82 - 84 HIGH STREET

BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY REPORT

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82 - 84 HIGH STREET
BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY REPORT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site:	82 - 84 High Street, Ruislip, Greater London, HA4 7AB
Grid Reference:	TQ09218735
Report Commissioned by:	Bika Construction Ltd
Emergence Survey:	Survey 1: 5th and 9th of July 2024 (zoned)

Bat Survey Results	Emergence Survey	No bats were observed roosting within the main building on site. Roosting bats are likely absent from the main building.
Further Surveys	None	No further surveys are required.
Avoidance and Mitigation	None	As no impacts are likely, no specific mitigation is required. In the unlikely event that bats are found then work must cease immediately, and further investigation must be undertaken by a licensed ecologist.
Enhancements	None	As bats are likely absent from the main building and the lighting surrounding the building is quite bright, no specific enhancements are recommended.
Survey Validity	12 Months	The survey data and conclusions of this report are valid until July 2025.

2. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 Grove Ecology Ltd has been commissioned to undertake a bat emergence survey following recommendations provided in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Grove Ecology, 2024), which found no evidence of bats roosting, however the building has low bat roost potential. One emergence survey was recommended within the PEA.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to detail the findings of the emergence survey and provide recommendations on further actions needed (if any) to support a planning application.

LOCATION

2.3 The site is situated at 82 - 84 High Street, Ruislip, Greater London, HA4 7AB (Grid Reference TQ09218735).

SITE AND SETTING

2.4 The site is approximately 266 square meters of land centrally located on the high street of Ruislip, Greater London. The entire site is developed, covered by a continuous building of variable height, ranging from single to three storeys.

2.5 The site has limited and fragmented connectivity to the wider rural landscape via approximately 500m of residential gardens to the west. Highly developed commercial and residential flats border the site to the north and south, whilst a carpark borders the west of site. The east elevation of the site faces onto the junction of Ickenham Road (B466) and the High Street (A4180). Other nearby features of note include St Martin's Church and graveyard approximately 100m to the northeast and Church Field Gardens located immediately to the east of the graveyard.

2.6 For site photographs and landscape aerials please see the 82 - 84 High Street Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Grove Ecology, 2024).

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

2.7 It is proposed that the former bank be converted into residential units via a change of use. This is likely to include conversion of the existing roof space into a residential unit and repairs to the brick work on all elevations.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

2.8 All UK species of bats and their roosts are strictly protected under UK legislation via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Four UK bat species are also listed under Annex II of the Habitats Directive. For full details of legislation pertaining to bats, its implications for development and potential punitive measures, please see Appendix A for details.

OBJECTIVES

2.9 The objectives of the emergence survey are to:

- Determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within the main building.
- Identify the species, numbers, usage and access points (if roosting bats are present).
- Determine the need for a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence.
- Provide recommendations for further surveys or actions if required.

3. METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY OF SURVEY METHODS

3.1 The emergence survey was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023). One survey was conducted on the main building due to its low bat roost potential. The survey effort was split across two nights to aid resourcing, with two surveyors at the rear of the site on the 5th of July 2024 and two surveyors at the front on the 9th of July 2024.

3.2 The hand-held ultrasonic detectors used were two Elekon Batlogger M2.

3.3 Nightfox Whisker infrared cameras and a HIKMICRO Lynx L15 thermal telescope were used as static night vision survey aids. Both camera types are capable of recording video for playback and review post survey. Whilst the thermal camera does not meet the specifications listed in the interim guidance *Thermal Imaging: Bat Survey Guidelines* (Fawcett Williams, 2021), it has previously proven effective at detecting bat emergence not visible to the naked eye in low light levels and has comparable (if not better) performance to the infrared camera model.

3.4 The surveyors recorded any relevant bat activity observed within the site, including species, flight direction and behaviour where possible, although it should be noted that the survey objective was to detect emergence, not activity. Bat calls were then analysed using Elekon Bat Explorer Software.

SURVEYOR DETAILS

3.5 The surveys were led by Grove Ecology Principal Ecologist Chris Aylward BSc, MSc, who has been working as an ecologist for 17 years. Chris is also a full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM), a full Member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB), a Chartered Biologist (CBiol) and holds a level 1 bat survey licence.

CONSTRAINTS

3.6 Surveys are only able to act like a 'snapshot' to record bats if they are present at the time of the survey. Bats will often move around to different roost sites that fulfil different requirements across the season, sometimes even more frequently than this. It is therefore possible that bats may not have been present during the survey but may be evident at other times of the year. The BCT survey protocol is the minimum requirement to obtain a reasonable level of confidence that bats are present or likely absent, it is not exhaustive nor absolute in its determination.

3.7 Due to the height of the main building and the topology of the surrounding area, collection of acoustic data for the very top of the main building was limited, hence if quieter bats such as brown long eared (Plecotus auritus) species were present then there was potential for this to be missed. This was overcome by dedicating a thermal camera to cover the entire roof at the rear and for the only potential roost feature on the roof at the front of the building. All video footage was closely analysed for emerging bats.

4. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

EMERGENCE SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 The emergence survey was undertaken on the 5th and 9th of July 2024, with the building being split into two zones. The emergence survey commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 1.5 hours after sunset.

4.2 No bats were detected emerging from or entering the main building.

4.3 The dates and conditions for the survey visit are provided below in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey locations, dates, and conditions.

Date	Survey Start	Sunset	Survey End	Survey Points	Weather Conditions
05/07/24	21:05	21:20	22:50	1, 2	Start Temp: 16°C, End Temp: 15°C, Dry and cool start, 70% cloud, wind speed <5 mph.
09/07/24	21:02	21:17	22:12	3	Start Temp: 15°C, End Temp: 12°C, Dry, cool and calm, 0% cloud, wind speed <5 mph.

4.4 No bat genus/species were detected flying across the site during the survey.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The emergence survey did not detect any bats roosting within the main building on site, therefore it is concluded that roosting bats are likely to be absent from the site and no impact is likely upon roosting bats.

FORAGING AND COMMUTING BATS

5.2 No bats were detected during the survey, most likely due to a combination of factors including light pollution acting as a deterrent to bats and urban development limiting foraging and commuting routes/areas. It was noted that this area in particular much of the local lighting is an intense white colour temperature, although it is unclear which bulb types were being used.

5.3 No significant impact is likely upon commuting and foraging bats within the vicinity of the proposed development as they are considered likely absent from the immediate area.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER SURVEYS, AND AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION

FURTHER SURVEYS

6.1 No further surveys are required unless construction is delayed until July 2025 or if evidence of bats is found unexpectedly during development.

AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION

6.2 As no likely impacts are expected, no specific mitigation is required.

6.3 In the unlikely event that bats are found then work must cease immediately, and further investigation must be undertaken by a licensed ecologist.

7. ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 No further enhancements are recommended for bats as they are considered likely absent from the site and immediate vicinity and are unlikely to enter the area unless significant changes occur to street and building lighting in the area.

8. REFERENCES

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

European Community (2007). *Guidance document on the strict protection of the animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Final version, February 2007.

Fawcett-Williams, K. (2021). *Thermal Imaging: Bat Survey Guidelines.* Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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HMSO (2012). *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012.* HMSO, London.

HMSO (2006). *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act) 2006*. HMSO London.

HMSO (1981). *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*. HMSO, London.

9. APPENDIX A – LEGISLATION AND POLICY

DISCLAIMER: The details provided in this appendix are for general guidance only and should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of the law. For legal advice please consult an appropriate legal professional.

All 18 British bat species are listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* as European Protected Species. Furthermore, the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (Schedule 12, Paragraph 5) has amended Section 9 of the 1981 Act. Bats are therefore, fully protected under Section 9 of the WCA 1981 and under Regulation 41 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),* which transposes the Habitats Directive into UK law.

All European bat species are listed as protected under Annex IV of Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, commonly referred to as the EC or EU Habitats Directive. In addition, four UK bat species are listed in Annex II of the EC Directive; the conservation of which requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation under certain criteria. These four species are the greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, the lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* and the barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*.

In England (and Wales) the EC Habitats Directive is transposed into national law by means of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*. The commonly used collective term for this above legislation is the 'Habitats Regulations' and all bats are European Protected Species (EPS).

Ultimately, the above EU and UK legislation makes it an offence to, or to attempt to do, any of the following:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat, including in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair a bats ability to survive; breed or reproduce; or rear or nurture their young;
- In the case of hibernating or migratory species, to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate;
- Affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;

- Damage, destroy or obstruct a breeding site or resting place of a bat whether intentionally or recklessly; and / or,

- Possess, control, transport, exchange or sell a bat or parts of a bat, alive or dead.

Furthermore, where development will result in damage to, or obstruct access to, any bat roost (whether occupied or not) or risks harming or significantly disturbing bats an EPS licence is required from Natural England, the regulatory body responsible for protected species in England, to allow the development to proceed.

The legal interpretation of "development" in the context of EPS is not restricted to works requiring planning permission from LPAs but includes permitted development and can encompass works that do not require any formal permission.

Bats are also afforded more general protection in England (and Wales) within the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006*. This imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, “to have due regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity” [Section 40 (1)]. It notes that “conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat” [Section 40 (3)]. Consequently, attention should be given to dealing with the modification or development of an area if aspects of it are deemed important to bats, such as roosts, flight corridors and foraging areas.

Species of Principal Importance in England (SPIE) – formerly UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority (BAP) include the barbastelle, brown long-eared bat, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein's bat.

10. APPENDIX B – SURVEYOR LOCATIONS

Figure 1. Close up location aerial photograph of site (red outline) and surveyor locations. Yellow lines denote the focus area of each surveyor.

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