



Preliminary Bat Roost Survey of 340 Hemdean Road, RG4 7QL

7 February 2025

Preliminary Roost Assessment of 340 Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QL

REPORT DETAILS

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CLIENT DETAILS

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DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report are confidential and may contain information regarding protected species of a sensitive nature.

This report has been prepared by NatureBureau Ltd for the sole use of the client and in connection with the development project described. The findings of this report are valid for a maximum of 18 months from the final review date.

This is a technical report and does not represent legal advice/opinion.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The contents of this report detail the findings of a Preliminary Roost Assessment undertaken at 340 Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QL. The proposed works will result in the demolition of the existing lean to and construction of a part double part single storey side extension and single storey rear extension

The main findings of the survey are detailed as follows:

Feature	Survey Findings	Recommendations
B1	Internally there was no bats or evidence of bats, and no significant potential ingress or egress opportunities for bats. Externally, there were no obvious gaps or crevices which could be used by roosting bats. B1 at 340 Hemdean Road offers negligible bat roosting potential.	There are no foreseen impacts on roosting bats, and the proposed works will be highly unlikely to cause disturbance, injury or death to bats, nor result in the destruction of a bat roost and/or block bats from accessing their roost.
B2	B2 is a small glass lean to attached to the side of B1. It offers no bat roosting potential. B2 at 340 Hemdean Road offers no bat roosting potential.	No further bat surveys are required.
Other habitats and considerations	The site is located within a local and wider landscape that provides high-quality habitat for bats, but the site is not ecologically linked to these areas. There are 14 known bat roosts within 2 kilometres of the site, with the closest record relating to a known common pipistrelle roost 788 metres north of the site (2018) Birds could begin nesting on site at any time.	Bats and their roosts are highly protected by law. If bats are discovered during development works, works must be halted, and the advice of a qualified ecologist must be sought. Lighting recommendations have been made to reduce impacts on bats which may be using the treelines to the rear (east) of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

NatureBureau Ltd was instructed by Robbie Marr to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 340 Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QL (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The PRA is to inform a planning application related to the erection of part double part single storey side extension and single storey rear extension, and the removal of existing lean to side porch (PL/24/1696) - hereafter referred to as 'the proposed works'.

The aim of the PRA is to assess the status of roosting bats on the site and to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas. With regards to roosting bats, this information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required.

Figure 1: The approximate site boundary (blue) and structures surveyed (red)

(Source: Google Earth, 2022)



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving bats within 2 kilometres (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: Summary of resources used during the desk study

Resource	Information assessed
Google Earth	Assessment of the local landscape, with the latest image date from July 2022.
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website ¹	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

¹ [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://defra.gov.uk/magic-map-application)

2.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 5 February 2025 between 13:00 and 13:30 hours. The survey was carried out by Kristina Wood.

Kristina Wood is a terrestrial ecologist and Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Kristina holds a Natural England CL17 bat survey licence registration (licence number available upon request).

The work, analysis and reporting was undertaken in line with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct², the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines³ and other relevant guidelines and legislation as listed in the Appendices of this report.

2.2.1 Built Structures

An assessment was carried out on the structures due to be impacted by the proposed works; the main residential dwelling (B1) and attached lean to side porch (B2), to determine their potential to support roosting bats. The assessment included an internal and 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. Particular attention was given to the floor and flat surfaces, window frames and features within the roof space.

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).

2.3 Limitations

The survey was undertaken at a time of year considered optimal for undertaking preliminary bat roost assessments, however, bats are highly mobile animals and unpredictable in nature, and as such, they can begin roosting in suitable structures at any time.

New loft insulation limited the internal survey due to safety concerns related to uncertain footing. However, using a high-powered torch, inspection of the flooring was still possible.

An inspection of the east facing dormer extension was not possible.

The results of this report are valid up to 18 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 2019⁴.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Studies

The interrogation of online publicly available datasets covered citations of statutory designated sites of importance for bats; bat occurrence records; licences issued for works involving bats; and maps/aerial images for features of interest.

² <https://cieem.net/resource/code-of-conduct/>

³ [Bat Survey Guidelines 23](#)

⁴ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences

Within 2 km of the site there are 14 records for licences issued by Natural England for works affecting bats entered on the MAGIC⁵ website. These licences relate to the destruction of known resting and breeding places of brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Daubenton's bats *Myotis daubentii*, Natterer's bats *Myotis nattereri*, serotine bats *Eptesicus serotinus* and soprano pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pygmeas* between 2011 and 2020. The closest record relates to a known common pipistrelle roost 788 metres (m) north of the site in 2018 (2018-35917-EPS-MIT).

3.1.2 Site Designations

Within 2 km of the site there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or National Nature Reserves (NNRs). Within 10 km of the site there are no SACs designated for bat interest.

Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (located 1.5km northeast of the site) hosts ancient woodland which is of high interest to bats. Viewing of aerial imagery shows some ecological connectivity between the site and this LNR.

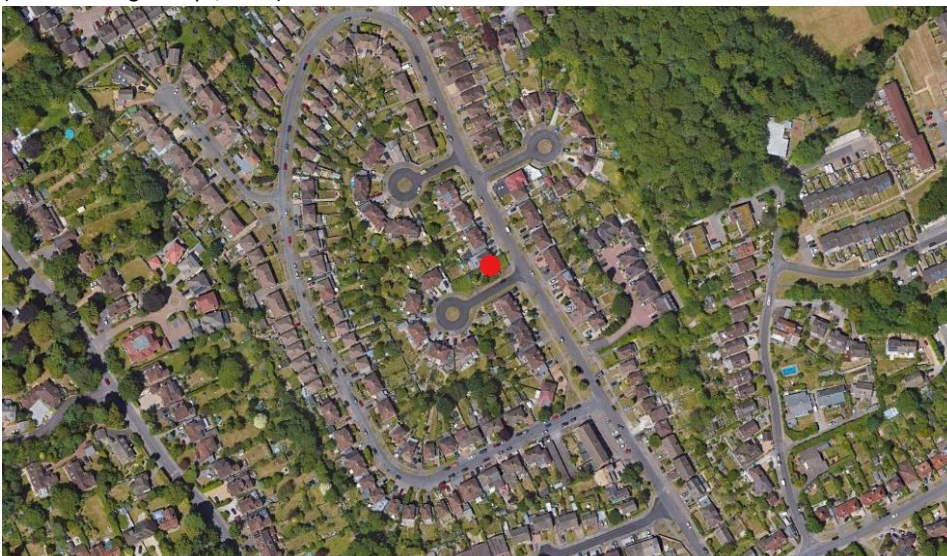
3.1.3 Other Features of Interest and Considerations

The nearest parcel of deciduous woodland, classified as a Priority Habitat, is located approximately 100 meters (m) northeast of the site, while the closest ancient woodland is situated 1.2 kilometers to the north. Numerous other small to medium-sized parcels of both deciduous and ancient woodland are present within the local and wider landscape. Additionally, a significant area of wood-pasture and parkland, designated as a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat, lies 1.3 kilometers east of the site. These habitats are known to support a diverse range of bat species. However, aerial imagery analysis indicates that hedgerows and mature tree lines provide limited ecological connectivity between the site and these habitats. The site itself does not contain any significant trees or mature hedgerows.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by a mix of residential buildings, tree lines, woodland, arable farmland, and open fields of undetermined use. Overall, the area offers high-quality habitat for bats.

Figure 2: Imagery showing the site (in red) in relation to the surrounding landscape

(Source: Google Maps, 2022)



⁵ [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://defra.gov.uk/magic)

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A daytime site visit was undertaken on 5 February 2025. At the time of the survey the temperature was 11°C in bright and sunny conditions. Additional site photos can be found in the Appendices.

3.2.1 Structure B1 (subject to a side and rear extension)

B1 occupies the south side of a two-story, semi-detached residential building constructed of brick. The structure features a simple hipped roof with a windowless dormer on the front (east) elevation, clad with concrete roof tiles. The property includes uPVC soffits, uPVC drainpipes, and framed windows, along with glass doors providing access to the rear garden.

External Survey

The west, south, and east roof aspects were clearly visible, and the roof tiles were found to be in good overall condition, with no broken, missing, or lifted tiles that could provide potential roosting sites for bats. Additionally, the significant presence of moss on the roof would likely obstruct bat access to any small gaps that may exist. A ridge chimney is located at the north of the roof, and the lead flashing was found to be in good condition, securely fitted to the roof tiles below.

From the front, B1 features upper and lower bay windows connected by a section of rendered brick. The rendering shows signs of aging, with some crumbling around the edges. However, these features are not considered suitable for bat roosting.

Externally, the windows and soffits on all elevations were found to be in good condition and well-fitted to the building. The brickwork was also in good condition, with no missing bricks or mortar.

Although the roof is not directly exposed to external lighting, streetlights located to the front (east) and side (south) of the site likely cause some degree of light spillage. Additionally, the garden is in a degraded condition, and there are no hedgerows or tree lines around the site that could provide cover for bats entering or exiting a roost. The only shrub identified on-site was Japanese laurel (*Aucuba japonica*).

Figure 3: The front (east) of 340 Hemdean Road



Figure 4: The rear (west) and side (south) of 340 Hemdean Road



Internal Survey

Internally, the roof space of B1 features a traditional A-frame apex constructed with timber rafters and a central beam. A brick wall and double chimney stack separate B1 from the neighbouring property.

The insulation material was found to be relatively new, confirmed to be two years old. The extent of floor coverage provided by this insulation limited the scope of the survey due to safety concerns regarding uncertain footing. However, as the loft space is small, a high-powered torch was used to inspect the area. No bat droppings were observed on the flooring. The insulation also obstructed views of the eaves, and an inspection of the east-facing dormer extension was not possible.

Among the visible rafters, no current or historical evidence of bats was identified. The roof membrane was found to be in generally good condition, with only one significant tear located at the front/east of B1. However, this tear does not align with any external features that could serve as entry or exit points for bats.

Figure 5: The loft space of B1: Stood south, facing north



3.2.2 Structure B2 (subject to demolition)

B2 is a single-story lean-to structure attached to the south side of B1. It consists of a wooden frame with glass panels on all elevations and is covered by a flat felt roof. Due to its construction, B2 has negligible potential for bat roosting.

Figure 6: B2, as seen from the west



3.2.3 Local Bat Habitat

The local and wider landscape promotes high quality bat habitat; however, the site itself has no ecological link to these areas.

3.2.4 Nesting Birds

There was no evidence of nesting bird activity associated with B1 or B2. However, it is possible that birds could begin nesting on or near the structures at any time during bird nesting season.

4 EVALUATION

The local landscape provides habitat that is highly suitable for bats; however, this habitat is not ecologically connected to 340 Hemdean Road. An internal and external survey of the built structures on site revealed no bats or evidence of bat activity.

As bats and signs of bat presence are not always detectable during surveys, the assessment also considered features that could potentially support roosting. Internally, B1 did not present any significant ingress/egress opportunities for bats. Externally, B1 showed no visible gaps or crevices in the brickwork or roof and associated features. B2 also provided no internal or external features conducive to roosting.

With consideration to the above, **the site is categorised as having negligible bat roosting potential**. This is in accordance with Collins (2023) where it is observed that there are 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. In accordance with this categorisation, **no further bat survey work is required for this site.**

Given the negligible bat roosting potential within the structures to be affected, no significant impacts on roosting bats are anticipated. The proposed works are highly unlikely to cause disturbance, injury, or death to bats, nor are they expected to result in the destruction of any bat roosts or obstruct bats' access to their roosts. However, the surrounding local and wider landscape contains habitats that are highly suitable for bats.

As such, it is essential that both the homeowner and building contractors remain vigilant and aware of their legal responsibilities should bats, or any other protected species, be discovered during works. Bats and their roosts are strictly protected by law (see Section 5.3). If bats (or evidence of their presence) are found during development, all works must cease immediately, and the advice of a qualified ecologist should be sought. Additional surveys may be necessary to assess the nature of any roosts present, and a derogation licence may be required to allow works to proceed in a manner that impacts the roosts. This derogation licence, or European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence, must be approved and issued by Natural England.

Due to the high-quality bat habitat found to the rear of the site, it is recommended that any development which takes place should be considerate of this when implementing any new lighting regimes during the construction and operational phases. To reduce the likelihood of disturbing bats, during the construction phase there should be no temporary nighttime lighting from sunset to sunrise, and all works must be completed in daylight hours. If emergency lighting is required, it should follow the following specifications:

- Lighting should be directional, facing away from the rear garden and neighbouring treelines, and set using a steep ground-ward angle and on short columns (no higher than 3m);
- Use a lamp no greater than 2000 lumens (150 watts), using light sources that peak higher than 550 nanometres, which avoids the UV, white and blue wavelengths;
- Warm white spectrum LED (<2500 Kelvin) should be used over a cool white spectrum;
- Cowls, hoods, baffles or louvres should be used to avoid light spillage off-site;
- Use of reflective surfaces under the light should be avoided

In addition to the above measures, the following recommendations should be employed to avoid excessive light-spillage post-development:

- Any lighting to the rear of the site should use sensor activated lamps;
- Variable lighting regimes must be utilised to lower lighting levels during periods of reduced human activity (e.g. 22:00-05:30)

4.1 Nesting Birds

During the PRA, no evidence of nesting birds was identified on site. However, if work must be carried out during bird nesting season, a careful check should be made for any nesting birds before any works take place. If an active bird nest is discovered, an exclusion zone must be put in place (minimum 5m), 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 APPENDICES

5.1 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 5 November 2024

The loft space of B1, showing the tear to the front (east) of the loft



The front (east) dormer extension was not accessible



The eaves were not observable due to the thickness of insulation



No bats or evidence of bats could be found around the rafters



The insulation was found to be new and showed no signs of bat presence



The rear (west) of B1



The soffits are tightly fitted to the building



B2 as seen from the east



B1 as seen from the front (east)



The site has no ecological link to the woodland found 100m northeast



5.2 Site Plans

Existing Elevations



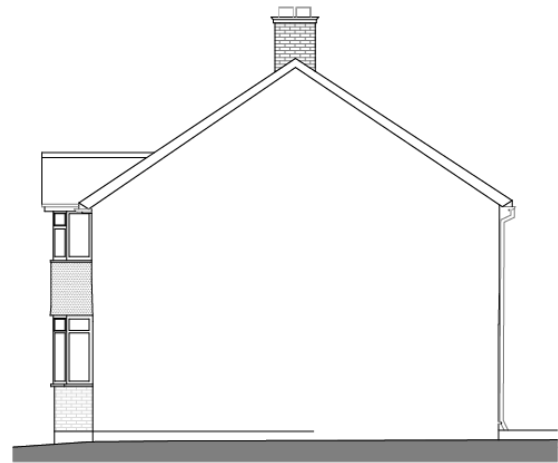
FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

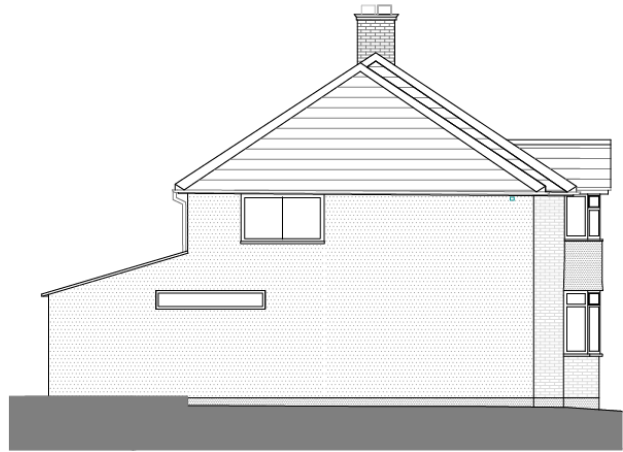


SIDE ELEVATION

Proposed Elevations



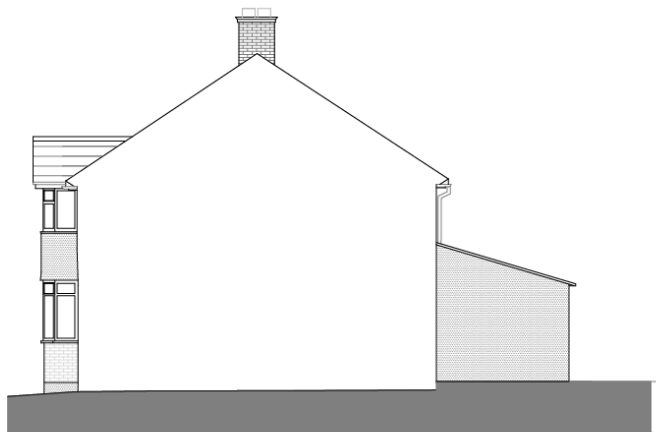
FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

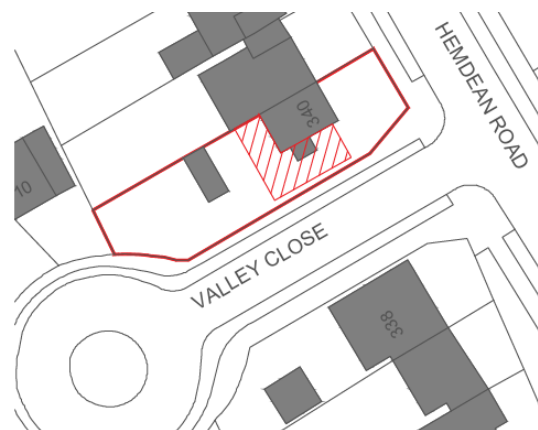
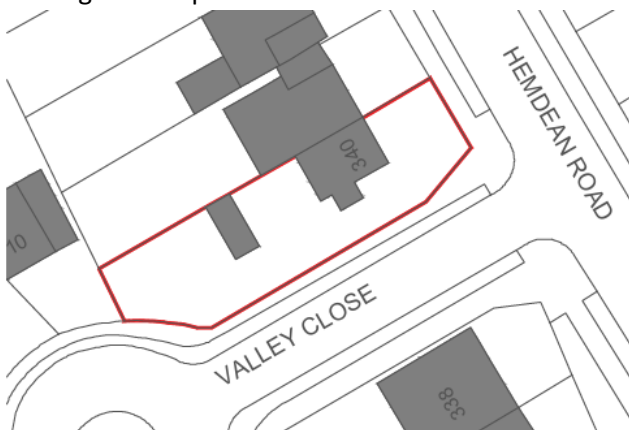


REAR ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

Existing and Proposed Block Plan



5.3 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:

- i. Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- ii. 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
- iii. 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 BAP⁶, highlighting them as species of conservation concern.

5.4 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.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 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.
- 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

⁶ UK Biodiversity Framework - Biodiversity policy & advocacy - Bat Conservation Trust (bats.org.uk)

- 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.

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.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary (BS 42020, 2013).

5.5 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.

5.6 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

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.