
**Hyde Nursery
Ruscombe**

Report for:
Westbourne Homes
Farthings Barn
Ashridgewood Business Park
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5BS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out further bat activity/emergence surveys at the above site. As evidence of bats was recorded by ACD Environmental Limited (ACD) during the initial assessment (a few bat droppings were recorded within the roof space of the property) with the building assessed to provide high roosting opportunities, further bat activity/emergence surveys were considered necessary to accurately characterize the roost so that appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures can be provided. Annotated site plans have been attached for reference.

The re-development proposals are for the construction of eighteen residential dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings and clearance of some vegetation.

The site is located off New Road in Ruscombe and centred at National Grid Reference: SU 795766. The site comprised the existing buildings, with associated hardstanding and vegetation. It is bordered by New Road to the east, Garraway Close to the west, and residential properties to the north and south.

2.0 LEGISLATION

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats, or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Baseline Data

The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) report produced by ACD dated September 2026 was reviewed to provide baseline conditions for the site.

Bat Emergence Surveys

As bat droppings were recorded and the property was assessed to provide **high** roosting opportunities for bats, three emergence/activity bat surveys were completed to characterize the roost. Three experienced surveyors carried out the surveys (details provided in Table 1), using direct observation and a range of bat detectors to record bat activity and supplemented with Night Vision Aids (NVAs). The following bat detectors were used on the site: heterodyne/frequency division (Pettersson D230); real time expansion Echo Meters (EM3+); zero crossing recorder (Anabat SD2); and Peersonic. The calls recorded from the EM3 detectors were analysed using BatSound software and the calls on the Anabat detector analysed using Analook software. NVA's used were three Canon XA cameras (XA11 and XA15), supplemented with infrared lights. The darkest point of the survey for each camera is shown in Appendix A.

Table 1: Surveyors

Date	Surveyor
03.08.26	Dave Endacott - 2025-85235-CL18-BAT
	Kathy Warden - 2025-85283-CL18-BAT
	Nicholas Braybrook MSc BSc (Hons) – 5 years experience
27.08.26	Dave Endacott - 2025-85235-CL18-BAT
	Kathy Warden - 2025-85283-CL18-BAT
	Nicholas Braybrook MSc BSc (Hons) – 5 years experience
21.09.26	Julian Thornber - 2025-86138-CL18-BAT
	Nicholas Braybrook MSc BSc (Hons) – 5 years experience
	Arran Bedford – 2 years experience

Bat activity is strongly influenced by weather conditions and time of night. Peak activity occurs at dusk, but activity continues throughout the night as bats can commute long distances from their roosts to particular foraging sites (depending upon the species). For this reason, the emergence/activity surveys started 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours.

The emergence/activity surveys were carried out on the evening of Monday 3 August 2026, Thursday 27 August 2026 & Monday 21 September 2026. The weather conditions were considered ideal to record bat activity and are summarised in Table 2. The building was re-checked prior to the third evening survey to record any changes that may have incurred in the intervening period¹.

Table 2: Weather Conditions

Date	Temp (°C)	Cloud (Oktas)	Rain	Wind (Beaufort scale)
03.08.26	26-24	0	Dry – no rain	0
27.08.26	22-19	8	Dry – no rain	2
21.09.26	20-18	0	Dry – no rain	0

4.0 RESULTS

Baseline Data

ACD completed an initial survey of the site in July 2026. A full internal inspection of the property recorded on the site was completed. Bat droppings were found within the loft along with several slipped tiles were noted on the exterior of the building, which have potential to support crevice dwelling species. Broken windows/doors allowed access into the building for roosting bats. Therefore, the property was assessed to provide **high** roosting opportunities for bats. No evidence of bats was recorded within any other buildings on the site, which were all assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities and no further surveys required.

Follow-up Survey

During the follow-up inspection of the property two individual bat droppings indicative of brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)² were recorded within the roof space, no other evidence of bats was recorded during the thorough internal and external re-inspection.

Bat Emergence Surveys

During the first emergence/activity survey (03.08.26), a single brown long-eared emerged from the western elevation of the property at 21:28 hrs (TN 1 on Figure 1). Foraging activity was dominated by common

¹ Completed by a licenced and experienced ecologist with care taken to minimise disturbance to any roosting bats that can affect emergence activity.

² Droppings have been sent off for DNA analysis.

pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), with occasional passes by soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared, myotis (*Myotis* sp.) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats also recorded.

During the second emergence/activity survey (27.08.26), no bats were recorded emerging from the property. The first bat contact being a pass by a common pipistrelle at 20:09 hrs approximately 8 minutes after sunset. Foraging activity was dominated by common pipistrelles, with occasional passes by soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, myotis and noctule bats also recorded.

During the third emergence/activity survey (21.09.26), no bats were recorded emerging from the property. The first bat contact being a pass by a noctule at 19:00 hrs approximately 4 minutes before sunset. Foraging activity was dominated by common and soprano pipistrelles, with occasional passes by brown long-eared, myotis and noctule bats also recorded.

There are considered to be no limitations to the accuracy of the survey as the building was thoroughly inspected and supported by a number of bat activity surveys. All surveys were carried out by suitably experienced bat surveyors and completed at the appropriate time of year and during suitable weather conditions.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The re-development proposals are for the construction of eighteen residential dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings and clearance of some vegetation. Overall, low levels of bat activity were recorded during the surveys and the site was assessed to be of limited ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and found in similar places across much of Britain, with the property confirmed as an occasionally used day roost by brown long-eared bats (possibly a single bat).

As the proposals are to demolish the existing building, a suitable bat licence³ will be required to permit these works to proceed. The licence application would be supported by a series of mitigation measures. Typical measures have been provided below and are shown on Figure 2.

In order to provide alternative/enhanced roosting opportunities for bats, four bat boxes (x2 Schwegler 2FN and x2 Schwegler 2F boxes, or equivalent) will be positioned in accordance with best practice and installed on suitable mature trees as soon as possible and prior to any works. In addition, four bat tubes (x4 Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box B or equivalent) will be installed in suitable locations on the new builds to provide additional roosting opportunities.

Prior to any works, the building will be carefully re-checked by a licensed bat worker/accredited agent for any roosting bats. The removal of all key features, including all roof tiles, will be carried out under the supervision of the licensed bat worker/accredited agent and completed under a soft strip protocol as detailed below. Although there are considered to be no seasonal constraints, in accordance with good practice, the works should not be completed if the day-time temperature drops below 6°C to avoid encountering any bats in a state of torpor.

- All site operatives will be given a toolbox talk on the possibility of encountering bats and the legal protection they and their roosts are afforded (copy of a toolbox talk has been attached at Appendix B for reference);
- initial works will be carried out with great care. All tiles (roof and ridge) will be lifted and removed by hand, lifting them clear with two hands rather than lifting the front and rolling the tile backwards which may crush any bats beneath;
- tiles will also be checked underneath before being stacked or discarded, as bats sometimes cling to the undersides; and

³ A licence application can only usually be submitted after full planning permission has been granted and any relevant conditions discharged.

- a similar soft strip of other features that bats can utilise for roosting (such as lead flashing) will be completed.

Should any bats be encountered during this initial check and soft strip, they will be caught by hand by the licensed bat worker/accredited agent and placed in a bat bag. The bat will then be placed in one of the bat boxes already installed on site. The box will have the hole loosely blocked with a piece of cloth to prevent pre-mature flight, which will be removed at dusk to allow any bats to move off after dark. Should any injured or severely underweight bats be located, remedial measures will be taken, including seeking appropriate care of the bat and providing additional food in the form of mealworms.

Brown long-eared bats are considered to be relatively common and widespread throughout most of Great Britain. Population estimates in Great Britain are currently around 934,000⁴. Brown long-eared bats are a current UK BAP Priority Species, although in Great Britain, the combined Roost Count and Hibernation Survey index for brown long-eared bat has shown no significant change since 2001 or over the last five years (2019-2024)⁵.

Day roosts of individual bats of the more common species are considered of Site importance (in accordance with Table 3.2 Bat Mitigation Guidelines⁶). The level of mitigation as detailed above is in line with that provided within Table 5.1 of the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, which states for roosts used by individual bats of common species that are to be destroyed:

Flexible (in terms of timing and type).

It is considered that with the series of mitigation measures to be implemented on the site, there should be no deleterious effects on the conservation status of the bats that are using the site and therefore favourable conservation status will be maintained.

In addition to the above specific mitigation measures, a series of generic mitigation measures, as detailed within the EclA Report (ACD dated September 2026), will be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026⁷.

As proportionate mitigation is available and deliverable, along with a range of enhancement measures to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on bats and local wildlife that are using the site, there are no over-riding ecological constraints to the proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted at this stage, subject to appropriately worded conditions.

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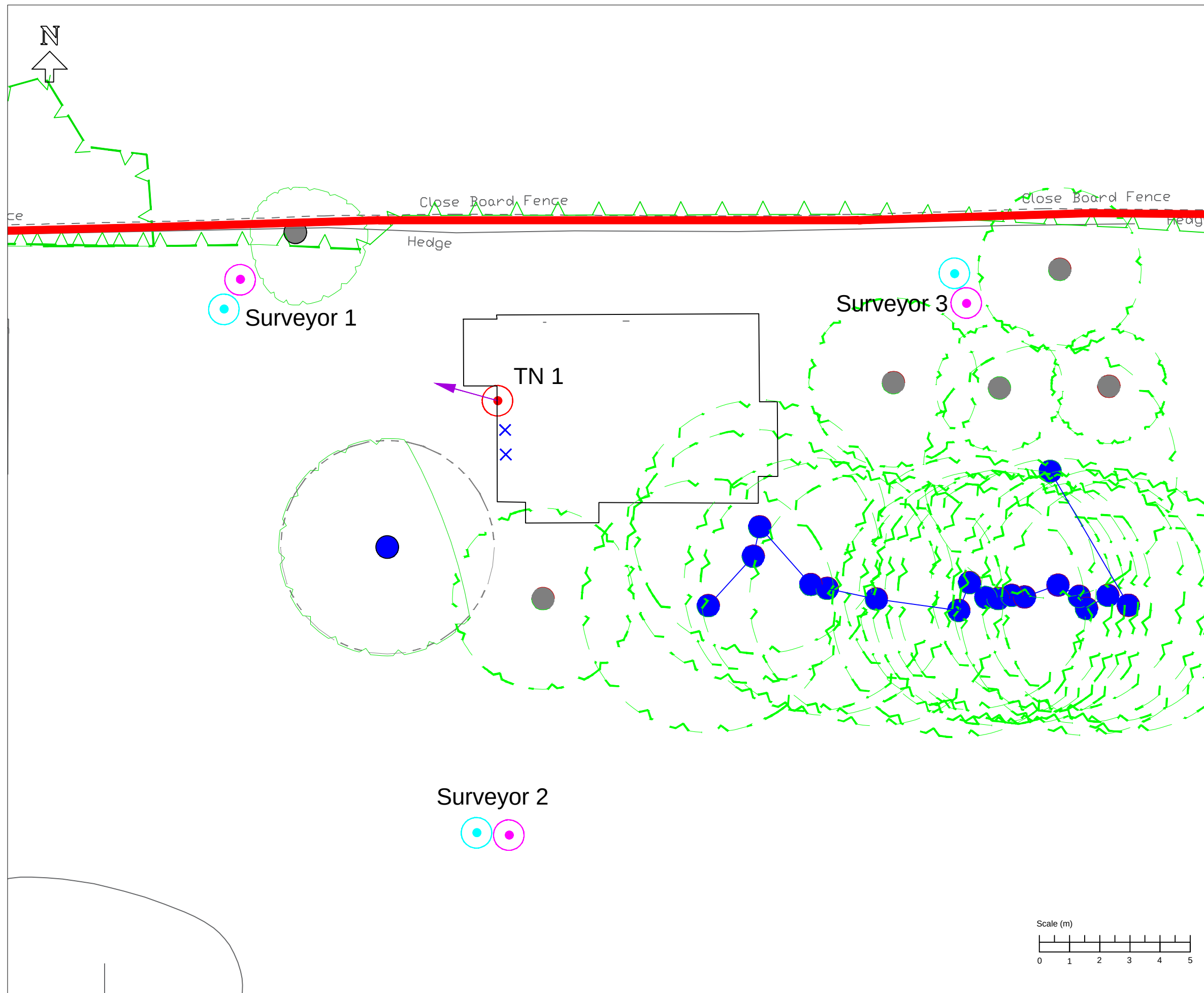
⁴ Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A. & Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage*. Natural England, Peterborough.

⁵ Bat Conservation Trust, 2026. The National Bat Monitoring Programme Annual Report 2024. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁶ Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2026). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

Figures



KEY

- Site Boundary*
- Location of Surveyor*
- Location of Static Detector*
- Target Note*
- Bat Emergence*
- Bat Dropping*

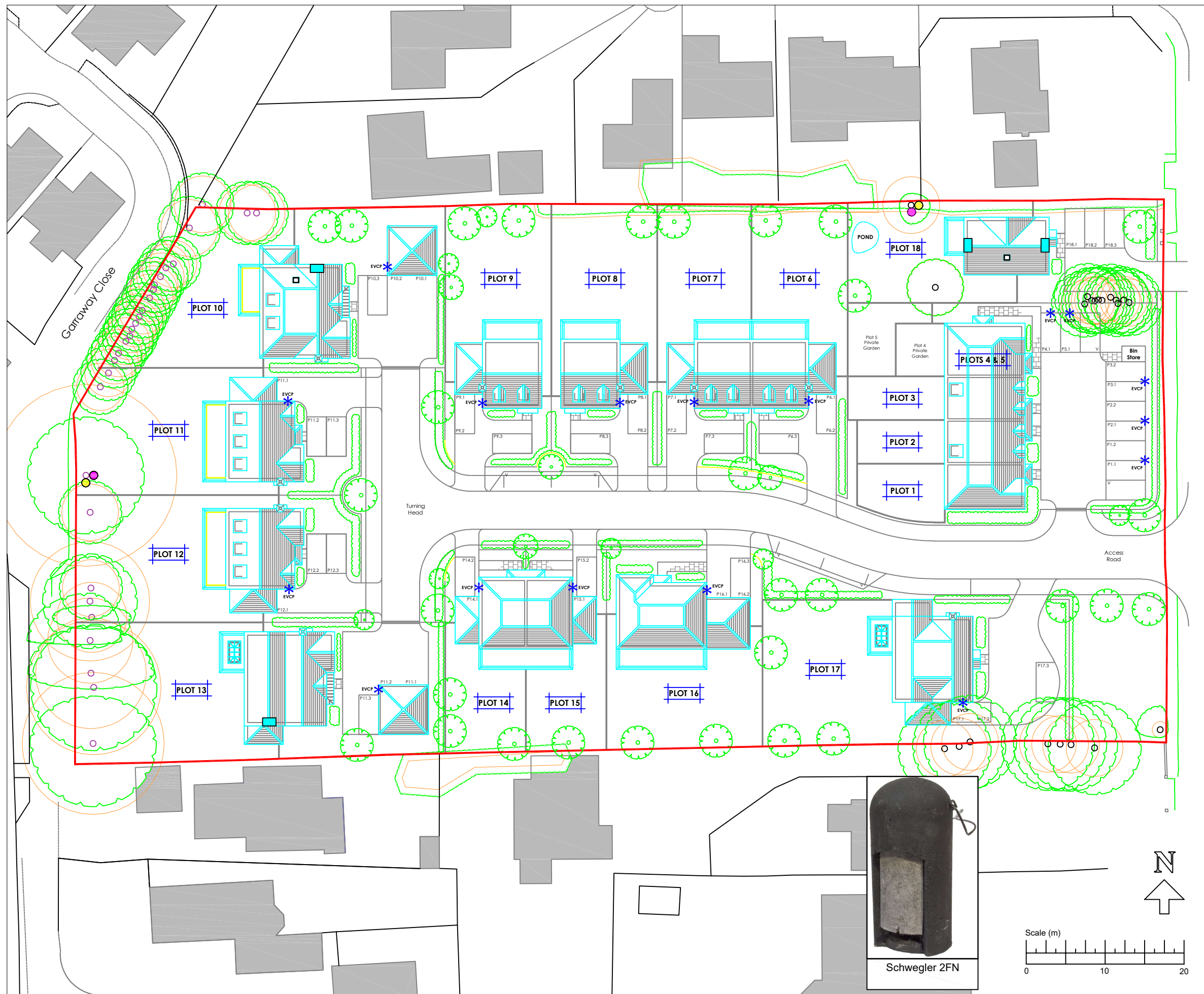
* Indicative Location

Notes

TN 1 - x1 brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) emerged from the western elevation of the property at 21:28 hrs (03.08.26) .

During the initial survey completed by ACD Environmental a few bat droppings were recorded within the roof space of the property. During the follow-up survey completed by AAe (21.09.26) two individual bat droppings were recorded which were indicative of brown long-eared, and have been sent off got DNA analysis.

Rev.	Details		Drawn	Date
			Chkd.	
Project				
263258				
Hyde Nursery				
Ruscombe				
Title				
Bat Survey Results Plan				
				
AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: (01235) 536042 F: (01235) 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk				
Scale	Date	23.09.26	Drg. No.	Rev.
As shown	Drawn	NAB	Chkd.	ARB
			Figure 1	



KEY

- Site Boundary *
- Individual Tree *
- Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'B' *
- Schwegler 2F *
- Schwegler 2FN *

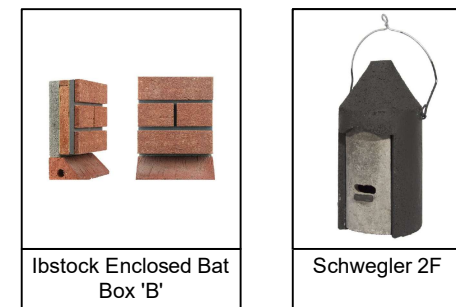
* Indicative location

Notes

Bat Tubes
x4 Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'B' (or equivalent)

Bat Boxes
x2 Schwegler 2F (or equivalent)
x2 Schwegler 2FN (or equivalent)

All key stages of the demolition works will be supervised by a licensed bat worker/accredited agent and only completed once an EPSL has been granted by Natural England.



Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
	Project 263258 Hyde Nursery Ruscombe		
	Title Bat Mitigation Plan		
	AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T:(01235) 536042 F:(01235) 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk		
Scale As shown	Date 25.09.26	Drg. No. Figure 2	Rev.

Appendix A

Darkest Points of Survey



Photograph 1 –eastern elevation of the property.



Photograph 2 – western elevation of the property.



Photograph 3 – southern elevation of the property.

Appendix B
Toolbox Talk (Bats)

TOOLBOX TALK:

BATS

Did you know?

- Bats are the world's only flying mammal.
- There are 17 species of bat known to be breeding in the UK, 6 of which are endangered or rare and 6 are classed as vulnerable.
- Bats can be found across the country in urban and rural locations.
- They are often sighted at dusk as they leave their roost, flying around hedgerows, woodland and waterbodies, feeding on insects.
- Throughout the year bats will often change their roost, depending upon the season.
- Usually a pregnant female will only have one baby a year, this makes colonies vulnerable to population decline.
- During the winter bats hibernate and may not wake up, even if disturbed. Therefore it's important not to work on sites with bats during these months.
- Bats may not use the same roost throughout the year, however they are legally protected with or without a bat occupying them.

Identification

- You may find bats in any number of places, they tend to prefer dark, quiet spots with good shelter, such as holes and cracks in trees, roofs and walls of buildings, under bridges, old tunnels and in caves.
- Signs of bat presence include discarded moth wings, staining around crevices and small mouse-like droppings which crumble easily.

Legislation

- All bats and their roosts are protected by UK and European Law. This makes it **illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats** or obstruct access to, damage or destroy their roosts and protects important feeding areas from damage or disturbance.
- Under law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Site Controls

- There is always a **risk** that bats, as they move between different roost sites and occupy new roosts, could be encountered during site works.
- **If any bats are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**
 1. If bats are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately** with any bat left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
 2. If any injured bats are found during the works AAe would care for them and where possible be released in the same location once recovered.
 3. During works staff must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with bats.
 4. Any roof tiles will be lifted straight up, rather than being rolled over, minimising the risk of harming bats which may be sheltering underneath.
 5. Areas must be fully checked for any bats or their evidence prior to filling any gaps and repointing any brickwork.
 6. Any lighting must be installed must avoid illuminating vegetation and or bat boxes/access points.

These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You're not expected to be able to identify bats or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**

Key Contacts

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX
Tel: 01235 536042



Brown long-eared bat.



Lesser horseshoe bat in rail tunnel.



Common pipistrelle bat.