

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

**979 OXFORD ROAD,
TILEHURST, READING RG31 6TN**



Commissioned by: **Sivaram Mohan**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A specialist daytime based preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken by ASW Ecology Ltd, at 979 Oxford Road, during Winter 2025.
2. A 2km radius online bat desk study, using MAGIC and the NBN Gateway resources, was also undertaken by us, for bat species and licence information, so to support this report.
3. The loft at the house had no bat evidence within and was unsuitable for roosting bats, mainly due to a likely lack of access for bats from the outside.
4. There was though external bat roosting potential present at the existing house, mainly under the ridge tiles and roof tiles, with crevices suitable for smaller bat species such as common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.
5. A follow-up bat emergence survey is therefore required for the house, with 1x bat dusk survey visit required during Spring 2025.
6. This survey will need to be undertaken in suitable weather conditions only, so that best practice guidance is followed at all times and all bat related legislation is strictly adhered to by the client.

1. INTRODUCTION

- A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken at 979 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6TN, during March 2025, for: Sivaram Mohan.
- The national grid reference for this site is: SU674750.
- This assessment was required due to the proposed development works at this property.
- The main method used for bat assessment, as well as the full results and the recommendations can be found within this report.
- Both this bat assessment and the report were undertaken and compiled by Mr Andrew S. Waller, Consultant Ecologist, ASW Ecology Ltd.
- Mr Andrew S. Waller MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Director of ASW Ecology Ltd - has been a Consultant Ecologist since 1997, and has very extensive experience/knowledge of protected wildlife species/issues including bats, for which he is fully licensed to survey throughout England by Natural England for consultancy purposes (Bat Class 2 Licence Registration Number: 2015-15703-CLS-CLS). He also has Natural England survey licences for great crested newts and barn owls. He has been studying bats for 32 years and wildlife in general for 43 years. He is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and meets the requirements of being a Suitably Qualified Ecologist.

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2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Bat assessment

- On the 3rd March 2025 a daytime based preliminary bat assessment was undertaken at 979 Oxford Road.
- A licensed bat consultant, with an assistant, using appropriate equipment, such as torches, an endoscope, digital camera and binoculars, conducted a comprehensive search of the existing building both internally and externally for any possible features or evidence which could suggest the presence of a bat roost.
- Weather conditions and visibility were good at the time of the visit, with it being cool, clear (0/8CC), calm and dry.
- Indications of bats roosting at any site during a bat inspection can include the presence of actual bats, crumbly bat droppings, insect prey remains and the staining of any timbers/wooden beams by natural oils in the bats fur or by urine.
- All results from this bat survey can be found in the next chapter of this report. A map can be found in Appendix 2, showing the site plan.

2.2 Constraints

- Due to the timing of this bat roost assessment, only the late Winter period could be covered. This is a standard constraint for any assessment which can only investigate part of any year.
- The Winter period is very important for bats as they are still hibernating, so their evidence can be present within buildings as well as the presence of hibernating bats too. Although bats may wake up on mild nights and undertake some feeding and drinking, where this is required.
- As always though, without taking into account any further active surveying or monitoring, this study can only provide a “snapshot” of the presence of bats at the site during the period of this study.
- This bat assessment report is valid for one year only, as per current best practice guidelines for bat surveys in the UK.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Building description:	House: This is a brick built, detached, two storey house with cavity walls. A pitched roof is present with chimney, lead flashing, concrete roof tiles and ridge tiles. The soffit boxes are sealed. A conservatory is present as well. The garage is integral with the house and has a flat roof
External bat survey	House: Crevices present under some lifted roof tiles and underneath the ridge tiles. Some moss present on roof too
Internal bat survey	House: A large sized loft is present, with roofing felt and a water tank noted. Lots of spider webs present. The loft is dusty and is boarded out for access
Bat evidence present	House: None
Other wildlife evidence present	House: Old wasp nest in loft
Overall bat roost grading for the building	House: LOW – due to the external bat roosting features present

3.2 Desk study

- A 2km radius online data search was undertaken by us for bats records near to the application site.
- This does not replace a formal biological records search but does contain some of the same information and helps support this report.
- The NBN Gateway (with strict permission) and the MAGIC website were all used. The ASW Ecology database was also used for a data trawl for wildlife records as this has collated records in the UK for 43 years.
- The key summary findings are below:

Magic lists 5x **Bat EPS Mitigation Licences** within 2km:

- 2015-18545-EPS-MIT- Brown long-eared Bat/ Common Pipistrelle/ Soprano Pipistrelle
- 2015-18545-EPS-MIT-1- Brown long-eared Bat/ Common Pipistrelle/ Soprano Pipistrelle - 15/04/2016- 31/01/2021
- 2015-18545-EPS-MIT-2. Brown long-eared Bat/ Common Pipistrelle/ Soprano Pipistrelle - 06/09/2016-31/01/2021
- 2015-14137-EPS-MIT. Common Pipistrelle/ Soprano Pipistrelle - 09/2015-15/09/2020
- EPSM2011-3384 - Common Pipistrelle-07/09/2011-01/09/2013

Bat records:

- Common Pipistrelle
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Brown long-eared bat

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Significance of the Bat Assessment results

- In summary, there was bat roosting potential at the house at 979 Oxford Road, based on the findings of this specialist investigation.
- The loft at the house had no bat evidence within and was unsuitable for roosting bats, mainly due to a probable lack of access for bats from the outside.
- There was though external bat roosting potential present at the existing house, mainly under the roof tiles and ridge tiles, with crevices suitable for smaller bat species such as common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.
- The desk study showed that three bat species are known to be present within a 2km radius from this property, including common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. Both of these bat species are mainly crevice roosting so will roost under lifted roof tiles and ridge tiles, for example.
- Please see the next chapter of this report for the formal recommendations and follow-up key actions, so that the client adheres to current best practice guidance and to UK bat legislation.

4.2 Impact assessment

In the absence of any mitigation measures or precautions, the following direct or indirect impacts from any proposed development works at 979 Oxford Road, on bats, would be predicted as:

- **DIRECT:** There would be a negative impact to bats by any potential development works at the house, if no mitigation was undertaken at all. There is a lower risk that without mitigation, that bats could be adversely disturbed, injured or killed during the development works, with a bat roost damaged or destroyed. **Impact magnitude predicted: LOW**
- **INDIRECT:** Given that no notable bat related habitat is to be lost, without mitigation, there is no impact by the loss of bat related features or fragmentation of the local bat populations due to the proposed works. **Impact magnitude predicted: NIL**

4.3 Summary of the legal protection of bats in the UK (please see other texts for full details of the legislation)

4.3.1 THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF BATS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Introduction

All species of bats in England and Wales are protected by law. Their legal protection derives from two sources:

- the strict species protection provisions of the EU Habitats Directive as implemented in England and Wales by Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the **“2017 Regulations, amended by the 2019 Regulations due to Britain leaving the EU”**); and
- Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“2017 Regulations, as amended by the 2019 Regulations”)

The 2017 Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017. They replace the previously applicable regulations (Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994 and the 2010 Regulations) in relation to England and Wales. The 2017 Regulations are the principal means by which the EU Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales.

The Regulations contain a number of Parts which set out the protection to be afforded to “European Protected Species” (“EPS”), which includes all species of British bats. The list also includes other species which are rare on a European scale, such as great crested newts, otters and dormice.

Under the 2017 Regulations both bats themselves and their “breeding sites and resting places” (most commonly their roosts) are protected.

It is a criminal offence to do the following (note that this is not an exhaustive list of all offences but rather a list of offences which will be of most relevance to developers):

- a. to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (even if bats are not present at the time);
- b. to deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild bat;
- c. to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or to deliberately disturb a group of bats, in particular:
 - i. any disturbance of bats which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - ii. any disturbance of bats which is likely to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or

- iii. any disturbance of bats which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- d. to have in one's possession or to control or to transport or to sell or exchange or offer to sell or exchange any live or dead bat or part of a bat which has been taken from the wild; or any part of, or anything derived from, a bat or any part of a bat; and
- e. to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

The maximum penalty that can be imposed for the above offences is (as at May 2010) a fine of up to £5,000, and/or up to six months imprisonment. The offences can be committed by individuals or by bodies corporate. Where a body corporate has committed the offence, the directors or officers of the company may also be prosecuted if the offence has been committed with their consent or connivance, or is attributable to their neglect.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (“WCA 1981”)

The WCA 1981 protects a wide range of animals, plants and habitats in the UK. All British bat species are afforded protection under Part 1 of the WCA 1981, in addition to the protection they have under the 2017 Regulations (as amended by the 2019 Regulations).

As regards England and Wales the following offences apply to protect bats under the W&CA 1981:

- a. to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection (s9(4)(b) WCA 1981);
- b. to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection (s9(4)© WCA 1981);
- c. attempting either of the above (s18(1) WCA 1981).

The maximum penalty that can be imposed for the above offences is (as at May 2010) a fine of up to £5,000, and/or up to six months imprisonment. The offences can be committed by individuals or by bodies corporate. Where a body corporate has committed the offence, the directors or officers of that company may also be prosecuted if the offence has been committed with their consent or connivance or is attributable to their neglect (s69(1) WCA 1981).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Requirement for a follow-up bat emergence survey

- Due to the existing house having external bat roosting potential, a follow-up bat emergence survey will need to be undertaken, in suitable weather conditions.
- Such a follow-up survey would adhere to current best practice for surveying bats by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT, 2023) where a site such as this, with **Low bat roost potential**, warrants a specialist bat survey of **1x night based bat survey visit** by experienced bat surveyors with specialist bat detectors.
- This bat dusk survey should be undertaken between **May to August** when bats are most active. Further bat dusk survey visits will be required if a bat roost is found during this recommended visit.
- Such a survey would especially focus on if any bat roost is present or not; the type of bat roost that could be present; and where the main bat access points are. The survey would also focus on any key bat commuting routes at the site as well as any key foraging areas.
- This bat survey should use ideally a sufficient number of experienced bat surveyors with bat detectors and night vision cameras (NVAs), and begin before sunset and last for approximately 2 hours. Any bat roost, if present, must be clearly mapped and with bat sonograms provided for the report.

5.2 Best practice guidance – nesting birds and development works

- **FOR AWARENESS PURPOSES:** As per any development related site, the general advice is that no vegetation eg trees, bushes, shrubs, hedges, bramble scrub or dense ivy cover should be removed during the bird nesting season as all bird nests are fully protected by law, and this includes whilst a nest is being built by the adult birds. This also includes buildings and bird boxes that have been proved to have active bird nests present.
- If any nests are present within the building during the future demolition/building works phase, then these must be left alone until the young birds have fully fledged from the nest and no further breeding attempts are to take place.
- The bird nesting season in the UK, currently runs mainly from early-January to September, but sometimes birds can start breeding before or after this period e.g. some resident birds can start building nests during the end of December, including crows, magpies, feral pigeons and woodpigeons. This early start of the nesting building phase for some bird species is due to human derived climate change.
- Therefore, September to mid-December can be the best months for such works, although with a bird watching brief for any early or late nesters as stated above.
- An experienced ecologist can be present though on a site during the nesting bird season, if applicable, to search the building for any active bird nests

6. REFERENCES

- (1) Altringham, J.D. (2003) *British Bats*. HarperCollinsPublishers, London.
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- (6) Gunnell, K. (2012) *Landscape and Urban Design for Bats and Biodiversity*. BCT, London.
- (7) Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.
- (8) Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P. (2004) *The Bat Workers' Manual*. 3rd Ed. JNCC, UK.

APPENDIX 1:
PHOTOGRAPHS A-K
(All photos are dated 3/3/2025)



Photograph A
The loft at the house had no bat evidence



Photograph B

The house had some external bat roosting features



Photograph C

The garage had no interest for bats



Photograph D

The house roof has some bat roosting potential, due to external crevices noted



Photograph E

Crevice under roof tile at the house, with bat roosting potential



Photograph F

Further crevice under a roof tile at the house, with bat roost potential



Photograph G

Crevice under ridge tile, that has bat roosting potential



Photograph H

Crevice under ridge tile at the house, with bat roost potential



Photograph I
Crevice under a ridge tile, with bat roosting potential



Photograph J
Crevices under roof tiles, with bat roosting potential



Photograph K

Overall, the house will need a follow-up bat dusk survey, before any works can commence

APPENDIX 2:

MAP A: SITE PLAN

