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Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

The Roebuck, Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6TG

Client:

Roetel Ltd

Survey date:

15/09/2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform the conversion of a former hotel to create 8 apartments.

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

The site survey was undertaken by Annabel Sharpe, consultant ecologist and bat licence 2023-1145-CL17-BAT					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
05/06/2024	14	81	20	5	**none**

Executive summary	The building has high habitat value and has tile features for crevice-dwelling bats all throughout the roof areas. With over 200+ tile features observed. However, the works proposed are internal conversion only and will not interfere with any roof area. Work can carry on with some mitigation measures in place, as detailed later in this report. Work will need to be undertaken to add new floor insulation to the loft. There was no evidence of roosting bats within the loft space, recent or historical, and works can be undertaken with precautionary methods in place. If at any point work needs to be undertaken in any roof area, including dormers, hanging tile walls, chimneys or under the eaves, then further survey work will be required to conclude if any bats are roosting under tiles and proceed accordingly. These can only proceed during the bat Active season, May-Sept. If at any point during work, bats or evidence of roosting bats are discovered, then all work will stop immediately, and a licensed ecologist will be contacted.
PRA Survey Factor	**Detailed using desk study and site survey. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.**
See PRA plan in Appendix 1 and location plan in Appendix 2	
Background and Site Location	

<table>
<tr><td>Summary of site location and surrounding habitats</td><td>Grid ref: SU67137542
Size of survey area: Converted hotel complex, 0.06ha
On site habitats: None, building and car parking area
Surrounding habitats: The railway runs directly north of the site in a northwest to southeast direction, with a vegetative tree and scrub boundary between the railway lines and the site. The River Thames is directly north of this railway, situated 45m from the site. To the south are residential houses, which all contain large gardens and a high volume of scattered trees, with small pockets of woodland. The closest is 40m west of the site, measuring 0.32ha. Though the site contains no suitable habitats, it is surrounded by good-quality foraging and commuting habitat routes for any dispersing bats.</td></tr>
<tr><td>EPSL and bat roost records (2km radius)</td><td>Known roosts from previous survey work or local knowledge:
N/A
Magic EPSL records 2km radius:
<table>
<tr><th>Bat Species Effected</th><th>Approx. distance from site</th><th>Impacts allowed by licence</th></tr>
<tr><td>BLE, C-PIP, S-PIP,</td><td>400m southeast</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr>
<tr><td>C-PIP</td><td>1.9km southeast</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Designated sites</td><td>On site –
None
2km radius –
900m southeast, Mcilroy Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
1.4Km southeast, Round Copse LNR
1.87Km southeast, Lousehill Copse LNR</td></tr>
</table>

	1.87Km south- Blundells Copse LNR **10km radius (bat SACs only) –** None
Previous survey data	None known
Limitations	Due to the complex roof structure, there are multiple blind spots present, where roof tiles could not be viewed. There is also restricted viewing of the northern elevation, as this faces onto the railway and had to be observed from a nearby railway bridge. Trees in front of the building on the north elevation continued to block the view even when viewing from the bridge. All the blind spots will be present if further surveys are to take place at the building and would require strong communications between all parties present, with additional IR to be able to assist in conclusions. However, as it stands no external works are proposed to the roof.

Field survey results	
Summary B1 is a large grade 2 listed building, which historically served as a hotel. It is a three-storey building, constructed from red brick walls and a red clay-tiled roof. The roof structure is complex, featuring one-, two-, and three-story roof heights, as well as a combination of gable-ended, flat, cat-slide, and hipped roofs. There are 7 red brick chimneys present. Several gable-ended, upper-walls are decorated with red-clay hanging tiles, which are also present on the sides of all dormer windows. There are gable-ended dormer windows present on every roof elevation. Three gable-ended porches are present. The northern elevation has several balconies as well as a single, flat-roof dormer window.	

Feature	Materials	Condition/description	Suitability/access/evidence of bats
Walls	Red brick walls, red clay hanging tiles	No features observed with the red-brick walls however, the hanging clay tile walls on the eastern porch, the upper gable walls and on the sides of the dormer windows have lifted tiles present. Some dormer side elevations could not be observed due to limitations of the building shape, but features could be assumed to be present due to conditions on all walls that could be observed.	Raised hanging tiles provide ideal roosting habitat for crevice dwelling bats and could support maternity roosts. No evidence found but recent and current rain would wash this away externally.

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Roof	Red Clay	Lifted tiles providing gaps of 8mm-2cm are present on every elevation of B1 and every section of the roof. Over 200 features are counted on the combined roof areas. No features were observed around the ridge tiles or around the chimneys, which are cemented in place. However, features that may be present in chimneys at blind spot locations and must not be discounted.	Space under tiles could accommodate crevice dwelling bats. due to the size of the roof and the sheer volume of available habitat, this is suitable to support maternity roosts of crevice dwelling bats. No evidence found but recent and current rain would wash this away externally

Eaves	Overhanging , but no soffit	Gaps/crevices on wall tops.	Provides possible bat access into internal void and crevices on wall tops.

Window/doors frames and lintels	Timber	Tight fitting	N/A
Internal voids	Timber rafters and ridge beam. Open floor to ridge. Water tanks present. No floor insulation. False ceiling secondary loft space below.	Internal space measures approximately. 13m long, 4.5m wide and 1.5m high. No crawl boards were present in the upper loft, and no floor insulation was in the loft. Straw remains were still present, suggesting the historical building had a straw floor as a means of insulation. No items are stored within the loft, but old water tanks are present in the central area, but not in use. Loft lining is wooden sarking boards, which appeared in good condition. It was noted that at the western end of the loft, there was a series of gaps present at the base of the ridge dormer. These gaps are large enough to allow bats direct access into the loft space.	No evidence of roosting bats was present; all droppings found within the loft were that of mice. Ridge line areas were lined in thick cobwebs as were the identified access point. Indicating no recent flying or passing of bats through the gaps into the loft. This indicates no void-dwelling bats have been using the loft space but does not rule out the possibility of crevice-dwelling bats between the roof tiles and sarking boards.

		A secondary ceiling has been installed below the original, creating a secondary loft space less than 1m high. The void space below contains loose roll insulation. The loft hatches are lined up with each other, and this lower loft space has to be passed through to reach the upper loft. The loft space was only present in the upper ridge area of the three-storey roof. As shown on the map in Appendix 1. No other loft or crawl spaces could be identified within the building. Several of the rooms and corridors had a vaulted ceiling, which eliminated separate lofts being present.	

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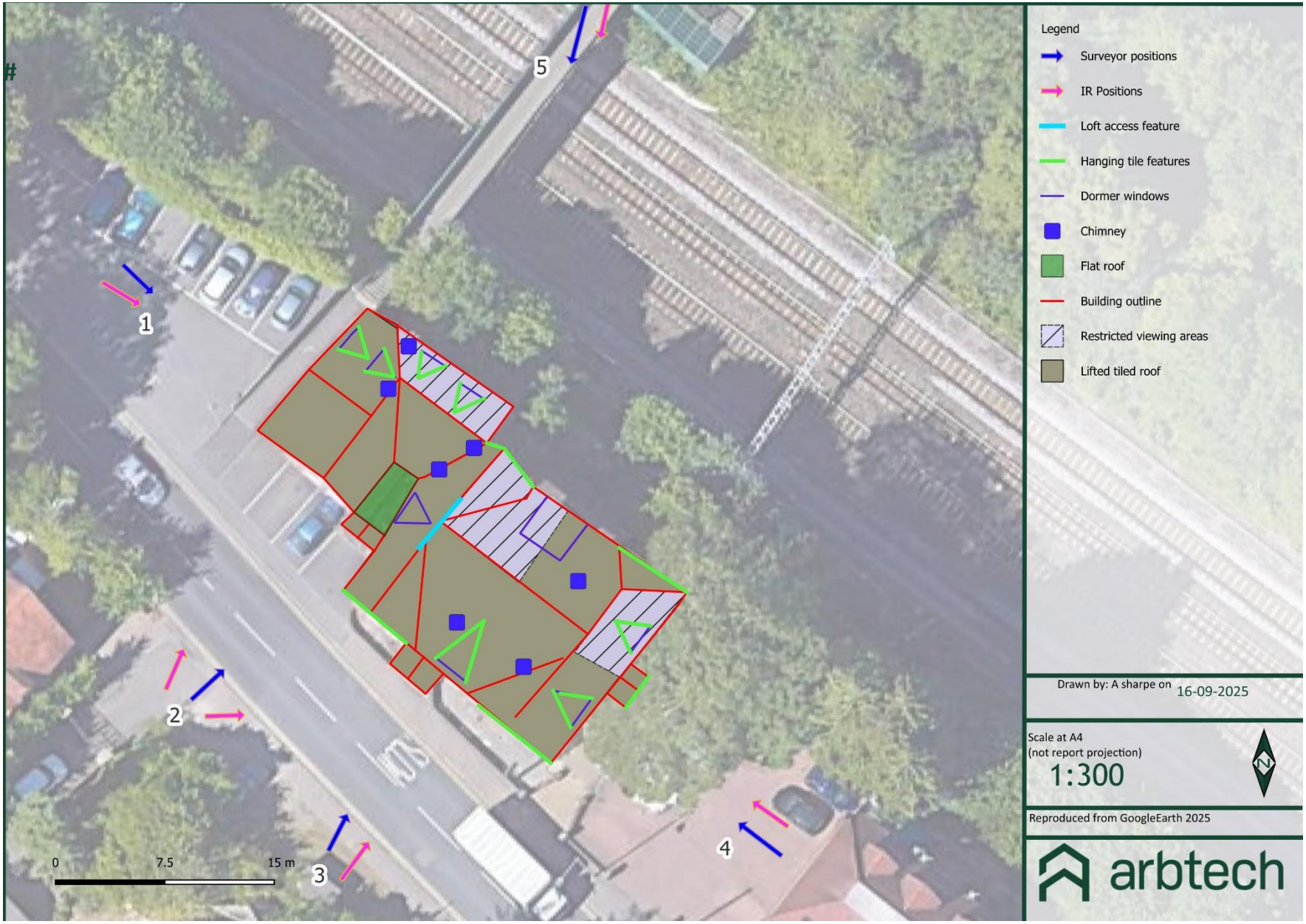
Habitat value	The building has high habitat value, and over 200 tile roosting features were observed on the building, with the site lying adjacent to the railway and the River Thames less than 50m away. The railway is lined with trees and vegetation, which provides a direct corridor and foraging area for bats dispersing from the building. The connectivity to the River Thames and countryside habitat beyond also provides high-quality foraging.
Foreseen Impacts	There are no plans to alter any exterior of the roof of B1, as such, there will be no direct impacts to any roosts that may be present under the roof tiles. However, there may be some disturbance through noise and vibrations, especially with work on the upper floors or in the rooms with vaulted ceilings as well as laying new insulation in the loft.
Recommendations	To mitigate the potential for disturbance, the following measures are recommended for the work to the room conversions. There were no droppings within the loft to indicate that void-dwelling bat species are present. The lack of void-dwelling species in any loft space will allow any new loft insulation to take place at any time. These works will not disturb any roosting bats. No removal of sarking boards or blocking up of the identified access point will take place if insulation occurs. However, of particular note is the need to avoid excessive noise or vibration disturbance e.g. from power tools or radios, within close proximity of the roost access features (locations shown in Appendix 1). Noise and vibration within the building must be kept to a minimum. Speaker systems must *not* be used in or around the building loft areas, and the use of heavy power tools on the site must be kept to a minimum. Where possible,

	non-powered hand tools only will be used within the loft. Sprayers in the loft must be avoided All person's present must ensure that noise levels are kept to a minimum in accordance with best practice as defined in the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to avoid unacceptable levels of noise and vibrations. Further guidance can be found in British Standard 5228-1:2009. Such measures applicable to the proposed development primarily include agreed working hours limiting night work, using the quietest equipment and plant available, shutting down equipment when not in use, and completing deliveries during working hours only. Most notably, prescriptions as to limit the noise of plant machinery as detailed within Table B.1 within the code of practice for noise control (British Standards Institution, 2014) Work to the upper floor conversion works and loft insulation installation are recommended to take place in the inactive season, October-March, as far as possible, when bats are less likely to be at the site and are not disturbed by vibrations and noise. Work to the lower floors is less impactful due to distance and therefore recommended to focus on the lower floors during the active season April-Oct If at any point bats, or evidence of bat roosting- such as bat droppings- is discovered during any work. Then all work must stop at once, and a qualified ecologist will be contacted. **If work is to be on the roof or if future work is required, such as repairs, the following must take place.**

	3 bat emergence/re-entry surveys are required on B1 during the active bat season (May – September) to confirm presence/likely-absence of bats roosting in or on the building. No works to the property that may block or remove potential roosting features should be carried out until the required surveys have been completed. Undertaking such work beforehand could unlawfully affect bats if present and may compromise the validity of the surveys and hinder the planning application process. These survey visits should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive. The survey visits should be at least three weeks apart. Sub-optimal: early May and September. Would require greater justification of timing e.g., weather conditions, known local bat activity. One of the surveys could be a dawn re-entry survey, or all three can be at dusk if supported by night vision aids (NVA). Five surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building's elevations to look for emerging/re-entering bats. An infrared camera should also be employed as part of the survey to see where any specific roost locations are located. If any bat roosts are confirmed from this survey schedule, a bat licence would be required to do works to the roof space of the buildings as it would involve the destruction or modification of roosts. This is applied for with the help of a suitably licenced bat ecologist after planning permission is granted but before commencement of works.

	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting
Nesting Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	Birds are likely to be nesting under eaves; features such as the tiles can also allow smaller urban birds to access, such as house sparrow.
Foreseen Impacts	No roof works are proposed and would not cause destruction of any nests. But nest may be disturbed through noise.
Recommendations	Any works that may be proposed to the roof areas in the future should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately prior to the start of works by a qualified ecologist. All active nests will need to be retained with a 5m buffer until the young have fledged. Mitigation to reduce noise disturbance for bats will also apply to birds. Nesting habitat under eaves, tiles and cladding will be retained post-development.
Enhancements	General-purpose nest boxes such as sparrow terraces, can be added to the building; however, this can only be done with consideration to the historic value of the building. If installed, these should be tucked under the eaves of the building facing a northern direction.

Appendix 1: PRA plan


#
1
2
3
4
5
0
7.5
15 m
Legend
Surveyor positions
IR Positions
Loft access feature
Hanging tile features
Dormer windows
Chimney
Flat roof
Building outline
Restricted viewing areas
Lifted tiled roof
Drawn by: A sharpe on 16-09-2025
Scale at A4
(not report projection)
1:300
N
Reproduced from GoogleEarth 2025
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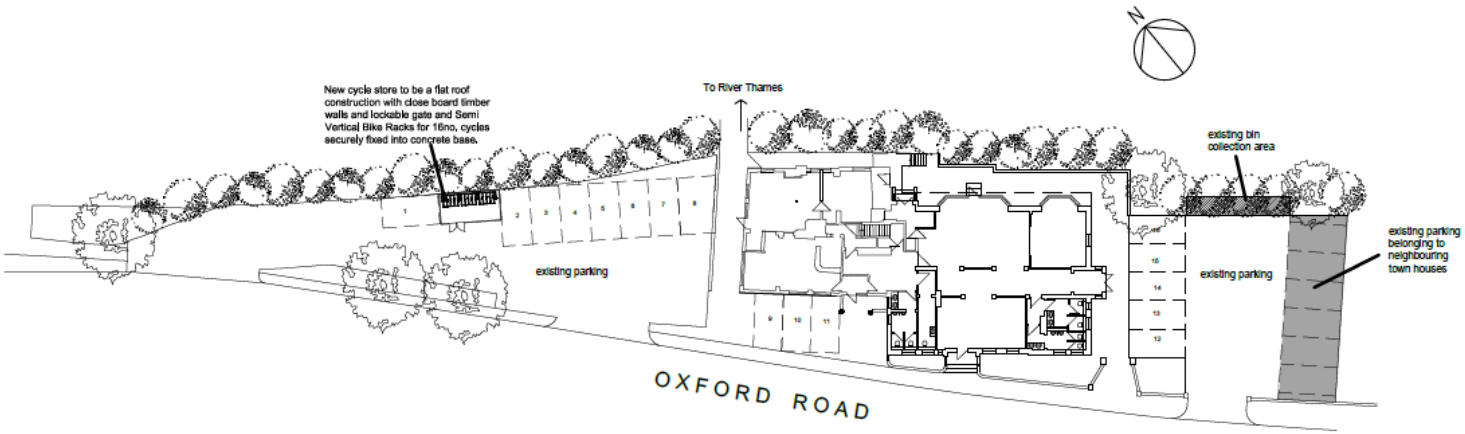
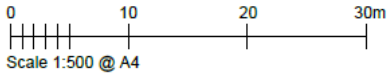
Appendix 2: Location map

Appendix 3: Proposed Plans





THE ROEBUCK HOTEL, OXFORD ROAD, READING.
Site Plan 1/500
Drawing Number: TIL1/P/02

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Version control			
Status	**Issue**	**Name**	**Date**
Draff	1	Annabel Sharpe, Bsc (Hons) Consultant ecologist, CL18 Bat licence	16/09/2025
proof	1.5		
Final	2	Annabel Sharpe, Bsc (Hons) Consultant ecologist, CL17 Bat licence	17/09/2025