Bat Survey Report for
9 Oxford Street, Leamington Spa,
CV32 4RA

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

2nd March 2024

QUALITY CONTROL

Date	Version	Name
02.03.24	Daytime inspection	Andy Warren – BSc (Hons), MA (LM), Tech Cert (Arbor A), MCIEEM, TechArborA Director
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The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, *CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition, Collins, 2016). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

At 9 Oxford Street in Leamington Spa, planning permission is being sought for a rear extension. The works include the removal of a small, single storey outside toilet.

As this could impact on features typically used by bats as roosting places, a diurnal inspection was undertaken on 2nd March 2024, to assess the building for signs of bat occupation.

All the external and internal structures, especially those associated with the roof and walls of the building were examined.

No signs of bat activity or occupation were found, and the suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp* or other bat species was considered to be negligible, as there were no suitable crevices or gaps.

At the time of the survey, the house was not identified as a bat roost or hibernation site, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No birds' nests were found inside or outside the dwelling.

1. INTRODUCTION

In late February 2024, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed by Gurdeep Matharu to undertake a bat survey of 9 Oxford Street in Leamington Spa. On 2nd March 2024, a visit was made to the property to carry out a diurnal inspection of the building to check for signs of bat occupation.

The result of the survey is contained in this report.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), through inclusion in Schedule 5. In England and Wales this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), which add an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions, and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations (the Habitats Regulations), which defines 'European protected species of animals'. In England this is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, in Scotland the Habitat Regulations 1994 (as amended), and in Northern Ireland the Conservation Regulations 1995.

All bats are also protected under the Bern Convention Appendix II, the Bonn Convention Appendix II, and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004):

- *Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;*
- *Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);*
- *Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;*
- *Damage or destroy roosts;*
- *Possess or transport a bat or any part of a part of a bat, unless acquired legally;*
- *Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.*

The word 'roost' is not used in the legislation but is used here for simplicity. The actual wording is 'any structure or place which any wild animal…uses for shelter or protection' (WCA), or 'breeding site or resting place' (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to fully assess bat occupation of a particular site, the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) recommends that information gathered from a desk study of known bat records, and a daytime site walkover, is used to inform the type and extent of future bat survey work, potentially including nocturnal emergence surveys.

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) is usually in the form of a diurnal walkover and can be carried out at any time of the year. It provides an opportunity to check for signs of bat occupancy and/or the suitability for bat roosting.

Evidence of bat activity includes droppings, scratch marks, feeding remains, carcasses, or even roosting animals, whilst suitability is determined by the type and number of potential roost features (PRFs) typically used by bats.

Roosting places vary depending on the species. Pipistrelles usually inhabit narrow cracks or cavities around the outside of buildings, but they will roost in similar niches inside larger barns. Typical sites include soffit spaces, gaps behind fascia boards and end rafters, crevices around the ends of projecting purlins, under warped or lifted roof and ridge tiles, or in gaps in stone and brickwork where mortar has dropped out.

Larger species such as Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*, Myotis bats (Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and Whiskered/Brandt's *M. mystacinus/M. brandtii*), and Lesser Horseshoes *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, like to roost in the roof voids of buildings, and can often be found hanging singly or in small groups from ridge boards or roof timbers, especially where these butt up against gable walls or chimney breasts. They especially favour older structures with timber frames. Here they squeeze into tight crevices making them difficult to observe.

Where bats are found, or there is evidence of bat occupation or activity, i.e. that bat use is confirmed, a roost characterisation survey is undertaken. The results are used to inform the impact assessment and design of mitigation measures. Roost characterisation includes nocturnal emergence surveys, unless sufficient information has already been collected using robust survey methods with no significant constraints.

Nocturnal emergence surveys allow numbers and species of bats to be confirmed, and should only be undertaken when bats are out of hibernation and in their summer roosts.

The bat active period is generally considered to be between April and October, although particularly cold weather will affect the level and extent of bat activity. Indeed, the air temperature at the start of each survey should be at least 10°C or above, with no strong wind or heavy rain. The survey starts 15 minutes before sunset and continues for one and a half to two hours after sunset.

Visits will be a minimum of three weeks apart, and the number of surveys and timing is dependent on the evidence found or the suitability of the site to bats. This will be determined by the ecologist. In general, at least two emergence nocturnal surveys will be carried out, but a third visit may be necessary if the results are inconclusive or further information is required.

Nocturnal emergence surveys are also used to determine the presence or absence of bats, where signs of bat activity are indeterminate or absent but the suitability for bat roosting is considered to be low, moderate or high.

For a site with no evidence but low suitability, just one nocturnal emergence survey is required, this to be in the period May to August.

For moderate suitability a minimum of two visits are needed between May and September, of which one must be in the period May to August.

With high suitability, three visits will be necessary between May and September, of which two must be in the period May to August.

Where there is no evidence of bat presence, and no suitability for roosting, no nocturnal surveys will be needed.

The number of surveyors and/or the use of night vision aids (NVAs) is determined by the ecologist, and is dependent on the complexity of the structure. For simple structures just one surveyor using an appropriate number of NVAs will be sufficient, but for larger sites and/or more complex or irregularly shaped structures, e.g. those with multiple elevations and/or roof slopes, more surveyors will be required.

On 2nd March 2024 a thorough inspection of the house was made by Andy Warren (Natural England bat licence No. 2015-16489-CLS-CLS.), including the exterior and interior walls, roof coverings, roof voids, eaves, gables, window casements and door frames.

10x42 binoculars and a Fenix TK75 torch were used for the inaccessible/unreachable areas. On this occasion an endoscope was not used, as there were no crevices and cavities that could not be inspected with a torch or by use of binoculars from a ladder.

The result of the survey is detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

In view of the proposed works, the likely low impact on bats, and in line with current guidance on accessing and using biodiversity data (CIEEM, 2016), a detailed background data search was not carried out in this case.

However, within 2.0 km of 9 Oxford Street the following development licences for bats were issued by Natural England:

- 2021 1.2 km southeast for Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus;*
- 2011 1.60 km north for Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus;*
- 2012 1.0 km west for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*
- 2013 1.6 km southwest for Common Pipistrelle
- 2014 1.2 km south-southwest for Common Pipistrelle.

3.2 Location

Oxford Street is located approximately 1.0 km north of Leamington Spa town centre. No. 9 lies at the north end of the street, on the east side of the road, just south of Oxford Place. The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference is SP 31974 66216 (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

The survey site comprised a terraced three storey town house with rear extensions (Figs. 1 and 2).

Figs. 1 & 2 Front and rear views of the house

The front of the house opened onto Oxford Street, but to the rear there was a small yard with raised flower and shrub beds (Fig. 3).

The house was surrounded on all sides by an extensive residential area with very little vegetation and no trees in any of the neighbouring gardens (Fig. 4).


Figs. 3 & 4 Rear yard (L) and Oxford Place (R)

The layout of the site is shown in the aerial photograph in Appendix 2.

3.4 Building Survey

3.4.1 Bats

The daytime inspection was carried out on 2nd March 2024 commencing at 13:00. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 1 below.

Parameter	Value
Temperature (ºC)	7.0
Cloud cover (%)	100
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	0

Table 1 Weather conditions during the diurnal survey

The roof of the main part of the house was intact and sealed, with all the roof tiles tightly overlapping and none raised, broken, dislodged or missing (Figs. 5 and 6).

A brick parapet formed the side wall of the two storey rear extension, off which there was a small section of sloping tiled roof, this also tight.


Figs. 5 & 6 Ridge, roof tiles and parapet to rear

The eaves were clipped, with guttering attached to timber fascia boards, the latter tight against the walls (Figs. 7 and 8). There was a small gap behind a replaced section of fascia, but this was heavily cobwebbed behind and clearly not in use by roosting bats. The verge of the two storey extension roof was fully pointed (Fig. 9).


Figs. 7 & 8 Clipped eaves with fascia boards tight

The walls were sound throughout, and the window casements and door frames were tightly fitting. A gap was noted behind the bathroom window lintel, but this was thickly cobwebbed inside and was not identified as a suitable bat roost (Fig. 10).


Figs. 9 & 10 Verge fully pointed (L) and bathroom window (R)

The small outside toilet had a sloping pantiled roof, this tight, with the verge fully pointed (Figs. 11 and 12).


Figs. 11 & 12 Outside toilet

Internally the toilet had no roof void. The roof was lined with tarred felt, and the whole structure was lightly cobwebbed (Fig. 13).

There was no access to the tiny void above the bathroom (Fig. 14), but this measured less than 30 cm high was obviously inaccessible to bats.

Figs. 13 & 14 Outside toilet roof lining (L) and bathroom (R)

The main house roof void was lined with tarred felt and only occupied half of the roof space, as the front half of the void was a bedroom (Fig. 15 and 16). There was no light penetration and the void was considered inaccessible to bats.

Figs. 15 & 16 Main roof void

No signs of bat activity or occupation were found inside or around the outside of the house.

3.4.2 Other species

No old or in-use birds' nests were found inside or outside the dwelling

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats tend to be seasonal visitors to properties and are not usually in occupation all year round. The females normally form maternity colonies during May or June and then leave for adjacent trees and/or woodland during July or August once the young bats are able to fly and become independent. Here they will spend the winter months in hibernation before returning to the house or barn the following spring.

Male bats generally live alone and have a number of favoured roosts. During the summer they visit each of these for a few days at a time, before moving to their chosen hibernation site in mid-late October. Different species have different habits, but this seasonal movement is common to all.

Bats choose their roosts carefully. During the summer they look for sites which are warmed by the sun, and as a result are most often found on the south and western side of buildings.

Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bats, prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of buildings, typical places being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit, barge and eave boarding, between roof felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls.

As such they can be difficult to find, so the suitability for roosting was also assessed.

This was considered to be negligible, as there were no suitable external crevices or cavities.

Another bat frequently encountered in buildings is the Brown Long-eared. This is also a common species, but unlike pipistrelles, they prefer the dry, warm space of the loft or roof void, and can often be found hanging from roof timbers, especially rafters and the ridge board next to chimney breasts.

No signs of Brown Long-eared Bat activity were found, nor evidence of other bat species which are commonly found inside buildings, and the roof voids were considered to be inaccessible to bats.

At the time of the survey, the house was not identified as a bat roost or hibernation site, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No old or in-use birds' nests were found inside or outside the dwelling

5. REFERENCES

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

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The Vincent Wildlife Trust, 2003. *The Bats of Britain and Ireland*. The Vincent Wildlife Trust, Ledbury.

APPENDICES

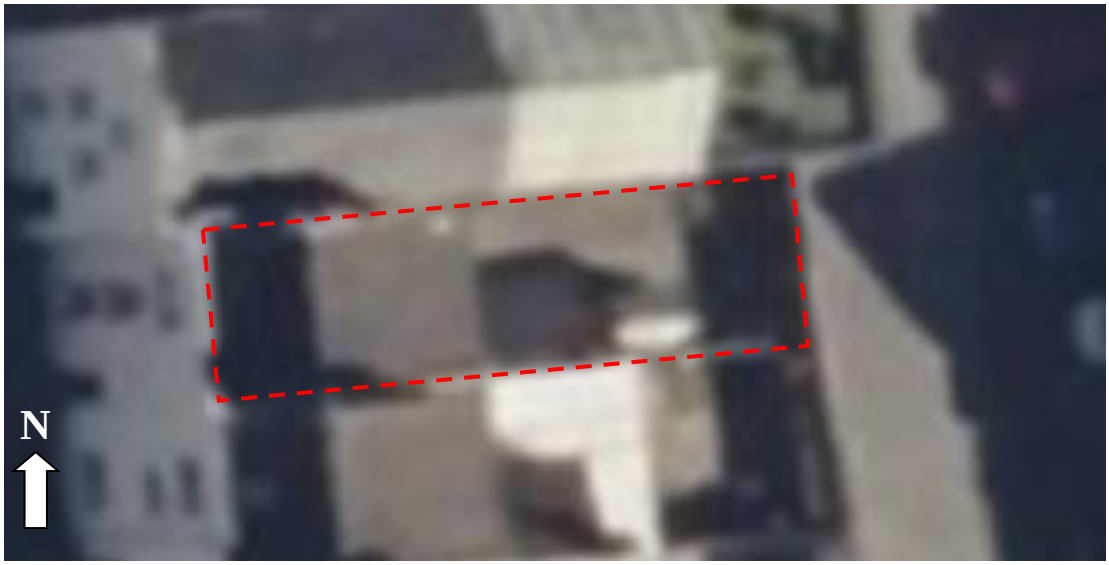
Appendix 1: Location plan

Appendix 2: Site layout

Appendix 1: Location plan

9 Oxford Street, Leamington Spa

Appendix 2: Site layout



9 Oxford Street

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9 Oxford Street, Leamington Spa – Bat Survey Report

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