

Bat Survey Report

Site: 12 Farmers End, Charvil, Reading RG10 9RZ

Ref: 251273

Client: Tolu Adebekun



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SUMMARY

Planning permission is being sought for works at 12 Farmers End, Charvil, Reading RG10 9RZ. The proposals are for a loft conversion and the addition of dormer windows to the existing roof.

As this could impact features typically used by bats as roosting places, a daytime inspection was undertaken on 11th April 2025 to assess the building for signs of bat occupation.

All the external and internal structures, especially those associated with the roof and walls of the building were examined. Features such as cracks in walls, gaps in soffit boards and lifted roof tiles were searched for during the inspection. The building has a loft which was inspected during the survey.

Due to the presence of multiple potential roost features, the building has moderate suitability for roosting bats. Two dusk emergence surveys are required to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. METHODS	6
3. RESULTS	9
3.1 Desk Study.....	9
3.2 Location.....	10
3.3 Site Description	10
3.4 Building Survey.....	12
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
5. REFERENCES.....	17
APPENDIX 1: LOCATION PLAN.....	18
APPENDIX 2: SITE LAYOUT.....	19

Revision	Description	Date
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1. INTRODUCTION

Indigo Surveys were commissioned by Tolu Adebekun to complete a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 12 Farmers End, Charvil, Reading RG10 9RZ (Grid Reference SU 77828 75645). The proposals are for a loft conversion and the addition of dormer windows.

The site is located in the south-east of Charvil, in a residential area. The site is bordered by residential properties in all directions. There is Charvil Meadows to the north-east, lakes and woodland to the east and south-east, a golf course to the south-west and fragments of woodland in all directions in the wider landscape.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), through inclusion in Schedule 5. In England and Wales this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions, and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations (the Habitats Regulations), which defines 'European protected species of animals'. In England this is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, in Scotland the Habitat Regulations 1994 (as amended), and in Northern Ireland the Conservation Regulations 1995.

All bats are also protected under the Bern Convention Appendix II, the Bonn Convention Appendix II, and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004). It is illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;
- Damage or destroy roosts;
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a part of a bat, unless acquired legally; and
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

The word ‘roost’ is not used in the legislation but is used here for simplicity. The actual wording is ‘any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection’ (WCA), or ‘breeding site or resting place’ (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

2. METHODS

To fully assess bat occupation of a particular site, the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) recommends that information gathered from a desk study of known bat records, and a daytime site walkover, is used to inform the type and extent of future bat survey work, potentially including nocturnal surveys.

The diurnal walkover provides an opportunity to check for signs of occupancy, such as droppings, scratch marks, feeding remains, carcasses, or even animals in residence, whilst nocturnal surveys (if required) allow numbers and species of bats to be confirmed. The latter are also used to determine the presence or absence of bats, where signs of bat activity are indeterminate or absent, but suitability of roosting is considered medium to high. Table 1 below describes the suitability categories used when inspecting structures.

Category	Roosting habitat present	Survey requirements
Negligible	No features that could be used by roosting bats.	No further surveys required.
Low	A structure with one or more features that could be used by opportunistic individual bats. However, the features do not provide suitable conditions or space for larger roosts.	One further survey required (between May to August).
Moderate	A structure with one or more features that could be used by individual bats, but not suitable as a significant roost.	Two further surveys required (between May and September).
High	A structure with features suitable for use by larger numbers of bats or individuals over a prolonged period.	Three further surveys required (between May and September).
Confirmed	Direct evidence of bats, including droppings, previous site records, or presence of individuals.	

Table 1: Structure suitability categories

Roosting places vary depending on the species. Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* sp.) usually inhabit narrow cracks or cavities on the exterior of buildings, but they will roost in similar niches inside

larger barns. Typical sites include soffit boxes, gaps behind fascia boards and end rafters, crevices around the ends of projecting purlins, under warped or lifted roof and ridge tiles, or in gaps in stone and brickwork where mortar has dropped out.

Larger species such as brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), myotis bats (*Myotis* sp.) including Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), whiskered/Brandt's bat (*M. mystacinus*/*M. brandtii*), and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), like to roost in the roof voids of buildings, and can often be found hanging singly or in small groups from ridge boards or roof timbers, especially where they butt up against gable walls or chimney breasts. They especially favour older structures with timber frames. Here they squeeze into tight crevices making them difficult to observe.

Daytime walkovers can be carried out at any time of the year, but dusk emergence surveys should only be undertaken when bats are out of hibernation and in their summer roosts. The recommended period is from May to September inclusive, with May to August optimum and September sub-optimum. The season can be extended into October, although particularly cold weather is sub-optimal. The air temperature at the start of each survey must be at least 10°C or above.

Nocturnal survey visits must be a minimum of three weeks apart, and the number of surveys is dependent on the evidence found or the suitability of the site for bats.

Where bats are found, or there is evidence of bat occupation or activity, such as bat use is confirmed, the number and timing of visits will be decided by the ecologist and will be appropriate for the type of roost. In general, at least two nocturnal surveys must be carried out, both of which must be emergence surveys.

Where there is no evidence of bat presence, and no suitability for roosting, no nocturnal surveys will be needed.

For a site with no evidence but low suitability, just one nocturnal survey is required, this to be in the optimum period.

For moderate suitability a minimum of two nocturnal surveys are needed, with high suitability, three nocturnal surveys will be necessary, of which two must be in the optimum period.

For sites < 5 ha in size, and/or regularly shaped structures, at least two surveyors must be present, with more surveyors at larger sites and more complex buildings, e.g., those with multiple elevations and/or roof structures.

On 11th April 2025 a thorough inspection of the house (B1) was made by Beth England BSc (Hons), MSc (licence reference 2023-11760-CL17-BAT), including the exterior and interior walls, roof coverings, eaves, gables, window casements and door frames. 8x32 binoculars and a high-powered torch were used for the inaccessible/unreachable areas.

The results of the survey are detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

In view of the scale of the proposed works, and in line with current guidance on accessing and using biodiversity data (CIEEM, 2016), a background data search was not carried out in this case.

According to MAGIC, there are nine European Protected Species licences for bats within 2km of the site. Details of the licences are provided in Table 2 below.

Licence number	Species	Date	Location and direction from site
2019-43241-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>), soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) and brown long-eared bat	2019-2025	0.3km NW
EPSM2010-2250	Brown long-eared bat	2010-2012	0.9km NE
2014-2526-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	2014-2015	1.2km NW
2018-36568-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat	2018-2019	1.5km SW
2020-44644-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat	2020	1.6km NE
2020-49294-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle	2020-2025	1.8km NE
2018-37707-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	2018-2023	1.9km SW
2016-27109-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat	2017	2km S
2016-27109-EPS-MIT-1	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat	2017-2022	2km S

Table 2: European Protected Species licences for bats within 2km

3.2 Location

The site is located in the south-east of Charvil, 0.6km south-east of A4 Bath Road. The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference is SU 77828 75645 (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

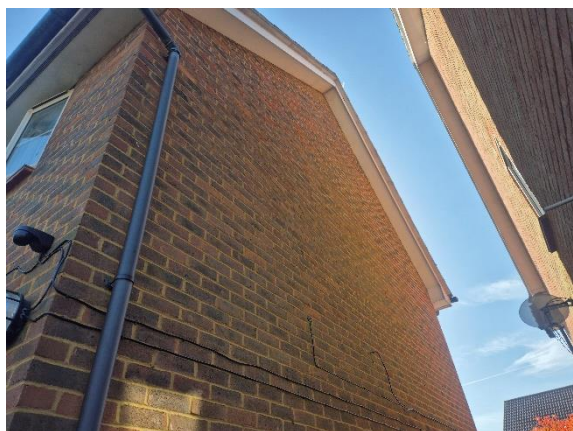
The survey site comprises a semi-detached residential property (B1) (Photographs 1-3). To the south of B1 is a driveway (Photograph 4), and to the north is a vegetated garden with a lawn and semi-mature tree (Photograph 5).



Photograph 1: Southern elevation of B1.



Photograph 2: Northern elevation of B1.



Photograph 3: Western elevation of B1.



Photograph 4: Driveway to the south of B1.



Photograph 5: Vegetated garden to the north of B1.

The layout of the site is shown in the aerial photograph in Appendix 2. The site is bordered by residential properties in all directions. There is Charvil Meadows to the north-east, lakes and woodland to the east and south-east, a golf course to the south-west and fragments of woodland in all directions in the wider landscape. The small vegetated gardens within the surrounding residential properties offer low to moderate foraging opportunities but could provide commuting corridors into good foraging habitats in the wider landscape.

3.4 Building Survey

The daytime inspection was carried out on 11th April 2025, commencing at 10am. The weather conditions during the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 3 below.

Parameter	Value
Temperature (°C)	17
Cloud cover (%)	10
Precipitation	No rain
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	2

Table 3: Weather conditions during the survey (11/04/2025)

B1 is a brick-built semi-detached house c. 6m in height with a pitch roof and clay pantile tiles. There are two dormer windows on both the northern and southern elevations. The ground floor of the building comprises garages.

The loft void of B1 covers the entire second storey (Photographs 6 and 7). It is c. 2.5m in height to the apex with a timber frame. There is a bitumen felt lining, and the void is partially boarded. There is minimal cobwebbing at the ridge, and light ingress was recorded on the northern and southern sides. This has been confirmed to be caused by grates in the soffit boxes. Access was possible to all areas. No evidence of bats was recorded. One of the garages was inspected during the survey (Photograph 8), no evidence of bats was recorded.

Externally, the roof tiles are flush to the roof with no gaps present (Photograph 9). However missing mortar was recorded at the ridge on both the northern and southern elevations, and on the dormer windows. There are also gaps around the roof vent pipe on the southern elevation (Photographs 10-13). As the roof is lined, these gaps could lead to cavities between the tiles and lining. No potential access features into the garages were identified.



Photograph 6: Loft of B1.



Photograph 7: Loft of B1.



Photograph 8: Interior of one of the ground floor garages of B1.



Photograph 9: Roof on the southern elevation of B1.



Photograph 10: Gaps at the ridge and around the vent pipe on the southern elevation of B1.



Photograph 11: Gaps at the ridge on the southern elevation of B1.



Photograph 12: Gaps at the ridge on the northern elevation of B1.



Photograph 13: Gap at the ridge of the dormer window on the northern elevation of B1.

Due to the presence of multiple gaps at the ridge of the main roof which could lead into voids between the tiles and lining, B1 has moderate suitability for roosting bats. The proposals will result in the disturbance and potential destruction of these potential roost features.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

B1 has moderate suitability for roosting bats. Two dusk emergence surveys with two surveyors (with the use of night vision aids) are required to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats. The nearby residential gardens have low to moderate suitability for foraging bats but could provide a corridor into better foraging habitats in the wider landscape.

Bats tend to be seasonal visitors to properties and are not usually in occupation all year round. The females normally form maternity colonies during May or June and then leave for adjacent trees and/or woodland during July or August once the young bats are able to fly and become independent. Here they will spend the winter months in hibernation before returning to the house or barn the following spring.

Male bats generally live alone and have a number of favoured roosts. During the summer they visit each of these for a few days at a time, before moving to their chosen hibernation site in mid-late October. Different species have different habits, but this seasonal movement is common to all.

Bats choose their roosts carefully. During the summer they look for sites which are warmed by the sun, and as a result are most often found on the south and western side of buildings.

Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bats, prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of buildings, typical places being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit, barge and eaves boarding, between roof felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls.

As such they can be difficult to find, so the suitability for roosting is also assessed.

Another bat frequently encountered in buildings is the brown long-eared bat. This is also a common species, but unlike pipistrelles, they prefer the dry, warm space of the loft or roof void,

and can often be found hanging from roof timbers, especially rafters and the ridge board next to chimney breasts.

5. REFERENCES

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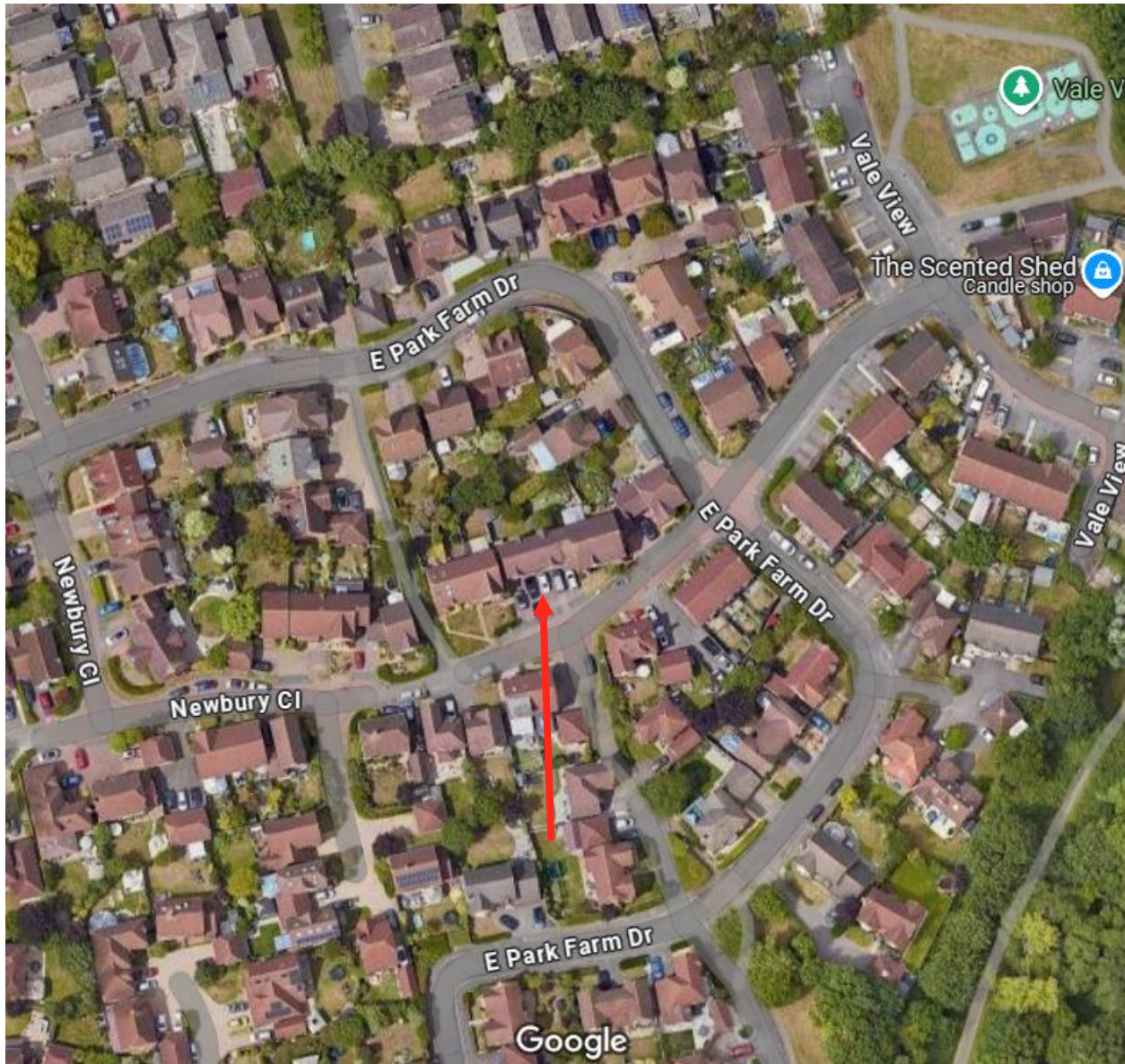
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location Plan

Appendix 2: Site Layout

APPENDIX 1: LOCATION PLAN



12 Farmers End, Charvil, Reading RG10 9RZ

APPENDIX 2: SITE LAYOUT



12 Farmers End Layout