



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS) AT LANCAMBRIA SWALLOWFIELD



**Prepared for:
Mr & Mrs Dible
Lancambria
Basingstoke Road
Swallowfield
RG7 1PY**

11 October 2024

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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 & Mrs Dible to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) and three dusk emergence surveys at Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PY. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a first-floor extension and new timber entrance gates including masonry boundary wall.

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 three 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. The surrounding habitat, with woodland and farmland, provide rich and diverse habitats suitable for a wide range of bat species and there is direct ecological connectivity to these areas from the site.

A search of Berkshire bat group records confirmed 8 different species within the 2-kilometer search radius, including *Myotis sp.*

We initially conducted a preliminary ecological appraisal of this site in August 2023. This site visit was carried out by Nick Powell on Monday 5 August 2024 at 7pm. During both site visits, an external and internal inspection of the property and attached garage took place to look for signs of bats.

The property and integral garage are in good condition externally and internally. However, during the August 2023 visit we noted a small number of gaps within the lead flashing around the chimney, between the soffit boards and fascias and under the dormer window hanging tiles and, during the August 2024 site visit, observed a gap within the lead flashing around the chimney and under the dormer window hanging tiles and a section of missing fascia board on the southern gable end elevation. These features could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats. Repair works to the property have been undertaken and the gaps between the soffit boards and fascias noted in August 2023 had been sealed.

In addition, during both site visits, bat droppings were noted externally on the property (window ledge and hanging tiles) and a number of bat droppings were recorded within the loft of the property, primarily on and around the chimney stack, indicating that bats have/are using the loft for roosting. DNA analysis of the droppings by SureScreen Scientific confirmed the droppings to be those of the common pipistrelle bat, see Appendix 1.

In line with best practice guidelines¹, three separate dusk emergence surveys were required on the property in order to assess the status of the roost currently and to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works.

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on Monday 5 August, Thursday 29 August and Tuesday 24 September 2024.



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A low number of bats were heard and seen foraging in and around the site throughout the surveys. At 21.00, during the first emergence survey (05.08.24), an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the right-hand corner of the front, left hand dormer window.

During the second emergence survey (29.08.24), at 20.14, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the left-hand corner of the front right hand dormer window and, at 20.17 an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen and recorded emerging from under the raised lead flashing at the rear, on the chimney stack on the northern gable end.

During the last emergence survey (24.09.24), at 19.20, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the right-hand corner of the front right hand dormer window.

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

In the absence of mitigation, the works to the property will result in the destruction of a day roost for a low number of common pipistrelle bats. However, following works there is no reason why new roosting provision cannot be successfully maintained with appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement. An EPSL must be obtained from Natural England before works commence to the building.

An outline method statement has been included to enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *“in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application”*. A full method statement will be prepared as part of an EPSL application to be submitted to Natural England.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr & Mrs Dible to carry out a DBW at Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PY to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council. Following the DBW, Urban Tree Experts was commissioned to conduct three dusk activity surveys upon the property in accordance with best practice guidelines.

1.2 Survey Scope

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 surveys were commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a first-floor extension and new timber entrance gates including masonry boundary wall.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

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

Simon Holmes MSc. Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 35 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

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.

Katie Holmes. 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.



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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 2.

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 property is located at Grid Reference SU 7194 6433, see Ordnance Survey (OS) extract at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.



3.2 Site Description

The site comprises a detached, two storey brick-built property with an integral garage. The remainder of the site comprises a paved driveway, a small front garden surrounded by hedgerows and mature trees (see cover photograph), and a rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn, with occasional shrubs and a patio, see Figure 2 on page 7. The site itself offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats.



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Figure 2. Rear garden. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

Aside from the preliminary ecological appraisal conducted by us in August 2023, a search of the planning register revealed that a bat survey was conducted by John Wenman in May 2007 and the findings from this survey were considered prior to conducting our survey. 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.

4.2 Daylight Survey

This DBW was carried out by Nick Powell on Monday 5 August 2024 at 7pm. The weather conditions for the survey were sunny with a temperature of 21 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, an endoscope, binoculars and a ladder.

During the DBW an internal and external inspection of the property and integral garage 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 or lead flashing.



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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; this is not always a reliable indicator.
- 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 with no bat roosting potential and that were unsuitable for roosting bats were not inspected in detail. This includes the wooden buildings in the rear garden as they will not be affected by the proposed works.

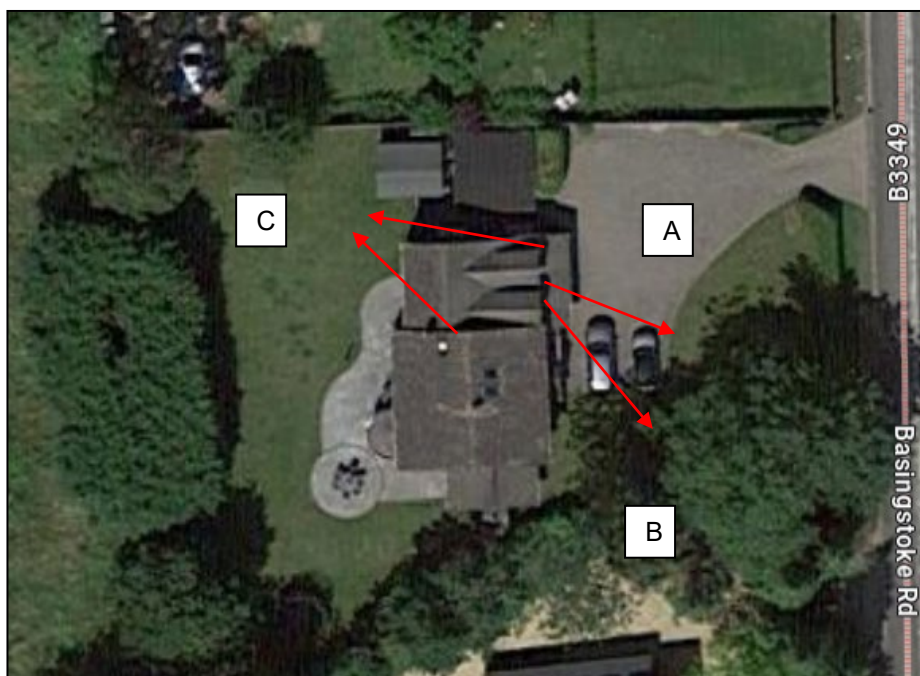
4.3 Dusk Surveys

The dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the evenings of Monday 5 August, Thursday 29 August and Tuesday 24 September 2024. The surveys were at a time of year when bats are known to be active with weather conditions suitable for the bat survey and insect prey is abundant.

The surveyors were stationed around the property (as shown in Figure 3 on page 8), to ensure the features identified in the DBW could be observed. A screenshot from the video cameras is included at Appendix 3.

During the surveys bat activity was monitored using three BatLogger M bat detectors together with three Sony Handycam night shot video cameras with high intensity IR lamps and an Infray FH35 thermal monocular. The detectors and cameras were fitted with SD cards for recording bat activity, allowing for later analysis with Kaleidoscope Pro 3 software, VLC media player and DVC-Scan.

Figure 3. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. Surveyor locations and emergence/re-entry directions.





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At 21.00, during the first emergence survey (05.08.24), an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the right-hand corner of the front, left hand dormer window.

During the second emergence survey (29.08.24), at 20.14, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the left-hand corner of the front right hand dormer window and, at 20.17 an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen and recorded emerging from under the raised lead flashing at the rear, on the chimney stack on the northern gable end.

During the last emergence survey (24.09.24), at 19.20, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a hanging tile on the right-hand corner of the front right hand dormer window.

In total 4 species of bat were recorded and identified foraging near the site. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 commencing on page 15.

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

Table 1 – Surveyor details and weather conditions for bat activity survey conducted at Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.

Date:	5 August 2024	29 August 2024	24 September 2024
Surveyors and locations	(A) Simon Holmes (B) Remote camera/batlogger (C) Nick Powell	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote camera/batlogger (C) Nick Powell	(A) Katie Holmes (B) Remote camera/batlogger (C) Nick Powell
Weather Conditions (Start)	Temperature 20.7°C, Cloud cover 80% Humidity 79% Dry Wind Beaufort 0	Temperature 18.8°C, Cloud cover 50% Humidity 58.1% Dry Wind Beaufort 0	Temperature 14.8°C, Cloud cover 90% Humidity 73.8% Dry Wind Beaufort 1-2
Sunset/Sunrise	20:43	19:55	18:56
Start time	20:25	19:40	18:40
Finish Time	22:30	21:25	20:30
Duration	02:05	01:45	01:50
Weather Conditions (Finish)	Temperature 19.4°C, Cloud cover 80% Humidity 80.4% Dry Wind Beaufort 0	Temperature 14.8°C, Cloud cover 20% Humidity 67.4% Dry Wind Beaufort 0	Temperature 13.1°C, Cloud cover 60% Humidity 79.7% Dry Wind Beaufort 0-1

4.4 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visits was made possible by the client. During the preliminary ecological appraisal and DBW, parts of the loft could not be accessed due to a large water tank and therefore a thorough inspection of the entire loft was not possible.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The property is situated in the village of Swallowfield and is adjacent to properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. Surrounding the site lie large areas of farmland and pockets of woodland, both of which are likely to provide good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are connected to the site via ecological corridors such as tree and hedge lines. To the south lies a large area of woodland, which provides good habitat for bats and has ecological connectivity from the site.

Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Swallowfield Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and The Marshes LNR lie within 2km of the proposed development site although there is limited ecological connectivity from the site to these designated sites. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed no current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, although there are five historical records having been granted within the search area.

5.2 External Inspection

The external features of the property and integral garage were examined for signs described in Section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascias, soffits and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a detached two-storey brick-built building which is in a good condition externally. The pitched roof above the main property and extension to the south are covered in composite tiles, none of which are missing or broken, see Figure 4 on page 11. The ridge tiles are all tightly fitted with no gaps in which bats could utilise for roosting and the verges are all well sealed and have no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 5 on page 11. The lead flashing affixing the single storey extension to the south, garage extension to the north and around the main chimney stack is secure with no splits or gaps however, the lead flashing around the chimney stack on the northern gable end, at the rear elevation is raised, resulting in a gap that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species or allow access into the loft for bats, see Figure 6 on page 12. The majority of the soffits and fascias are sealed with no gaps suitable for crevice dwelling bats (see Figure 7 on page 12) however, on the front southern gable end a section of fascia is missing leaving gaps, see Figure 8 on page 13.

Above the integral garage on the front elevation are two dormer windows covered in hanging tiles, which all overlap. There are, however, the corner tiles are raised which provides potential roosting opportunities for bats and bat droppings were observed on one of the tiles, see Figure 9 on page 13.

The presence of droppings on the hanging tiles and crevice like features formed at the corners indicate that the tiles could be utilised by crevice dwelling bat species for roosting or provide access into the building to roost.



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Figure 4. Example roof and ridge tiles. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.
05.08.24



Figure 5. Example sealed verges. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.
05.08.24





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Figure 6. Raised lead flashing on rear chimney stack. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24



Figure 7. Sealed soffits/fascias. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24





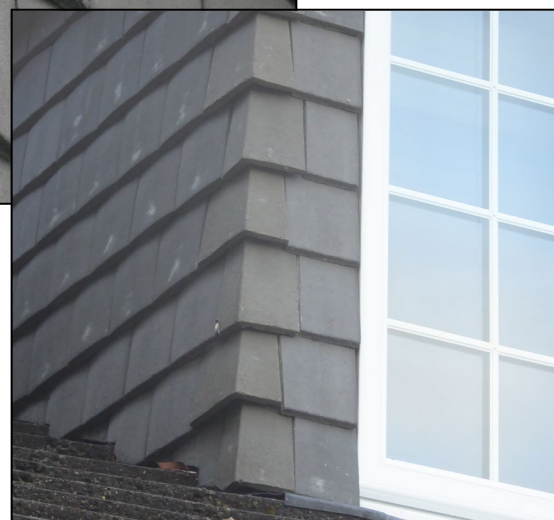
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Figure 8. Missing fascia on southern gable end. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24



Figure 9. Example gaps in hanging tiles on dormer windows and bat droppings. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24





5.3 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 space was accessed via a loft ladder and is in a good condition. The loft is partially lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 10 below. The roof tiles are lined with bitumen felt all of which could be seen appeared to be in a good condition. A small number of bat droppings, of a similar size and consistency to those of pipistrelle *sp.* bats were recorded in the loft space, indicating bats are or have been using the loft space for roosting, see Figure 11 on page 14. DNA analysis of the droppings by SureScreen Scientific confirmed them to be those of the common pipistrelle bat, see Appendix 1.

Figure 10. Loft space. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24



Figure 11. Example bat droppings. Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. 05.08.24





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5.4 Dusk Surveys

In total 4 different species were recorded and identified foraging and commuting around the site. 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 (BLE), *Plecotus auritus*. The longest and most frequently recorded calls and observations were from the common pipistrelle bat. A simple summary of the bats recorded can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of bat calls recorded in the vicinity of Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield.

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
05/08/24	A	20:25 – 22:30	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.57 a noctule was seen and heard in transit high above the site, it was then heard another 10 times foraging between 21.24 and 21.59. At 21.00 an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from under a raised hanging tile on the right-hand corner on the front left hand dormer window and thereafter another 40 foraging calls were heard from common pipistrelle bats with them being seen occasionally foraging in the boundary trees to the left of the surveyor. Only 3 foraging calls from a soprano pipistrelle bat were heard at 21.32.
05/08/24	B	20:25 – 22:30	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	Between 20.57 and survey end the batlogger recorded 55 foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats, 3 calls from a soprano pipistrelle and 6 calls from a noctule. The remote camera did not record any bats.
05/08/24	C	20:25 – 22:30	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	At 20.57 a common pipistrelle was seen and heard in transit entering the site from the neighbouring property to the left and thereafter common pipistrelle foraging activity dominated until survey end with up to 2 bats being seen foraging in the rear garden and along the tree line. Only 2 calls from a soprano pipistrelle bat were heard at 21.32, the bat was not seen. A number of foraging calls from a noctule were heard between 21.24 and 21.49. Analysis of the data recorded revealed a call from a BLE bat.
29/08/24	A	19:40 – 21:25	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.14, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from a raised hanging tile on the left-hand corner on the front right hand dormer window and thereafter a limited number of foraging calls from a common pipistrelle bat were heard but the bat was not seen again. Soprano pipistrelle activity was very limited with 5 foraging calls being heard between 20.30 and 20.49, the bat was not seen. A single call from a noctule was heard at 20.53.
29/08/24	B	19:40 – 21:25	N	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and BLE	Between 20.27 and 21.23 the batlogger recorded 14 foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats, 6 calls from soprano pipistrelle bats, a single noctule call and 3 calls from a BLE bat. The remote camera did not record any bats.
29/08/24	C	19:40 – 21:25	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule	At 20.17 an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen and recorded emerging from under the raised lead flashing at the rear, on the chimney stack on the northern gable end and thereafter the bat commenced foraging in the rear garden until 20.50. A very limited number (7) of foraging calls from a soprano pipistrelle were heard between 20.52 and 21.10 with the bat being seen foraging behind the surveyor. A single call from a noctule was heard at 20.54.



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Table 2. Summary of bat calls continued

Date	Surveyor Position	Time	Seen	Heard	Species	Comments
24/09/24	A	18:40 – 20:30	Y	Y	Common and soprano pipistrelle	At 19.20, an individual common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from a raised hanging tile on the right hand corner on the front right hand dormer window and thereafter common pipistrelle foraging and transit activity was heard and recorded until survey end, with a bat being seen sporadically looping around the property foraging. A single call from a soprano pipistrelle was heard at 19.45, the bat was not seen.
24/09/24	B	18:40 – 20:30	N	Y	Common pipistrelle and BLE	Between 19.22 and survey end the batlogger recorded 157 foraging calls from common pipistrelle bats and at, 20.18, 2 calls from a BLE bat. The remote camera did not record any bats.
24/09/24	C	18:40 – 20:30	Y	Y	Common pipistrelle and BLE	At 19.21 a common pipistrelle bat was seen in transit from the front of the property to the rear and thereafter until 19.15 constant foraging took place in the rear garden with the bat being seen looping around the property foraging as well. Analysis of the data recorded revealed 10 calls from BLE bats between 20.00 and 20.15.

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;
- **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 or **historical records of bats** on the site, or **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); or
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.



7. Conclusions/Interpretation

- 7.1 The evidence collected during the preliminary assessments and bat activity surveys provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. Low numbers of bat droppings are normally associated with low numbers or individual bats. The location of the bat droppings observed in loft space and observations from the activity surveys indicates that the loft hosts a day roost for an individual common pipistrelle bat and the dormer windows hosts a day roost for a low number (<3) common pipistrelle bats. The common pipistrelle bat is a common (widespread in the UK and Berkshire) species (and a lack of aggregated droppings indicates this is not a maternity or hibernation site).
- 7.2 The calls detected and recorded from the survey provided identification of common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctule*, and BLE, *Plecotus auritus*, all foraging and/or transiting across the site with individual bats observed emerging from Lancambria. The longest and most frequently recorded calls and observations were from common pipistrelle bats.
- 7.3 The property has various features suitable for crevice dwelling bats to roost, for example the pipistrelle *sp.* and BLE bats and the surrounding land with the tree/hedge lined agricultural fields, copses and woodland provide excellent foraging and roosting opportunities for not only the pipistrelles and BLE but a wide range of bat species.
- 7.4 The bat activity was dominated by common pipistrelles, with calls and visual observations indicating a low number of other individuals across the surveys. With the good foraging conditions this season (2024) the bat activity encountered during the surveys is considered low. All activity surveys in the county this season have resulted in low levels of bat activity despite favorable foraging conditions.
- 7.5 Whilst a limited number of calls from a BLE bat were recorded and/or heard by the surveyors, 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 their hearing and sight.
- 7.6 The proposed work will lead to the destruction of non-breeding day roosts of a low number of common pipistrelle bats and, if unsupervised, bats may be killed resulting in a major negative impact at a local level. The cumulative evidence leads me to conclude that an EPSL is required before work commences. Mitigation measures (against the risk of disturbance, killing or injuring bats during the work), and mitigation/compensation measures (to provide continued bat roosting provision at the site) are required. Mitigation/compensation need not be exactly like-for-like but should be suitable, based on species' requirements. Careful timing of work will be required, however there are no monitoring requirements. The full mitigation and enhancement proposals will be confirmed in the EPSL method statement to Natural England.
- 7.7 An outline method statement has been included to enable the Local Planning Authority to have regards to the requirements of the Habitats Directive... *in the exercise of their functions in considering the planning application.*



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- 7.8 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). The provisions in the Method Statement must be implemented in order for the works to be legally undertaken and must form part of any planning conditions.

8. Method Statement for Planning

This method statement aims to address:

- Timing and methods of activities
- Provision of new bat roosts
- Impact on and replacement of existing roosts
- Lighting and habitat provisions as applicable

8.1 Pre-commencement

- 8.1.1 A project ecologist must be engaged prior to work commencing on the property to provide advice and supervision during the project. This ecological method statement must be adhered to, it provides project supervision and guidance to ensure that best practice and compliance is adhered to and may prevent a criminal offence being committed. If there is a delay of greater than one year from the date of this report, further survey effort will be required. Bats are highly mobile wild animals and may be encountered within a building following negative survey results.

- 8.1.2 The mitigation strategy must include the erection/construction of alternative roosting provision before work commences at the site. This may take the form of, but is not restricted to bat boxes, for example 2 number Schwegler 1FF bat boxes (see www.NHBS.com), must be suitably affixed on a mature tree on the site at a minimum height of 4.5 metres. The exact siting to be agreed with the project ecologist. This type of bat box provides alternative roosting habitat for the species roosting on this site, should it be required. The boxes must remain in situ once all work has been completed and will contribute to a biodiversity net gain for the site.

8.2 Method

8.2.1 Prevention of injury

A toolbox talk will be given to contractors prior to commencement of works on the property, which will include: background legislation in relation to bats; the most likely areas to expect bats (behind hanging tiles, fascias and lead flashing), good working practice and, details of what to do if a bat or additional evidence of bats is discovered. In the unlikely event that bats, or evidence of other roost locations are found, works must stop and the project ecologist contacted, and any license modification obtained.

8.3 Ecological supervision

- 8.3.1 Records of any site visits must be made by the project ecologist, and photographs must be taken as required in order to ensure compliance with this method statement.
- 8.3.2 Prior to any works on the property it must be inspected by the project ecologist for any new evidence of bats and the project ecologist must be available (on-call) to provide advice.



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8.3.3 If, during the work, when the project ecologist is not on-site, and a bat is discovered that appears to be injured or distressed, then the animal should be carefully placed in a small box (e.g. shoe box) by either handling the bat with thick gloved hands or covering the bat with the box and sliding a thin piece of cardboard under to create a floor to the box. A clean piece of cloth loosely crumpled will be placed in one corner of the box (to allow the bat to crawl under and hide), a few small air holes will be put into the lid of the box, and a very shallow container (e.g. foil milk bottle top) of water will be placed in one corner of the box. The project ecologist must then be called without delay and all work must stop until the project ecologist has been consulted.

8.3.4 High risk works, removal of the hanging tiles or lead flashing around the chimney stack on the northern gable end elevation must be directly supervised by a licenced project ecologist and shall follow a 'soft-strip' method using hand tools. This will involve hand removal of materials exposing potential roosting areas beneath. The work should progress from a common location for example the ridge to wall plate as required and must be supervised by a project ecologist. Stripping of the insulation/roofing membrane internally shall follow a soft strip method, peeling back the insulation/membrane and examining the underside for bats must be conducted. Any roofing work must only be conducted when the air temperature is sufficiently high (at least 8°C) to ensure that so as to not risk harming bats which may be found. Any bats in poor or injured condition will be assessed by either a bat care worker or taken to a veterinary practice and where rehabilitated will be released when deemed fit and translocated to one of the bat boxes located on the site.

8.4 Timing of work

8.4.1 Any work to the existing roof has the potential to disturb bats during the bat activity period (1 May to 31 August) and therefore roofing works must be conducted outside this period. If the works cannot be undertaken during the period 1 September to 1 May and should bats be encountered during this period or at any time during the work, then all work must stop and the project ecologist called for advice.

8.4.2 All work must be undertaken in normal working, daylight, hours, which is in accordance with best working practice and allows the project ecologist to address any issues if bat(s) are found during the demolition work.

8.5 Incorporation of bat roosting

8.5.1 Maintaining bat roost provision: Permanent roost provision for common pipistrelle bats must be created as part of the new extension. The new extension must provide suitable crevice like features, for example integral bat boxes in the main roof for example between the joists and combined with a bat access tile. The compensation measures must be positioned on south or east facing elevations but not directly above a window. Suitable alternatives would include bat bricks where access is possible or bat access tiles at the ridge and where they provide access to the roof, they must incorporate a lining that has passed the snagging test for bats.

8.6 Lighting proposals

8.6.1 Lighting: The exact lighting proposals are not known at this stage but where new external lighting is provided best practice in the form of Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night Guidance Note GN08/23 (Bat Conservation Trust and Institution for Lighting Professionals) must be followed.



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Research into artificial lighting at night (ALAN) has identified a reduction in insect diversity at night and the potential to disrupt a broad range of insect behaviour patterns and in turn foraging opportunities for bats, particularly where they are bright white. It is therefore essential that any new external lighting is carefully selected, for example, all external lighting must be Light Emitting Diode (LED) and directed downward or be located at a low level. By carefully directing light downwards and using a PIR with short illumination sensor the impact of external lighting on any foraging bats can be reduced.

8.7 Post construction work

5.7.1 Monitoring: There is no requirement for monitoring visits with this scheme.

9. 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.

10. 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

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APPENDIX 1

Folio No: 3340-2024
Purchase Order: KH202409
Contact: Urban Tree Experts
Issue Date: 04.09.2024
Received Date: 20.08.2024

Biological Report

Technical Report



SureScreen Scientifics

Folio No: 3340-2024
Purchase Order: KH202409
Contact: Urban Tree Experts
Issue Date: 04.09.2024
Received Date: 20.08.2024

Biological Sample Analysis

Summary

Most biological materials (tissue, feces, hair, blood, etc.) contain small amounts of DNA from the organism of which it originated. Using molecular methods such as PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and DNA sequencing, SureScreen Scientifics are able to analyze an unknown sample to determine which species the sample originates from our methods are optimized for the detection of species including bats (over 92% of bat species worldwide can be identified including all 18 UK bat species), mammals; bees, wasps & hornets; birds; fish; plants (from roots, leaves, stem and even dried wood) and many more species.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Sample Type	Species Name	Match(%)
B3764	Lancambria 2023		Bat Dropping	Common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus)	99.43
Genetic Sequence TTGGAACTGACTAGTTCCNCTAATAATTGGAGCCCCTGACATGGCATTTCCTCGTATAAATAATATAAGTTTCTGA CTCCTACCTCCTTCTTTTCTACTACTACTAGCCTCGTCTATAGTAGAAGCGGGAGCGGGTACAGGCTGAACAGTC TACCCCTCTAGCAGGAAACCTAGCTCATGCTGGAGA					
B3765	Lancambria 2024		Bat Dropping	Inconclusive	-
Genetic Sequence -					

Matters affecting result: none
Reported by: Chelsea Warner

Approved by: Chelsea Warner



Methodology

Once samples have arrived in the laboratory, the DNA is isolated using a commercial DNA extraction kit. Using PCR, DNA (if present within the sample) is amplified using universal molecular markers designed to amplify a short fragment of the DNA of the target species group (i.e. mammal, fish, arthropod, reptile, plant etc.). If amplification is successful, the resulting DNA sequence is revealed using a process known as Sanger Sequencing in order to obtain the genetic sequence of the mitochondrial gene within the sample. The sequence results are aligned against a library of known reference sequences using bioinformatics software, which enables us to determine which species the DNA sequence from the sample matches with, informing the species identity and sequence similarity (match %).

If the initial analysis is unsuccessful, the entire process is repeated up to two additional times with a fresh reserve sample (if available) in order to obtain a species identification. If no DNA is detected after three attempts, then we can be confident that any further analysis of the sample will likely also fail to result in species identification.

Interpretation of Results

Sample Type: The sample you send to us can come from a variety of sources. Fecal, dropping, urine, hair, blood, carcass (skin, flesh, bone), gamete, plant matter or unknown biological material all contain DNA that we can test for in order to identify the species of origin.

Genetic Sequence: The unique DNA sequence obtained from the sample.

Match (%): How closely matched the DNA sequence from your sample is to the sequences within our reference database. This can be interpreted as a score of result accuracy, with the maximum score of 100% indicating an exact match of the sample to the indicated species' reference sequence. Lower scores (80-99%) indicate some variation between the sample and reference sequence, likely due to natural variation between individual genetic sequences and/or systematic variations generated through the sequencing process. Scores below 80% similarity should be interpreted with care and can indicate part degraded or part contaminated samples.

Inconclusive Result:

Degraded sample: DNA is degraded and we are unable to determine species identification due to degradation of sample DNA. This can happen either before sample collection (old samples, exposure to UV etc.) or after sample collection if stored for long periods before analysis or not handled correctly.

Inhibited/contaminated sample:

We are unable to determine species identity due to contamination or the suspected presence of large quantities of PCR inhibitors. Contamination sources can originate from other species which could have come into contact with the samples, or human contamination during sample collection.

Alternative Result: Sometimes, for targets such as bat dropping analysis, other mammalian species such as rodents are detected. We find this to be a common occurrence as some bat droppings can be similar in appearance to rodent droppings. Although sometimes unexpected, repeat analyses in these cases would likely return the same results.



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APPENDIX 2

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.



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APPENDIX 3

Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PY
Sample screenshots from night vision cameras

A



B



C

