

Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology

Gordon Davies

**44 Proctors Road, Wokingham,
RG40 1RP**

Preliminary Roost Assessment

July 2025

Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology Notes

44 Proctors Road, Wokingham,

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Executive Summary

1. This report presents the findings and recommendations of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) undertaken at 44 Proctors Road, Wokingham, RG40 1RP (the Site). The assessment was commissioned to inform a planning application involving refurbishment and extension of the existing dwelling (B1) to the front, side, and rear.
2. The survey was completed on 17 June 2025 by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology on behalf of Gordon Davies. The purpose of the survey was to assess the potential of B1 to support roosting bats and identify any need for further survey effort.
3. During the survey, both internal and external inspections were undertaken. The quality of roosting habitat within B1 was categorised as 'moderate'. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey, but features were present which were suitable for roosting bats. Further details are provided in Section 3.
4. As a result, two emergence surveys are recommended for B1.

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by Gordon Davies
- 1.2 to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the building (B1) at 44 Proctors Road, Wokingham,

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- 1.4 (application boundary given in Appendix 1, hence referred to as 'the Site'). The Site is located at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 82845 68819 and is approximately 0.03 ha in extent.
- 1.5 The objective of the survey was to assess the potential of B1 to support roosting bats, and identify any need for further survey effort, in order to inform the proposed development works at the Site.

Ecological Context

- 1.6 The Site was situated within a suburban residential area to the east of Wokingham, a historic market town in the county of Berkshire. The property was surrounded by detached and semi-detached dwellings with established gardens and well-lit streets.
- 1.7 There were significant areas of greenspace in the vicinity, including Cantley Park, the ancient semi-natural woodland of Holt Copse, and the scenic walking trails of Keephatch Park. The wider surrounding area was characterised by the suburban centres of Woodley and Winnersh to the north and the town of Bracknell to the east. The landscape to the south and west transitioned to semi-rural, with a network of agricultural fields, managed woodlands, and public footpaths connecting to the wider Berkshire countryside.

Development Proposals

- 1.8 The assessment was commissioned to inform a planning application involving refurbishment and extension of B1 to the front, side, and rear. It is understood that these works will necessitate the extension of the existing roof structure.

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2.0 Methodology

General

- 2.1 The methodology for the bat survey and assessment follows the definitive industry standard outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition¹. This guidance, published by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), supersedes all previous editions and interim notes, including the 3rd edition².
- 2.2 A PRA of B1 was conducted on 17 June 2025 by Consultant Ecologist Leigh-Ann Barran BSc (Hons). Leigh-Ann has over 5 years of experience in ecological consultancy, a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and experienced at undertaking PRAs.
- 2.3 The external features of B1 were surveyed for characteristics that may be used by roosting bats. B1 was initially assessed from ground level with the use of binoculars, and then with a ladder at higher height, where necessary. Potential access-points into roof voids were noted as well as crevices and voids in the external structure (where bats could roost). An internal survey of the loft void was conducted. The full survey provided an assessment of B1 on the basis of which further surveys or suggestions for scheme design can be provided. The survey followed the guidelines from the Bat Conservation Trust³, with guidance detailed in **Error! Reference source not found..**
- 2.4 B1 was assessed according to the following factors that influence the likelihood of bats roosting.
- Surrounding habitat: whether there are potential flight-lines and foraging areas for bats nearby.
 - Construction detail: the type and construction of architectural features such as attics, soffit boxes, lead flashing and hanging tiles that could be used by roosting bats.
 - Building condition: whether disrepair has opened potential bat-access points (especially around roofs).
 - Potential bat-access points: whether there is flight and crawl access.
 - Potential roosting locations: description of all bat-accessible voids, cracks and crevices.
- 2.5 Descriptions of the building were recorded onto specially designed survey sheets, and digital photographs were taken. The criteria shown in Table 1 were used to categorise the buildings according to their potential for roosting bats.

¹ Collins, J. (. (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. (3rd edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Table 1: Categorisation of Roosting Habitats in Structures, and Foraging and Commuting Habitats (adapted from Collins, 2023).

Potential Suitability	Description	
	Roosting Habitats in Structures	Potential Flightpaths and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on-site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on-site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e., no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on-site likely to be used as flight-paths or foraging habitats by bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that may be used by individual bats occasionally throughout the year. However, these sites lack the space, shelter, protection, and suitable surrounding habitat for regular use or support by larger numbers of bats, making them unsuitable for maternity or classic hibernation but usable by individual hibernating bats.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e., not very well connected to the surrounding landscape or other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to its size, shelter, protection, and surrounding habitat, but is unlikely to support a high-conservation roost type (e.g., maternity or hibernation roost). This categorization is independent of species conservation status, which is confirmed after presence is established.	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland, or water.
High	A structure with one or more suitable roosting sites for larger bat populations, used more frequently and for extended periods, due to its size, shelter, protection, and surrounding habitat. These sites can support high conservation value roosts, such as maternity or hibernation sites.	High-quality habitat, well connected to the wider landscape, is likely to be regularly used by bats for flight paths along river valleys, streams, hedgerows, tree lines, and woodland edges. Such habitats, including broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses, and grazed parkland, are also ideal for foraging. The site is near and connected to known bat roosts.

2.6 The buildings were then inspected for evidence of bats. Visual, systematic examinations were made for bats and evidence of bats, both internally and externally, of the following:

Internal features

- Roof beams, junctions, and slopes (including the ridge)
- Gaps beneath roofing felt
- Dividing walls and cavity walls
- Chimney breasts
- Cracks, holes, and crevices in woodwork, brickwork, and mortar
- Floors and stored items
- Sheltered voids

External features

- Wall, window, and door surfaces

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- Window and door frames
- Wall bases, ledges, and tops
- External cracks and crevices
- Soffits, lead flashing, and other weatherproofing features.

2.7 Evidence of roosting bats include urine staining, mammalian fur oil markings, droppings, and in some cases the absence of cobwebs. Bat droppings can prove beyond doubt that bats have used a building and can help to identify roosting locations because piles often accumulate beneath roosting sites of entrance points.

Limitations

2.8 Where data provided by the client or external sources have been used, it has been assumed to be accurate. Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies in third-party data. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are based on the assumption that all relevant information requested from these sources has been supplied accurately and comprehensively.

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3.0 Results

Building Overview

- 3.1** The surveyed structure at 44 Proctors Road, Wokingham, RG40 1RP, comprises a two-storey, gable-ended residential dwelling constructed from cavity brickwork, with adjoining garage (Figure 1).



Figure 1. B1 (main dwelling with adjoining garage)

- 3.2** The main roof of the dwelling was pitched and clad with sand-faced concrete tiles, which were observed to be in good condition with no missing or dislodged tiles. The garage was flat roofed, constructed from timber boards and bitumen felt, and adjoined the main house on one side. The front elevation featured a section of vertical cladding formed from sand-faced cement tiles, located above the main entrance.

External Inspection

- 3.3** The external inspection identified a number of features that could support roosting bats. Prominent gaps were present between the soffit box and fascia on the front and rear elevations, providing direct access into the roof void and the cavity walls (Figure 2).

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Figure 2. Gap in soffit box where it meets fascia. Gap has been covered by wide-spaced mesh.

- 3.4** Additional potential roosting feature were noted between sections of the vertical tile cladding, and at the apex of the gable end soffit, on the front elevation (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Gaps between hanging tiles, and gap in soffit at apex of gable end.

- 3.5** On the storm-damaged gable side of the house, soffit boarding was found to be missing or degraded, and several eaves gaps had been loosely blocked with widely spaced wire mesh (Figure 4). These measures are unlikely to fully exclude bats.



Figure 4. Damaged soffit covered with wire mesh.

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- 3.6** Overall, the external fabric of the building offers multiple features suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species.

Internal Inspection

- 3.7** Internally, the loft space of the main house is regularly accessed for storage, but it showed signs of limited disturbance, with abundant cobwebbing and the presence of small, suspended wasp nests. Tears in the sarking felt were evident throughout the loft, particularly near the gable walls. Daylight was visible through gaps where the sarking felt meets the loft floor, indicating possible external access points (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A gap between the soffit and sarking felt.

- 3.8** Gaps and crevices were observed in the internal gable wall, including areas where mortar was missing between bricks, creating cavity areas potentially suitable for roosting bats (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Gaps in interior gable wall.

- 3.9** The garage interior was partially open to the outside due to damage to the flat roof. Structural collapse of timber sections had created open voids, and the space was subject to daylight ingress

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(Figure 7). The junction between the garage and the main house exhibited gaps in the mortar, which could provide further access points for bats or facilitate movement between structures (Figure 8).



Figure 7. Garage interior with area of caved in roof.



Figure 8. A sawn cut in the interior brick of the garage, which created an access point into the cavity wall. A similar cut existed within the brick in the main house, in the same general location as the cut in the garage. The cut in the main house also facilitated access into the cavity wall.

Summary of Bat Roosting Potential

- 3.10** Although no direct evidence of bats, such as droppings, staining, or feeding remains, was identified during the survey, the building supports a range of features that could be used by roosting bats. These include crevices in the external cladding and soffits, access into cavity walls, tears and gaps in the sarking felt, and internal voids with limited disturbance. Based on these findings and in line with current guidance, the building is assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats. The range and distribution of features, coupled with a low level of internal disturbance and the building's structural condition, indicate that further survey effort is appropriate to establish presence or likely absence.

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4.0 Evaluation and Recommendations

- 4.1 B1 was found to have moderate potential for roosting bats due to the presence of multiple roosting features.
- 4.2 Given the proposed works, if there are roosting bats within B1, the works could result in the loss of roosting features and an offence may be triggered if roosting bats are present. It is therefore recommended that emergence surveys are carried out to determine whether bats are roosting in B1. This will comprise two dusk surveys between May and August inclusive, at least three weeks apart, as per best practice guidelines.
- 4.3 If bats are not recorded emerging or re-entering B1, it can be concluded that bats are likely absent from the structure, and bat related offences caused by the proposals would not be predicted. Hence, no further survey work/mitigation would be required.
- 4.4 If bats are recorded emerging from B1, additional survey visits will be required to effectively characterise the roost. Taken together these surveys would form the basis of a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence and inform any necessary mitigation requirements.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan

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Key

 Site Boundary

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Site Boundary

Date: 10 July 2025

Map data: Google, QuickMapServices © 2025

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Appendix 2: Legislation and Policy

National Planning Policy

The NPPF states that:

Paragraph 175

Planning policies and 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;

Paragraph 181

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 incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Wildlife Legislation

The primary statutes governing wildlife protection in the UK are the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (referred to as the Habitats Regulations) and the WCA 1981. The Habitats Regulations focus on sites and species of international significance, while the WCA addresses those of national importance.

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of 943 species and habitats of principal importance. These species are known as England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK BAP and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Certain species listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981, including all bat species, Great Crested Newt, Hazel Dormouse, and Otter, are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 making them European Protected Species (EPS). Taken together it is illegal to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture any wild animal of EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any EPS in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - The ability of that species to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young; or
 - The local distribution of that species.
- Recklessly disturb an EPS or obstruct access to their place of rest;
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
- Possess or transport any part of an EPS, unless acquired legally; and/or
- Sell, barter or exchange any part of an EPS.

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