

Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (BATS) OF 3 ERIC AVENUE EMMER GREEN



**Prepared for:
Mr M Hunt
3 Eric Avenue
Emmer Green
Reading
RG4 8QU**

10th June 2020

Ref: SH/ET/PEA-20/05.06



CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Instruction
- 1.2 Aims and Objectives
- 1.3 Proposed works
- 1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Legislative Background

3. Site Location and Description

- 3.1 Site Location
- 3.2 Site Description

4. Survey Methodology

- 4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search
- 4.2 Daylight Survey
- 4.3 Constraints

5. Survey Findings

- 5.1 External Inspection
- 5.2 Internal Inspection

6. Evaluation

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Interpretation
- 7.2 Contingency plan

8. References

9. Queries

Appendix 1

©2020 Urban Tree Experts

All rights in this report are reserved. No part of it may be reproduced, edited or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature, without our written permission. Its content and format are for the exclusive use of Mr M Hunt and his agents in dealing with this site. It may not be sold, lent, hired out or divulged to any third party not directly involved in this site without the written consent of Urban Tree Experts. It may be reproduced as part of a planning application.

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.



Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr M Hunt to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QU. This is to support a current planning application to Reading Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Friday 5th June 2020 at 10.30am, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property and 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 property and garage for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, internally or externally, 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 desk top study revealed two current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats and one statutory designated site within the 2km search radius of the proposed development site.

Externally, there was no evidence of bats (current or historically) within the property or garage. The buildings are in a good condition externally and there was no visible roosting opportunities or access points into the building which could be utilised by bats.

Due to the absence of roosting potential and the lack of evidence of bats found during the detailed inspection, it is concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats at the property. Based on the recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines prior to works, no further surveys are required and the proposed works should proceed.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr M Hunt to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QU 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 buildings.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the buildings (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 (number 200486) that will seek to construct a first-floor extension above the existing bungalow, and single storey side and rear extensions.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was completed by Emma Turnbull and the report was written by Simon Holmes CEnv. Emma holds a Class 2 Bat Licence (CLS-41628) and has been surveying bats for three years. She has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, echolocation analysis and bat biology and identification.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI29096). He has 31 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.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

3. Site Location and Description

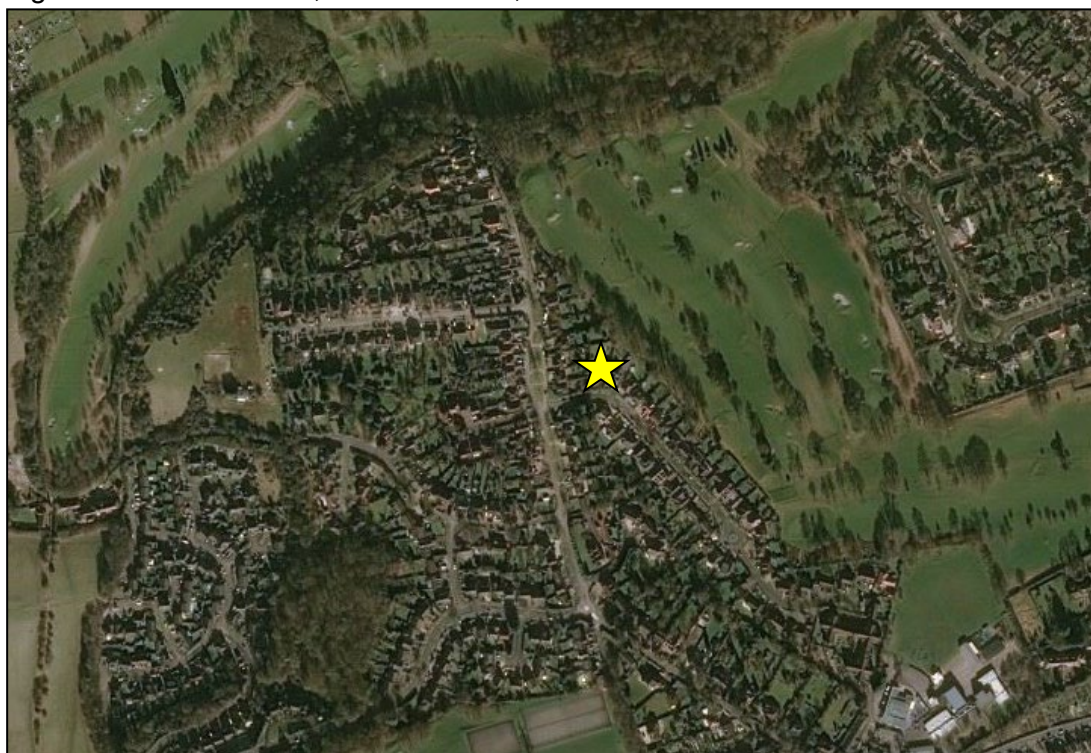
3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU 7131 7685, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green, highlighted.



Figure 2. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green, overview of the immediate area.





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

3.2 Site Description

The application site, comprises a detached, brick-built bungalow with integral garage. The remainder of the site comprises a small front garden with tarmacadam driveway and a large rear garden, the majority of which is laid to lawn with some mature trees on the boundary, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers limited foraging or commuting habitat for bats.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20



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.

The site is located in the urban suburb of Emmer Green, to the north of Reading town centre. Located in a cul-de-sac, to the north, south and west are properties of various age and styles. To the east are fairways of Reading Golf Club. Further afield to the north and west are areas of agricultural and improved grassland and areas of woodland such as Cucumber Wood and Chambers Copse. These areas provide good roosting and foraging habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity between these areas and the site.

Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies within 2km of the site, it has known bat roosts and provides good foraging opportunities for bats, although there are main roads and housing developments between the areas and therefore no direct connectivity for bats.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

A search of the Magic interactive website revealed two current EPSLs 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
2015-18560-EPS-MIT	2021	Brown long-eared and soprano pipistrelle
2017-28760-EPS-MIT	2022	Brown long-eared and common pipistrelle

4.2 Daylight Survey

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) of 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QU was carried out by Emma Turnbull on Friday 5th June 2020 at 10.30am. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast with a temperature of 14 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 was carried out to identify any signs of use by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the buildings – 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 buildings.
- 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 with no bat roosting potential and that were unsuitable for roosting bats were not inspected in detail, this included the conservatory.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the occupant and there were no constraints to the survey.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the property and garage 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 building and in a good condition externally. The hip and valley roof is covered in clay tiles, none of which are missing or broken, see Figure 4 below. The ridge tiles and valleys are all well sealed with no gaps, see Figure 5 on page 9. The hanging tiles on the south facing gable end and above the front door are all in good condition with no gaps that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 6 on page 9 and 7 on page 10. The verges and lead flashing around the chimney are tight with no gaps, see Figure 7 on page 10. The uPVC windows, doors, soffits and fascias are all tight with no splits or cracks which could be used by roosting bats, see Figure 8 on page 10.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property or garage and externally there are no visible features on the building which could be utilised by roosting bats.

Figure 4. Example of roof structure. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 5. Example sealed ridge tiles and valleys. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20



Figure 6. Well-fitting hanging tiles. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 7. Well-sealed verges. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20



Figure 8. uPVC soffits and fascias. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20





5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft space of the property was accessed from the hall, via a loft ladder. The loft is boarded, illuminated and insulated. A proportion is being used for personal storage, but this did not hinder the inspection, see Figure 9 below. The roof tiles were lined with tar paper which is in a good condition with no rips or tears, see Figure 10 on page 12. The loft was found to be in a good condition internally and there was no light spill into it when the hatch was closed, and lights turned off.

Whilst the garage is being used for personal storage, this did not hinder the inspection. The garage does not have a loft as it is open to the rafters and lined with tar paper that is in a very good condition, see Figure 11 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the property or garage and internally there were no roosting opportunities for bats.

Figure 9. Loft spaces. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20





Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

Figure 10. Tar paper lining to loft. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20



Figure 11. Internal view of garage roof. 3 Eric Avenue, Emmer Green. 05.06.20





6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site has been assessed with reference to the criteria laid out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). These criteria are listed below 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 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);
- 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 garage provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions as set out in this report. The lack of visible features on the building in which bats could roost or access the building to roost lead us to concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the property. Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, and based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licenced bat ecologist.

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 bats may start roosting at the site.



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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:

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

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

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



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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.