



38 Lea Close, Reading, Berkshire RG30 3NB

**Daytime Bat Walkover
& Preliminary Roost Assessment**

April 2026

on behalf of Mr A. Purcell

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site Description

38 Lea Close, referred to as the 'site' within this report, is a detached dwelling and garage located to the northern side of Lea Close in suburban Reading, Berkshire RG30 3NB. The approximate Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is SU 6810 7147.

The site comprises the dwelling and detached garage of 38 Lea Close. The dwelling is semi-detached and constructed from brick, with a pitched roof of modern clay/concrete tiles. There is one loft space within the roof of the dwelling. The detached garage is also of brick construction, with a wooden flat roof with a covering of bitumen felt.

The site is located in a suburban area of Reading and is surrounded on all sides by residential development in the form of dwellings, gardens and roads.

1.2 Proposals

There is a proposal to remove the existing garage and conservatory and to erect side and rear extensions to the dwelling.

1.3 Aims of Study

The specific aim of this study is to survey the buildings (dwelling and garage of 38 Lea Close) for bats and/or evidence of bats. The study assesses the overall potential of the buildings to support roosting bats and discusses the likely impact of proposed works of the building on bats and their habitats.

The report makes recommendations for appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement measure and the potential impacts are assessed in accordance with the legal protection afforded to bats under The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017. The need for a European Protected Species (Bat) Licence is also discussed in light of the impact assessment.

1.4 Bat Ecology

Bats are the only mammals to have developed the ability of true flight. At present, over 1,100 species of bat are recognised worldwide, making bats the second largest mammal group after rodents. As well as flight, bats have evolved a system of navigation and orientation using echolocation which has allowed many species to become nocturnal. There are 18 species of bat that occur within the British Isles, of which 17 are known to breed here. More species occur in the south and west of the country, with species numbers declining towards the north and into Scotland.

All bat species in the UK are nocturnal and feed exclusively on insects (they are insectivorous) which they catch in flight during their night-time activity, using echolocation to locate and home-in on their prey. Bats will roost during the daytime and seek out dark, enclosed and undisturbed places in which to do so, often using a variety of roosting sites within their home range. Different roost sites are used for different purposes (such as mating, giving birth and hibernation) and at different periods of a bat's life cycle.

During the summer, female bats will gather together in a maternity or breeding roost. In the UK, this starts to occur towards the end of May and the females will seek out a warm and undisturbed site in which to give birth. Because maternity roosts require a particular set of environmental attributes (such as location, temperature, orientation and size), breeding bats tend to return to roost and breed in the same locations year after year. Given that bats live a relatively long time (anywhere from 10-20 years), and only give birth to one pup a year, maternity colonies are crucial to the reproduction and survival of the local population and can be very sensitive to environmental change.

Relatively little is known about hibernation roosts, as tracking and locating hibernating bats is very difficult. However, many species (particularly those within the genera *Myotis* and *Rhinolophus*) have been found within underground sites such as caves, mines and cellars, where the temperature remains constant and low throughout the winter allowing the bats to remain in a state of torpor. The spring and autumn are periods of transition and bats can use a number of different locations on a temporary basis, often moving between roosts as environmental conditions change and temperatures fluctuate. In the autumn, bats will mate, and it has been shown that male and female bats will gather at particular locations (such as a building, cave or tree) to meet, socialise and mate.

Bats choose to roost in a number of different locations, depending on the species, their activity pattern and the period of their lifecycle. Certain species, such as the pipistrelles, favour crevices and small cavities for roosting and will use features such as cracks, crevices and small rot holes in the boughs and trunks of trees and within certain features of buildings such as boxed eaves, gaps under roof tiles, hanging tiles and soffit boards. Other species favour large, uncluttered roof spaces and lofts within buildings where they can hang up on the underside of the roof and use the interior space for flying prior to emergence. Hollow trees, cellars, caves, barns, churches and cavity walls can also all be used for roosting, given suitable access. Certain species, such as the noctule, favour roosting sites within trees whilst others tend to favour buildings. Roost sites may be used by only a very small number of bats, such as solitary males, or may offer shelter to tens or hundreds of bats within maternity and hibernation roost sites.

The suitability of roosting sites is also highly influenced by the location or context of a tree, building or cave. Roost sites are most often favoured when they are within close proximity to foraging habitats and where those habitats are connected to one another within the landscape by features such as hedgerows, woodlands, rivers or sunken lanes along which bats disperse and 'commute' from place to place. Suitable foraging habitats are any places where insect prey is diverse and abundant such as woodlands, ponds, lakes, rivers, scrub, hedgerows and unimproved grassland or pasture. Thus, the ecological context of a site is very important for determining if bats may be present within a roost and the potential for a roost to be present tends to be much higher within rural or village locations.

2 Methodology

2.1 Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW)

A daytime bat walkover (DBW) was undertaken on the 28th April 2026 by professional ecologist Jan-Piet Stuursma of Windrush Ecology. Mr Stuursma holds a licence from Natural England to survey for bats within all counties of England (Licence No. Level 2 2025-84995-CL18-BAT).

A detailed internal and external survey of the dwelling and garage of 38 Lea Close, Reading was undertaken using a 1 million candle-power torch in order to look for bats and/or evidence of bats and to assess the potential of the buildings to support roosting bats. Internal rooms, loft spaces (if present) and external elevations were inspected for evidence of bats including, bat droppings, urine stains, feeding remains (such as moth wings) and characteristic fur staining around access points.

The bat survey was undertaken according to best practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023) and the *Bat Workers Manual* (JNCC, 2010).

The study also takes into account the nature of the buildings and the ecological context of the site, including the following factors which may increase the likelihood of roosting bats being present (Collins, 2023):

- Age of the building (pre-20th Century or early 20th Century construction)
- Nature of construction; traditional brick, stone or timber construction

- Large and complicated roof void with unobstructed flying spaces
- Large (>20 cm) roof timbers with mortise joints, cracks and holes
- Entrances and gaps for bats to fly and crawl through
- Poorly maintained fabric providing ready access points for bats into roofs, walls; but at the same time not being too draughty and cool
- Roof warmed by the sun, south-facing roofs in particular
- Weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles with gaps
- Undisturbed roof voids
- Buildings and built structures in proximity to each other providing a variety of roosting opportunities throughout the year
- Buildings or built structures close to good foraging habitat, in particular mature trees, parkland, woodland or wetland, especially in a rural setting

The following criteria are used to determine the level of 'bat roost potential' within buildings (Collins, 2023):

Table 1. Criteria for the assessment of buildings for roosting bats (Collins, 2023).

Potential Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats in Structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after the presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitats. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

^a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute), but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

^b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or level of disturbance.

^c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and

Potential Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats in Structures
	Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected as Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

3 Results

3.1 Description & Assessment of Buildings

3.1.1 Dwelling

The two-storey, semi-detached dwelling of 38 Lea Close is of brick construction with a pitched roof of modern clay/concrete tiles and plastic boxed eaves. To the south elevation is a section of horizontal wooden panelling, between the lower and upper storey windows. There is a single-storey, glazed conservatory to the northern elevation of the dwelling.

The building is in a very good state of repair, with close-fitting and interlocking roof tiles and a modern underlay to the roof. The boxed eaves are modern, solid and intact and the brickwork is also in a good state of repair, with no gaps, cracks or crevices. The wooden panelling to the front (southerly) elevation is tight-fitting, with no gaps between or beneath the panels.

There is one loft space within the roof, with a simple wooden frame and a floor to ridge height of approximately 2m. The roof appears to have been recently repaired, with a modern breathable membrane.

The dwelling of 38 Lea Close is assessed as having 'negligible' potential (Collins, 2023) to offer shelter to roosting bats within an undetected location.

3.1.2 Garage

The detached garage is of brick construction, with a flat roof of wood with bitumen felt overlay. There is a wooden barge board around the eaves of the roof. The building is of simple construction, with no loft spaces. Glazed windows to the north-east and north-west elevations bring light into the internal space.

The external brick walls are solid and intact, and the wooden barge board is close-fitting, offering no potential access for bats under the board. The internal space is considered to be unsuitable for bats.

The garage of 38 Lea Close is assessed as having 'negligible' potential (Collins, 2023) to offer shelter to roosting bats within an undetected location.

3.2 Evidence of Bats

No bats or evidence of bats were found during the survey. In particular, there are no bat droppings within the loft space of the dwelling at 38 Lea Close.

3.3 Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was noted during the survey.

In particular, there is no evidence of species such as house sparrow *Passer domesticus* or house martin *Delichon urbicum*.

3.4 Other Species

There is no evidence of other protected or notable species.

4 Discussion

4.1 Legislative Guidance

As with many animal species within the UK, declines in the abundance and distribution of many bat species have been documented through recent decades. The reasons for these declines are various and complex but it is considered that the major factors are changes in landuse and agriculture, the loss of woodlands and hedgerows and the loss of suitable roosting sites.

Bats are particularly sensitive to human activity due to the fact that they roost within buildings, trees and underground structures such as mines, and the availability of suitable roost sites is considered to be a key factor in the conservation of bats within the UK. As a consequence, all species of bat and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Taken together, these make it an offence to:

- (a) Deliberately capture or intentionally take a bat
- (b) Deliberately or intentionally kill or injure a bat
- (c) To be in possession or control of any live or dead wild bat or any part of, or anything derived from a wild bat
- (d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection
- (e) Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- (f) Deliberately disturb any bat, in particular any disturbance which is likely
 - to impair their ability;
 - (i) to survive, breed, reproduce or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - (ii) in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong

A bat roost may be any structure a bat uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection. It is important to note that since bats tend to re-use the same roost sites, current legal opinion is that a bat roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

Although the law provides strict protection to bats, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 through the issuing of licences. Where a lawful operation is required to be carried out but which is likely to result in one of the above offences, a licence may be obtained from Natural England (the statutory body in England with responsibility for nature conservation) to allow the operation to proceed. However, in accordance with the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

- The proposal is necessary 'to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';
- 'There is no satisfactory alternative';
- The proposals 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

These three criteria are often referred to as the 'three tests' of the Regulations. All three must be satisfied in order for a licence to be granted.

4.2 Impact Assessment

The survey indicates that roosting bats are currently absent from the dwelling and garage of 38 Lea Close. No bats or evidence of bats were found, and the buildings are assessed as having 'negligible' potential (Collins, 2023) to offer shelter to roosting bats within an undetected location.

There is no evidence to indicate that the buildings are being used as a place of shelter/protection by roosting bats. Works to the buildings are unlikely to result in any significant impacts on bats or the places that they use for breeding, shelter and/or protection (roosts) and no specific compensation measures are considered necessary.

Since no significant impacts on bats are predicted under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, a European Protected Species (Bat) Licence will not be required for the proposed works to proceed. Since there are no predicted impacts on bats or their habitats, it is not necessary to consider the 'three tests' of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in this instance.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

No further surveys are considered to be necessary at present.

5.2 Bats

As previously discussed, a European Protected Species (Bat) Licence is not considered to be necessary for works to proceed. This is due to the fact that roosting bats are considered to be absent from the buildings at 38 Lea Close, Reading.

5.2.1 Timing

No timing constraints are considered necessary.

5.2.2 Careful Work Practices

As bats are a highly mobile species, contractors should be briefed with regard to the fact that individual bats can often exploit very small crevices as roost sites (such as gaps under roof coverings) and that bats can move between roost sites on a regular basis.

In the very unlikely event that bats or significant evidence of bats (for example large accumulations of fresh bat droppings) are encountered, works should stop immediately, and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

6 References

Altringham, J., 2003. *British Bats*. Harper Collins.

Collins, J. 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

7 Appendix 1. Photographs



Photograph 1. The front (southerly) elevation of 38 Lea Close.



Photograph 2. The side elevation of the dwelling.



Photograph 3. Detail of the roof to the northern elevation of the dwelling.



Photograph 4. The garage.



Photograph 5. Detail of the internal space of the garage.

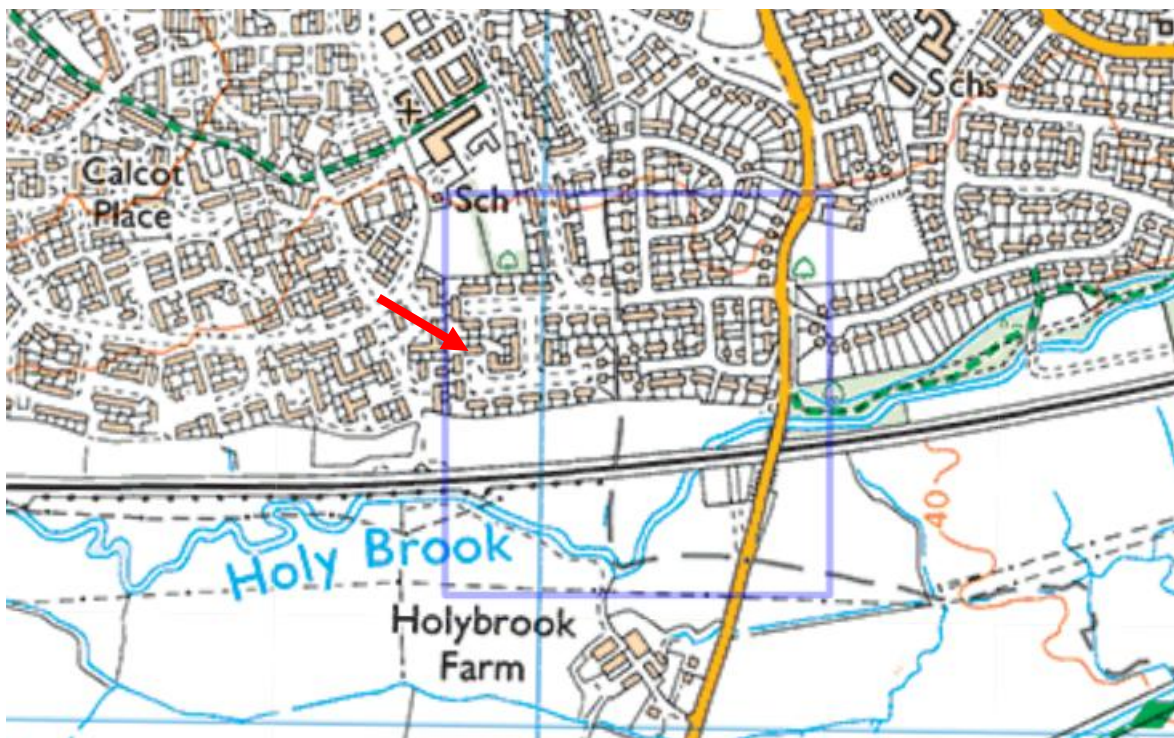


Photograph 6. Detail of the loft space of the dwelling.

8 Appendix 2. Site Location Plans



Aerial photograph showing the location of the dwelling and garage at 38 Lea Close, Reading (indicated by white outlines).



Ordnance Survey map showing the approximate location of 38 Lea Close (indicated by the red arrow).