

Bat Survey Report

Site: Horton House, Gosditch, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, SN6 6NZ

Client: Scott and Katie Andrews



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QUALITY CONTROL

Date	Version	Name
09.09.25	Daytime inspection	Mollie Paxford – BSc (Hons), MSc, MEnvSc Director
05.11.25	Report prepared, reviewed and issued	Mollie Paxford – BSc (Hons), MSc, MEnvSc 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* (4th edition, Collins, 2023). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

At Horton House on Gosditch, in Ashton Keynes, planning permission is being sought for a rear extension.

As this could impact on features typically used by bats as roosting places, a diurnal inspection was undertaken on 9th September 2025, to assess the building for signs of bat occupation.

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

Inside the roof void two clusters of bat droppings were found, one within the roof space and the other within a gable end slot. These were sent for DNA analysis, which confirmed both of the clusters to be from Soprano Pipistrelle Bats *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The access point was clearly through the slots in the gable walls.

The suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp.* was otherwise considered to be negligible, as there were no gaps or crevices around the exterior of the house.

Although bat droppings were found inside the roof void, the proposed works are such that there will be no impact on the bat roost. The access point will be retained, whilst the new extension will not intrude into the existing roof space. Instead, the roof tiles will be carefully removed to allow the tying in of the extension roof, which will be added over the existing roof membrane.

As such, there will be no impact to the bat roost, and no further surveys or mitigation measures are considered necessary.

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No old or in use birds' nests were noted in or around the building.

1. INTRODUCTION

In July 2025, Paxford Ecology Ltd was instructed by Scott and Katie Andrews, to undertake a bat survey of Horton House on Gosditch, in Ashton Keynes. On 9th September 2025, 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 inspection 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 9th September 2025, a thorough inspection of the building was made by Mollie Paxford (Natural England bat licence No. 2020-47378-CLS-CLS), including the exterior and interior walls, roof coverings, roof void, eaves, gables, roof and ceiling timbers, window casements and door frames.

10x42 Nikon 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 inspection is detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

In view of the small scale 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, the following European Protected Species licences have been granted within a 2.0 km of the site:

- ❑ 2018-37942-EPS-MIT – 1.6 km east for Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Common Pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*;
- ❑ EPSM2012-5078 – 1.9 km east for Soprano, Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*.

3.2 Location

Ashton Keynes is a small village located approximately 8.0 km northwest of Swindon. Gosditch runs west out of the village, with Horton House situated on the south side of the road, at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 04297 93918 (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

The survey site comprised a stone cottage with a pitched roof (Figs. 1 and 2). To the rear was a small conservatory.



Figs. 1 & 2 Horton House

There was a small garden (Figs. 3 and 4). The site lay within a small, rural village and was surrounded by similar properties, with pastoral farmland and Cotswold Water Park lakes.



Figs. 3 & 4 Surrounding area

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

3.4 Building Survey

The daytime inspection was carried out on 9th September 2025, commencing at 14:00. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 1 below.

Parameter	Value
Temperature (°C)	17.0
Cloud cover (%)	10
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	0

Table 1 Weather conditions during the diurnal survey

3.4.1 Bats

The roof was covered with pan tiles with the ridge fully intact and sealed, whilst the roof tiles were all tightly overlapping with none raised, missing, broken or dislodged (Figs. 5 and 6).



Figs. 5 & 6 Ridge and roof tiles

To the rear was a small conservatory and extension (Figs. 7 and 8). These were both tightly sealed all round. The gable ends were finished with a barge board stood proud of the wall, with ventilation slots in both gable walls (Figs. 9 and 10).

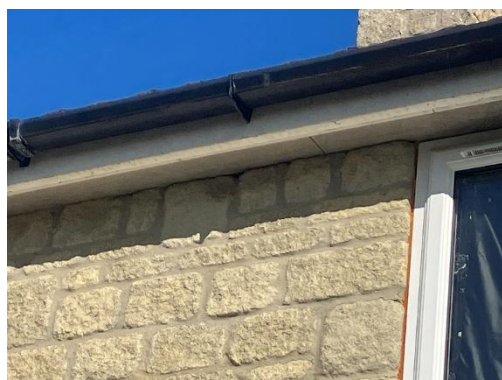


Figs. 7 & 8 Rear extensions



Figs. 9 & 10 Gable ends

The eaves were finished with timber boxed soffits which were tightly sealed to the walls (Figs. 11 and 12). One area of rotten wood was noted, although this was too exposed to be suitable for roosting bats.



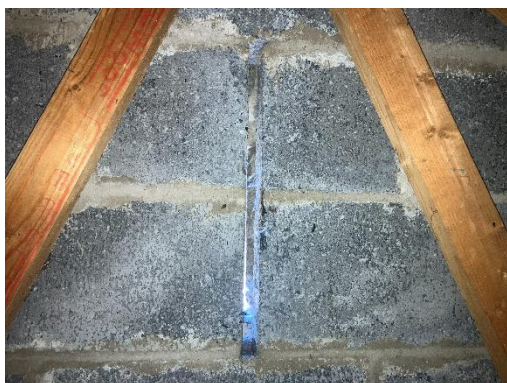
Figs. 11 & 12 Eaves

The doorframes and window casements were all tightly fitting, with no gaps.

Internally there were bat droppings noted within the roof void, in a loose cluster (Figs. 13 and 14). The ventilation slots were clearly the access points into the roof void. Indeed, at the bottom of the west ventilation slot was a cluster of bat droppings (Figs. 15 and 16). These were sent for DNA analysis, which confirmed both of the clusters to be from Soprano Pipistrelle Bats.



Figs. 13 & 14 Bat droppings



Figs. 15 & 16 Roof void

3.4.2 Other species

No old or in use birds' nests were found.

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 suitability for roosting was also assessed.

The suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp.* externally was considered to be negligible, as there were no gaps or crevices around the exterior of the house.

However, inside the roof void two clusters of bat droppings were found, one within the roof space and the other within a gable end slot. These were sent for DNA analysis, which confirmed both of the clusters to be from Soprano Pipistrelle Bats *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The access point was clearly through the slots in the gable walls.

Although bat droppings were found inside the roof void, the proposed works are such that there will be no impact on the bat roost. The access points will be retained, whilst the new extension will not intrude into the existing roof space. Instead, the roof tiles will be carefully removed to allow the tying in of the extension roof, which will be added over the existing roof membrane.

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5. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

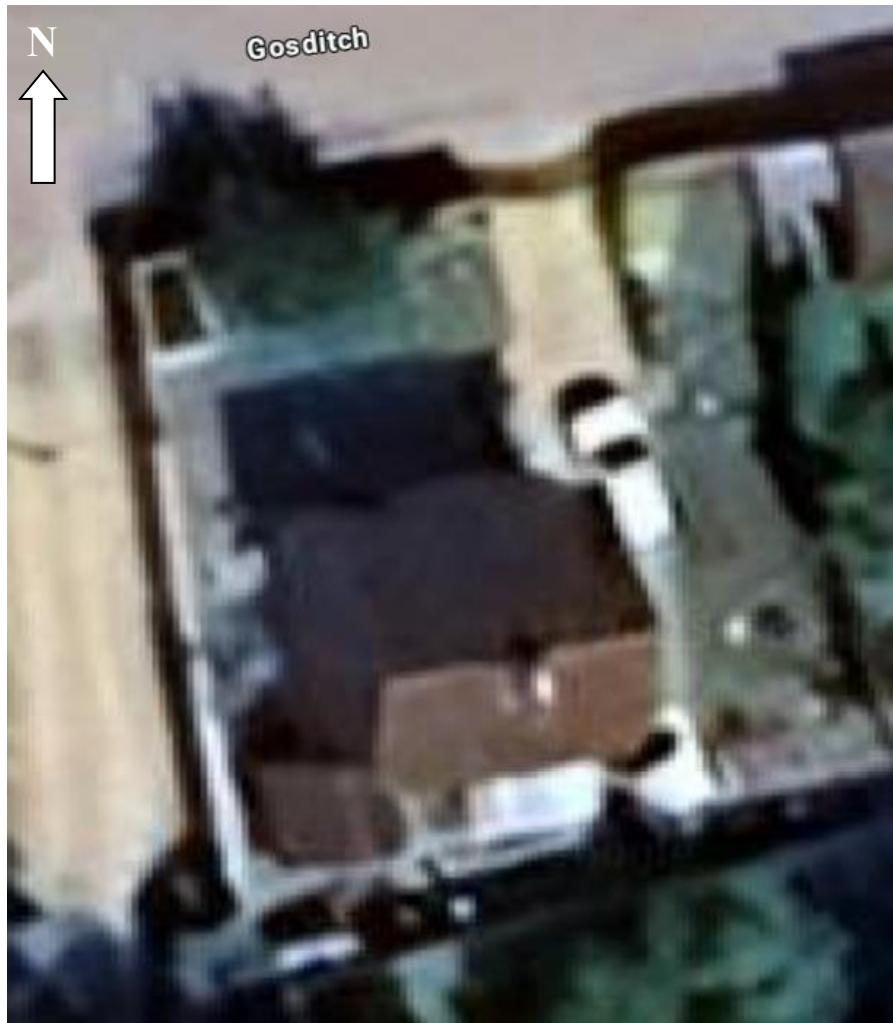
Appendix 2: Site layout

Appendix 1: Location plan



Horton House, Ashton Keynes

Appendix 2: Site layout



Horton House