. The property is adjoined to all sides by similar detached/semi-detached properties with gardens.
- 1.6. The environs are predominately residential with a mix of medium/large properties. The wider landscape includes woodlands and there is a nearby golf course.

Legislation

- 1.7. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2017. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully consider bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.
- 1.8. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 2.3. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 23rd October 2023 by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker (2021-10116-CL18).
- 2.4. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.
- 2.5. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

- **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural
- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

- 2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

Evening emergence/ activity surveys

- 2.7. Two evening emergence/ activity surveys were carried out by two bat surveyors led by experience and licenced bat worker Miguel Canovas. The surveyors were positioned so that all aspects of the building suitable for roosting bats could be observed. The Surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions. The emergence surveys commenced at 15 minutes before sunset and continued for two hours. All general bat activity on site was also noted.
- 2.8. Echo meter touch and Peersonic bat detectors and IR cameras were used together with visual observations on flight patterns and feeding behaviour to aid identification to species level. Recordings of bat calls were made and later analysed using dedicated computer software Audacity and Wildlife Acoustics.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

- 3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Planning Policy

- 3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

3.3. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely

impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 3.4. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.
- 3.5. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
42 Wellesley Dr, Crowthorne	Overview	Two-storey detached house. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied. No bats or current evidence of roosting bats were found inside of the dwelling, however, few bat droppings were found under the wall hanging tiles outside of the property.	Moderate suitability ☒
	Exterior	The brick walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well-sealed. Areas of hanging wall tiles around the house have gaps and missing hanging tiles which provide opportunities for crevice roosting bats. A small number of bat droppings were found on an upended plant pot near the south elevation of the building. The property has a small size well managed garden, dominated by lawns and hard standing.	
	Interior	Areas of living accommodation are composed of well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is insulated	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		and compost of exposed timber with type 1 bituminous sarking felt. No gaps were observed.	
	Roof	Tightly fitting concrete roof tiles with no gaps observed. All roof verges remain well-sealed, areas of soffit and where lead flashing is used to seal roof abutments remain tightly fitted in place.	

Bat emergence surveys

- 3.6. The building was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, two emergence surveys were undertaken on the 20th May and 11th June 2024. The surveys were led by Miguel Canovas CEnv, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker.
- 3.7. The table below details the results of the surveys.

Table 2; Bat emergence table

Survey Date	20/05/2024	11/06/2024
Survey Conditions	Cloud: 23% Weather: Dry Wind level 0 / 2 Start temp 18 ⁰ C End temp 16 ⁰ C Sunset time 20.56	Cloud:5% Weather: Dry Wind level 0 / 1 Start temp 13 ⁰ C End temp 12 ⁰ C Sunset time 21.16
Emergence survey	No bat emergence	No bat emergence
General bat activity. Non emergence	21.02 – 21.56 Multiple passes by common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> and a soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> bats seen/ heard	21.29 – 22.08 Multiple passes by common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> bat seen/ heard flying around the front and rear garden and across the building.

	foraging around the building and garden trees.	
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Birds

- 3.8. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the dwelling.

Evaluation

Scoping survey

- 3.9. The property is located within a residential however, lies near to woodlands and a golf course with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.
- 3.10. During the scoping survey a small number droppings were found under the wall hanging tiles. The size and shape of the droppings and context would indicate that the droppings come from a species of common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. That species is crevice dwelling bats and will utilise various cracks and crevices in new and old buildings such as wall hanging tiles gaps, behind paneling, shutters and eaves and within holes in brickwork, stonework and woodwork. It is possible that the droppings were deposited by bats flying in the area or bats prospecting potential roost sites.

Emergence / activity surveys

- 3.11. During the bat emergence surveys, no bats were recorded either exiting or entering the dwelling, confirming that roosting bats are likely to be absent from the building.

- 3.12. During the surveys common and soprano pipistrelle bats were observed/ heard foraging around the garden trees. The garden, the adjacent neighbouring and similar gardens are considered to provide a useful foraging resource for local bats.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.
- 4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.
- 4.3. The NPPF (2021) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.4. All bats within the UK are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under this registration there are strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb, damage or destroy the resting place (roost) of a bat. Under the Bonn Convention, the UK is obliged through the planning system to protect important bat habitats.

- 4.5. No bats emerged or re-entered the building during the emergence surveys. However, a small number of old bat droppings were found near to the base of the wall.

Precautionary works

- 4.6. Due to the presence of bats in the area and the presence of potential roosting features, it is recommended that a Toolbox Talk is provided to site workers prior to the commencement of works.
- 4.7. It is recommended that a licence bat worker is present when hanging tiles are removed from the buildings.
- 4.8. Bats are transient in nature and can occasionally take up sites on an occasional or transient basis. There is a small possibility that bats could be encountered during demolition works; therefore, all works must proceed under a cautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion. Soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from Crossman Associates or Natural England (telephone number 0300 0603900).
- 4.9. Is recommended that two new Habibat bat tubes to be installed on the external gable walls of the building. These boxes will provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats, including *Pipistrelle sp.*

Lighting

- 4.10. The site lies near to woodlands, these habitats are likely to support a number of species of bat; typical species that would be likely to be present include common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, therefore any exterior lighting that is to be employed should be of the modern LED-type and should take into account the

presence of bats and avoid over illumination of the garden, trees and adjacent properties. This can be achieved by using directional lights and or cowls.

Biodiversity enhancements

Birds

- 4.11. During the construction phase of the new building, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.
- 4.12. New nesting opportunities will be provided for the local bird population with a particular emphasis on house sparrows (which have suffered significant decline) and it is recommended that a sparrow nest box is installed within the development.
- 4.13. Sparrow nest boxes are ideally fitted below eaves. Suitable models include the Vivara Woodstone Sparrow Nest Box, which is suitable for integral and surface mounting. This model is strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour; models can be found at vivira.co.uk.

5. Limitations

- 5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.
- 5.2. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments)*. HMSO

HMSO (1995) *Biodiversity*. The UK Steering Group Report

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians* (2004) JNCC

Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

Mitchell-Jones, A.J , & McLeish A.P. (2012) *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

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Website at www.magic.gov.uk

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press

TSO (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework*. TSO

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Appendix I – Site Figures

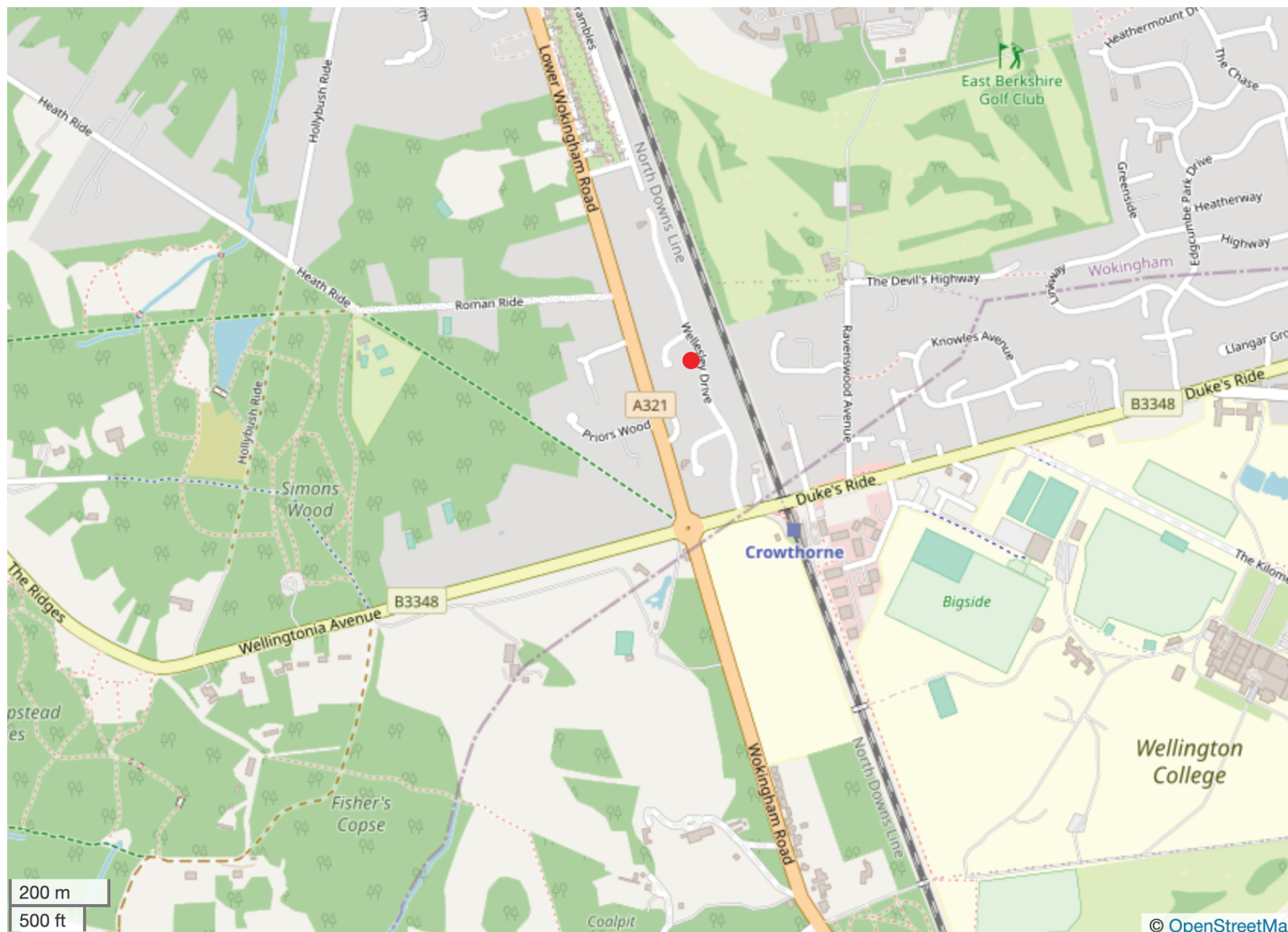


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● Site location



Client Mrs Grierso
Title Location plan
Site 42 Wellesley Dr, Crowthorne
Figure 1
Date 31 October 2023
Scale 1:15,000



Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Front - southern elevation

Hanging tiles gap detail

Bat droppings detail



Photograph 2:

Western elevation

Bat droppings detail



Photograph 3:

Back northern eastern elevation

Hanging tiles gap detail



Photographs 4 - 6



Photograph 4:

Roof void



Photograph 5:

Interior



Appendix III– Information Sheets

Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Information sheet Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows



Habibat house
sparrow nest box



Vivara woodstone sparrow
nest box; suitable for both
integral fitment or surface
mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish. Site boxes under eaves, away from windows and direct sunlight.

Sparrow boxes should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptake of a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.

Ibstock Box



Schwegler model 9b