



**envirotech**

**Ecological Consultants  
Environmental and Rural Chartered Surveyors**

**BAT SURVEY AT  
Knott Gate Farmhouse**



**RICS**

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## ***Accuracy of report***

This report has been compiled based on the methodology as detailed and the professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report reflects the situation found as accurately as possible, bats are wild and can move freely from site to site. Their presence or absence detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different past, current or future use of the site surveyed.

We would ask all clients acting upon the contents of this report to show due diligence when undertaking work on their site and or in their interaction with bat species. If bats are found during a work programme and continuing the work programme could result in their disturbance, injury or death either directly or indirectly an offence may be committed.

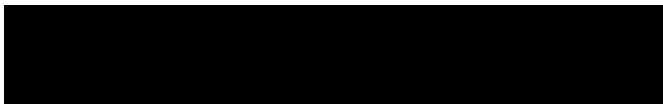
Bats may only be disturbed, injured or killed under licence.

**If in doubt, stop work and seek further professional advice.**

## ***Quality and Environmental Assurance***

This report has been printed on recycled paper as part of our commitment to achieving both the ISO 9001 Quality Assurance and ISO 14001 Environmental Assurance standards. Envirotech has been awarded the gold standard by the Cumbria Business Environmental Network for its Environmental management systems.

Signed



**Andrew Gardner** BSc (Hons), MSc, MRICS, Dip NDEA  
Director

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is understood that the farmhouse will be renovated and an external store converted to supplement the existing residential accommodation.

A daytime inspection was undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 23<sup>rd</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This involved a close inspection of the building for signs of use by bats both internally and externally.

A desk study and data search were also undertaken to ensure the reasonable probable use of the site by bats could be determined.

The habitat around the site offers a moderate potential for foraging being open pasture with tree lines. There is moderate connectivity between the site and higher quality foraging areas.

The farmhouse building has moderate potential for use by bats, the detached store negligible potential.

Two emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with Collins, J (ed) (2016).

Indications of use of the site by low numbers of Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bats were found during the survey. A single Soprano Pipistrelle emerged from an external wall crevice in different locations on each visit.

It is understood the external walls will be repointed and as such the roost site lost.

On the basis of the survey work carried out, under guidance provided in respect of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, and considering the plans for the site, it is considered that a Protected Species Mitigation Licence (PSML) for bats will be required prior to works being carried out.

A mitigation strategy has been prepared and should be followed in order to ensure that the welfare of the local bat population is maintained during, and following the works.

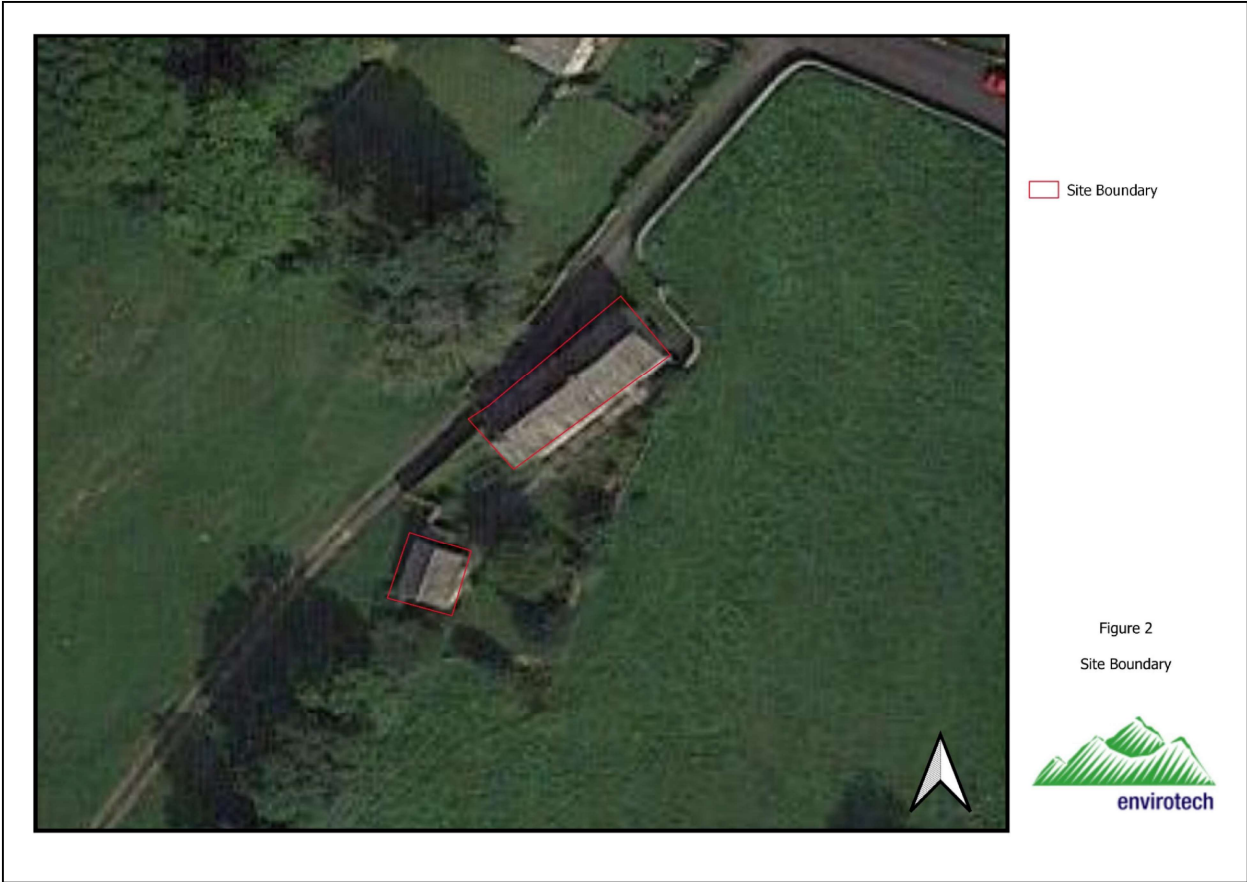
## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Site Description

The site lies in a rural location at Slaidburn. The surveyed building comprises a stone built farmhouse and detached store under stone slate roofs.

There is fragmented woodland and open pasture in the local area but the site is in a sheltered position at SD709524, Figure 1 and 2.





## **2.2 Proposed Works**

It is proposed that the farmhouse is renovated and outbuilding converted to supplement the existing residential accommodation. There will be significant internal and external alteration to the areas of the building affected. This will include a re-roof, installation of new windows and repointing of external walls.

The timing of work is unknown.

## **2.3 Aims of Study**

To ensure that the proposed development does not affect any bat species which are listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and or the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) the survey will:-

- ⇒ Identify past and/or current use of the site by bat species.
- ⇒ Assess the likely impact of the proposed development on these species.
- ⇒ Provide an outline mitigation/compensation scheme (if required) for bat species affected by the development.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Bats

#### 3.1.1 Rationale of Survey

The methods used **comply with those described in Hundt (2012) and Collins, J (ed) (2016)**. The following extracts from Collins, J (ed) (2016) are used to determine the appropriate level of survey in accordance with the guidelines.

**Key point 1:** Guidelines should be interpreted using professional expertise.

*“The guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience. It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of surveys carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate. However, in this scenario an ecologist should provide documentary evidence of (a) their expertise in making this judgement and (b) the ecological rationale behind the judgement.*

*Equally, it would be inappropriate for someone with no knowledge or experience to read these guidelines and expect to be able to design, carry out, interpret the results of and report on professional surveys as a result, simply following the guidelines without the ability to apply any professional judgement.”* Section 1.1.3

**Key point 2:** Guidelines are descriptive rather than prescriptive and must be adapted on a case by case basis.

*“The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.”* Section 1.1.3

**Key point 3:** Surveys should be undertaken where it is reasonably likely bats are present and may be affected by the proposal. Where bats are not likely to be present and or will not be affected by the proposal, survey could but need not be undertaken.

*“It is reasonable to request surveys where proposed activities are likely to negatively impact bats and their habitats. However, surveys should always be tailored to the predicted, specific impacts of the proposed activities (see Section 2.2.2). Excessive, speculative surveys are expensive and cause reputational damage to the ecological profession.”* Section 2.1

**Key point 4:** Surveys should be proportionate to predicated impacts.

*“When planning surveys it is important to take a proportionate approach. The type of survey (or suite of surveys) undertaken and the amount of effort expended should be proportionate to the predicted impacts of the proposed activities on bats. Clause 4.1.2 of BS42020 (BSI, 2013) states that ‘professionals should take a proportionate approach to ensure that the provision of information with the (planning) application is appropriate to the environmental risk associated with the development and its location”* Section 2.2.5

### 3.1.2 Desk Study

*“The aim of a desk study for bats is to collate and review existing information about a site and its surroundings to inform the design of subsequent bat surveys.”* Section 4.2.1

*“As a minimum, it is recommended that background data searches should be carried out upto 2km from the proposed development boundary.”* Section 4.2.2

**Key point 5:** A records search was undertaken of the Envirotech dataset. No additional data searches were considered necessary at this site as the bat species likely to be found in the local area could be adequately determined from the records searched.

*“The desk study records provide contextual information for the survey design stage as well as the evaluation of the survey results. They should be interpreted to identify:*

- *If proposed activities are likely to impact on a SAC or the qualifying feature of a SAC (this may trigger the need for a HRA);*
- *If the proposed activities are likely to impact on other designated sites and thus require consultation with relevant bodies;*
- *Any species (or genera) confirmed/thought to be present;*
- *Any bat roosts that will be impacted (on or off-site);*
- *If it is likely that the CSZs of bats from roosts off-site will be impacted (see Section 3.7);*
- *If there are any rare species in the area that may require species-specific survey methodologies.”* Section 4.2.3

**Key point 6:** Likely bat roosting and feeding sites on and adjacent to the site were identified from aerial photography and the use of Google Street View for ground level analysis. This allows us to identify habitat connectivity and potential foraging areas at a landscape level. We are also able to relate the results of the records search against habitat types and the species of bat which could and or are recorded in the local area. Identification of bat species which may occur locally allows for additional field based surveys to be correctly targeted.

### 3.1.3 Field Survey

**Key Point 7:** To ground truth the desktop data (Key point 5) a field assessment of habitat at and adjacent to the site was made. This allows us to cross check our interpretation of aerial photography with actual habitat on the ground. There is occasionally significant change between landscape detailed on aerial photographs and habitat on the ground. Buildings, hedgerows and roads may be built or removed. For example occasionally woodland is felled or has been replanted.

*“A preliminary ecological appraisal for bats is a walkover of the proposed development site to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute and forage both on site and in the surrounding area (it is important that connectivity within the landscape is also considered at this stage). The aim is to determine the suitability of a site for bats, to assess whether further bat surveys will be needed and how those surveys should safely be carried out.”* Section 4.3.1

**Key point 8:** A thorough inspection of the walls and eaves was undertaken using a torch and short focus binoculars to locate potential bat roosts. Gaps and cracks in the walls or under the eaves and soffits may provide access to the building by bats. Where possible all gaps and cracks

judged to be of a suitable size for bats to take entry to the building were inspected either from the ground or the top of a ladder. Where appropriate an endoscope was used to fully inspect these gaps internally.

**Key Point 9:** A thorough inspection of the roof was undertaken using a torch and short focus binoculars to locate potential bat roosts. Gaps under the roof coverings, ridge lines and flashing may provide suitable roost sites for bats. All gaps and cracks judged to be of a suitable size for bats to take entry to the building were inspected either from the ground or the top of a ladder. Using short focus high quality binoculars and a torch to illuminate any gaps underneath the roof coverings it is often possible to see residual evidence of bats such as droppings, scratch, grease and urine staining, lichen build-up from increase nutrient levels or bats themselves.

**Key Point 10:** A thorough inspection of the interior and exterior of the building to look for signs of bats such as grease or scratch marks, bat droppings and feeding detritus was made. Windows and or other items in and around the site were inspected for urine staining.

**Key Point 11:** A thorough search for detritus associated with bat feeding perches and roosts was undertaken. These roosts are usually in roof voids, under eaves and open buildings.

**Key Point 12:** Internal voids and rooms were assessed where it was considered bats may be able to take access. Indications of use such as grease and scratch marks, urine staining, droppings, desiccated young bats, dead bats in water tanks and cobweb free areas under the roof and roof supports were all assessed.

*“The time needed for a preliminary roost assessment will vary according to the complexity of the structure and the number of ecologists deployed. Large structures with multiple roof spaces, multiple human access points and/or abundant voids and crevices will clearly take some time to understand and search thoroughly. Also, structures may contain several different bat roosts of different species each with their own access point and used at different times of the year. This all adds time to the survey.”* Section 5.2.7

**Key Point 13:** It is the considered opinion of the surveyors who undertook this survey that the time taken to undertake the survey was sufficient given the complexity of the building, methods used, time of year and species of bat which may be present. The times in Collins, J. (ed) (2016) should be considered in light of Key Point 1 (Professional judgement), Key point 2 (interpretation on a case by case basis) and Key Point 3 (survey should cover areas where it is reasonably likely bats are present and may be affected by the proposal).

*“Where the possibility that bats are present cannot be eliminated or evidence of bats is found during a preliminary roost assessment, then further surveys (such as winter hibernation (Section 5.3), presence/ absence (Section 7.1) and/ or roost characterisation (Section 7.2) surveys) are likely to be necessary if impacts on the roosting habitat (or the bats using it) are predicted. The ecologist should consider the further surveys needed (if any), their logistics (resources, emergence survey locations, timings), and any potential health and safety hazards reported.*

*If the structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats (see Table 4.1), an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available.*

*If sufficient areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden) then further surveys may not be appropriate.*

*Information (photographs and detailed descriptions) should be presented in the survey report to justify this conclusion and the likelihood of bats being present at other times of the year estimated. If there is a reasonable likelihood that bat roosts could be present, and particularly if there are areas that are inaccessible for survey, then further surveys may be needed and these should be proportionate to the circumstances (see Section 2.2.5).*

*If no suitable habitat for bats is found, then further surveys are not necessary. In this scenario, it is necessary to document how this decision has been reached; photographs and detailed descriptions should be made available as evidence of a robust survey and assessment.” Section 5.2.9*

**Key Point 14:** The suitability of a sites potential for roosting is categorised by BCT Collins, J (ed) (2016) as Negligible, Low, Moderate and High and then suggests a level of survey effort required to be confident in the absence of bats. We consider this range to be too coarse, there being a transition between each level of suitability which is not reflected in the guidelines. We have a modified schedule of suitability using a risk level between 0 and 7. See Key points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 13 which justify this approach.

Suitability Collins (2016)	Description Roosting habitats	Risk Level	Survey level
	Modified from Collins (2016)		
Negligible	No features on site which could be used by roosting bats.	0	No additional survey required
	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	1	
	Features on site could only be used by bats occasionally, habitual use in or between years is unlikely	2	Surveyor to make judgement as to if additional surveys likely to provide useful information about the site. RAM's and provision of new roosting provision to be recommended
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically but no evidence of use found, could provide roost sites which are used in or between years.	3	
	One or more potential roost sites. Potential for habitual use in or between years. Unlikely to contribute to long term favourable conservation status of the species.	4	
	Potential for habitual use in or between years, roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). May be used for transitional or day roost sites by common bat species. Function likely to support favorable conservation status of bats locally.	5	Single survey (dusk or dawn) between May and August.  Roosts are often transitional, surveys early and late in season may be appropriate. Consider additional survey in transitional period April and September
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only - the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	6	Two surveys (dusk or dawn) between May and August. Consider additional survey in transitional period April and September
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	7	Three surveys (at least one dawn) between May and August. Consider additional survey in transitional period April and September

**Table 1** Risk and need for additional survey following preliminary appraisal for bats.

**Key Point 15:** Having undertaken a detailed inspection of the site, additional presence/absence surveys were required:

A roost has been identified, but more information is needed in order to assess its importance and the potential significance of any impacts on it. Information may be needed on the number of bats within the colony, the access points, the species, and flight paths to and from the roost	<input type="checkbox"/>
A comprehensive internal inspection survey is not possible because of restricted access, but given the sites location, bat species likely to be found in the local area, and potential roost sites, the structure or tree has a reasonable likelihood of supporting bats	<input type="checkbox"/>
A comprehensive preliminary roost assessment is not possible because it is a sub-optimal time of year, or there is a risk that evidence of bat use may have been removed by weather, human activities or the presence of livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>
A preliminary roost assessment has not ruled out the reasonable likelihood of a roost being present, but no definitive evidence of the presence of bats has been recorded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A preliminary roost assessment <u>has ruled out the reasonable likelihood of a roost being present</u> , but the surveyor was on site at a time of day when additional survey information could be gained to provide additional contextual information about the site and the opportunity to do so can be taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 2** *Need for additional survey following preliminary ecological appraisal for bats.*

**Key Point 16:** Potential roost locations were identified during the initial survey and were all adequately covered during the emergence survey. There was either direct visual coverage, with appropriate overlap between surveyors, coverage by infrared video camera or areas with limited visual coverage were noted and surveyors were positioned such that any bats emerging from these areas could be distinguished from bats which had commuted into the site.

**Key Point 17:** Bat commuting routes and activity in and around the site were observed and noted. The surveyors were either in visual and verbal contact or used 2-way radios to communicate bat activity over the site to each other. This reduced the potential for double counting or miss-recording bats which have flown into rather than emerged from the site or vice versa.

**Key Point 18:** A passive pre-emergence scan was made around potential roost sites with a bat detector set at 17 KHz. This would detect pre-emergence social chatter from bats. The surveyors were also listening for audible chatter during the inspection.

**Key Point 19:** An active scan was made with a bat detector post emergence. The surveyors adjust the frequency of the bat detector in response to bat sightings to confirm species. Some bat detectors have auto-tuning capability, see Table 3.

Bat Detector	Capabilities	Used
Bat Box Duet	Heterodyne and frequency division, manual tuning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Echo Meter EM3(+)	Heterodyne, frequency division or time expansion. Recording capability, auto tuning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro	Heterodyne, frequency division or time expansion. Recording capability, auto tuning.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anabat	Zero Crossing, recording capability.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 3** *Bat detectors used and capabilities.*

### 3.1.4 Timing

*“Recorded bat activity is dependent on the prevailing conditions at the time of the survey, which vary temporally (through the night, between nights, through the seasons and between years) and spatially (dependent on latitude and longitude).*

*Bat activity is also determined by what the bats are doing at different times of the year; in general:*

- *April surveys may detect transitional roosts.*
- *May to August surveys may detect maternity colonies and males/non-breeding females in summer roosts.*
- *August is particularly good for maximum counts of both adults and juveniles and can be useful to observe roost re-entry because the young bats are inexperienced at flying and are often easy to observe as they try to enter the roost.*
- *August to October surveys may detect mating bats. September and October surveys may detect transitional roosts used after bats have dispersed from maternity colonies but before they go into hibernacula (although October may be less suitable for surveys in more northerly latitudes).*

*It is important to stress that prevailing conditions and local trends in bat activity (for example, when were the young born in the year in question?) should be considered and recorded to provide context to survey results. Section 7.1.7*

**Key Point 20:** Bats use of sites varies throughout the year. The “most active season” for bats is April - September. For assessing maternity colonies the optimum time period is May to August. Surveys should however be chosen to maximize the likelihood of detecting bat activity which may be between April and October for summer roosts and December and February for winter hibernation. There is overlap between the two periods which should be addressed by survey where appropriate.

The timing of the survey should therefore account for the functionality and potential of the site to be used by bats for different purposes. Some sites may be unsuitable for maternity roosting but have a high potential for transition or day roosts. Some sites may have the potential to perform several functions.

Mitchell-Jones (2004) indicate that:

*“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”.*

Bats use different types of roost at different times of the year. The following roost types/ times shown on Figure 3 are taken from Mitchell-Jones (2004) and were considered in the assessment of this site. Times of the year given in Figure 3 should however be considered in light of factors such as fluctuations in temperatures between years, altitude, weather conditions, species and latitude which all affect the movement of bats between roost sites.

*“An experienced surveyor should carry out surveys at a time that gives them the highest chance of establishing whether or not bats are present and how they are using the habitat including roosts). Actual timings will depend on a number of factors including the surveyor’s knowledge and experience of the site and surrounding habitats, existing data records, possible bat species present, geographical location, weather conditions in that particular year and, of course, the aims and objectives of the survey.”* Section 2.4

This site was assessed at the following periods in the bat year. Some roost types can be clearly identified when not in use or can be inferred from habitat type/residual evidence.

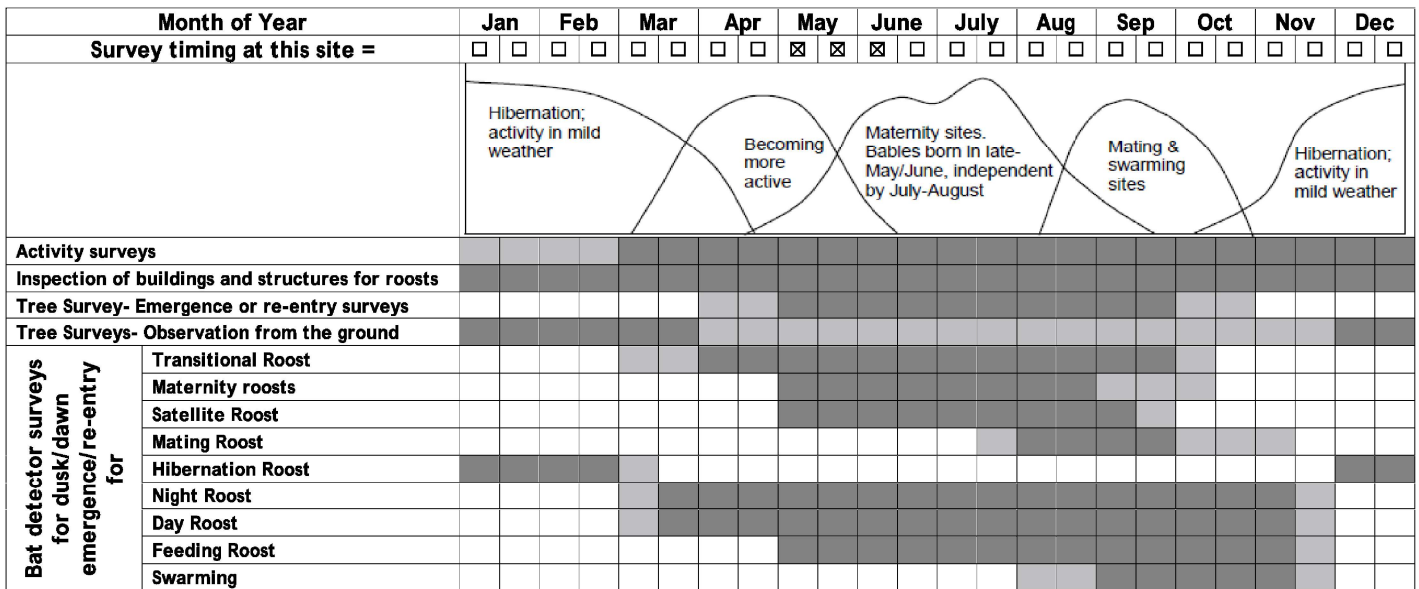


Figure 3 Survey timing in the bat year from Mitchell-Jones (2004).

**Key Point 21:** An assessment of the species of bat likely to be found at the survey site has been made (Key Point 5, 6, 7 and 8). An assessment of the weather and time of year before and during the survey was also made. The duration and timing of survey was considered proportionate to the species of bats likely to be found, potential roost types, weather and cover around potential roost entrances.

**Key Point 22:** Based on the above criteria, two dusk/ dawn activity surveys were undertaken. The number of surveys and timing are in accordance with Collins, J. (ed) (2016) Table 3, Figure 3 and Figure 5 because the site is moderate risk.

**Key Point 23:** Sunset is a very poor indicator of bat emergence times as lux levels associated with it are highly variable and are dependent upon atmospheric conditions. A combination of sunlight, high pressure, dry air dust particles and cloud cover can create a prolonged sunset. Delayed emergence can occur during very high pressure systems, which intensify and prolong sunsets. This can delay or bring forward emergence considerably and can skew conclusions as to how far bats have travelled from their roost if sunset is used as the time base from which activity is then monitored. Variations in local conditions also do not allow for comparisons to be made between emergence at different sites on the same day. The time of year also affects the time it takes to go dark with light levels falling and rising more quickly in spring and autumn than in summer when the arc of the sun is higher in the sky.

There is a variable correlation between sunset and lux levels hence we consider they should be used independently of each other. Lux levels provide a far greater degree of certainty in respect of identifying likely bat emergence time and commuting distances, time after sunset is a poor substitute for analysing bat activity information

Emergence of *Pipistrelle* spp. usually commences at 200lux (from maternity roosts when bats have a high energy requirement) and 40lux from non-breeding and transitional roosts. Noctule are also an early emerging species at around 200lux. Emergence for whiskered/Brandts occurs between 40 and 4 Lux with brown long-eared and Daubenton's using emerging when light levels fall below 4 Lux.

During the activity survey lux levels were monitored by taking an average light reading, facing away from any potential roost sites at an angle of 45 degrees.

The activity survey continued until such a time as bat flight heights, emergence points and activity could no longer be reasonably determined. At this point the no additional useful information about the site could be gained

Date of visit		9 <sup>th</sup> May	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Notes
Site inspection		1hr	1hr	1hr	
Weather conditions	Cloud	100%	50%	50%	1
	Wind	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
	Rain	Light	Nil	Nil	1
	Temperature	-	12° C	10° C	1
Emergence survey	Start/ Light Level	-	21:20   250 lux	21:48   250 lux	
	End/ Light Level	-	23:00   0.2Lux	23:00   0.2Lux	
Surveyors		AF, EW	AF, EW	AF, EW	

**Table 4** Survey dates and times.

1. Weather conditions were considered acceptable for a survey at the site given the potential for use of the site and species which may be present. Bats are usually active with temperatures above 7 degrees Celsius.

#### Surveyors

1. (EW) Mrs Emma Walker BSc (Hons) Grad CIEEM  
Natural England Bat Class Licence (Level 1)
2. (AF) Mr Adrian Fryer  
Unlicensed observer with experience in emergence surveys

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Definitions used in this report are detailed here, in reference to Hundt (2012) and Collins ed. (2016).

### Building

A structure with walls and a roof, for example a residential property, block of flats, office block, warehouse, garden house, folly, barn, stable, lime kiln, tower, church, former military pill box, school, hospital or village hall. Some buildings have cellars (underground sites) beneath them.

### Built structure

A structure that was made by humans but cannot be described as a building or as an underground site, for example a bridge, wall, monument, statue, free-standing chimney, or derelict building consisting only of walls.

### Underground site

A human-made or natural structure that is entirely or partially underground, for example a cave, cellar, subterranean, mine, duct, tunnel, military bunker, well, or ice house.

### Roost (breeding site / resting place)

The implementation of the EU Habitats Directive provides general definitions for breeding sites and resting places. For bats the two often overlap, which is why in many cases they are both referred to as roosts. Any interpretation of the terms 'breeding sites', 'resting places' and 'roosts' must take into account the prevailing conditions.

Natural England licensing guidelines (Natural England, 2011) discusses the age of roosts and mitigation requirements as well as the period of time bat roosts are protected when not used. The following is reproduced from this document.

“Q. The development site ceased to be inhabited last year and it is prone to vandalism. I found evidence of a maternity roost but all current signs suggest that the site is now abandoned by bats. What should I mitigate for?

Wildlife Advisers do not use a tightly defined period within which bat need to have used a structure beyond which it is no longer regarded as a bat roost. A structure can be regarded as a bat roost even if not knowingly occupied by bats for a year or two.”

The Method Statements mitigation should reflect compensation for a roost at its highest status within recent years. For example, meagre mitigation for an occasionally used, summer, non-maternity roost that had declined from a maternity roost as a result of human induced change to the roosts conditions e.g. vandalism, may not be acceptable to the Wildlife Adviser.

A demolished structure, irrespective of its previous bat occupancy, clearly, ceases to be a bat roost. An intact structure without bat occupancy perhaps after a few years, and more assuredly after five years, also ceases to be a bat roost”. [Emphasis added]

Natural England's guidelines are derived from the European Commission's Article 12 guidance on the definition of resting places for European Protected species.

European Commission (2021), section (54) and (59) state

The 2021 guidance states of this offence: *“The protection applies all year round if these sites are used on a regular basis”* (pg 32). It goes on to state: *“Thus, it follows from Article 12(1)(d) that such breeding sites and resting places also need to be protected when they are used only occasionally or are even abandoned but where there is a reasonably high probability that the species concerned will return to these sites and places. If, for example, a certain cave is used every year by a number of bats for hibernation (because the species has the habit of returning to the same winter roost every year), the functionality of this cave as a hibernating site should be protected in summer as well so that the bats can reuse it in winter”* (pg 33).

The guidance also states that breeding sites and resting places “that are used regularly either within or between years, must be protected even when not occupied” (pg 33 and pg 35).

### Resting places: a definition

Resting places are defined here as the areas essential to sustain an animal or group of animals when they are not active. For species that have a sessile stage, a resting place is defined as the site of attachment. Resting places will include structures created by animals to function as resting places, such as roosts, burrows or hides. Resting places that are used regularly, either within or between years, must be protected even when not occupied.

Resting places essential for survival may include one or more structures and habitat features required for:

1. thermoregulatory behaviour, e.g. *Lacerta agilis* (sand lizard);
2. resting, sleeping or recuperation, e.g. *Nyctalus leisleri* (Leisler's bat) roosts;
3. hiding, protection or refuge, e.g. *Macrothele calpeiana* burrows; and
4. hibernation, e.g. bat dormitories, and *Muscardinus avellanarius* (common dormouse) hides.

It is clear that for a site to be classified as a roost when not occupied there must have been past habitual and the probability of future use within at least a two year period as defined as “within or between years”.

European Commission (2021) summaries the requirement for the protection of resting sites thus

“Breeding sites and resting places must be strictly protected because they are crucial to the life cycle of animals and are vital elements of a species’ entire habitat. Article 12(1)(d) should therefore be understood as aiming to safeguard the continued ecological functionality of such sites and places, ensuring that they continue to provide all the elements needed by the animal to rest or to breed successfully. The protection applies all year round if these sites are used on a regular basis.” [Emphasis added]

As the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 derives and is guided by legislation and guidelines issued by the European Commission, this definition is still valid within the transition period.

## **Summary**

### *“Breeding site”*

Breeding is defined here as mating, giving birth to young (including egg laying) or production of offspring where reproduction is asexual. A breeding site is defined here as the areas needed to mate and to give birth in, and covers also the vicinity of the nest or parturition site, where offspring are dependent on such sites. For some species, a breeding site will also include associated structures needed for territorial definition and defence. For species that reproduce asexually, a breeding site is defined as the area needed to produce offspring. Breeding sites that are used regularly, either within or between years, must be protected even when not occupied.

The breeding site may thus include areas required for:

1. courtship;
2. mating;
3. nest construction or selection of egg laying or parturition site;
4. places used for the purpose of parturition or egg laying or production of offspring where reproduction is asexual;
5. places of egg development and egg hatching;
6. nest or parturition sites when occupied by young dependent on that site; and
7. wider habitats that make reproduction successful, including feeding grounds.

### *Resting place*

Resting places are defined here as the areas essential to sustain an animal or group of animals when they are not active. For species that have a sessile stage, a resting place is defined as the site of attachment. Resting places will include structures created by animals to function as resting places, such as roosts, burrows or hides. Resting places that are used regularly, either within or between years, must be protected even when not occupied.

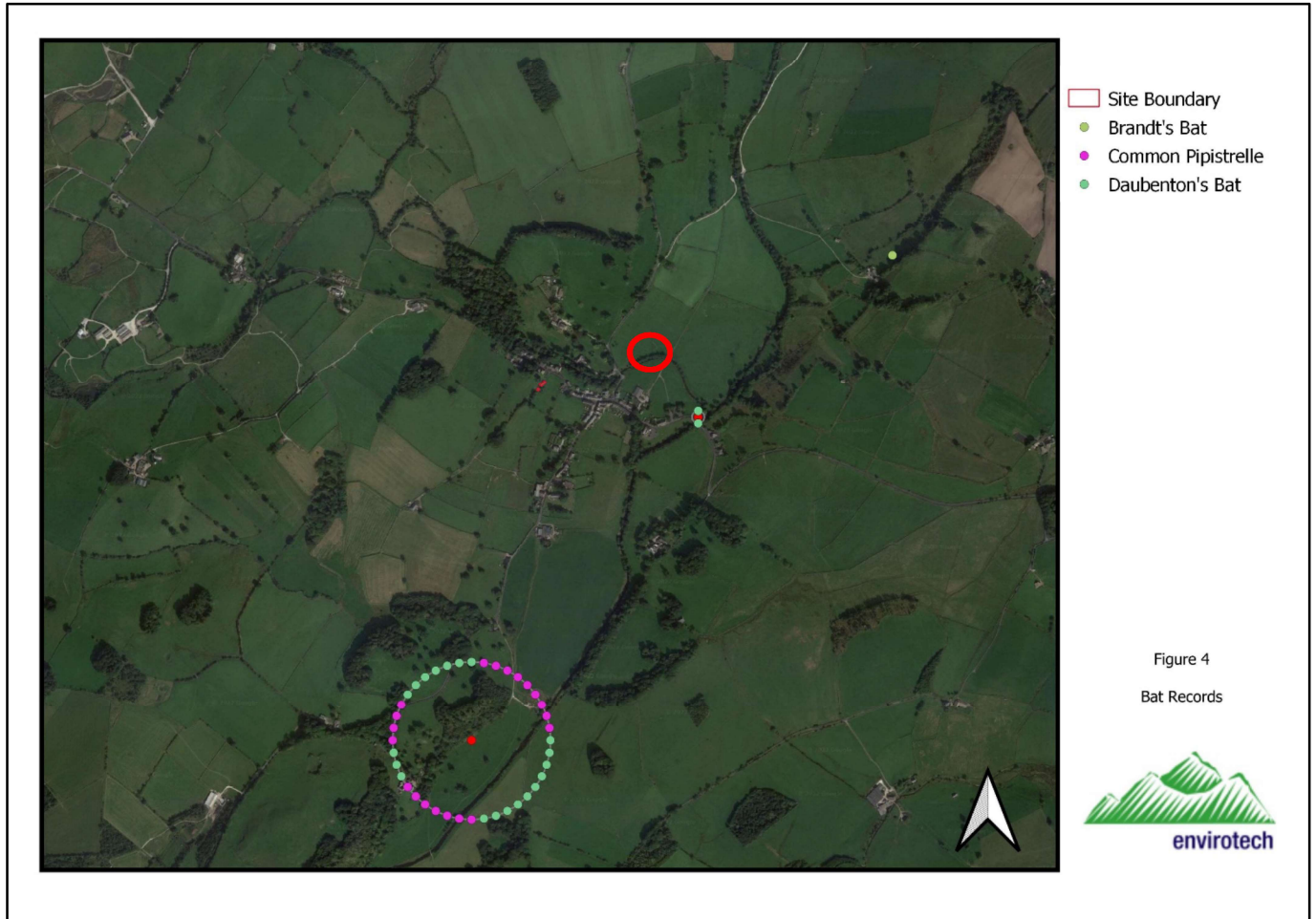
1. Thermoregulatory behaviour
2. Resting, sleeping or recuperation
3. Hiding, protection or refuge
4. Hibernation

## 5. RESULTS

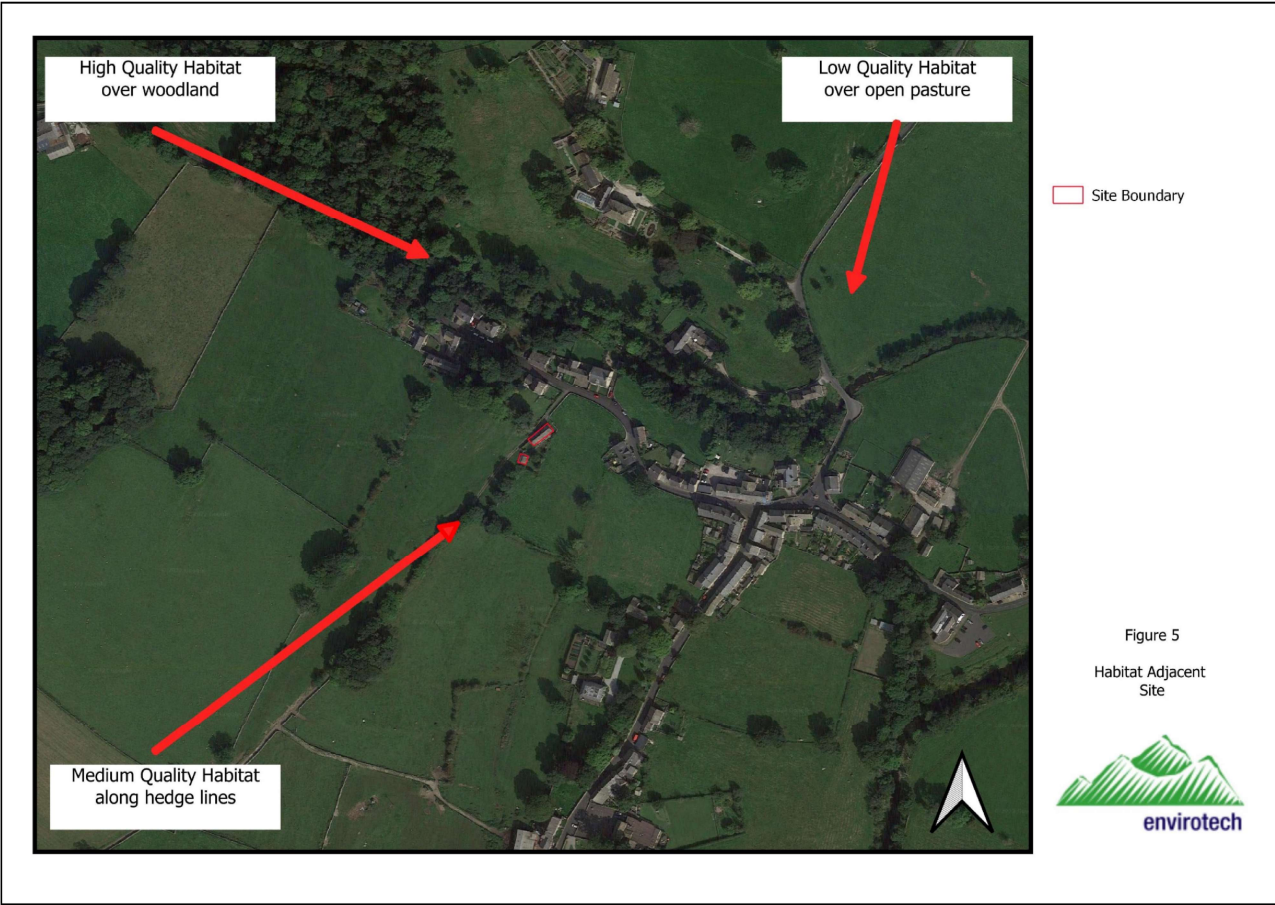
### 5.1 Desk Study

A search of the Envirotech dataset returned several records of three bat species within 2km but no records for the site.

Records are shown on Figure 4.



The habitat at and adjacent to the site was assessed from satellite imagery this was then ground truthed, Figure 5.



From the pre-existing records, a review of aerial photography, a field assessment of the area adjacent to the site and the experience of the surveyor, bat species which may occur on or adjacent to the site and the rationale for this decision are detailed in Table 5. This assessment does not look at the roosting potential of the site. The assessment of bats which are indicated as potentially occurring on the site or local area is based on the initial largely desk based scoping survey. Additional site specific assessment is provided later in this report. This assessment does however allow for the scope of site survey to be refined.

BAT SPECIES	ROOST PREFERENCE*			NICHE*	SUITABLE HABITAT		RECORDED WITHIN 2KM
	Crevice	Void	Tree		Locally	On site	
<b>Common pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	✓	✗	✓	Generalist	☒	☒	☒
<b>Soprano pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	✓	✗	✓	Riparian/Generalist	☒	☒	☐
<b>Nathusius pipistrelle</b> <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	✓	✗	✓	Enclosed woodland	☒	☐	☐
<b>Brown long-eared</b> <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	✗	✓	✓	Enclosed woodland	☒	☐	☐
<b>Whiskered</b> <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	Linear vegetation	☒	☒	☐
<b>Brandt's</b> <i>Myotis brandtii</i>	✓	✓	✓	Linear vegetation	☒	☒	☒
<b>Natterer's</b> <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	✗	✓	✓	Enclosed riparian	☒	☐	☐
<b>Daubenton's</b> <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	✓	✗	✓	Open aquatic	☐	☐	☒
<b>Alcathoe's</b> <i>Myotis alcathoe</i>	✗	✗	✓	Enclosed woodland	☐	☐	☐
<b>Noctule</b> <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	✗	✗	✓	Above woodland/water	☒	☐	☐

**Table 5** Bat species whose geographical range extends to the region in which the site is located. \*Typically but not exclusively.

## **5.2 Field Survey**

### **5.2.1 Habitat Description**

The habitat on and adjacent to the site identified from satellite images was ground truthed. Details of the habitats found on and adjacent to the site are detailed in Figure 5.

It is judged that the most suitable commuting route for bats into and out of the site is the road to the East. The surrounding habitat is considered to have moderate foraging potential.

### **5.2.2 Bat Roost Survey**

#### **5.2.2.1 General description**

There is one main building on site which comprises a farm house and a secondary detached store.

#### **5.2.3 Buildings**

##### **5.2.3.1 External walls/ Eaves**

The walls of the farmhouse are made from natural stone and are in moderate condition. There are a plethora of wall crevices on all elevations, many of which extend back into the walls. Cracks are also present around windows and doors. Fascia boards are only present on the gables but there are no soffits and wall top gaps are also frequent.

A low number of bat droppings were seen under a roost site identified in activity survey 2. No other evidence recorded internally or externally.

The walls of the detached store are also stone but low to the ground, being single storey. Shallow gaps were noted in them but no evidence of use by bats was apparent.

##### **5.2.3.2 Roof**

The roof of the farm house is half stone slate and half slate; both areas contain slipped and raised slates as well as ridgeline gaps. Roof verges are open. The roof of the store is stone slate, which is tightly fitted and unlined.

##### **5.2.3.3 Internal walls**

The internal walls of the buildings are unavailable to roosting bats as they form part of the occupied spaces of the buildings.

##### **5.2.3.4 Roof Voids/ Roof structure**

The void is split into two by a stone wall with small gap. There were thick layers of insulation which meant ceiling timbers were not visible. A section of the internal ceiling had collapsed due to water ingress. As such full access into the voids was deemed unsafe. Viewing from the ladders the roof is unlined and any parge coating is now negligible. Thick cobwebs hung across the space suggesting the presence of void dwelling species unlikely.

##### **5.2.3.5 Summary**

To summarise the farm house is of moderate size and the external walls are in moderate condition. The walls, eaves lines and roof have gaps in them which may provide roost sites for bats. A low number of bat droppings were found on an external wall. The external store is smaller and of similar condition to the farmhouse but no evidence of use by bats was found on it. Overall this site has moderate potential for use by bats, our categorisation would be 5. Further details of our categorisation can be found in Table 1.

#### 5.2.4 Activity Survey

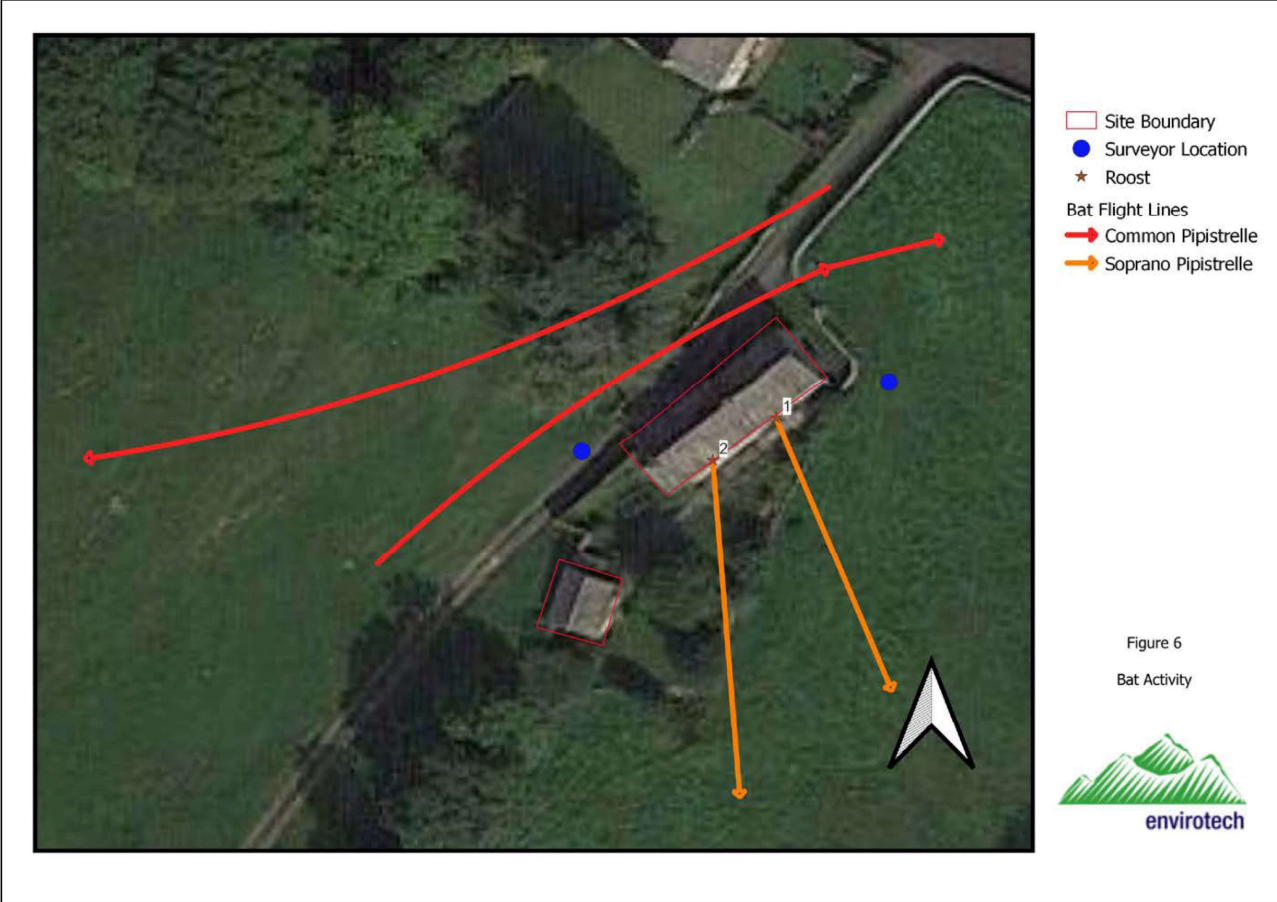
During the first activity survey no bats were seen and rain led to the assessment being cancelled.

During the second activity survey a single Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) emerged from a wall gap on the South-east elevation (Roost 1).

During the third activity survey a single Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) emerged from a wall gap on the South-east elevation (Roost 2), in a different location to that seen on the second activity survey.

There were occasional passes by Common Pipistrelle to the West.

Bat activity is plotted on Figure 6.





**Figure 7- Roost locations**

## **6. CONSTRAINTS**

We judge that the site survey is sufficient to address the risk to bats at the site based on the species present in the local area, construction of the building and nature of the proposed work. The level of survey effort accords with the recommendations of Collins ed. (2016). The reasonable probable use of the site by bats has been determined.

## **7. INTERPRETATION**

### **7.1 Presence / absence**

There was current evidence of two Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bats roosting found at the site during the survey.

We consider that the building is unlikely to be used by significant numbers of bats for roosting. It is highly unlikely the building is essential for species survival. Precautionary mitigation would be appropriate.

### **7.2 Population size class assessment**

From a review of adjacent habitat the maximum number of bats that are likely to use an area within 250m of the site is of the magnitude 10 - 99 (medium).

### **7.3 Site status assessment**

Whilst the site itself is unlikely to be used as a roost by a significant number of bats, there is use of the adjacent landscape. Bats are likely to rely on a number of roost sites in buildings and trees in the local area. It is therefore likely that the site has a low significance for bats.

## 8. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

### 8.1 *Bat Roosts*

#### 8.1.1 *Pre and mid-activity impacts*

A worst case scenario will be considered in addressing potential impacts at the site without mitigation.

##### 8.1.1.1 *Maternity Roosts*

No signs of past maternity or gathering roosts were found at the site during the survey. The potential for a maternity or gathering roost in the building is judged to be very low due to the absence of highly suitable roost sites. Evidence of past use of the site by large numbers of bats such as would occur in a maternity or gathering roost, such as staining on the roof or walls, was absent. Evidence of intensive/ regular use such as occurs in such roosts can usually be found at any time of year. **We judge there is no risk to a maternity colony or gathering roost at this site from the proposed work.**

##### 8.1.1.2 *Satellite Roosts*

We do not consider that satellite roosts will be affected by the proposal. There was no indication of elevated use of the site such as would occur if this roost type were present. **We judge there is no risk to a satellite roost at this site from the proposed work.**

##### 8.1.1.3 *Transitional and day roost sites*

**We judge there is a high risk of disturbing bats in or loss of transitional or day roost sites.** We judge that on balance it is likely this sites potential for use for these purposes will be degraded by the proposed work as the external walls of the farmhouse will be pointed. There are likely to be numerous other more suitable sites in other buildings and trees in the wider area. The building is unlikely to offer significant roosting potential or be essential for species survival locally.

##### 8.1.1.4 *Night Roosts*

We do not consider the site is sufficiently close to or linked with high quality foraging habitat such that bats may use it for night roosting.

##### 8.1.1.5 *Feeding roosts*

We do not consider the site is sufficiently close to or linked with high quality foraging habitat such that bats may use it for feeding roosts.

##### 8.1.1.6 *Lek sites*

In our experience lek sites are commonly found in proximity to the main feeding and commuting routes. The primarily commuting and feeding area at the site was judged to be the woodland some distance from the site to the North. There were no potential lek sites identified in the building facing this commuting route which are also close enough to it to be used by male bats for leks. It is therefore unlikely there will be use of the building by bats for lekking.

#### 8.1.1.7 Hibernation

There are no areas of rotten wood in the building or damp walls which also offer crevices which could be suitable for hibernating *Pipistrelle* spp. bats.

There are no areas of the building which are sufficiently damp, cool and darkened which would be ideal for hibernating *Myotis* spp. bats. There is very little evidence and limited potential for hibernation at the site; it is therefore unlikely there will be loss of hibernation sites.

#### 8.1.1.8 Swarming

There is unlikely to be any loss of a swarming site. Swarming sites are generally found at or near hibernation sites. We judge that the site is unlikely to be used by *Myotis* spp. bats and brown long-eared bats which have been known to swarm as there are no hibernation sites for these species in the building.

#### 8.1.1.9 Summary

**Without mitigation, there is considered to be the potential for the alteration or loss of two transitional or day roost sites for single Soprano Pipistrelle bats. There is a risk of killing or injury to low numbers of bats, but this is unlikely to have a significant impact on their local distribution.**

#### 8.1.2 Long term impacts

There is on balance a low risk of long term negative impacts on the favourable conservation status of bats in the local area as a result of the proposed work.

#### 8.1.3 Post activity interference impacts

There is unlikely to be disturbance to roosting bats during the post construction phase of the project. There is already significant disturbance at the site from existing use of the site and surrounds.

#### 8.1.4 Other impacts

It is our opinion that there will be no significant other negative impacts relating to the proposed work which may affect bat species.

#### 8.1.5 Bat Foraging and Commuting Habitat

There is unlikely to be a disruption to any commuting routes at the site. The site does not lie on or near to a high quality commuting route.

There is unlikely to be a disturbance to feeding bats during and after the construction phase of the project. It is judged that the foraging areas near the site will be unaffected by the proposed work.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

### 9.1 Further Survey

We consider that the risk to bats in the building will remain stable and no additional survey work is required prior to the determination of the planning application.

### 9.2 Mitigation Measures

#### 9.2.1 Bats

Natural England requires that mitigation addresses the impacts picked up by the site assessment, as follows:-

- **Quantitative characteristics:** There should be no net loss of roost sites, and in fact where significant impacts are predicted there will be an expectation that compensation will provide an enhanced resource compared with that to be lost. The reasoning behind this concept is that the acceptability of newly created roosts by bats is not predictable.
- **Qualitative characteristics:** the plans should aim to replace like with like. As an extreme example, it would be unacceptable to replace maternity roosts with hibernation sites.
- **Functional characteristics:** compensation should aim to ensure that the affected bat population can function as before. This may require attention to the environment around the roost.

Natural England also recommends that precautions are taken to avoid the deliberate killing or injury of bats during development work at the site.

The site survey found evidence of habitual use of the building by roosting bats in or between years. The survey effort was sufficient to allow for an assessment of this to be made.

#### 9.2.1.1 Bat Roosts

As a precautionary approach the following guidelines will be adhered to.

1. A Natural England licence will be obtained prior to work commencing on the South-east external walls if they are to be pointed or scaffolded.
2. All contractors on the site will be made aware of the possible presence of bats prior to the commencement of work and location of the bat roosts.
3. Contractors will be provided with the contact details of an appropriately qualified individual who can provide advice in relation to bats at any time during work. In the event that bats are found during work, unless the action has already been cleared by a suitably qualified individual, **all work will cease** and an appropriately qualified individual will be contacted for further advice.
4. Contractors will be observant during demolition work for bats which may use the building if new areas of the roof are exposed and left open overnight. Bats are opportunistic and may make use of gaps opened up during work overnight.

5. If it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves should be worn. It should be carefully caught in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk near to where it was found, or moved to an undisturbed part of the building, with outside access, and placed in a location safe from predators.
6. **If bats or bat roosts are found during work, all work should cease.** The site will need to be re-assessed in regard to its use by bats. A Natural England licence will be required if continuing work is, on balance, likely to result in the disturbance, killing or injury of bats or the alteration, destruction or obstruction of roost site.
7. Remove all roof coverings by hand only.
8. Subject to the requirements of the PSML an ecologist will be required on site at the start of works to confirm the absence of roosting bats and or to undertake an exclusion.
9. Create at least eight gaps along the eaves lines of the building which allow access to the wall tops under the eaves during any re-roofing which is undertaken. A plan for these type of roost is shown on Figure 8. These potential roost sites will be a significant improvement on existing site conditions.
10. There is no need to restrict the timing of work. Use of the structure by bats is equally likely to occur at any time of the year but will be at low levels.

Following English Nature (Natural England) guidance Mitchell-Jones (2004), if these guidelines are followed we would consider that on balance, a disturbance to bat species which could be contrary to the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) is unlikely. **If bats are found prior to or during work a licence application will be required.**

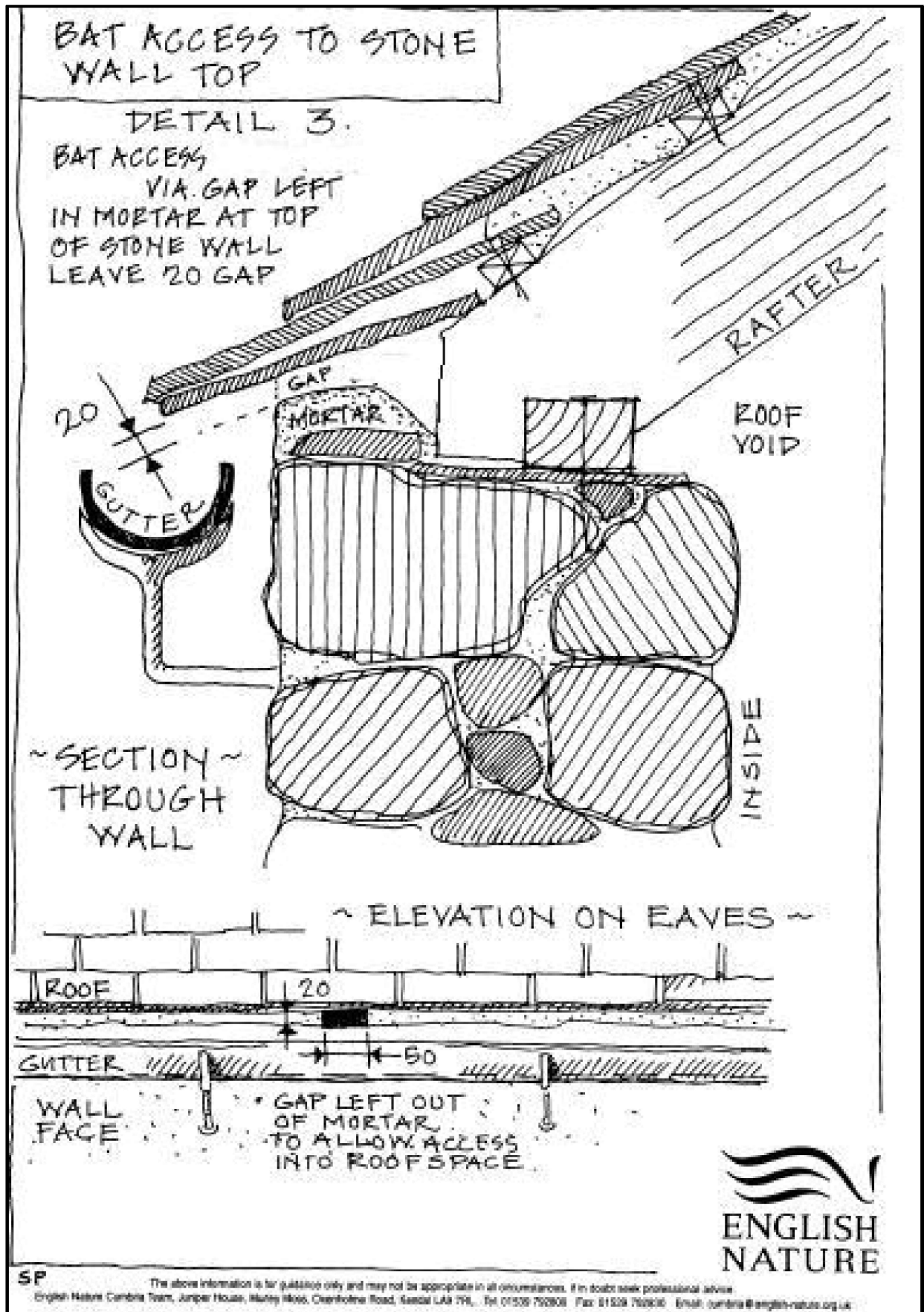


Figure 8 New roost site creation.

### *9.2.1.2 Mitigation for Foraging and Commuting Habitat*

No specific mitigation for foraging and commuting habitat is necessary. The habitat surrounding the site does not change significantly.

### *9.2.1.3 Requirement for Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 Licence*

At this stage, we judge that a Natural England licence will be required to cover work on the building. Low numbers of Soprano Pipistrelle bats were confirmed as roosting at the site, the loss of potential roost sites cannot be avoided but no significant disturbance to bats will occur, so long as the recommendations of this report are followed.

A Natural England licence will be required as work is, on balance, likely to result in the disturbance, killing or injury of bats and or the alteration, destruction or obstruction of a roost site.

## 10. MITIGATION SUMMARY

The site survey found evidence of Soprano Pipistrelle bats roosting in low numbers. The level of use is not considered likely to be significant and with the retention/creation of gaps at the eaves and precautionary mitigation, a significant disturbance and/or the overall loss of roost sites is unlikely to occur.

On the basis of survey information, specialist knowledge of bat species and the mitigation that has been proposed, it is considered that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under regulation 39 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. We consider there to be a need for a Natural England licence at this time.

## 11. REFERENCES

Information from the following sources has been used in preparing the survey report.

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## APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

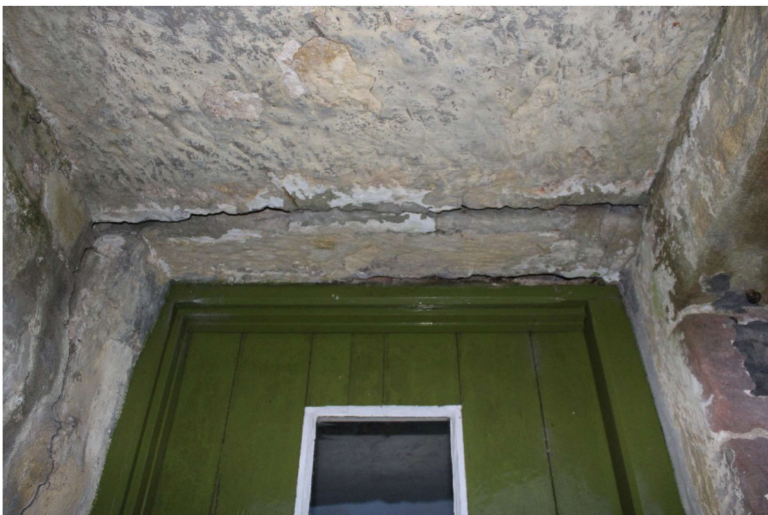
Photograph	Notes
 <p>The first photograph shows a two-story stone building with a dark car parked in front. The second photograph is a close-up of the stone wall showing significant cracking and crevices. The third photograph shows the rear of the building with a chimney and a green netting structure in the foreground.</p>	<p>Crevices in the stone walls were frequent</p>



Gaps along the roof verges



Slipped slates on the roof



As above doorways



Roof void with unlined roof and insulation to the floor



The store has well sealed walls and a stone slate roof. It is a small building which could be fully inspected during the daytime surveys