



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (BATS) AT 46 GROSVENOR ROAD CAVERSHAM



**Prepared for:
Mrs J Jupp
46 Grosvenor Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5EN**

21 September 2023

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The validity of this report ceases at the prescribed time limit or after 12 months from the site inspection, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner.



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Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mrs J Jupp to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 46 Grosvenor Rd, Caversham, RG4 5EN. This is to support a current planning application to Reading Borough Council (reference: 231067).

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 10.30am, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property and attached garage took place to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building 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.

A desk top study was conducted 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 2km search radius and it revealed one statutory designated site is located within, and three current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site.

The property and attached garage are in good to fair condition internally and externally. However, there are lifted roof tiles and gaps between the roof and hip tiles on the building, which could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats.

The combined information from the desk top study and features such as the lifted roof tiles, gaps between the roof and hip tiles and the good foraging opportunities that are within travelling distance for bats resulted in the property being assessed as having a low potential to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines, one dusk emergence or dawn return to roost survey is recommended on the building, in order to establish the presence or absence of bats. If bats are recorded roosting during this survey, further survey effort and mitigation will be required in order for the proposed development to proceed legally.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mrs J Jupp to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 46 Grosvenor Rd, Caversham, RG4 5EN to support a current planning application to Reading Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the building.
- 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 (3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a current planning application to Reading Borough Council (reference: 231067) that is seeking to construct a first-floor front extension, a single storey rear extension and remove the chimney breast.

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 commenced surveying bats last year and has received training in bat surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, bat identification, acoustic monitoring and echolocation analysis.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 34 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.

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.



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3. Site Location and Description

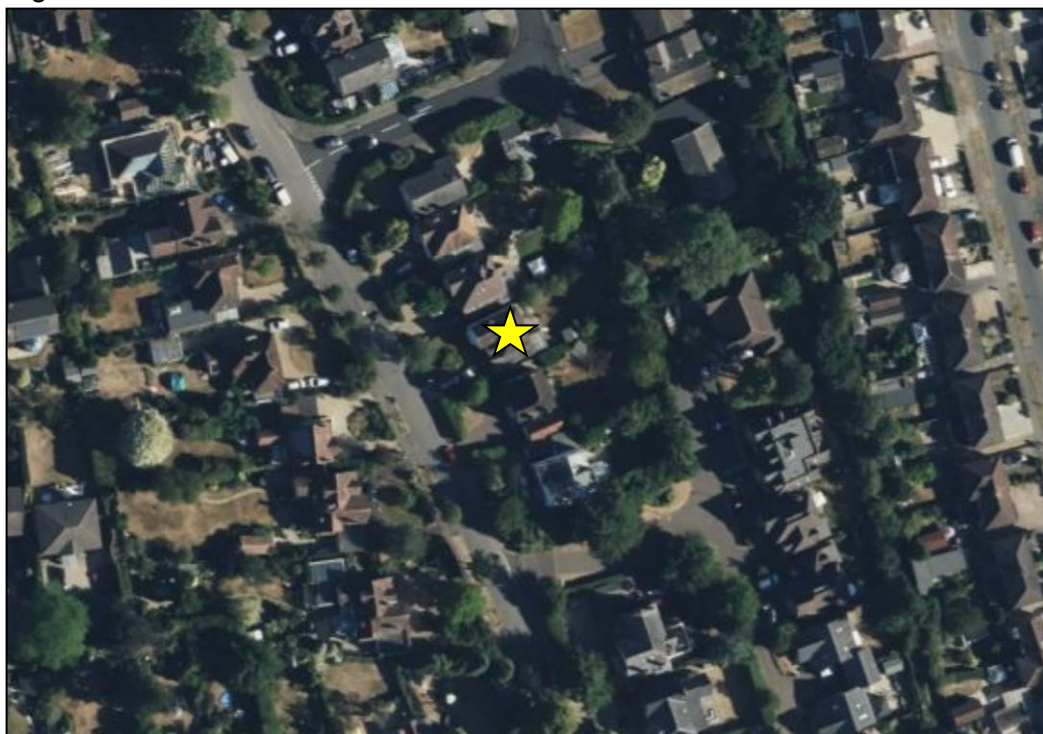
3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU 7221 7546, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, highlighted.



Figure 2. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built property with an attached garage all set within its own grounds. The remainder of the site comprises a concrete driveway, a small front garden and a rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn with some shrubs around the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers limited foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



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 within 2km of the site. Due to the urban area, the scale of the potential development, and the very local impact that may occur, no data was sought from local records centre at this time.

The site is situated in an urban area of Caversham and is surrounded by properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. Housing developments and roads are situated in all directions to the site which do not provide good habitat for bats. Areas of grassland and pockets of woodland lie in close proximity to the site, which are likely to provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats although there is limited ecological connectivity from the site to these areas. Further afield lie large freshwater lakes, areas of woodland, farmland and the River Thames, all of which provide good habitat for bats although there are no ecological corridors connecting these areas to the site.



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Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies within 2km of the proposed development site and has known bat roosts, although there is no ecological connectivity from the site to this LNR. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed three current EPSLs for bats have 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
2018-33476-EPS-MIT	2023	Serotine
2020-44895-EPS-MIT	2025	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and daubentons
2020-44895-EPS-MIT-1	2025	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and daubentons

4.2 Daylight Survey

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 46 Grosvenor Rd, Caversham, RG4 5EN was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 10.30am. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast with a temperature of 20 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole and a ladder.

During the preliminary ecological appraisal (bats), an internal and external inspection of the property and attached 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.

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.

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 and attached garage were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascia's and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a two storey, detached, brick-built building that is in a good to fair condition externally. The multi pitched roof is covered in close fitting tiles, the majority of which are in good condition, see Figure 4 on page 9. There are a number of lifted tiles across the roof (see Figure 5 on page 9) which could be utilised by crevice dwelling bats for roosting or provide access into the building for roosting bats. The hip tiles were all well cemented with no gaps large enough to allow roosting bats to exploit (see Figure 6 on page 10), although there were some gaps between the roof and hip tiles which could potentially be used by roosting bats, see Figure 7 on page 10. The lead flashing around the chimney is all tightly fitted and did not have any gaps in which roosting bats could exploit (see Figure 8 on page 11) and the area of PVC cladding on the front of the building was overlapping and had no cracks or splits in which crevice dwelling bats could roost, see Figure 9 on page 11. There is a dormer window at the front of the property, see Figure 10 on page 12. The roof of the dormer is pitched and covered in close fitting tiles, and the sides of the dormer are covered in PVC cladding, all of which is tightly fitted with no gaps which could be used by roosting bats, see Figure 11 on page 12.

The attached garage was also inspected externally. The garage is brick built and in good condition. The roof of the garage is partially pitched, and this section is covered in tiles some of which are lifted, see Figure 12 on page 13. The rear section of the garage roof is flat and covered in felt, all of which is tightly fitted and had no rips or tears in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 13 on page 13.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded externally on the property or garage although there were a number of gaps within the roof tiles on the building which could provide potential roosting opportunities for roosting bats or provide access into the building for bats.



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Figure 4. Example of roof tiles. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 5. Example of lifted roof tiles. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





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Figure 6. Example of hip tiles. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 7. Gaps between roof and hip tiles. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





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Figure 8. Lead flashing around chimney. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 9. PVC cladding on front of building. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





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Figure 10. Dormer window. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 11. PVC cladding on dormer window. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





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Figure 12. Tiled section of garage roof. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 13. Flat section of garage roof. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft of the property was accessed via integral ladders through a hatch and is in a good condition internally, see Figure 14 below. The loft is partially lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 15 on page 15. The roof tiles are lined with expanding foam which had no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 16 on page 15.

The attached garage was also inspected internally, although there is no loft space. The garage is used for storage and is cluttered but in a good condition. The ceiling is plaster boarded and contained no cracks or splits in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 17 on page 16.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the loft of the property or internal space of the garage and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities for bats within the building.

Figure 14. Loft hatch. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





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Figure 15. Example of loft space. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23



Figure 16. Expanding foam lining roof tiles. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham. 12.09.23





Figure 17. Plaster boarded ceiling of garage. 46 Grosvenor Road, Caversham.
12.09.23



6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the criteria laid out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). These criteria are listed on page 22 of the guidelines with the features **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 and historical records of bat roosts in the general area.**



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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 internal and external inspection of the property and attached garage provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report.

The property and garage are in a good to fair condition externally and internally however, there are a number of lifted roof tiles and gaps between the roof and hip tiles that may provide potential roosting opportunities for bats or access into the building for roosting bats and therefore the presence or absence of bats cannot be determined without further survey effort.

The combined information from the desk top study and features such as the lifted roof tiles, gaps between the roof and hip tiles and the good foraging opportunities that are within travelling distance for bats resulted in the property being assessed as having a low potential to support roosting bats.

Based on the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, protocol requires that one dusk emergence and/or dawn return to roost survey is undertaken on the property and garage between May and August, in order to establish the presence or absence of roosting bats within the building and to inform appropriate mitigation if required. Two surveyors will be required for this survey, in order to cover all potential bat roosting features.

NB: If bats are recorded entering or emerging during the activity survey, further survey effort and a derogation licence from Natural England, presently referred to as an EPSL, will be required.

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 building may have changed and the site may become more suitable to support roosting bats.



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8. References

Collins, J (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), London.
HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.
HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act.
HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (1999). Bat Workers' Manual (2nd Edition). Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, Peterborough.

9. Queries

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

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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 CS36 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy states *“Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes. On sites with recognised biodiversity or geological value, development will not be permitted where there would be a direct or indirect adverse impact on the site, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: -*

- i. The need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and*
- ii. Appropriate compensation, impact minimisation, mitigation and compensation 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.