

BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY REPORT

Offley Place

*Produced on behalf of,
Offley Place*

Offley Place
COUNTRY HOUSE

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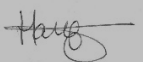
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This report has been prepared in accordance to CIEEMs 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' document.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Maydencroft Limited was commissioned by Martin Black to conduct emergence surveys on two buildings at Offley Place in Great Offley. Surveys were carried out in accordance to the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition), produced by the Bat Conservation Trust in 2023.

The two buildings subject to assessment include a disused stable building (B1) and a residential cottage to the north of the main house (B2). A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was conducted by Maydencroft Limited in March 2025. An additional building (B3) was surveyed during the PBRA but did not contain any roosting features.

The PBRA highlighted potential roosting features (PRFs) in Building 1 including:

- Lifted and slipped roof tiles and ridge tiles.
- Gaps in soffit
- Missing mortar
- Open loft hatch
- Gap around window frame
- Loft void with wooden beams and no lining

Bat droppings were also identified around the loft hatch during the PBRA, which indicate that the building is a confirmed roost.

The PBRA highlighted potential roosting features (PRFs) in Building 2 including:

- Lifted roof tiles
- Lifted lead flashing
- Hole in brickwork leading to cavity wall
- Loft void present although competitors were present in the form of a large fly infestation.

Buildings 1 and 2 were found to be of high suitability for roosting bats and Building 3 was found to be of negligible suitability for roosting bats. As such, B1 and B2 were subject to three further emergence surveys to determine the presence of roosting bats. All surveys were conducted between May and September inclusive to confirm presence or likely absence of roosting bats prior to the works being carried out on the buildings.

1.2 Historic survey results

A daytime survey and dusk emergence survey of B1 and B2 were previously carried out by Jones and Sons Environmental Sciences Limited in 2005-2006. The surveys were commissioned in anticipation of renovation and extension of the stables and cottage block, to be used as function rooms. However, the proposals were never executed, and the buildings remained in their original condition.

The daytime bat survey identified pipistrelle bat droppings in the roof voids of the cottage and the stable building, as well as droppings on the exterior of the stable

building within a patch of ivy. The emergence survey identified a single common pipistrelle emerging from the eastern wall of the stable building.

1.3 Site proposals

The proposed works will involve the installation of solar panels on the roofs of Building 1 and 2, as well as cabling through the loft spaces to connect the panels to existing power supplies.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Emergence surveys

Dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on site between 3rd June and 17th September 2025. Surveys were carried out by Hannah Brookes (Ecologist), Jasper Carnell (Assistant Ecologist), Annie Price (Assistant Ecologist), Lorena Sinclair (Field Ecologist) and Loren Choy (Field Ecologist) of Maydencroft Limited.

Professional bat detectors and recording equipment (5 x Echometer Touch 2 Pro and a Batlogger M) were used as well as four infrared night-vision camcorders.

Table 1: Bat activity survey details

Date	Building	Time (start/end)	Weather	Surveyors
03/06/25	B1	20:59-22:44	Partial cloud and a light breeze, 13°C	Hannah Brookes, Jasper Carnell, Annie Price, Lorena Sinclair, Loren Choy
04/06/25	B2	21:00-22:45	Partial cloud and a moderate breeze, 14°C	Jasper Carnell, Annie Price, Lorena Sinclair, Loren Choy
22/07/25	B2	20:50-22:35	Overcast and still, 18°C	Hannah Brookes, Jasper Carnell, Lorena Sinclair
23/07/25	B1	20:49-22:34	Partial cloud and a light breeze, 18°C	Hannah Brookes, Jasper Carnell, Annie Price, Lorena Sinclair
16/09/25	B1	18:56-20:41	Partial cloud and a light breeze, 15°C	Jasper Carnell, Annie Price, Lorena Sinclair, Loren Choy
25/09/25	B2	18:58-20:43	Clear sky and a moderate breeze, 18°C	Jasper Carnell, Annie Price

2.1.1 Surveyor qualifications

- Hannah Brookes – Ecologist, BSc (Hons), Qualifying CIEEM
- Jasper Carnell – Assistant Ecologist, MSci (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM
- Annie Price – Assistant Ecologist, BSc (Hons)
- Lorena Sinclair – Field Ecologist
- Loren Choy – Field Ecologist

All surveys were planned and monitored by Alice Salisbury, Principal Ecologist of Maydencroft Limited (BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, Level 2 Bat Licence).

2.2 Static bat detector survey

Although droppings had been previously identified, the initial dusk emergence survey on 3rd June 2025 identified no emergences and very little overall activity. Therefore, although it is not specifically required under good practice guidelines, a static bat detector was deployed to monitor bat any activity which may not be evident during the dusk emergence surveys.

A Titley Scientific Anabat Swift bat detector was deployed at the loft hatch entrance before the start of the B1 dusk emergence survey on 23rd July 2025. The detector was

left in place for five consecutive nights to record data from sunset to sunrise, before being collected on 28th July 2025. The data was analysed by Hannah Brookes, Ecologist of Maydencroft Limited using Anabat Insight software.

2.3 Survey constraints

One of the features on Building 2 previously identified during the PBRA was mistakenly bricked up prior to the commencement of emergence surveys. The feature was described in the PBRA as a hole in the brickwork next to a drainpipe on the western aspect of the cottage, which was approximately 15cm in diameter and led into a cavity wall. The feature was surveyed using an endoscope during the initial survey, but no evidence of roosting activity was identified.

The repair work was undertaken in early May of 2025, prior to peak maternity roost formation and the birth of young. Although the main access to the feature was removed, a small gap remained which is considered large enough for any bats within the feature at the time to escape. No evidence of bat presence was found under inspection using an endoscope during the PBRA, or after the feature was blocked. It is considered unlikely that any bats were killed or were trapped within the feature, but ease of access to the feature has been significantly reduced.

All other features within both buildings were fully visible on the cameras during both surveys. The minimum recommended number of survey visits to give confidence in a negative result for buildings were undertaken for all buildings.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Dusk emergence survey (B1): 3rd June 2025

No bats were seen emerging from the building during the survey. Two common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) were observed foraging along the eastern aspect of the stable block for much of the survey. A noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was heard on the detectors but not seen during the survey. The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed.

3.2 Dusk emergence survey (B2): 4th June 2025

No bats were seen emerging from the building during the survey. Again, common pipistrelles and a single noctule reading was heard on the detectors but not seen during the survey. The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed.

3.3 Dusk emergence survey (B2): 22nd July 2025

No bats were seen emerging from the building during the survey. Common pipistrelle bats were occasionally seen flying in front of the building. Other species heard during the survey include noctule and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed.

3.4 Dusk emergence survey (B1): 23rd July 2025

No bats were seen emerging from the building during the survey. Common pipistrelles were heard occasionally in the area, likely foraging in adjacent habitats. Other species detected during the survey include soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), although neither of these were observed during the survey. The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed.

3.5 Static bat detector data (B1): 23rd July 2025 – 28th July 2025

The vast majority of calls recorded on the static detector were of common pipistrelles. Other species such as soprano pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared bat were heard on occasion. A good deal of background noise was recorded, potentially due to electrical interference, water or rodents within the loft, leading to a large volume of audio files. All recordings were manually reviewed to remove null recordings verify the results.

The detector was deployed prior to the commencement of a dusk emergence survey but did not record any of the foraging activity along the eastern edge of the building which was observed externally during the survey. This implies that any recordings subsequently made were from bats flying either directly beneath the loft hatch or potentially within the loft void itself, rather than next to the building.

The time scales of the recordings are not consistent with day roost or maternity roost behaviour. Prior to emergence, bats often emit social calls to the roost and can be heard echolocating during emergence, around sunset (Middleton, Froud and French, 2014). The recordings generally began long after sunset, when all bat species would already have emerged from their roosts. In addition, no social calls were identified.

Instead, the calls were generally more consistent with foraging and commuting behaviour.

Table 2: Static detector survey results

	23/07	24/07	25/07	26/07	27/07
Timespan of confirmed recordings	23:22-00:29	23:53-02:06	01:47-03:39	00:07-03:08	21:20-04:35
Common pipistrelle	11	14	11	2	15
Soprano pipistrelle					4
Noctule					1
Brown long-eared bat					1

3.6 Dusk emergence survey (B1): 16th September 2025

No bats were observed emerging from Building 1 during the survey. Common pipistrelles were observed foraging within the immediate area, and a brown long-eared bat was seen flying past the building on some occasions. The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed emerging from the building.

3.7 Dusk emergence survey (B2): 17th September 2025

No bats were observed emerging from Building 2 during the survey. Common pipistrelles were seen occasionally passing in front of the building. Other species heard but not seen include Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and brown long-eared bat. The footage from the infrared cameras was analysed after the survey and no bats were observed emerging from the building.

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic surveys carried out ten years prior identified evidence of roosting bats in Buildings 1 and 2. However, the evidence collected during the most recent emergence surveys and static detector analysis showed no sign of roosting bats utilising either building. There is a chance that bats may enter the extensive loft space of Building 1 to forage, which could provide an explanation for some of the droppings identified during the PBRA. Otherwise, it is considered that any droppings found previously are from a historic roost. As such, it is considered that roosting bats are likely currently absent from both buildings and therefore, a mitigation licence is not required for the proposed works.

Although a licence is not required, the buildings are still known to be a historic roost. As such, it is recommended that a suitably qualified Ecologist is present on Site to supervise the initial works and ensure that no roosting bats are present prior to commencement. If any indication of roosting bats is found during the works, then the works should cease immediately, and the Ecologist will advise on how to proceed.

Other species to consider throughout the works include nesting birds, which may be present within the open loft of Building 1 or along the eaves of either building. The works should be undertaken outside bird nesting season i.e. during the period September to February (inclusive – as a guide). If this is not possible, all areas impacted should first be checked for active nests by an ecologist or other suitably qualified individual. In the event that nesting activity is identified, certain aspects of the work in the vicinity of the nest will need to cease until the birds have finished nesting and the young have fledged. In addition, barn owls (*Tyto alba*) were observed in the parkland to the east of the buildings. Machinery should not encroach any further than necessary in this direction to prevent any disturbance to surrounding barn owls.

Potential habitat enhancements, although not mandated under a licence or otherwise, could include the installation of bat boxes and bird boxes. Boxes may be installed on the buildings themselves once the works are complete.

5. REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines*. 4th Edition.

Jones and Sons Environmental Sciences Limited (2006) *Offley Place Stables and Cottage Kings Walden Road Gret Offley Near Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3DS 2006 Bat Method Statement*

Maydencroft Limited (2025). *Preliminary Bat Roosting Assessment Report: Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, March 2025*

Middleton, N., Froud, A. & French, K. (2014) *Social Calls of the Bats of Britain and Ireland*. Pelagic Publishing

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the content of this report accurately identifies the potential ecological constraints to operations, its overall ecological value, and considered the possibility of the presence or absence of all Protected Species and the need for further surveys or ecological works. External factors such as weather conditions, time of day, seasons, disturbance by others, can all affect the use of the site by such species, and this report should therefore not be viewed as definitive. No liability can be accepted for omissions or changes within the status of wildlife after the production of this report.

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