



Preliminary Roost Assessment

4 Westview Drive,
Twyford,
RG10 9BP

Preliminary Roost Assessment of 4 Westview Drive, Twyford, RG10 9BP

REPORT DETAILS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NatureBureau Ltd was commissioned by Els De Mets to undertake a daytime bat Preliminary Roost Assessment at 4 Westview Drive, Twyford, RG10 9BP to inform proposed development. The survey was carried out on 11 June 2026 by Natural England licenced bat ecologist Kristina Wood. The survey included a desk study and an external inspection of a residential dwelling (B1) proposed for an extension. The survey included a detached garage (B2) which will be demolished to accommodate the extension.

The surrounding landscape comprises a diverse and well-connected mosaic of habitats capable of supporting a range of bat species. Nearby woodland blocks, woodland edge habitats, tree lines, and wetland features are likely to provide valuable foraging habitat, commuting corridors, and potential roosting opportunities. Consequently, bats are considered likely to be present within the wider landscape and to utilise habitats in the vicinity of the site.

However, the survey found very limited opportunities for bats to roost within the site structures. Internally, a thorough inspection of B1 identified no evidence of current or historic bat use. Although sections of the roofing membrane were torn, the external inspection did not identify corresponding access points through the roof covering at these locations. A single feature of potential relevance was identified adjacent to the western side of the chimney stack, where a localised area of missing mortar externally coincided with a tear in the roofing membrane internally. However, this feature was found to be occupied by nesting house sparrows, and no evidence of bat use was recorded.

B2 was similarly assessed as offering negligible suitability for roosting bats. The structure is well lit and heavily utilised for general storage, with evidence of frequent human activity and regular disturbance. No internal roof void is present, and inspection of the exposed timber roof beams revealed no evidence of use by bats or nesting birds. No droppings, staining, feeding remains, nesting material, or other field signs indicative of current or historic occupation by bats were identified.

No features typically associated with bat hibernation, such as cellars, deep cavities, or substantial stone crevices, are present on site. The limited external crevice features observed are unlikely to provide the stable, humid, and thermally buffered conditions required for hibernation.

B1 and B2 at 4 Westview Drive are considered to provide negligible bat roosting potential, in accordance with the criteria set out in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). Accordingly, **no adverse impacts upon bats are anticipated**, and the likelihood of committing offences under relevant wildlife legislation is considered negligible. In accordance with Collins (2023), **no further bat surveys are required**.

Evidence of nesting birds was identified during the survey, and bird nesting could occur elsewhere on B1 and B2 during the bird breeding season. Appropriate recommendations have been provided.

1 INTRODUCTION

NatureBureau Ltd was commissioned by Els De Mets (hereafter referred to as “the client”) to undertake a Preliminary (bat) Roost Assessment (PRA) at 4 Westview Drive, Twyford, RG10 9BP (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’) to satisfy legal requirements in relation to bats and their roosts, which are protected by law. This report summarises the findings of that survey.

1.1 Site Overview

The site, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 79018 76869, comprises a semi-detached residential dwelling (Building B1) and detached garage (B2). The property includes an amenity garden to the rear (south) and a driveway to the front (north).

The site is situated centrally within a moderate-density residential area to the north side of Twyford, approximately 8 kilometres (km) northeast of Reading Town Centre.

1.2 Site Plans

The proposed works comprise a two-storey side and single-storey rear extension, facilitated by the removal of B2.

An impact assessment is provided in Section 4.1.

Site plans can be found in Section 6.1.

1.3 Scope of Assessment

The aim of the roost assessment is to assess the potential status of roosting bats on the site and to determine the existence and location of any bat-suitable foraging and commuting habitats. With regards to roosting bats, this information will serve to assess the potential ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological and legislative constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required.

Figure 1: B1 at 4 Westview Drive, Twyford, RG10 9BP

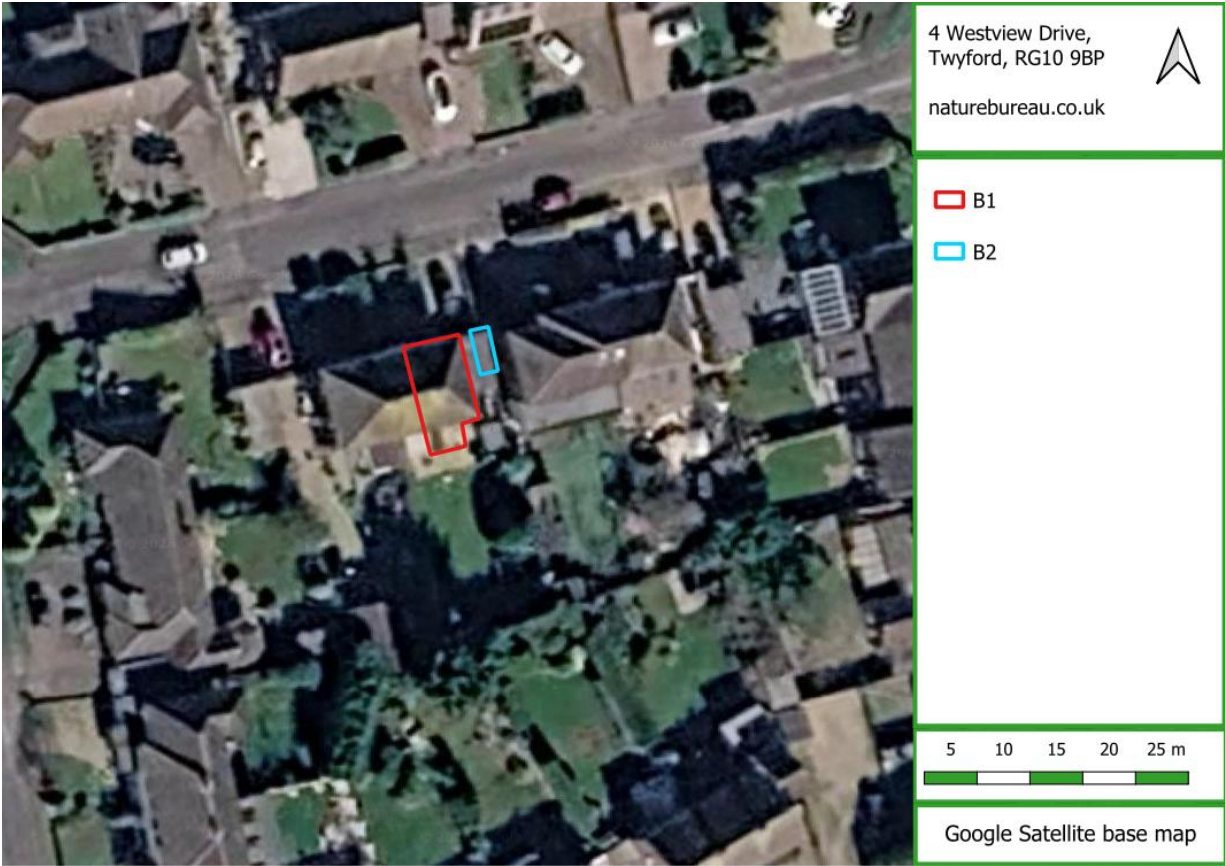


Figure 1: The site within the wider landscape



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving bats within 2 km of the site, and for records of relevant designated sites within this same radius. Additionally, maps/aerial images were interrogated for features of bat interest.

Table 1: Resources used during the desk study

Resource	Information assessed
Google Earth ¹	Assessment of the local landscape. Latest image date: August 2025
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website ²	Records of licences issued by Natural England for works affecting bat species within 2 km of the site; any relevant site designations within 2 km of the site; Special Areas of Conservation designated for bat interest within 10 km of the site; Priority Habitats in the local area

2.2 Field Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 11 June 2026, between 18:00 and 18:45 hours. The survey was carried out by Kristina Wood - a Natural England bat licenced ecologist.

The work, analysis and reporting were undertaken in line with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct³, the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines⁴ and other relevant guidelines and legislation as listed in the Appendices of this report.

2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An assessment was carried out on B1 and B2 to determine their potential to support roosting bats. The assessment included an external investigation of structures for signs of bat activity such as droppings, rub or scratch marks, staining at potential roosts and exit holes, live or dead bats, and features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats, such as raised or missing tiles. Equipment used during the survey includes binoculars, a ladder, a high-powered torch and a phone camera.

The suitability of B1 and B2 to support bats was rated from no suitability to high suitability in accordance with Section 4.3 of the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines, and recommendations for further survey requirements are also taken from Collins (2023)⁴.

2.3 Limitations

DEFRA's MAGIC mapping system has recently been updated (12 December 2024), and as a result, European Protected Species licences are not always displayed accurately or in full. It is possible that the available data is incomplete.

The survey was conducted in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023) to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats. However, the data collected represents a snapshot in time, based on conditions observed during specific survey dates. As such, it provides an indication of site use by bats at the time of assessment only.

Identifying bat roosts within buildings can be challenging, particularly in larger structures or those with numerous potential roosting features. Roosting sites used by solitary bats or males can be especially difficult to detect due to their discreet nature. Many bat species utilise narrow crevices, such as gaps between roof tiles or beneath tile linings, where any droppings or signs of occupancy may become concealed and inaccessible to surveyors.

Additionally, inspections may not always reveal evidence of bat presence, as droppings and other field signs can degrade quickly due to adverse weather.

The results of this report are valid up to 12 months and/or if the conditions of the site change significantly, as per the Advice Note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys produced by CIEEM in 2019.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences

According to Defra's MAGIC database, four Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licences have been issued within 2 km of the site for activities affecting bats. These licences relate to works impacting brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) between 2010 and 2020. These relate to the damage or destruction of resting and breeding places.

The nearest record (Licence Refs: 2020-44644-EPS-MIT) pertains to works that caused the destruction of the resting place of brown long-eared and common pipistrelle bats, located approximately 100 m southwest, issued in 2020.

3.1.2 Site Designations

Within 2 km of the site there are no Statutory Designated Sites such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local or National Nature Reserves (L/NNRs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Furthermore, there are no SACs designated for bat interest within a 10 km radius.

3.1.3 Priority Habitats

Within 2 km of the site, there are several scattered parcels of Ancient Woodland and Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat. In addition, a substantial area of Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitat is located approximately 1.5 km to the southeast. Further Priority Habitat is present in the form of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, occurring extensively approximately 80 m southwest of the site.

Collectively, these habitats contribute to a diverse and well-connected ecological landscape with the potential to support a range of bat species. The surrounding woodland blocks, woodland edge habitats, tree lines, and wetland features are likely to provide valuable foraging habitat, commuting routes, and potential roosting opportunities. In particular, linear landscape features and wetland habitats are of high value to bats, offering sheltered flight corridors and supporting elevated abundances of nocturnal invertebrate prey.

Although the site is situated within a residential development, the wider housing area is centrally located in relation to these surrounding habitats and retains ecological connectivity through areas of undeveloped land, mature gardens, and linked boundary vegetation. These features facilitate movement of bats between the site and the wider landscape, maintaining functional connectivity despite the urban setting.

3.1.4 Additional Landscape Features of Interest

A railway corridor and several large waterbodies are located approximately 1 km south and southwest of the site. Both features are likely to be of value to bats within the wider landscape.

Railway corridors often function as linear commuting routes, particularly where they are bordered by mature trees, scrub, or other semi-natural vegetation. These features can facilitate bat movement through the landscape by providing navigational cues, shelter from wind, and connectivity between roosting, foraging, and breeding habitats.

The large lakes and associated marginal vegetation are likely to provide high-quality foraging habitat for a range of bat species. Open water and wetland habitats typically support abundant populations of aquatic and emergent insects, which form an important food resource for bats.

Together, these features enhance the ecological value of the wider landscape by providing foraging opportunities, commuting corridors, and habitat connectivity for bats.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A daytime site inspection was undertaken on 11 June 2026 in bright, clear weather conditions, with an ambient temperature of approximately 21°C recorded at the time of the survey.

B1 comprises a semi-detached, two-storey residential dwelling of traditional brick construction, surmounted by a pitched roof clad with concrete roof tiles. A masonry chimney stack is located on the eastern side of the roof ridge. The property is fitted with uPVC-framed windows and uPVC soffits. To the rear (south elevation), there is a single-storey uPVC porch extension.

3.2.1 External Assessment: B1

The external brickwork was observed to be in good condition, with no evidence of significant deterioration, cracking, displacement, or structural defect. All windows and doors appeared well fitted, appropriately sealed, and suitably integrated within the building envelope. The uPVC soffits were similarly found to be in good condition and well sealed around the entirety of the structure, with no discernible gaps, lifted sections, or potential access points identified.

The main roof covering was found to be in excellent condition. All roof tiles were present, secure, and correctly aligned, with no slipped, lifted, or missing tiles noted during the inspection. Mortar bedding was generally intact throughout.

Two crevices were identified: a small gap beneath the chimney flashing on the rear (south) elevation, and a gap beneath the ridge tiles immediately to the left of the chimney stack, also on the south elevation. House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) were observed entering and exiting the roof space at the latter location and were also noted alarm calling from the roof, indicating active use of this access point.

The eastern roof slope, which is due to be affected by the proposed works, was inspected from ground level using high-powered binoculars. Roof tiles and mortar were observed to be present and in excellent condition, with no defects, displacement, or gaps identified.

The attached porch comprises a shallow-pitched roof finished with a felt covering. The felt was observed to be well fitted and in good condition, with no signs of lifting, splitting, weathering, or deterioration. No crevices, voids, or other features with potential to provide access for roosting bats were identified within this structure.

3.2.2 Internal Assessment: B1

Internally, B1 comprises a traditional timber A-frame roof structure forming the loft space. The roofing membrane exhibited several areas of damage and tearing, resulting in localised exposure of the underside of the roof tiles.

A detailed inspection of these damaged sections, together with the loft floor beneath, did not identify any evidence of bat roosting activity, such as droppings, feeding remains, staining, or other characteristic field signs. The chimney stack was also inspected internally, with no evidence of bat use recorded.

Particular attention was paid to the junctions between the terminal rafters and adjoining gable walls. The small gaps present at these locations were found either to be shallow in extent or obstructed by cobwebs, indicating a lack of regular use by bats and limiting their suitability as access points.

Historic bird nesting material was present within the loft space, demonstrating that wildlife has gained access to the roof void in the past. However, no bats were observed during the survey, and no droppings, feeding remains, staining, scratch marks, or other evidence indicative of current or historic bat occupation were identified.

3.2.3 B2

B2 comprises a detached, single-storey garage of brick construction beneath a flat roof. The roof is finished with a felt covering, which was observed to be in good condition, well fitted, and free from signs of lifting, deterioration, or damage. The uPVC fascia boards were similarly found to be well fitted, with no gaps, crevices, or other features capable of providing access to roosting bats.

Internally, the structure is well lit and heavily utilised for general storage, with evidence of frequent human activity and regular access. No internal roof void is present. Exposed timber roof beams were inspected in full and revealed no evidence of use by bats or nesting birds. No droppings, staining, feeding remains, nesting material, or other field signs indicative of current or historic bat or bird occupation were identified.

3.2.4 On-site and Neighbouring Habitats

The site is predominantly comprised of highly managed amenity garden habitat and hardstanding.

Overall, the habitats within the site are considered to provide low suitability for foraging and commuting bats, with limited ecological value for roosting or wider bat activity.

3.2.5 Tree Assessment

No trees are due to be impacted by the proposed development; therefore, no tree assessments were undertaken.

3.2.6 Nesting Birds

House sparrows were seen nesting on site the at time of the survey. It is also possible that birds could begin nesting elsewhere on or near B1 at any time during bird nesting season.

4 EVALUATION

The surrounding landscape comprises a diverse and well-connected mosaic of habitats capable of supporting a range of bat species. Nearby woodland blocks, woodland edge habitats, tree lines, and wetland features are likely to provide valuable foraging habitat, commuting corridors, and potential roosting opportunities. Consequently, bats are considered likely to be present within the wider landscape and to utilise habitats in the vicinity of the site.

Notwithstanding the suitability of the surrounding landscape, the survey found very limited opportunities for bats to roost within the site structures. Internally, a thorough inspection of B1 identified no evidence of current or historic bat use. Although sections of the roofing membrane were torn, the external inspection did not identify corresponding access points through the roof covering at these locations. A single feature of potential relevance was identified adjacent to the western side of the chimney stack, where a localised area of missing mortar externally coincided with a tear in the roofing membrane internally. However, this feature was found to be occupied by nesting house sparrows, and no evidence of bat use was recorded.

B2 was similarly assessed as offering negligible suitability for roosting bats. The structure is well lit and heavily utilised for general storage, with evidence of frequent human activity and regular disturbance. No internal roof void is present, and inspection of the exposed timber roof beams revealed no evidence of use by bats or nesting birds. No droppings, staining, feeding remains, nesting material, or other field signs indicative of current or historic occupation by bats were identified.

No features associated with bat hibernation were recorded within either structure. The site does not contain cellars, deep cavities, substantial crevices, or other features capable of providing the stable temperature and humidity conditions typically required by hibernating bats.

Taking into account the condition of the buildings, the limited availability of suitable access points and roosting features, the high levels of disturbance within B2, and the absence of any evidence of current or historic bat use, **B1 and B2 at 4 Westview Drive are considered to provide negligible bat roosting potential**, in accordance with the criteria set out in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

4.1 Impact Assessment

The proposed works comprise a two-storey side and single-storey rear extension, facilitated by the removal of B2.

Based on the findings of the PRA, these works are considered highly unlikely to result in the damage or destruction of a bat roost, or in injury, mortality, or significant disturbance to bats potentially roosting within the structure or adjacent features.

Accordingly, no adverse impacts upon bats are anticipated, and the likelihood of committing offences under relevant wildlife legislation is considered negligible, as detailed in the accompanying appendices (Section 6.3).

4.2 Recommendations

In accordance with Collins (2023), **no further bat surveys are required.**

4.3 Nesting Birds

Evidence of bird nesting was identified on B1, and birds could potentially begin nesting anywhere on site at any time during bird nesting season. The proposed works could therefore cause disturbance, injury or death to nesting birds.

If work is to be carried out during bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive), the site owner and site contractors must be aware of their obligations towards nesting birds and must check for them prior to commencing the works. If an active bird nest is discovered, an exclusion zone must be put in place (minimum 5 m), and works must be halted in that area. Breeding birds and their nests are protected by law, and all active nests must be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

5 CONCLUSION

4 Westview Drive is situated within a landscape of high suitability for bats; however, the buildings themselves offer negligible potential to support bat roosting. The proposed works are therefore considered highly unlikely to have any impact on bats, and no further bat survey work is required.

As a precaution, standard good practice measures should be implemented during the bird nesting season (typically March to August inclusive) to avoid disturbance to active nests and to ensure compliance with relevant wildlife legislation.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Site Plans



6.2 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 11 June 2026













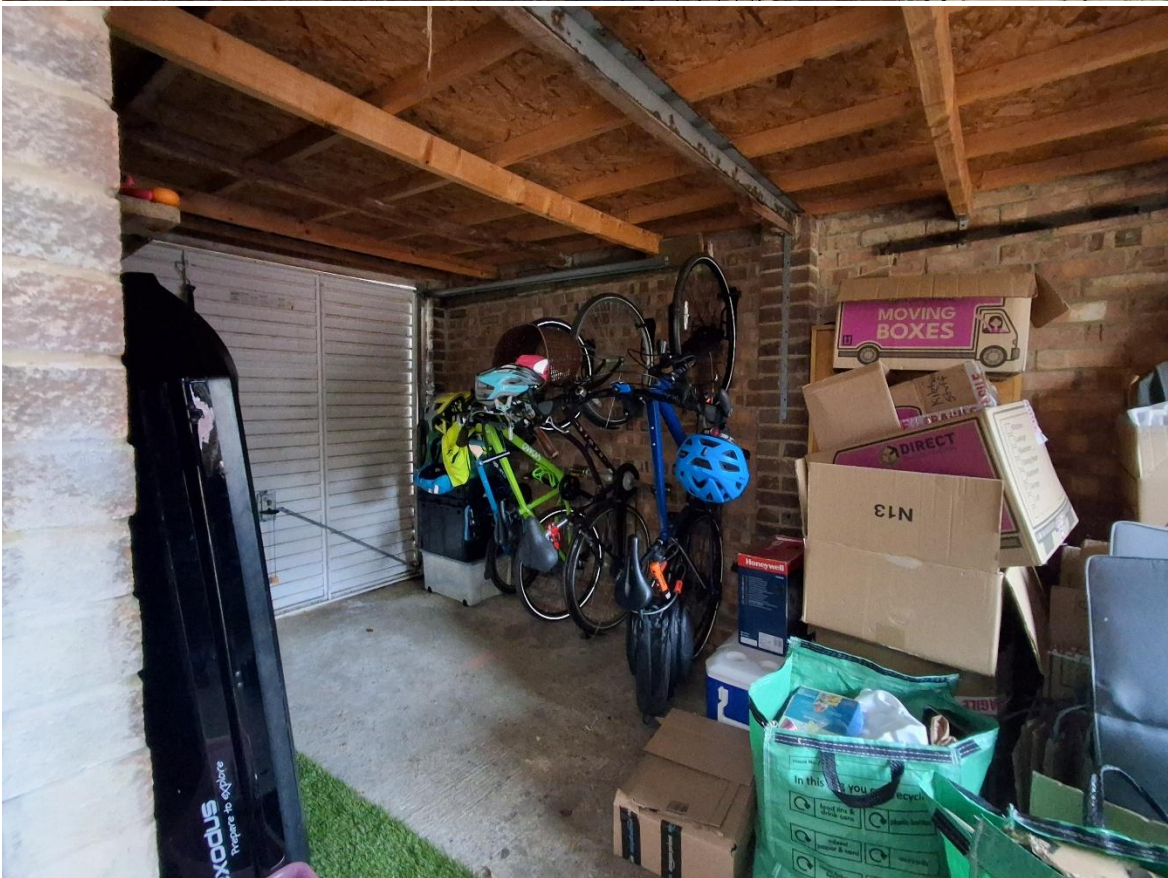














6.3 Bat Legislation

All species of bats receive special protection under UK law, including the strict species protection provisions of the EU Habitats Directive as implemented in England and Wales by Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (the “2017 Regulations, amended by the 2019 Regulations due to Britain leaving the EU”), and Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended by the 2019 Regulations) makes it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young; or
- Damage or destroy a roost – regardless of whether the action was deliberate or not.

Furthermore, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to this structure or place.

Eight of the UK bat species are also listed as Priority Species on the UK BAP¹, highlighting them as species of conservation concern.

6.4 Industry Guidance and Standards

This report has been written with consideration to:

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition.
- Bat Conservation Trust (2019). National Bat Monitoring Program Annual Report 2019.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

¹ [UK Biodiversity Framework - Biodiversity policy & advocacy - Bat Conservation Trust \(bats.org.uk\)](https://www.bats.org.uk/biodiversity-policy/)

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Garland, L. & Markham, S. (2008) Is Important Bat Foraging and Commuting Habitat Legally Protected? <http://biodiversitybydesign.co.uk/cmsAdmin/uploads/protection-for-bat-habitat-sep-2007.pdf>
- Harris, S. & Yalden, D. (2008). Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook, 4th Edition. The Mammal Society, Southampton.
- Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018). Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series Publication: http://www.bats.org.uk/news.php/406/new_guidance_on_bats_and_lighting
- JNCC (2004) Bat workers manual (3rd edition). JNCC, Peterborough.
- Mathews F, and Harrower C. (2020). IUCN – compliant Red List for Britain’s Terrestrial Mammals. Assessment by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough ISBN 978-1-78354-485-1.

6.5 Table 4.1 from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines

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 *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 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.

6.6 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'. Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.