



SAM
WATSON
ECOLOGY

**FORMER HALL ON LAND TO REAR OF
117 – 119 OXFORD ROAD, READING**

Preliminary Roost Assessment

December 2025

Report ref: SWE- P25-0262-R1

Sam Watson Ecology
45 Bull Street
Aston
Bampton
OX18 2DT

Samwatsonecology@gmail.com

07971 555192



PROJECT: Former Hall on Land to Rear of 117 – 119 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7UH

CLIENT: Oxford Homes

REPORT REF: SWE-P25-0262-R1

PREPARED BY: Sam Watson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of new residential development comprising 9 X 1-bed flats

REPORT SCOPE: Preliminary roost assessment

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PROPORTIONALITY STATEMENT

Section 5.5 of BS42020¹ states –

“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.”

In addition, paragraph 45 of the National Planning Policy Framework² states –

“Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions, and should be reviewed at least every two years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.”

Paragraphs 98 and 99 of Government Circular 06/2005³ also state –

“98. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat...”

99. 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. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development.”

In accordance with these standards, the surveys and information detailed in this report are considered to provide an assessment of the potential impacts on ecological receptors proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to each from the proposed development. The assessment is not intended to be exhaustive or assess receptors that have been scoped out based on professional judgement, nor can this reasonably be requested in support of an application.

¹ BSI Standards Publication – BS42020:2013 - *Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development*

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) – *National Planning Policy Framework*.

³ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (16 August 2005) *Government circular: biodiversity and geological conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system*



1.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

Introduction

- 1.1 Sam Watson Ecology (SWE) was appointed by Oxford Homes to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of a site known as 'Former Hall on Land to Rear of 117 – 119 Oxford Road, Reading' (approximate central grid reference SU 70907 73340). The survey was commissioned in order to investigate the potential use of the existing building by bats, to support an application for planning consent to demolish the building and construct an apartment block on the site.
- 1.2 The site is located centrally within Reading and is surrounded on all sides by existing built development in the form of roads, retail and properties with associated gardens

Site location indicated by red line



Method

- 1.3 In order to investigate the potential use of the building by bats for roosting a PRA was carried out on 12th September 2025. The methodology used was based on that outlined in the 4th edition of the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidance⁴. Internally it involved

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



checking the building for evidence of bats including droppings, feeding remains, staining, and any bats themselves. Following this, features on the exterior of the building that bats could potentially exploit for roosting were also identified. Such features can include: gaps behind fascia/barge boards and soffits; loose, missing or hanging coverings such as roof tiles and lead flashing; cracks in brickwork or panelling; and where weatherboarding has warped allowing potential access behind.

- 1.4 An assessment of the overall suitability of the building to support roosting was then carried out based on the presence, number and suitability of interior and exterior features that bats might use for roosting.
- 1.5 The building survey was carried out by Samuel Watson who is registered on Natural England's Bat Survey Class Licence WML-CL18 registration ref: 2025-85612-CL18-BAT.



2.0 LEGISLATION

Legislation

- 2.1 All bat species and their roosts are afforded full protection under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Regulation 43 of these states:

“43.— (1) A person who—

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,*
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,*
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or*
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an*

animal, is guilty of an offence.

- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—*

(a) to impair their ability—

- (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or*
- (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or*

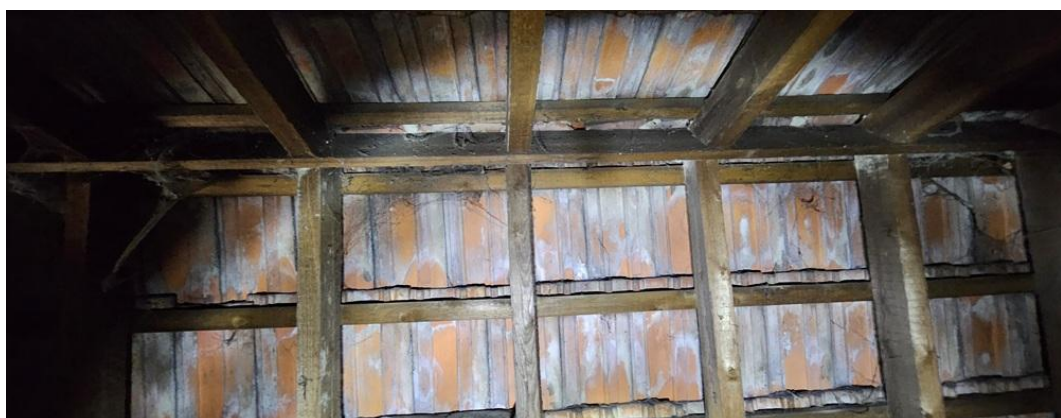
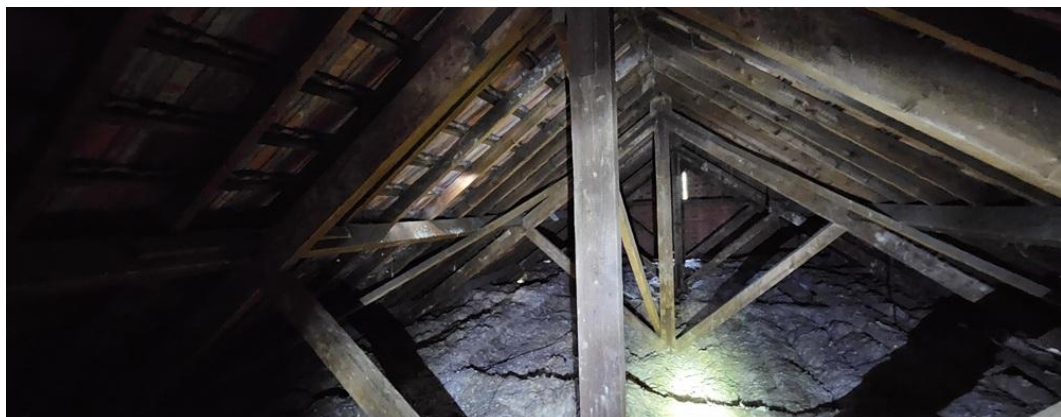
(b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.”

- 2.2 It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection, and to obstruct access to such a place.



3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1 The building surveyed is a relatively large former hall, with a small flat roof porch on the east elevation. It is constructed of red brick, with a pitched roof covered in clay, double roman roof tiles. Internally, there is a single void over the footprint of the building and the roof has a braced king post truss design. The void is approximately 2m high at the internal ridge and there is access into the void via an arrow loop type feature in each gable. The roof tiles were noted to be unlined.
- 3.2 A comprehensive survey of the roof void was not possible due to the risk posed by a heavy built up of pigeon droppings throughout. A survey of the area around the access hatch, which is approximately 25% of the void area, did not identify any evidence of bats, however.



- 3.3 Externally, the building is in generally good repair, with the roof and ridge tiles, and areas of lead flashing laying flat and lacking significant gaps and cracks. Notwithstanding this, gaps were noted between the soffit box and external wall, and between the fascia and wall on the north gable. In all instances these features are relatively shallow and wide, and are sub-optimal for roosting. These also lead directly into the roof void such that were bats to use these features for roosting; it is likely that they would also access the roof void. In the



absence of evidence of bats on the exterior of the building, coupled with the lack of evidence in the void and the site's urban location, it is reasonable to conclude the building is not currently used as a roost by bats.





4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 No evidence of bats was found during the survey and no bat roosts were identified. Whilst features were identified on the exterior that could provide potential roost locations, these are sub-optimal and the balance of evidence would suggest that the building is unlikely to support roosting bats at present.
- 4.2 On the basis of this result, no requirement for the proposed development to be carried out under a protected species derogation licence has been identified and no further survey of the building is considered necessary at the current time. A precautionary approach to the demolition of the building, such as having a watching brief by a suitably licenced ecologist could, however, be employed to address any small residual risk to bats that might be present when the work is carried out.