



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 73 OXFORD ROAD WOKINGHAM



**Prepared for:
Mr A Douiri
73 Oxford Road
Wokingham
RG41 2YH**

14 November 2025

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Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
Worcestershire
WR15 8NX
Tel: 0118 976 2902
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

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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 A Douiri to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]), of 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham, RG41 2YH. This is to support a current planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 4 November 2025 at 1pm, during daylight hours. An external and internal 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 one statutory designated site is located within, and one current European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats has been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The landform immediately to the rear of the garden includes allotments and a burial ground and to the west a public open space with mature trees and Emm Brook all of which provide suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging for a wide range of bat species.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the property 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 properties suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and potential roost features were identified during the preliminary inspection. When combined with the data from the desk top study, this resulted in the property being characterised as having a moderate potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², two dusk emergence surveys are recommended on the property in order to determine the presence or absence of roosting bats within the building and inform appropriate mitigation if required. If bats are seen emerging from or re-entering the property during the surveys, a further activity survey and an EPSL will be required in order for the development to proceed legally.

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).



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr A Douiri to conduct a DBW of 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham, RG41 2YH to support a current 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 current planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (number 252414) for “Householder application for the proposed erection of a two-storey rear extension with a pitched tiled roof to match the main dwelling, incorporating new matching fenestration to the rear elevation, and the alteration of the existing front dormer windows to form double apex pitched roof dormers, alongside associated roof alterations and internal modifications.”.

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 3 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 (SCI64844). He has 35 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.



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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 SU80206897, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing maps.

Figure 1. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham, highlighted.

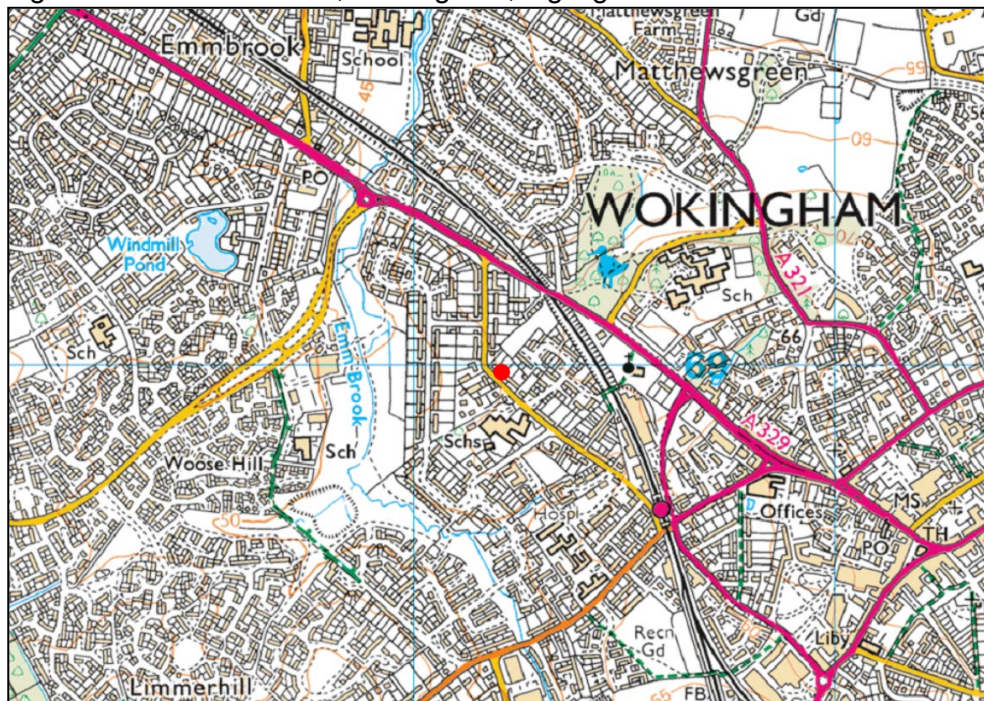
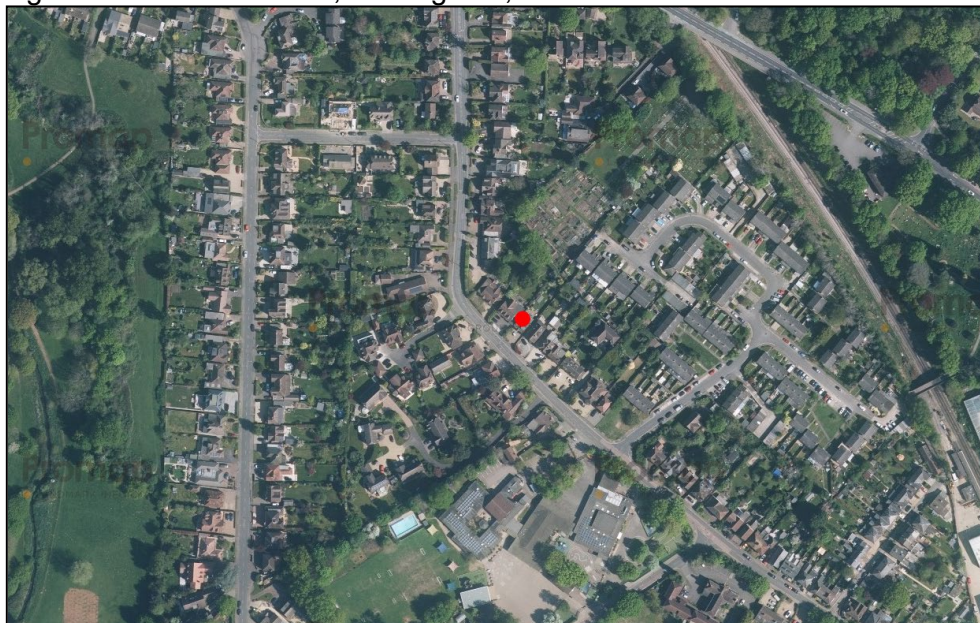


Figure 2. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built and rendered/painted bungalow with rear flat roof extension. To the front there is a paved driveway/parking area with trees and shrubs, and to the rear, the garden is mainly laid to lawn with woody shrubs, hedgerows, a patio area and mature trees mainly on the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity to the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

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 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 application site is situated in the urban conurbation of Wokingham with properties and gardens of varying sizes and styles to the south, east and west. To the north the garden backs onto St Paul's Gate Allotments with connection to a burial ground, a main railway line and onto Holt Copse and Joel Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Further afield to the west is a public open space that consists of mature trees/open grassland, the Emm Brook and a freshwater lake, all of which provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging habitats and are connected to the site via the garden network. Further afield lie areas of woodland, farmland and parkland, all of which are likely to provide good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats although there are few ecological corridors connecting the site to these areas due to the dense urban environment.



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Holt Copse and Joel Park LNR is located to the northeast, well within 2km of the proposed development site and there is ecological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed one current EPSL for bats has been granted within 2km of the site, the details of which are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Current EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site

EPSL reference	Licence end date	Species on licence
2020-48489-EPS-MIT	12/2027	Common and soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham, RG41 2YH was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 4 November 2025 at 1pm. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 14.8 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW an internal and external 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. This includes the wooden building in the rear garden as it will not be affected by the proposed works.

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 and rendered/painted bungalow with converted loft and rear flat roof extension, see Figure 4 below. The pitched roofs over the main dwelling and over the front porch are covered in tiles which, on the front elevation are raised leaving gaps that crevice dwelling bat species could exploit for roosting, see Figure 5 on page 9. There is no missing mortar and no gaps in the ridge tiles (see Figure 6 on page 10), and the leadwork and bitumen felt around the chimney stack and Velux windows is flush with no gaps that could be used for roosting, see Figure 7 on page 10. The soffits and fascias are tight to the wall with no gaps or splits and they do not offer any roosting opportunities. The rear flat roof of the single storey extension is covered in well fitted bitumen felt all of which was well fitted with no rips or tears, see Figure 8 on page 11.

There are two dormer windows on the front elevation and one on the rear elevation. The flat roofs of the dormer windows are covered in well fitted bitumen felt with no rips or tears that could be exploited by roosting bats, see Figure 9 on page 11. The hanging tiles on the sides and fronts of the dormers windows have moved, leaving gaps that crevice dwelling bat species could exploit, see Figure 10 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property however, the raised roof tiles and gaps in the hanging tiles on the dormer windows could provide roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bat species and the presence or absence could not be determined.

Figure 4. Rear view of property. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25





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Figure 5. Example raised roof tiles on front elevation. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham.
04.11.25





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Figure 6. Example sealed ridge tiles. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25



Figure 7. Example flush lead flashing/bitumen felt on chimney stack. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25





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Figure 8. Example well fitted bitumen felt on rear, single storey extension. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25



Figure 9. Example well fitted bitumen felt on dormer windows. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25





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Figure 10. Example moved hanging tiles on dormers windows leaving gaps. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25





5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft of the property has been converted into habitable accommodation leaving two eaves cupboards that were accessed via small doors. The spaces were not lit or boarded and were insulated and the roof tiles were 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.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the eaves storage spaces.

Figure 11. Example eaves storage spaces. 73 Oxford Road, Wokingham. 04.11.25





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 (some sections)**;
- 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.

The raised roof tiles and gaps in the hanging tiles on the dormer windows provide crevice like features suitable for bats to roost or access into the building for bats and the presence or absence of bats could not be determined without further survey effort. When combined, the crevice-like features and surrounding habitat that is suitable for foraging, commuting and roosting bats result in the property being classified as having a moderate potential to support roosting bats.



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Based on the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, it is recommended that two dusk emergence surveys are undertaken on the property in order to establish the presence/absence of bats. The features identified will require 3 survey positions equipped with bat detectors/night vision cameras in order to cover all the potential bat roosting features.

If bats are seen emerging from or re-entering the property during the surveys, a further activity survey and an EPSL will be required in order for the development to proceed legally.

7.2 Contingency Plan

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 buildings may change and bats may start roosting at the site.

8. References

Collins, J (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended).
HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).
HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

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

Telephone: 01189 762902
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

Urban Tree Experts
Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX



Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638



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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.