



**Preliminary bat roost assessment
&
Great Crested Newt Habitat Assessment**

Site Location	Bracken Ridge, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, RG40 3QN
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Validity of data

The findings of this study are valid for a period of 24 months from the date of survey to support any mitigation requirements. However, the LPA may require a repeat of any surveys older than 12 months. If works have not commenced by this date, it may be necessary to undertake an updated survey to allow any changes in the status of bats on site to be assessed, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.

Executive Summary

Chase Ecology undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at the named site. The aim of the assessment was to consider the value and suitability of the structures for roosting bats & nesting birds as detailed below;

Survey Methodology	An internal & external survey was carried out by Elena Vasileva Class 2 survey licence 2024-12141-CL18-BAT. The assessment is for potential roosting and usage of the structure for bats & nesting birds. See section 3 (Methodology). Additional to the visit further research has been carried out on the Magic.gov database and National Biodiversity Network
Results of Preliminary Bat Roost Inspection	SEE SECTION 6.0 Following a preliminary bat roost assessment, it has been identified that both the building and surrounding environments offer value to bats. A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed 26 granted European Protected Species applications for Brown Long-eared, Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Nathusius's Pipistrelle bats. A 2km radius search has demonstrated habitats of value to bats including woodland, parkland, open fields, hedgerows and waterbodies of which support feeding & commuting. The main dwelling has evidenced roosting features of value to bats within the upper and lower roof coverings, vertical hanging tiles and eaves which look to offer access and availability to both void & crevice dwelling bats and could not be fully ruled out during the Preliminary Roost Assessment without causing disturbance to materials which in effect may cause disturbance to possible bat roosts within. A single Pipistrelle bat (likely Common Pipistrelle) was observed within the rear South facing vertical hanging tiles confirming a roost. As the building offers several features of value it is not confirmed at this stage if further bats use the property for roosting.

Evidence of Nesting Birds	No evidence of nesting birds identified
Great Crested Newts	Although the proposed development works look to offer no direct impacts to surrounding habitats of value to Great Crested Newts, it s recommended that a suitable level of protection be applied to limit impacts to any unlikely amphibians which may use the site during the terrestrial times of the year. See Appendix 5: Great Crested Newt Protection & Avoidance
Requirements for Additional Survey	In line with best practice survey guidelines, a structure that has demonstrated confirmed activity from bats must have a further three emergence surveys to confirm activity from bats, species, volume and locations. These survey should be carried out within the recommended survey season from May to September with at least two of these visits during the optimal time of May to August. Where bats are recorded to be using features of the structure where disturbance would be caused, a Protected Species mitigation licence and suitable protection procedures must be applied. See Appendix 2: Bat Conservation Trust flow chart See Appendix 3: Description of the categories used to assess a building or tree's bat roost potential and the survey effort required to determine the likely presence or absence of bats
Legislation	Evidence of these additional survey requirements are placed upon all LPA's by both Part 4 (50) of The Conservation (of Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 (as amended 2017) and section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (which places a duty on LPA's, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity). Furthermore should an LPA approve a planning application (where Bats presence was deemed a likelihood) prior to Bat usage of the area affected by the development being fully understood (known) then should that development result in either the disturbance (including disturbance to behaviours or migration), injury or death of a Bat then the authority and

	developer could be considered too have acted recklessly under Part 1 (9) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 2016); and as such be guilty of committing an offence. Prior to any planning decision being made, emergence/re-entry surveys must be completed, as stated by Natural England and the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines. This will enable a fuller understanding of bats usage of the building and assess the appropriateness of the level of mitigation.
Predicted Impacts of Development on Bats and Nesting Birds	Further assessment required to confirm or rule out any activity from bats and to assess any disturbance caused during development.
Mitigation and Compensation of Proposed Impacts	Not at this stage
Licensing Requirements for Bats	Not at this stage
Required Actions	See section 6.0 It is advised that no further works take place to the identified areas of value to bats at this stage as this may cause disturbance to bats and their roosts. see section 2.0 of this report

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1.0 Introduction

Brief

- 1.1** This report will present the findings of a preliminary bat roost assessment, nesting bird survey and Great Crested Newt habitat assessment of the named site and further research of the area online.

Site description

- 1.2** An occupied two storey detached dwelling, see section 5.0 images.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1.1** All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence to:
- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
 - Deliberately disturb bats;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place
- 2.1.2** In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses
- 2.1.3** If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts, then a licence will need to be obtained from Natural England, which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats.
- 2.1.4** In the UK, the provisions of the Birds Directive are implemented through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected it an offence to: • kill, injure, or take any wild bird; • take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built; or • take or destroying an egg of any such wild bird.
- 2.1.5** Special protection against disturbance during the breeding season is also afforded to those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All reporting undertaken by Mr Garry Smith who is an experienced licensed bat ecologist in England [Class 2 registration 2017-28032-CLS-CLS] with over 10 years' experience practical of professional ecological surveys.
- 3.2 Preliminary roost assessments can be undertaken throughout the year and can provide conclusive results, which can save expense and time for Planning Applicants. The optimum time to investigate for the presence of bats is during their active season when signs of presence can be more easily located.
- 3.3 A thorough interior and exterior inspection of the building for bat roosting and potential roosting features was undertaken. Signs surveyed for included droppings, dead bats, feeding remains (beetle, moth and butterfly remains), urine staining and grease marks around crevices and down walls, and any noises such as scratching and audible bat calls.
- 3.4 During the survey, the surrounding area was assessed in relation to suitable habitat that may be of value to bats, birds and Great Crested Newt..
- 3.5 Surveys were conducted following best practice guidelines (see section seven)
- 3.6 All areas of the building internally were inspected with the aid of a 2 million c/p lamp and inspection camera. External features were also inspected where possible and observations were aided with binoculars where needed.
- 3.7 A desk top survey was also completed to establish the biodiversity of the area along with its habitat structures including statutory and non-statutory designations
- 3.8 Biological records were not obtained for this survey

4.0 Results

Desk Study

Environmental record search

4.1 A data search from freely available resources was undertaken to assess the names species for distribution/record within a 2km study area which demonstrated records for;

- Brown Long-eared
- Common Pipistrelle
- Nathusius's Pipistrelle
- Soprano Pipistrelle

4.2 Designated sites;

Statutory (2km)

Site	Designation	Distance (km)	Direction
Heath Lake	SSSI	1.80	NE

Priority Habitat Inventory within 2km

HABITAT	Distance (km)	DIRECTION
Deciduous Woodland	0.10	SW
Deciduous Woodland	0.20	N
Deciduous Woodland	0.35	SE
Deciduous Woodland	0.70	S
Deciduous Woodland	0.80	N
Deciduous Woodland	1.10	E

None of the above names sites/locations would be effected in any way from the proposed development plan for this site, including both habitats and species.

4.3 Aerial photographs of the site were consulted to determine if there are important landscape features surrounding and within vicinity of the site.

4.4 A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed 26 granted European Protected Species applications for Brown Long-eared, Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Nathusius's Pipistrelle bats.

Field study

4.5 The Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats was carried by Elena Vasileva [Class 2 registration 2017-28032-CLS-CLS] where the dwelling and surrounding areas were assessed for the possible usages of bats & birds.

External	Features of value to bats	Notes
External Brickworks	No	No gaps or features of value to bats observed within external brickworks/ render coverings of the upper and lower sections of the property.
Window/door frames	No	No gaps or features of value to bats observed within or surrounding the door/window frames to the property.
Eaves coverings	Yes	A small number of minor gaps between the timber coverings were observed which may offer access opportunities for bats.
Roof coverings	Yes	Both the upper and lower tiled roof coverings to the property have demonstrated a number of gaps of adequate proportions to offer likely shelter/access opportunities for bats. Such features have included gaps within the dry ridge/hip coverings, surrounding roof lights and raised coverings. In addition, vertical hanging tiles throughout the structure have also demonstrated a moderate number of gaps which are common features used by crevice dwelling bats such as Pipistrelle which have been recorded locally.

Internal	Features of value to bats	Notes
Membrane coverings	Yes	BRM coverings were observed below the tiled roof coverings. Such coverings may offer further roosting opportunities for bats between the membrane and tiles where external gaps provide access.
Daylight/gaps internally	No	No areas of protruding daylight observed within the roof void spaces.
Evidence from bats	Yes	A single Pipistrelle bat (likely Common Pipistrelle) was observed within the rear South facing vertical hanging tiles confirming a roost. As the building offers several features of value it is not confirmed at this stage if further bats use the property for roosting.
Restrictions	No	Full access throughout the site.

Limitations

4.6 Many species of bat in the UK are crevice dwelling, and signs of bats and bats themselves can be difficult to find within a building or within areas that are inaccessible such as the gaps within roof coverings, eaves and cavities within the stonework's.

4.7 Great Crested Newt

No water features observed within the site other than a small drainage ditch to the front North areas of the site which contains no vegetation or suitability for said species.

Water features observed within 500 meters of the site;

Pond – 65 meters – North/East – Residential site

Land Drain – 290 meters – South – Across rear of Residential

Pond – 300 meters – West - Residential site

Pond/Land drain – 450 meters – South/East – Parkland

The habitats within the site have demonstrated low value opportunities for Great Crested Newts.

The site offers hardstanding/managed grass/ornamental flora across the North and central areas of the site in a well-managed condition with the main dwelling.

The lower South areas of the site have however demonstrated less management leading down to the South boundary with potential shelter/foraging habitats commonly used during terrestrial stages of the year.

5.0 Plans & Photographs

Image 1 – North facing elevation of the property offering gaps within the vertical hanging tiles of adequate proportion to offer likely roosting habitats



Image 2 – As per image one above



Image 3 – Gaps below the ridge coverings as observed from the North elevation which looks to provide further roosting opportunities

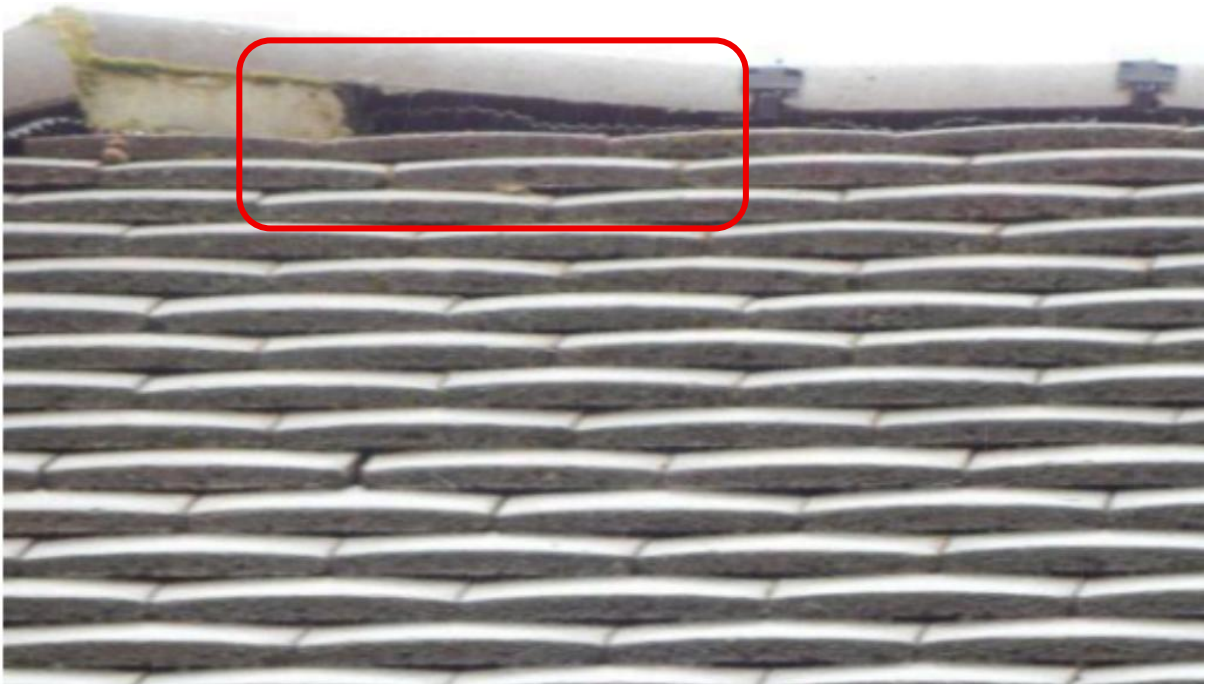


Image 4 – Rear South facing elevation of the property offering further vertical hanging tiles where a single Pipistrelle bats was observed during the assessment



Image 5 – Single Pipistrelle bat observed within the South facing vertical hanging tiles



Image 6 – Example of gaps within the rear South facing vertical hanging tiles



Image 7 – Single storey section to the rear South of the property where further gaps of value across the tiled roof coverings were observed



Image 8 – As per image seven above



Image 9 – North & South facing elevation of the linked garage which is situated across the West elevation of the property



Image 10 – Small number of gaps within the garage roof coverings which look to provide shelter/access opportunities for bats



Image 11 – Internal views from within the garage section of the property



Image 12 – Internal views across the upper areas of the property



Image 13 – Internal views from within the accessible roof void spaces of the property



Image 14 – Habitats to the front North areas of the site offering manages grass, hardstanding's and landscaping's



Image 15 – View looking South to North across the mid section of the site



Image 16 – Lower South boundary habitats of the site



6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

All recommendations provided in this section shall be on Chase Ecology's current understanding of the site proposals and current planning application, correct at the time the report was compiled. Should any aspect of the proposals alter, the conclusions and recommendations made in the report should be reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate

- 6.1 Following a preliminary bat roost assessment, it has been identified that both the building and surrounding environments offer value to bats.
- 6.2 A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed 26 granted European Protected Species applications for Brown Long-eared, Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Nathusius's Pipistrelle bats.
- 6.3 A 2km radius search has demonstrated habitats of value to bats including woodland, parkland, open fields, hedgerows and waterbodies of which support feeding & commuting.
- 6.4 The main dwelling has evidenced roosting features of value to bats within the upper and lower roof coverings, vertical hanging tiles and eaves which look to offer access and availability to both void & crevice dwelling bats and could not be fully ruled out during the Preliminary Roost Assessment without causing disturbance to materials which in effect may cause disturbance to possible bat roosts within.
- 6.5 A single Pipistrelle bat (likely Common Pipistrelle) was observed within the rear South facing vertical hanging tiles confirming a roost.
As the building offers several features of value it is not confirmed at this stage if further bats use the property for roosting.
- 6.6 In line with best practice survey guidelines, a structure that has demonstrated confirmed activity from bats must have a further three emergence surveys to confirm activity from bats, species, volume and locations. These survey should be carried out within the recommended survey season from May to September with at least two of these visits during the optimal time of May to August.
- 6.7 Where bats are recorded to be using features of the structure where disturbance would be caused, a Protected Species mitigation licence and suitable protection procedures must be applied.

- 6.8** It is advised that no further works take place to the identified areas of value to bats at this stage as this may cause disturbance to bats and their roosts. see section 2.0 of this report
- 6.9** Although the proposed development works look to offer no direct impacts to surrounding habitats of value to Great Crested Newts, it s recommended that a suitable level of protection be applied to limit impacts to any unlikely amphibians which may use the site during the terrestrial times of the year. See appendix 5: Great Crested Newt Protection & Avoidance

7.0 References

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition 2024

UK Bat Mitigation Guideline or ILP/BCT 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK' GN 08 / 23

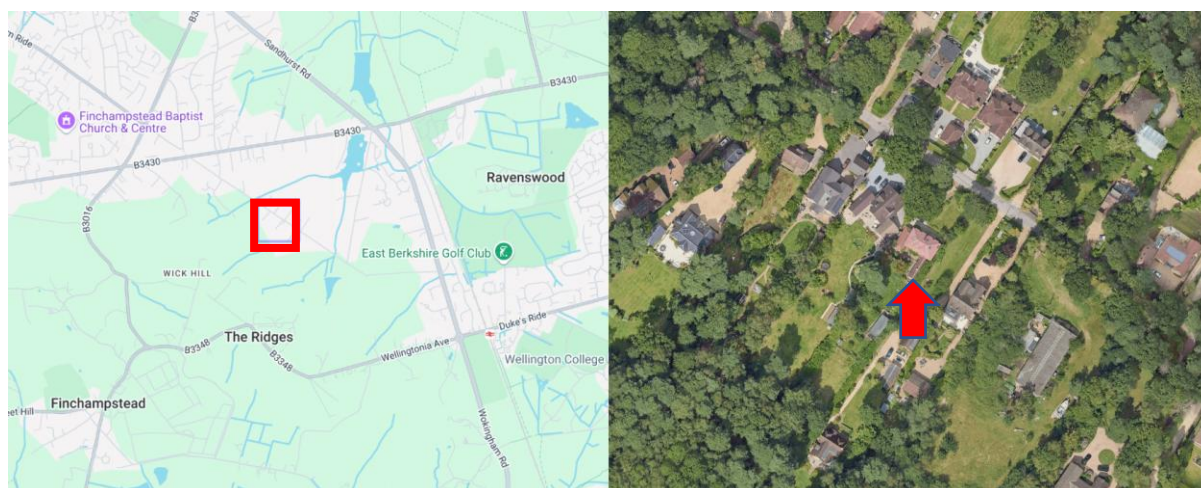
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Bat Conservation Trust.

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

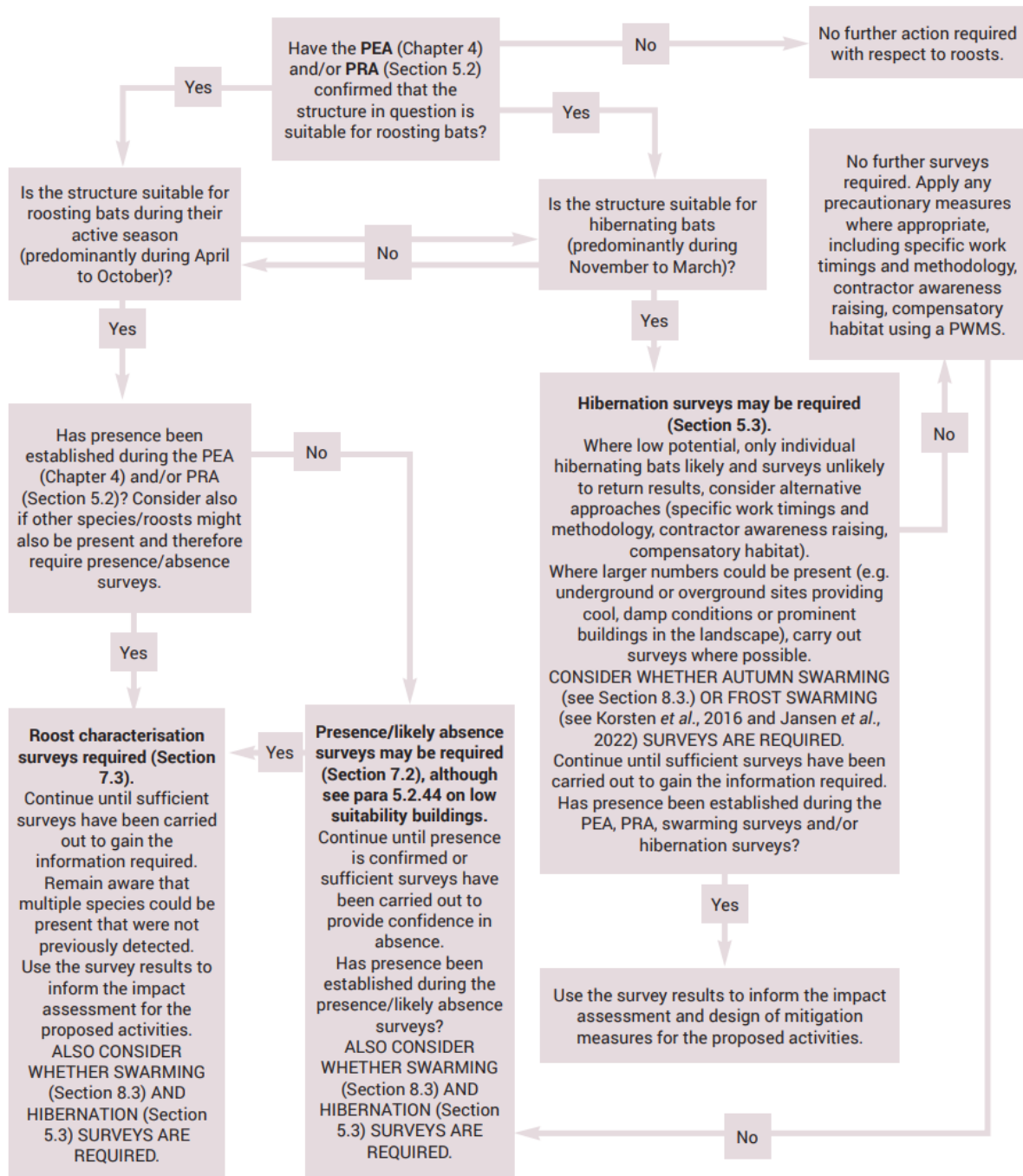
Google Maps

Appendix 1: Location plan



Appendix 2: Below flow chart taken from the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines used when assessing the suitability of a structure and any additional survey requirements.

Figure 5.1. Flow chart illustrating the process used to establish which types of surveys are necessary for roosts in structures, to be applied using professional judgement.



Note on Figure 5.1: In some situations, bats may use the same structure throughout the year and in these situations, both arms of the flow chart need to be fully considered.

Appendix 3: Description of the categories used to assess a building or tree's bat roost potential and the survey effort required to determine the likely presence or absence of bats

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b 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 and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.
a Negligible is defined as ‘so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant’. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance. c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten <i>et al.</i>, 2016 and Jansen <i>et al.</i>, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.		

Table 7.1. Recommended timings for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees where other methods such as PRF inspection are not possible, but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result). To be used in tandem with Table 7.2.

Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
May to August (structures)	May to September ^a , with at least one of surveys between May and August ^b	May to September ^a , with at least two of surveys between May and August ^b
No further surveys required (trees)		
a September surveys are both weather- and location-dependent. Conditions may become more unsuitable in these months, particularly in more northerly latitudes, which may reduce the length of the survey season. September surveys are likely to miss maternity roosts due to dispersal before this time, but may pick up mating roosts. b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least three weeks apart, preferably more. Survey timings should consider the prevailing conditions in the year of survey, which will vary geographically. In years with a cold spring, the surveys should not be started in early May or all completed in May. The surveys should maximise the possibility of detecting maternity roosts, which can switch roosts between pregnancy and lactation, and the optimum coverage includes the pre-parturition, post-parturition and mating periods.		

Appendix 4: Emergence Survey Location Points

Below site view to show suitable surveyor location points during each emergence survey to maintain visibility of the property.

In line with best practice survey guidelines, a total of four surveyors will be required to visually cover all elevations of the structure during each emergence survey with additional support from IR/Thermal cameras.



Appendix 5: Great Crested Newt Protection & Avoidance

Although no evidence from Great Crested newts or other amphibians were observed during a site visit on the 5th May 2025, it is recommended that a suitable level of protection be applied during all stages of the works to prevent impacts.

All current areas of managed grass and landscaping should be maintained at all times to prevent any growth/cover which may promote terrestrial value to amphibians.

The lower South areas of the site which have demonstrated an unmanaged habitat should be protected during all proposed works and limited from access to contractors, plant and materials during such time as below;

