



East Court, Finchampstead RG40 3SD

2024 Final Bat Survey Report



December 2024

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site details:

East Court (grid reference SU 79633 63363) is a Grade II listed former manor house – further history on the house and residents can be found at: <http://www.eastcourt.org.uk/>. Currently a private residence, it is located off the B3348 in the village of Finchampstead. Finchampstead lies 8 miles south-east of Reading, in a rural setting with older buildings, farm- and parkland.

Proposed works:

The main building requires maintenance to the roof, including the removal of existing tiles and their replacement alongside necessary repairs. Three further outbuildings (the stables, garage, and summerhouse) were also surveyed.

Survey methodology:

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was conducted on 31st May 2023. Spires Ecology Ltd were then commissioned to undertake bat activity surveys to complete the dataset required for consideration by the Local Planning Authority in 2023 and an update survey in 2024.

Findings:

Evidence of bats was found within the loft voids of East Court. Brown long-eared bats have utilised loft 1 which was confirmed by DNA analysis. Several entry points to the main property were noted, including raised roof tiles, decaying bargeboards, and other gaps at connecting points. Three outbuildings – the stables, garage, and summerhouse – also provide potential roosting sites. East Court was therefore considered to have bat roosts present, with high potential for each of the stables, garage and summerhouse.

The activity surveys undertaken by Spires Ecology Ltd in June, July and August 2023 have identified 20 roosts for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and natterer's bats within the buildings at East Court. These 20 roosts equate to 31 roost access features on all elevations of the main farmhouse with one single roost located on the stable complex.

In July 2024 the updating activity survey found several roosts continued to be used including the brown long-eared maternity roost. Four new roosts were identified including a maternity roost for common pipistrelle bats.

Impact Assessment:

In the absence of mitigation, there is a risk of destruction of any bat roosts present within the buildings, and/or a risk of death or injury to bats themselves.

Recommendations:

The number of bats (32 maximum count on the final survey in 2023) and the species (four) observed during the surveys over 2023 and 2024 means that the site will require a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence, or registration under the pilot Natural England Earned Recognition scheme, prior to the works being undertaken. Additional suggestions have been made to enhance the site for wildlife to fulfil the aims of the NPPF.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background

East Court is a grade II listed former manor house with further outbuildings within the grounds at Finchampstead. The manor house requires a thorough renovation of the complex roof to ensure ongoing functionality. Consequently, there is a risk of destruction of any bat roosts present within the building, and/or a risk of death or injury to bats themselves, therefore a preliminary roost assessment for bats was requested to assess this risk and determine if any further survey work is required.

Legislative context

Bats and their roost sites are protected by law such that it is an offence to deliberately, intentionally, or recklessly disturb, kill, take, or injure bats or damage or destroy their roost sites. Actions that will constitute an offence in law may be mitigated against if sufficient precautions are followed and/or a mitigation license is sought from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO; Natural England). Therefore, a precautionary approach has been adopted to ascertain the use, if any, bats are making of these buildings in relation to a planning application submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to better inform any subsequent decisions.

Landscape and ecological context

East Court (grid reference SU 79633 63363) is a Grade II listed former manor house located off the B3348 in the village of Finchampstead. It is a large and complex property, comprising a main house and two substantial outbuildings (the stables and summerhouse) and one small garage.

Finchampstead is an affluent village with large properties set in larger-than-average grounds; it lies 2 miles south of Wokingham, 5 miles west of Bracknell, 8 miles south-east of Reading, and 34 miles west of Central London. As such the local area has much green space, but much of this is improved grassland or ornamental gardens.

Objectives of the survey and report

The preliminary bat roost assessment survey included an internal and external inspection of the property to identify its' potential to contain bat roosting sites. This involved a systematic search with close-focusing binoculars, an endoscope (where appropriate) and a high-powered torch, looking for bats themselves, as well as any evidence of bat use. Spires Ecology Ltd undertook a suite of bat activity surveys to confirm bat presence, species, numbers, and roost status by establishing the location of any bats observed exiting or entering the building, and flight-lines in the vicinity of the building. Bat surveys have been conducted in accordance with current guidance¹.

Potential appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures are assessed for this site following the legal protection given to bats under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, and any requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence is considered.

¹ Collins, J (ed) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Field survey personnel

The survey was conducted by Dr Merryl Gelling CEcol MCIEEM. Dr Gelling is a Chartered Consultant Ecologist specialising in protected species and has over twenty years practical experience of wild mammal surveying in the UK. Dr Gelling has published several scientific papers on wild animal health and welfare, and is an experienced bat surveyor, holding Natural England Bat Survey Licences WML CL 19 and 20 (Levels 3 & 4; numbers 2015-13150-CLS-CLS & 201-13151-CLS-CLS), permitting disturbance of bats for the purposes of surveying for science and education or conservation, and WML CL 21 (Registered Consultant RC083), permitting the registration of individual sites under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence. Dr Gelling hold Accreditation Level 3 under the Natural England Earned Recognition pilot scheme, as well as other Natural England Protected Species and Home Office licences. A significant portion of Dr Gelling's work has focused on advising on suitable bat mitigation for development projects.

Assistance during the PRA survey was provided by Evie Morris, who is working towards her Natural England Bat Survey Licence and has worked previously in academic research with bats.

The activity surveys (2023) were undertaken by Dr Merryl Gelling, Dr Amanda Lloyd (WML CL 18 2016-23252-CLS-CLS), Ms Evie Morris (2023-11135-CL19-BAT), Mr Karl Lofthouse (WML CL18-2015-15163-CLS-CLS), Ms Julie Watson (WML CL18 2015-15886-CLS-CLS), Mr Danny Masters, Ms Julie Bywaters, Mr Tony Wells and Mr Guy Horwood.

In 2024 the activity survey was undertaken by Dr Merryl Gelling, Dr Amanda Lloyd, Ms Evie Morris and Mr Tony Wells.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey for bats

The properties were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats using high powered torches, ladders, and binoculars where appropriate. Signs searched for, and indicative of bat use, included:

- Faeces – these typically contain fragments of insect exoskeleton and crumble (unlike those of small rodents, which typically harden over time). Bat droppings will stick to surfaces including walls, windows, and window ledges. They may also become caught in cobwebs below a roost site or feeding perch.
- Urine staining and droplets on horizontal surfaces – like faeces, urine is a sign of recent activity and may highlight flyways.
- Feeding remains – these include the discarded wings of flying invertebrates, which may accumulate under a feeding perch. Some species, such as the Brown long-eared bat, have a well-known penchant for moths of the Noctuid family. Therefore, the accumulated wings of these Noctuid moths are indicative of the presence of this bat.
- Oil staining – the fur of bats may leave an oily residue on surfaces close to occupied roost sites and access / re-entry points.
- Diurnal vocalisations – these are most pronounced at larger roost sites during periods of hot weather.
- Absence of cobwebs – a well-used bat roost, and its access points, are typically clear of cobwebs.

- Scratches – scratch marks, produced by the claws of many bats, may be apparent close to the access point for a well-used roost.
- Dead bats.
- Tracks in dust.
- Odour – most bats have a distinctive odour and certain species, such as the Noctule and Soprano pipistrelle are noted for their pungent-smelling roosts, resulting from urine scent marking activity and oily fur.

Consideration was also given to the following factors, regarding identifying the suitability of building's features to support roosting bats:

- Surrounding habitat: potential bat flight-lines and bat foraging areas locally.
- Construction features: architectural features including loft spaces, barge boards, soffit boxes, lead flashing, cavity walls and hanging tiles can provide bat roosting potential. Some construction features and materials are more favourable to bat occupation than others.
- Building condition: if the building has no roof or has a sound roof with no potential bat entry gaps, then there is a lower likelihood of bats being present.
- Internal conditions: temperature regime, protection from the elements and wind/light/rain penetration.
- Potential bat-access points: both flight and crawl access.
- Potential roosting locations: all bat-accessible voids, cracks, and crevices.

No other specific faunal surveys were undertaken. However, incidental records were made, and the habitats identified on site were evaluated for their potential to support species of conservation interest, including protected and priority species.

The emergence activity surveys (dusk survey) in 2023 were conducted by seven to eight surveyors observing the outside of the buildings, each equipped with heterodyne and frequency division bat detectors (BatLogger M, Batbox Duet, Echo Meter 3, Anabat Walkabout, EM Touch). In 2024 four surveyors undertook an updating survey on the main farmhouse only. Surveyors were in position at least 15 minutes before dusk and remained for up to two hours after dusk. Up to six thermal or infra-red cameras were also used from a number of different models: Hikvision IR CCTV, Pulsar Helion XP50, Flir Scion PMT166, Guide IR Track IR Pro19 and Nightfox whisker. Sound analysis was conducted with BatExplorer, Kaleidoscope and Sonobat. Night vision aids were set to record throughout the survey, with all footage downloaded and reviewed using VLC media player in real-time, or at a maximum of 2.0x normal speed, with motion detection activated. The timestamps on bat detectors and cameras were aligned at the start of the survey, with notes made of specific areas or time periods requiring additional detailed post-survey scrutiny.

Desk study

Google maps and 'Where's The Path' websites were accessed to view aerial images of the site. Assessment of the likelihood of bat species being present within the local environment has been informed by collating records of known roosts in the area. European Protected Species Mitigation licences that have previously been granted were searched for on the MAGIC website², which also

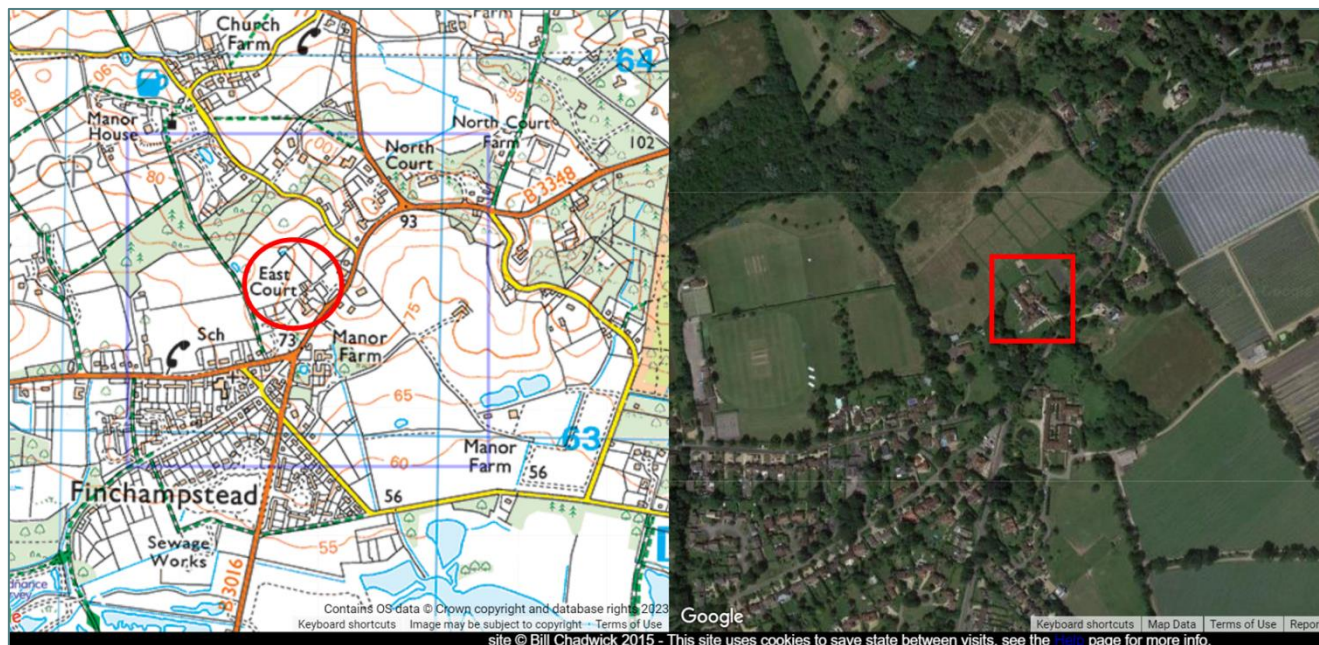
² MAGIC, 2023: <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/>

identifies local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's), local and national Nature Reserves and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), which have been designated as such due to a significant population or species of bat.

4. RESULTS

Desk study

Figure 1: Where's the Path street map of the location (circle) and aerial image of the site (square).



A site check using Defra's Magic tool³ reported no Nature Reserves or other land designations of interest within 2km of East Court. Within 5km of the site, are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four local Nature Reserves, and one National Nature Reserve. There is some overlap between these designations: the National Nature Reserve, Castle Bottom, includes the SSSI of the same name, two of the Local Nature Reserves similarly overlap with SSSIs of the same names: Heathlake or Longmore Bog.

The data request from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (dated 8th June 2023, ref TVERC/23/0208, see appendix 4) reported 527 bat records within 2km of East Court. This comprises 11 species including long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, Leisler's bat, Nathusius' pipistrelle, Noctule, Serotine, soprano pipistrelle, western barbastelle and whiskered/brandt's bat. The records are from aural detector surveys, injured bats and roost records.

Twenty-five European Protected Species mitigation licenses have been granted for bats within 2km of the site. The licences were granted for pipistrelle species (common and soprano pipistrelle, and Nathusius' pipistrelle bat) and brown-long eared bats, for both the destruction/damage of resting and breeding places. The closest of these records is <350m south of East Court, also within the village of Finchampstead.

³ MAGIC, 2023: <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/>

Inspection survey

The weather during the survey had a temperature of 17° Celsius, some clouds in the sky and a reasonable breeze. There had been no rain for several days and temperatures had generally been warm.

External inspection

East Court: This is a complex Grade II listed former manor house. The manor's history began in the 13th century and is well documented online by former residents (<http://www.eastcourt.org.uk/>). It has been extended and modified in numerous ways over its history, and the result in the present is a complex structure with different levels, of differing ages, constructed of slightly differing materials.

A number of potential entry points were observed among the roof tiles, cladding features, bargeboards, chimney flashing, and at gaps where one construction material joined another. Evidence of bats (droppings) were also seen on roof tiles surrounded potential entry points.

Please refer to Figure 2 for the manor building plan and inspected loft areas.

Detached outbuilding: This outbuilding is mainly constructed of red brick with a small section of shiplap. It has two double garage sections with a stable section. The eaves are open but have been historically blocked off with chicken wire. The roof above the garage doors is starting to bow and, in this area, there are raised roof tiles. To the rear there is one metal roofed disused chicken coop and a fenced off chicken run. The chicken coop walls are constructed from fence panels which do not meet the roof above.

Please refer to Figure 7 for the site photos.

Internal inspection

The main house: Three loft hatches were accessible, giving access to loft spaces that were inspected over the course of this survey. All three of these spaces were of timber frame construction and insulated with fibreglass. Storage spaces at the eaves were also accessible at various points throughout the house and where they were inspected were found to be large, primarily insulated with fibreglass, with occasional visible access points connecting to the outside. One ornamental roof space was also boarded for potential storage, it is described below as "roof 4".

Loft 1: Of modern timber frame with F1 lining (as far as could be seen). It is contiguous with the adjacent loft two (to bats, if not to humans), but is accessed through a separate hatch. Droppings were found in this void and were sent for analysis.

Loft 2: Predominantly older timber frame was present in this void. The roof was unlined on one side, and the other side lined with F1 membrane. This void contained a number of bat droppings, some of which were sent for analysis. An inactive wasps' nest was also found.

Loft 3: The timber framing in this part of the house was mostly modern. The roof was lined on one side with F1 membrane and on the other with a plastic sheeting. Gaps were visible at the eaves, which would allow for wildlife entry into the roof, although no evidence was found in this loft.

Loft 4: A small ornamental roof, accessible through a small side door. Insulated and boarded out on the inside, this structure offers much more in terms of crevice roosts as it is clad in loose hanging tiles.

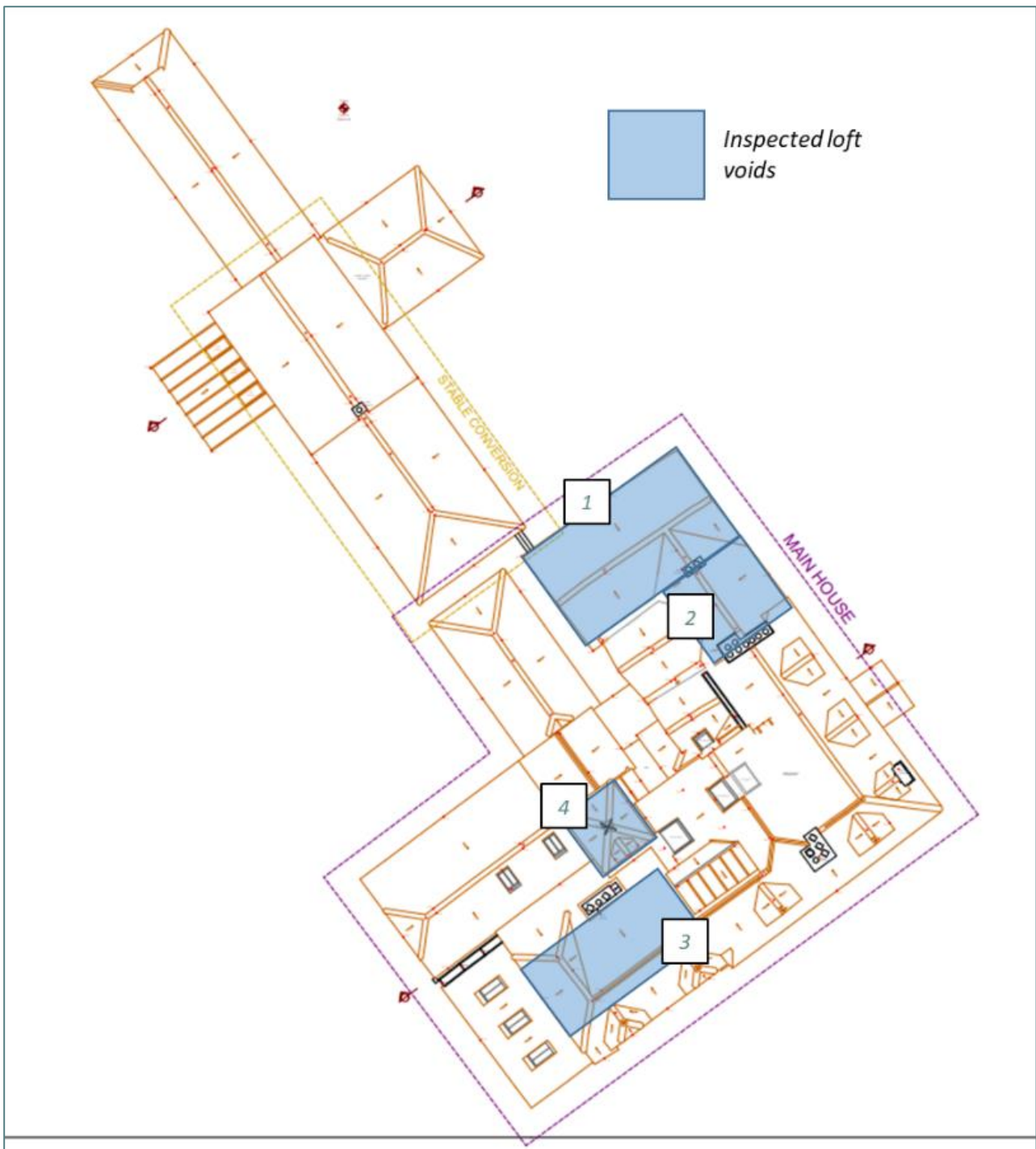
Detached outbuilding: The majority of this building (stable and one garage section) has a false ceiling comprising wooden boards with a roof void present but no internal access. Between the stable and garage there is a wall of wooden shiplap from floor to apex. These areas are currently used to store wood and garden supplies. The second garage section and potting shed are open from floor to unlined roof above. Areas of the roof have had chicken wire added above the potting shed. No evidence of bats was found internally.

DNA analysis

Multiple species DNA analysis was conducted on the bat droppings collected on 31st May 2023. One species was identified to have used loft 1 and 2 at East Court; brown long-eared bat (see appendix 2).

Confirmed bat roost for brown long-eared bats.

Figure 2: Building plan and inspected lofts.



*Roof locations estimated from building plans

Dusk surveys

Table 1: Dates and prevailing weather conditions for bat surveys at East Court, Finchampstead

Date	Dusk or Dawn	Survey start and end times	Sunset or Sunrise time	Weather Conditions (start-end)			
				Temp (oC)	Wind (Beaufort)	Cloud (Oktas/8)	Rain
26 th June 2023	Dusk	21:09-22:54	21:24	19-17	1-1	1-2	0 - 0
17 th July 2023	Dusk	20:56-22:41	21:11	19-16	0-0	1-1	0-0
7 th August 2023	Dusk	20:25-22:10	20:40	17-13	1-0	2-0	0-0
22 nd July 2024	Dusk	20:49-22:34	21:04	22-19	1-1	7-7	0-0

For the activity surveys in 2023, seven to eight surveyors were located around all the buildings, in positions which afforded the most complete view of the external aspect, augmented with thermal and/or infra-red cameras to cover the buildings. In 2024 four surveyors surveyed the main farmhouse only.

Activity surveys in 2023

June 26th dusk survey: Seven thermal/infra-red cameras were used. The earliest bat activity was recorded at 21:26 which was from an emerging but silent pipistrelle bat which was seen but not heard by two surveyors from the front of the house. Other bats heard on site included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, noctule and a myotis species of bat.

Twenty-nine bats (comprising three species) emerged from the building seen by surveyors and/or cameras.

Table 2: Emergence results from 26th June 2023

Time	Species	Point of emergence
21:26	Silent bat (pipistrelle from flight)	One bat emerged from second dormer on eastern elevation (access 2.2)
21:48	Silent bat (pipistrelle from flight)	One bat emerged from the first dormer on the southern elevation (access 2.1)
22:04 – 22:28	Brown long-eared bats	Seven bats emerged from a hanging tile on the eastern elevation (access 1.2)
22:08	Silent bat (pipistrelle from flight)	One bat emerged from the first dormer on the eastern elevation (right hand side of window), (access 20.1)

22:34	Silent bat (pipistrelle from flight)	One bat emerged from the first dormer on the eastern elevation (left hand side of window), (access 20.2)
21:35 and 21:50	Common pipistrelle	Two bats emerged from the fourth dormer on the southern elevation (roost 15)
From 22:12	Brown long-eared bats	Four bats emerged the soffit on the gable end (south-western elevation), (access 3.1)
From 22:42	Brown long-eared bats	Two bats emerged from a hanging tile close to the soffit on the gable end (south-western elevation), (roost 3.2)
21:30	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile on the western elevation (roost 8)
21:42	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile (just out of sight) in the central area of building (roost 9)
21:45	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile (central area) above gable end on the southern elevation (roost 13)
21:46	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile close the central "turret" feature (roost 11)
21:47	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile (just out of sight) on the western elevation (access 7.1)
21:47	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from the bottom hanging tile on the gable end (western elevation) (access 6.1)
21:58	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile on the single storey extension (south elevation) (roost 10)
21:59	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on a single storey extension (western elevation) (access 6.2)
22:15	Brown long-eared bats	One bat emerged from a roof tile close to the central "turret" feature (roost 12)
22:38	Brown long-eared bats	One bat emerged from a roof tile (central area) above the gable end on the southern elevation (roost 14)

July 17th dusk survey: Five thermal/Infra-red cameras were used. The earliest bat activity was recorded at 21:21 from a common pipistrelle that emerged from roost access 6. Other bats heard on site included brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle, natterer's, noctule and serotine. Two bats were

seen to false approach a large chimney on the southern elevation before disappearing out of sight of the cameras and surveyors.

Twenty-three bats of four species (brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and natterer's bat) were seen by the surveyors or the cameras to emerge from the building (from hanging tiles, main roof tiles and dormer tiles).

Table 3: Emergence results from 17th July 2023

Time	Species	Point of emergence
21:45-22:09	Brown long-eared bats	Nine bats emerged from a hanging tile on the eastern elevation (access 1.1)
21:38	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile close to a chimney on the eastern elevation (roost 19)
21:25 and 21:56	Soprano pipistrelle	Two bats emerged from second dormer on eastern elevation (access 2.1)
21:58	Pipistrelle species	One bat emerged from the first dormer on the southern elevation (roost 18)
21:36	Pipistrelle species	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on the second dormer on the southern elevation (roost 17)
21:47	Natterer's bat	One bat emerged from a hanging tile on the front of the fourth dormer on the southern elevation (roost 4)
21:21	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from the fourth dormer on the southern elevation (roost 15)
21:46	Pipistrelle species	One bat emerged from a roof tile (central area) above gable end on the southern elevation (roost 13)
21:44	Pipistrelle species	One bat emerged from the bottom hanging tile on the gable end (western elevation) (access 6.1)
21:53	Pipistrelle species	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on a single storey extension (western elevation) (access 6.2)
21:47	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile at the apex of the single storey extension (western elevation), (access 6.3)
21:52	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on the single storey extension (western elevation) (access 6.4)

21:53	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile on the single storey extension (western elevation), (access 6.4)
21:46	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a soffit/hanging tile on a two storey building gable end (western elevation), (access 7.2)

August 7th dusk survey: Six thermal cameras were used. The earliest bat activity was recorded at 20:48 from an emerging soprano pipistrelle on the front elevation (roost access 28) which re-entered at 21:16 and then left the roost again at 21:20. Other bats heard on site included common pipistrelle, long-eared, and noctule.

32 bats of three species were seen by the surveyors or cameras to emerge from the building, using 16 roost access points. One common pipistrelle appeared to emerge from behind a bush on the western elevation, however the exact point of access is unknown.

Table 4: Emergence results from 7th August 2023

Time	Species	Point of emergence
20:48, 21:16 and 21:20	Soprano pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on the second dormer on the eastern elevation (front of house), re-entered and then emerged later on (access 2.2)
21:19	Soprano pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a hanging tile on second dormer on eastern elevation (access 2.1)
21:25 – 21:51	Brown long-eared bats	3 bats emerged from a roof tile on the eastern elevation (access 1.2)
21:25 – 21:32	Brown long-eared bats	10 bats emerged from a hanging tile on the eastern elevation (access 1.1)
21:00	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from the first dormer on the southern elevation (roost 18)
21:05, 21:06 and 22:06	Soprano pipistrelle	Two bats emerged from a roof tile on the second dormer on the southern elevation (roost 17), one bat re-entered the feature at 22:06.
21:05 and 21:15	Pipistrelle species	Two bats emerged from a hanging tile near a drainpipe (roost 16)

20:47, 22:09	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on the fourth dormer on the southern elevation with one re-entering at 22:09 (roost 15)
21:17, 21:35	Silent bat (likely brown long-eared)	Two bats from a hanging tile close to the soffit on the gable end (south-western elevation), (access 3.2)
21:35	Silent bat (likely pipistrelle species)	One bat emerged from a roof tile (central area) above the gable end on the southern elevation (roost 18)
20:56	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a roof tile near an apex on the south-western elevation (access 7.3)
21:07, 21:13	Common pipistrelle	Two bats emerged from the bottom hanging tile on the gable end (western elevation) (access 6.1)
21:05, 21:10	Common pipistrelle	Two bats emerged from a central roof tile on the single storey extension (western elevation) (access 6.5)
21:09	Common pipistrelle	One bat appeared from behind a bush on the western elevation but the exact emergence point is unknown (likely the soffit above) (access 6.6)
21:10	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile on a single storey extension (western elevation) (access 6.2)
21:29	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile at the apex of the single storey extension (western elevation), (access 6.3)
21:03	Common pipistrelle	One bat emerged from a ridge tile close the apex/gable end of the stable complex (roost 5)

Activity survey in 2024

July 22nd dusk survey: Six thermal/infra-red cameras were used. The earliest bat activity was recorded at 21:02 which was from an emerging but silent pipistrelle bat which was seen but not heard by two surveyors at the rear of the house. Other bats heard on site included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, noctule and a myotis species of bat.

Twenty-seven bats (comprising three species) emerged from the building seen by surveyors and/or cameras.

Table 5: Emergence results from 22nd July 2024

Time	Species	Point of emergence
21:14	Soprano pipistrelle	Access 18.2, tile on dormer
21:14	Common pipistrelle	Access 7.4. Hanging tile
21:33	Common pipistrelle	Access 7.1 gable end apex
Unknown	Common pipistrelle	Roost 11, tile on central tower
21:41	Brown long-eared	Access 1.29, roof tile
21:46-21:57	Brown long-eared	Access 1.1, 8 bats from hanging tile
21:14	Pipistrelle species	Roost 21, hanging tile close to downpipe
21:18 & 21:20	Soprano pipistrelle	Roost 17, ridge tile on dormer – 2 bats
21:20	Common pipistrelle	Roost 24. Hanging tile on dormer
21:32	No call (likely brown long-eared)	Access 3.1, eaves
21:45	Soprano pipistrelle	Roost 22, roof tile near downpipe
21:02 – 21:30	Common pipistrelle	Roost 23, minimum 8 bats emerged. Roof tile

Table 6: Summary of roost locations to date, species and minimum numbers of bats for 2023 and 2024.

Roost ID	Access point	Species	Number of bats	Roost location	Roost characterisation
1	1.1	Brown long-eared	10	Hanging tile and into Loft 1 and 2	Maternity
1	1.2	Brown long-eared	3	Roof tile close to the ridge and into Loft 1 and 2	Maternity
2	2.1	Soprano pipistrelle	2	Hanging tile on dormer	Day
2	2.2	Soprano pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile on dormer	Day
3	3.1	Brown long-eared	7	Soffit/eaves, likely access into loft 3	Maternity
3	3.2	Brown long-eared	2	Hanging tile, likely access into loft 3	Maternity
4		Natterer's bat	1	Hanging tile next to a drainpipe	Day
5		Common pipistrelle	1	Apex roof tile	Day
6	6.1	Common pipistrelle	2	Roof tile/flashing	Maternity
6	6.2	Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile	Maternity
6	6.3	Common pipistrelle	1	Apex roof tile	Maternity
6	6.4	Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile	Maternity
6	6.5	Common pipistrelle	1	Central roof tile	Maternity
6	6.6	Pipistrelle species	1	Soffit/eaves above bush on single storey	Maternity

7	7.1	Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile on apex	Day
7	7.2	Common pipistrelle	1	Roof tile	Day
7	7.3	Common pipistrelle	1	Roof tile close to eaves	Day
7	7.4	Common pipistrelle	1	Hanging tile	Day
8		Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile	Day
9		Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile	Day
10		Common pipistrelle	1	Central roof tile	Day
11		Common pipistrelle	1	Hanging tile	Day
12		Brown long-eared	1	Roof tile close to ridge	Day
13		Common pipistrelle	1	Roof tile	Day
14		Pipistrelle species	1	Roof tile	Day
15		Common pipistrelle	1	Ridge tile on dormer	Day
16		Pipistrelle species	2	Hanging tile near a drainpipe	Day
17		Soprano pipistrelle	2	Ridge roof tile on dormer	Day
18		Common pipistrelle & Soprano pipistrelle	1	Roof tile on dormer	Day
19		Common pipistrelle	1	Roof tile close to chimney	Day
20	20.1	Pipistrelle species	1	Hanging tile on dormer	Day

20	20.2	Pipistrelle species	1	Hanging tile on dormer	Day
21		Pipistrelle species	1	Hanging tile close to downpipe	Day
22		Soprano pipistrelle	1	Roof tile near downpipe	Day
23		Common pipistrelle	8	Roof tile	Maternity
24		Common pipistrelle	1	Hanging tile on dormer	Day

Figure 3: Building plan of emergence results and surveyor (red dot) and camera (blue dot) locations for 2023 and 2024.

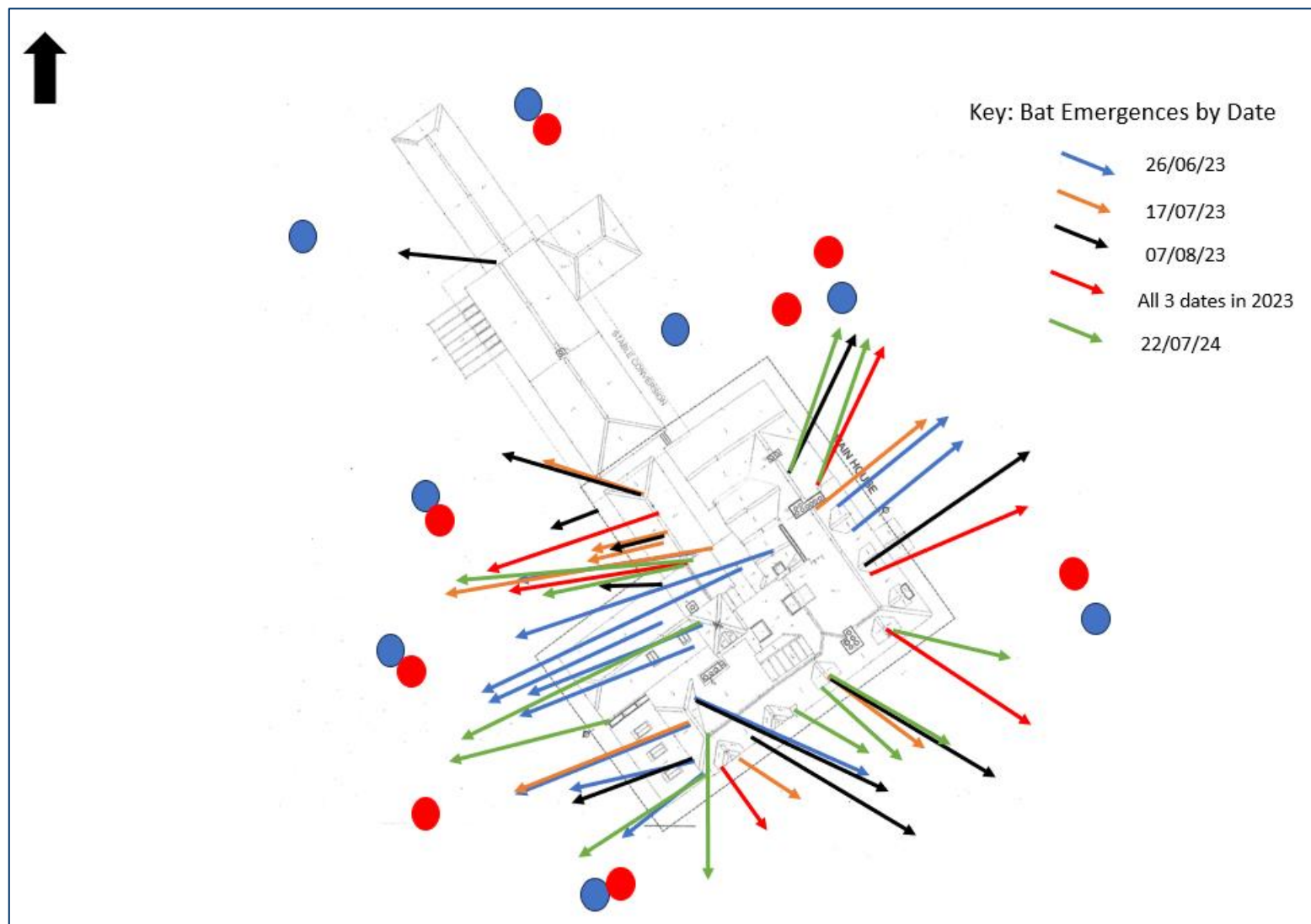


Figure 4: Approximate locations of roosts

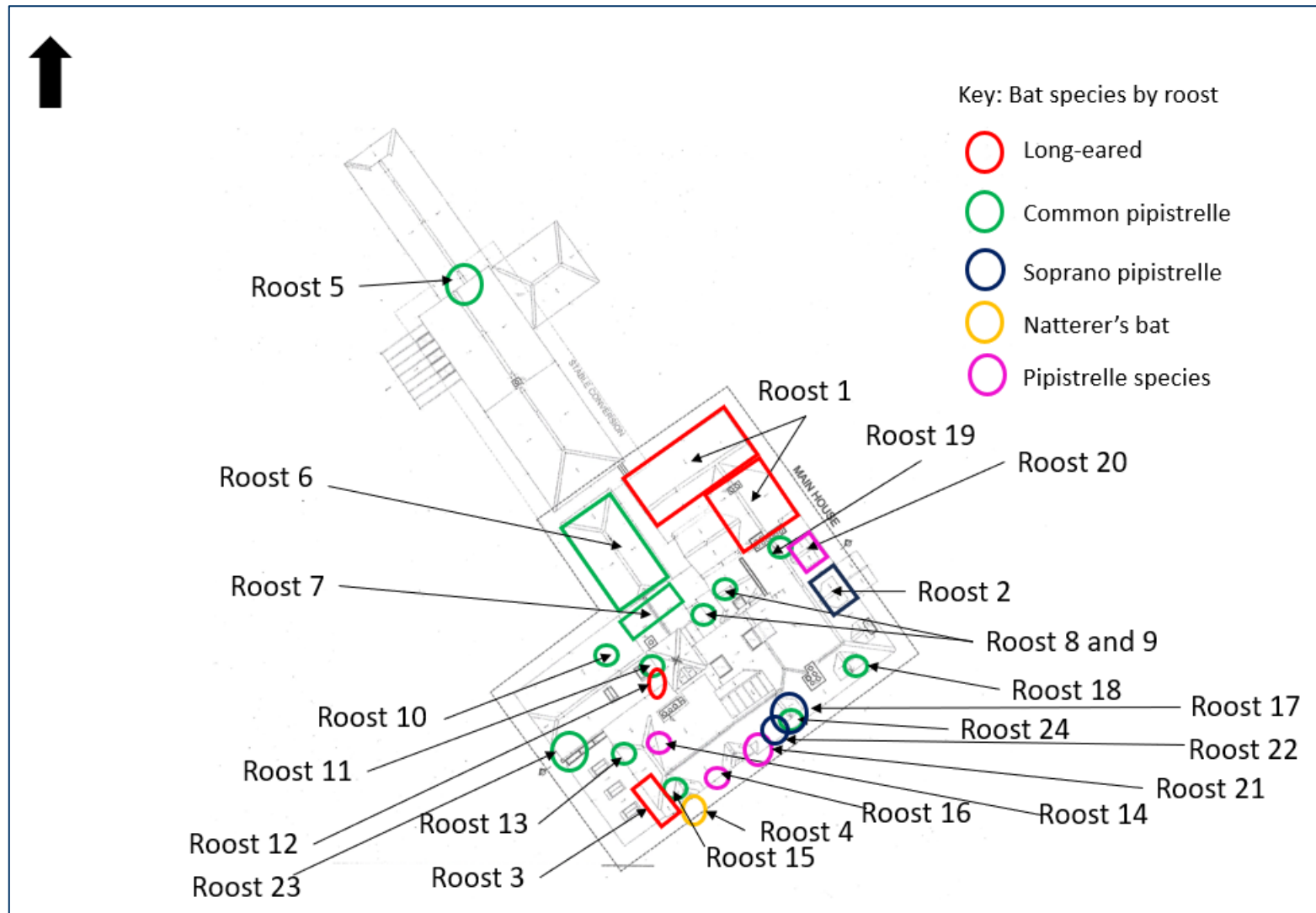


Figure 5: Annotated photographs of roost access locations for three elevations (2023)







Figure 6: Photos of the site

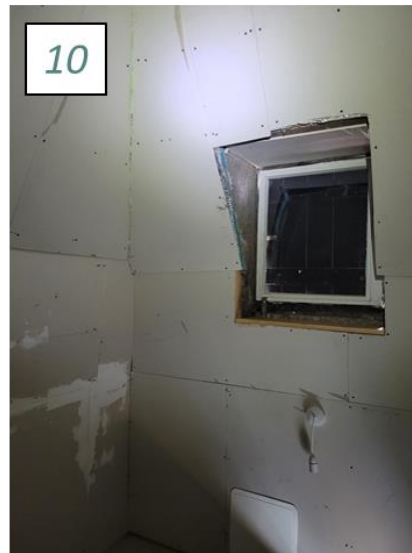
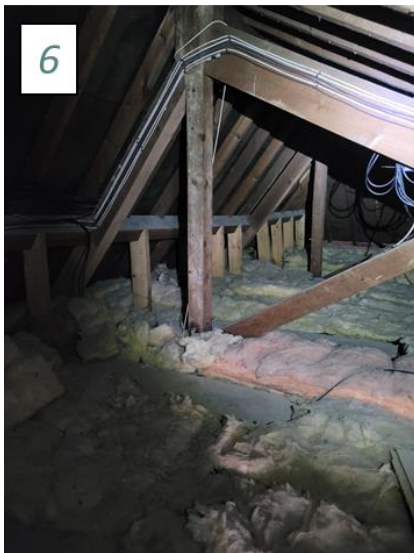
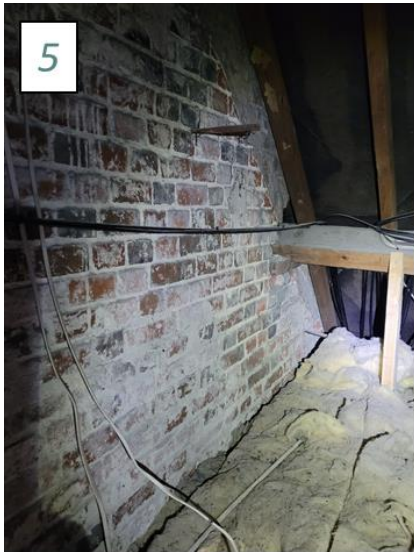


1: East Court from the front (southern) elevation, looking north.

2: Western elevation (looking east).

3: North-western elevation (looking southeast).

4: Northern roof section, viewed from a window in the centre of the house, facing northeast.



5: Loft 1, showing evidence of bats on the walls and floor insulation.

6: Loft 1 looking into the void space.

7: Loft 2 showing unlined tiling.

8: Loft 2, as viewed towards the larger chimney breast (south).

9: The ornamental structure that contained loft 4, showing small access door.

10: Inside loft 4, boarding is visible, as is a sealed window (taken from access door).



11 – 15: views of the myriad lifted and hanging tiles on the roof



16: External view of the detached garage, black circle to show where the roof is bowing. 17: Rear elevation showing disused chicken coop and run.
18: Eaves of the building. 19: Internal view of the stable area with false ceiling.



20: Wood store with unlined roof above. 21: Potting shed with chicken wire above.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

During the preliminary roost assessment evidence of bats was found within the loft voids of East Court. Brown long-eared bats have utilised lofts 1 and loft 2 which was confirmed by DNA analysis. Several entry points to the main property were noted, including raised roof tiles, decaying bargeboards, and other gaps at connecting points. Three outbuildings – the stables, garage, and summerhouse – also provide potential roosting sites. East Court was therefore confirmed as having roosting bats present, with the outbuildings considered to have a high potential to support roosting bats.

During the activity surveys in 2023, 31 roost access points equating to 20 roosts have been identified. These roost access points are used by four bat species (soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and Natterer's bat). The minimum number of bats is 32 (counted to emerge on one survey) using the farmhouse and stable complex. The majority of the roost access features are day roosts for individual bats, however roost 1 (likely accessing loft 1 and 2) and roost 3 are used by a maternity colony of long-eared bats. Roost 4 was used on one occasion by a Natterer's bat. Several roosts/roost access features were used on all three surveys. However, the complexity of the roof (central area) on the farmhouse was such that there were areas which neither a camera nor a surveyor could adequately observe activity.

During the updating survey in 2024 on the house several roosts and access points continue to be used (roost 1, 3, 11, 17 and 18). Four new roosts were identified, including one small maternity roost for common pipistrelle bats (roost 23). With this information there are now 36 roost access points equating to 24 roosts.

East Court, Finchampstead will require a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence prior to any works being undertaken.

Potential impacts of development and timing of works

The evidence is that there are a number of bat roosts on all elevations of the house and a single day roost on the stable complex, totalling 24 roosts within the buildings on site. The majority of the roosts/roost access points are used by individual bats, however there are two small brown long-eared bat maternity roosts on the eastern (roost 1) and southern elevations (roost 3) of the farmhouse, and two common pipistrelle maternity roosts (roost 6 and roost 23). During one survey, a total of 32 bats were seen to emerge from the farmhouse and stable complex. Therefore, there is a risk of destruction of any bat roosts within the buildings, and/or a risk of death or injury to bats themselves if works commence without suitable mitigation.

Constraints

Due to the complexity of the building's roofs there were areas where neither a camera nor surveyor could adequately observe activity (central roof area).

Further survey

No further surveys are required, assuming works commence within one year of the date of this report.

Future considerations

Planning permission

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) is concerned with sustainable development under three mutually dependent elements: economic, social, and environmental. The environmental element aims to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment and, as part of this, help to improve biodiversity. This provides guidance to local planning authorities when considering biodiversity and conservation, indicating that if significant harm to local biodiversity cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. It is vital that appropriate survey work is undertaken and mitigation recommendations, if required, are proposed before a developer submits a planning application. Where planning has been consented with conditions, it is necessary to demonstrate that all conditions have been met before works commence.

License requirements

Results from East Court, Finchampstead confirm that a bat licence will be required for works to commence. This site is eligible for registration the Natural England Earned Recognition Pilot scheme. For a license or site registration to be granted, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the three 'tests', as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats Regulations) have been met, namely:

- i) for the purposes of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest;
- ii) there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- iii) the action will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

See appendix 3 for further information on bat legislation and the three tests.

Potential Mitigation:

It will be necessary to ensure access for bats remains beneath hanging tiles, roof tiles and ridge tiles and that there is still access into loft voids (1 and 2) on the building after works are completed. Natterer's, common and soprano pipistrelle bats are predominantly crevice-roosting bats, whilst brown long-eared bats require large, open loft voids. To ensure access remains for bats, the hanging tiles, roof and ridge tiles in the areas marked by roost access points should be slightly raised, or alternatively have bespoke bat tiles used in these areas to ensure access remains post-works. Long-eared bats may require cuts in the F1 bitumastic felt lining to ensure they can access loft 1 and loft 2.

It is possible to ensure a net gain in bat roosting opportunities on the stables, which could have bespoke bat tiles added to the roof or bat boxes attached to the walls.

Due to the entanglement risk posed by modern breathable roofing membranes, traditional F1 roofing felt must be used throughout and will be a condition of any licence issued by Natural England.

To ensure there is ongoing provision for bats on site whilst works commence, at least four bat boxes (one box per species identified) should be located around the site (either on the stable block or on trees within the grounds). These must be erected before works start on site and should remain in perpetuity.

It should be noted that brown long-eared bats can remain in their summer roost into the winter hibernation period, and therefore all destructive work to pertinent areas should occur within the autumn or spring windows, to reduce the impacts of disturbance on any individual bats located.

It should also be noted that bats are highly mobile and can switch roost access features and roost locations to areas where they have previously not been found, therefore to safeguard bats which may be on site when work commences, a soft-strip of the any roof and ridge tiles and hanging tiles must be undertaken with the licenced ecologist or their representative on site to ensure that any bats located can be removed. Any bats found during works should be captured by hand by an appropriately qualified Ecologist who is named on the licence, checked over and relocated into the new roost provisions.

Proposed change of tiles in one section of roof: A small section of the rear north-west facing roof slope is significantly shallower in pitch than the majority of the rood, which appears to have been altered at a later date. No bat roosts have been located on this pitch (refer to Proposed roof plan Rev A 19/11/24 Planning revisions for location), and therefore changing the current clay tiles to slate tiles will not impact on the overall provision for bat roosting across the property. Nonetheless, to mitigate for the reduction in roosting potential, incorporating a commercially available bat access slate tile on this roof section will ensure bats could still utilise this pitch for roosting.

Detached outbuilding: Activity surveys for bats have not been conducted on this building, which was only brought into scope in late 2024. However, a detailed PRA survey was carried out in December 2024, and we have undertaken significant survey work on the property which, whilst not focused specifically on this building, were over-arching in their scope for understanding bat activity around the property. There was no indication of high levels of bat activity in that area of the property beyond that which we were observing directly, and therefore it is expected that bats will be using the building in a similar way to the use they make of other buildings on the property; that is that there will be day roosts for pipistrelle species on an opportunistic basis.

To prevent further delays to these much-needed roof works, the property should be registered in its entirety with the Bat Earned Recognition scheme, using Licensing Policy 4. LP4 is a route by which we can obtain a license in situations where additional survey work is unlikely to provide additional confidence in results already obtained, and those additional surveys would be disproportionate in terms of delaying the timeline of the project, and/or the financial implications of undertaking additional surveys.

In terms of mitigation on site, this outbuilding will also be subject to a supervised soft strip to safeguard any bats present. Given that the tiles will be replaced on a like-for-like basis, there will be numerous cavities available for bat roosting under tiles on the new roofs, and therefore no impact on the favourable conservation status of any species found present.

Timing: There will be constraints as to timings of the works due to a high-status roost being impacted (roost 1, 3, 6 and 23). Works to maternity roosts should commence from September/October when the roost has dispersed, or, less ideally, March/April prior to a maternity roost forming for the following year.

East Court will require a European Protected Species Licence to be issued from Natural England, or registration of the site under their Earned Recognition license scheme. In either case, a licence cannot be issued less than three weeks or more than 12 weeks in advance of works commencing. The registered ecologist is required to have visited the property within three months of applying to register the site to ensure conditions have not altered since survey works began. Natural England will require all survey data in order to determine a licence application.

It will be a condition of the licence that monitoring of the roosts and bat activity on site is undertaken at least one year after work to the bat roost is completed, and therefore access to the site for the licenced ecologist will be required in the future.

Lighting: Bats are subject to disturbance from changes or increases in light levels in areas upon which they rely, including roost access points, commuting routes and foraging areas, therefore it will be necessary to consider a lighting plan. Suitable lighting for bats which also ensure required visibility for occupants include directional down-lighting, illuminating below the horizontal plane to avoid light spill into the surrounding area. Low level path lighting should be considered, using narrow spectrum low ultra-violet warm LED lighting which is triggered via motion sensors.

Supervision: An ecological watching brief should be maintained throughout pertinent aspects of the works which pose a significant risk of locating a bat. All contractors will be subject to a 'toolbox talk' highlighting the potential of finding bats and actions which should be taken in the event that a bat is located and will be required to sign to state that they have received such instructions.

Limitations

This report has been prepared for sole use by the Client and their agents and must not be relied upon by any other party without the prior express written permission of Dr Merryl Gelling (Spires Ecology Ltd.).

6. APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of sites to support bat roosts⁴.

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of roosting habitats</i>	<i>Minimum further survey requirements</i>
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further surveys required
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).	One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey. May to August.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. May to September with at least one survey between May to August.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third survey could be either dusk or dawn. May to September, with at least two surveys between May and August.
Confirmed	Structures have been confirmed as bat roosts. Surveys are required to characterise those roosts in terms of the numbers and species of bat using those roosts, and how they are being used.	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third survey could be either dusk or dawn. May to September, with at least two surveys between May and August. NOTE: If Night vision aids are used then it may be possible to conduct all three surveys at dusk ⁴ .

⁴ Taken and adapted from Tables 4.1, 7.1 and 7.3 in Collins, J (ed) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 2

DNA analysis results from Ecotype Genetics for East Court, Finchampstead



Sample ID: EG-1044-6

Sample information:

Sample type: Faecal	Species group: Bats
Suspected species:	Site Location: East Court 1
Comments:	

Laboratory information:

DNA Extraction Code: EG-2023-0508	Identification method: qPCR
Analysis Procedure Notes: All UK bat species tested for - only a single species detected in this sample.	
Laboratory Comments: None	

Species Identified:

Species 1: Plecotus auritus (Brown long-eared bat)	qPCR Ct Value: 19
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APPENDIX 3

Bat legislation

All bat species and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, succeeded by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). Under this legislation it is therefore an offence to:

- i) Deliberately capture or intentionally take a bat
- ii) Deliberately or intentionally kill or injure a bat
- iii) To be in possession or control of any live or dead wild bat or any part of or derived from a live bat
- iv) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection
- v) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- vi) Deliberately disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- vii) Deliberately disturb any bat, in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability
 - a. To survive, breed, reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - b. In the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In situation when an otherwise lawful operation is being carried out that has the potential to result in an offence there is scope for a derogation to be granted under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) by the granting of a licence from a Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation. In England this licence is considered by Natural England.

As part of this, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the three 'tests', as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats Regulations) have been met, namely that:

- i) The proposal serves the purposes of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. The house is currently in a poor state of repair and will continue to deteriorate if no maintenance works are undertaken.
- ii) There is no satisfactory alternative.
- iii) The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

All three tests must be met regardless of whether an application is for the European Protected Species Mitigation Licence or the Bat Class Mitigation Licence.

APPENDIX 4

Data search from TVERC (TVERC/23/0208)

SINGLE SPECIES RECORDS

Taxon Group	Common Name	Latin Name	European Directives	UK Legislation	NERC s41	Other Designations	No of records	Earliest Record	Latest Record
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Bat	Chiroptera	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-CR, RL-GB-post2001-EN, RL-GB-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-DD	10	01/07/2016	30/08/2021
	Bats	Vespertilionidae	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-CR, RL-GB-post2001-EN, RL-GB-post2001-VU, RL-GB-post2001-NT, RL-GB-post2001-DD	2	01/01/2015	28/07/2015
	Brown Long-eared Bat	Plecotus auritus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	NA	91	01/01/1995	26/08/2022
	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	NA	120	01/01/1995	04/08/2022
	Daubenton's Bat	Myotis daubentonii	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	NA	17	01/01/1995	13/08/2021
	Lesser Noctule	Nyctalus leisleri	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	RL-GB-post2001-NT	3	07/05/2014	01/01/2015
	Long-eared Bat species	Plecotus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-EN	46	21/11/2004	20/12/2018
	Myotis Bat species	Myotis	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-CR, RL-GB-post2001-DD	24	01/09/2008	11/09/2019
	Nathusius's Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus nathusii	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	RL-GB-post2001-NT	8	09/05/2017	27/06/2019

Taxon Group	Common Name	Latin Name	European Directives	UK Legislation	NERC s41	Other Designations	No of records	Earliest Record	Latest Record
	Natterer's Bat	Myotis nattereri	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	NA	3	29/06/2019	12/06/2020
	Noctule Bat	Nyctalus noctula	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	BF-LBAP	5	01/01/1995	04/08/2022
	Noctule Bat	Nyctalus noctula	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	NA	45	01/01/1995	04/08/2022
	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-NT	43	30/06/1997	04/08/2022
	Serotine	Eptesicus serotinus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	RL-GB-post2001-VU	19	01/01/2008	04/08/2022
	Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	NA	88	01/01/2007	04/08/2022
	Western Barbastelle	Barbastella barbastellus	HabDir-A2np, HabDir-A4	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NERC-S41	RL-GB-post2001-VU	2	04/08/2015	11/06/2019
	Whiskered/Brandt's Bat	Myotis mystacinus/brandtii	NA	HabReg-Sch2, WACA-Sch5-s9.4b/s9.4c/s9.5a/s9.5b	NA	NA	1	16/05/2018	16/05/2018