



ecological consultants

PROTECTED SPECIES REPORT: Bat Roost Characterisation Survey

Outbuildings at Holly House Farm, Huncote,
Leicestershire

Report Reference: BG21.169.1

June 2021



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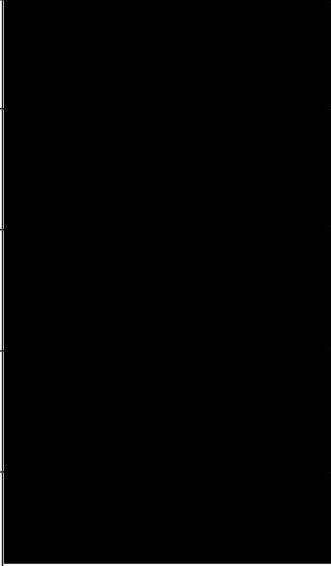


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Outbuildings at Holly House Farm

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Grid reference: SP 51711 99142

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1 Summary

- 1.1 Brindle and Green were commissioned by Mr Julian Collier to undertake a suite of bat roost characterisation surveys on Building 1, Holly House Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire. The surveys were undertaken between May and June 2021.
- 1.2 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in April 2021 by Brindle and Green Ltd (BG21.160), which concluded that Building 1 offered potential roosting features with a 'Moderate' suitability and two further emergence surveys were recommended to confirm presence / absence of bat roosts. Building 2 was deemed to have negligible bat roosting suitability, therefore, there were no further surveys recommended on this building. Report BG21.169 should be reviewed in conjunction with this report.
- 1.3 The site is the subject of a planning application for a change of use of Building 1 into a dog care centre. The external features of the building will not be altered, work is restricted to interior conversion and adding fittings. Design proposals for the site are presented have not yet been finalised.
- 1.4 Building 1 was found to support a single common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) day roost within the external brickwork, under the barge board on the southern elevation. Bat activity within the application site was considered to be low, with activity pertaining to commuting passes of common pipistrelle over the course of the three surveys.
- 1.5 All bats in the United Kingdom and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is an offence to damage or destroy any bat roost, intentionally or recklessly obstruct a bat roost, deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or intentionally kill, injure or take any bat.
- 1.6 A summary of recommendations set out to ensure the client works within the law and that any impacts to protected species are minimised is included below:

- 1.6.1 As the proposed redevelopment does not incorporate external works to the building the bat roost confirmed within Building 1 will not be impacted by the works. Should development proposals to the building change and incorporate works to the external elevations, the roof, internal demolition, timber removal or involve the use of loud machinery such as jackhammer, a Natural England European Protected Species Development Licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence will be required prior to the onset of works to mitigate the damage / loss of a bat roost.
- 1.6.2 In order to secure enhancement as a result of the planned works, it is recommended that a suitable bat box, such as an oak Kent bat box, or similar approved, be installed on a mature tree within the site ownership
- 1.6.3 Bats are highly mobile and can change roost sites throughout the year and from season to season. If the site works do not begin within twelve months of this initial survey it will be necessary to conduct a re-survey to determine if the characteristics of the roosts on site have changed.

1 Introduction

- 2.1 Brindle & Green were commissioned by Mr Julian Collier to undertake a series of bat dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys of a detached outbuilding; Building 1, Holly House Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire, Grid Ref.: SP 51711 99142.
- 2.2 The purpose of this survey was to establish whether bats were roosting within the potential features identified during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (BG21.169, April 2021) and to provide details on solutions for mitigation if required.
- 2.3 The red line boundary comprises two outbuildings (Buildings 1 and 2) at Holly House Farm, situated within rural Leicestershire, 8km south-west of Leicester. The surrounding environment comprises extensive arable and pastoral land. The M69 is located 0.1km south-east. Both buildings are the subject of a full application for the conversion from storage into a dog care centre.
- 2.4 The surveys pertained to Building 1; a single storey red-brick barn supporting a pitched corrugated sheet roof, with a timber sliding door on the northern elevation, and open doorway and window on the western and eastern elevations, respectively. Timber fascia boards are present on all elevations, and a timber soffit is located on the western elevation. Brickwork well-sealed for the majority of the building. The building is currently vacant.
- 2.5 The legislation relevant to bats within the United Kingdom is summarised within Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.
- 2.6 Results and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared by an experienced ecologist and are therefore the view of Brindle & Green Limited. The survey is based on information provided by our client, the development proposals, and the results of our survey of the site. This report pertains to this information only.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Building 1 was subjected to two bat dusk emergence surveys (09/05/2021 and 31/05/2021), and a single dawn re-entry survey (22/06/2021) to confidently characterise the roost identified.
- 3.2 Bat surveys were conducted according to methodologies outlined within Natural England's Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Colins, 2016). The dusk surveys began 15 minutes before sunset and lasted for two hours following sunset, while dawn re-entry surveys began 2 hours prior to sunrise, and were completed 15 minutes after sunrise. Where methodology has deviated from good practice, it has been recorded and justified within the limitations section of the report.
- 3.3 On each survey, surveyors operated an Echo Meter Touch detector connected to an iPad. Where possible, species were identified using information from visual and audio cues, all sonograms were recorded on to the iPad and were analysed using Analook software to confirm species identification.
- 3.4 All bat passes, including time and species, were recorded on to field maps, noting direction of flight and emergence. Where possible, the number of individuals observed and behaviour of the bat was also recorded, including foraging, commuting and social calling behaviours.

3.5 Surveyors

Surveys carried out by Tom Hough MSc, QualCIEEM, Natural England Bat Licence Class 1 (2020-50050-CLS-CLS), Consultant Ecologist, Veronica Cantero Sanchez MSc, Ecologist, Nikki Scott, Trained Seasonal Ecologist and Chris Chapman, Trained Seasonal Ecologist.

The survey was overseen by Lucinda Sweet PhD, MCIEEM, Natural England Bat Licence Class 2 (2019-39122-CLS-CLS), Great Crested Newt licence (2016-22852-CLS-CLS), Director.

3.6 **Survey Conditions**

The surveys were undertaken in weather conditions considered conducive to bat activity. The weather conditions for each survey are summarised within Section 5: Results.

3.7 **Limitations**

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The protected and notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on site, based upon the suitability of the habitats and known distribution of the species in the local area.

3.8 **Report Lifespan**

Given the transient nature of the subject we would consider the survey results contained to be accurate for 12 months.

4 Site Context

4.1 Site Description

The application site can be found at SE 37214 45715 and comprises two outbuildings at Holly House Farm, situated within rural Leicestershire, 8km south-west of Leicester. Building 1 was the only building to be surveyed and pertains to a red-brick barn supporting a pitched corrugated sheet roof. This building supported suitable cavities under timber fascia boarding on all elevations, suitable cavities along the interior roof ridge, gaps in mortaring on southern elevation of small adjoining section, suitable crevices where timbers adjoin to wall in interior, which were considered suitable to support roosting bats.

4.2 The surrounding environment is predominantly rural, comprising arable and pastoral land, with scattered trees and hedgerows along field boundaries providing connectivity to the site. The M69 is located 0.1km south-east, bordered by woodland which will likely provide further connectivity to the east and west.

4.3 Zone of influence

The zone of Influence is used to describe the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development in relation to the target species, in this case bats and breeding birds. Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, it is not considered that the impacts of the proposed works would extend beyond the scheme footprint and its immediate surroundings.

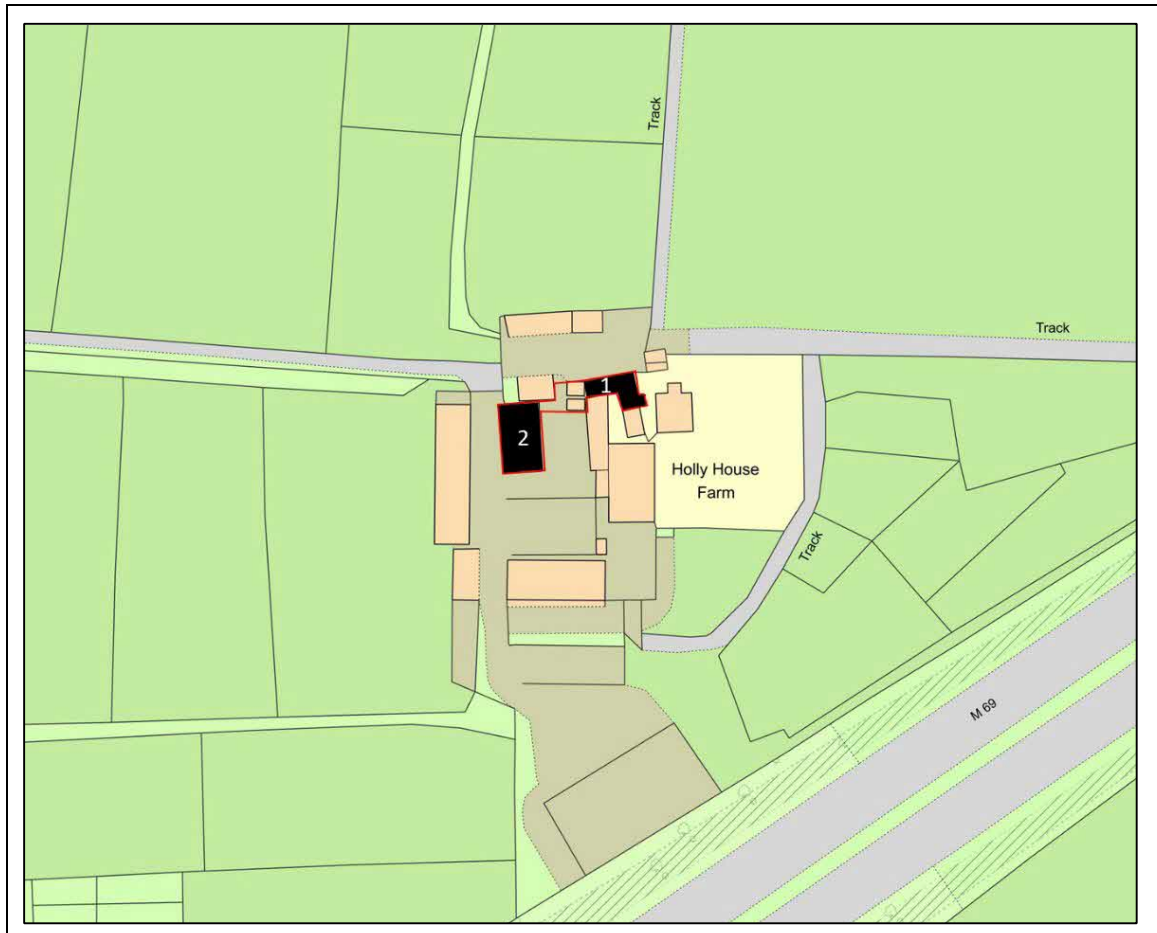


Figure 1. OS Map of the project site and surrounding area.

The red line boundary depicts the application site. The Bat surveys pertained to Building 1. Building 2 was not subjected to further survey. The two other structures pictured within this area are no longer present.

5 Results

5.1 A summary of bat activity per survey is provided in the tables below. Raw data sheets are available upon request. A diagrammatic representation of the bat activity recorded during surveys can be seen within Figure 2.

5.2 Bat Dusk Emergence Survey – 09/05/2021

Sunset time: 20:44	Cloud Cover: 8/8	Wind speed: BF2
Start time: 20:29	Start temp: 14°C	Start humidity: 89%
Finish time: 22:14	Finish temp: 3°C	Finish humidity: 77%

5.2.1 Survey effort was focused on determining the presence of bats within Building 1 and establishing the location of access / egress points. Assessments of how bats were using the area adjacent to the survey building were also undertaken.

5.2.2 **Table 1.** Summary of bat activity on dusk emergence survey 09/05/2021.

Time	Activity
20:29-21:00	No bat activity observed.
21:00-21:15	At 21:06 a CP was observed emerging the building from the gable end at the southern corner, from Roost Location 1 - a gap in the brickwork under the barge board (Figure 2 and 3). At 21:13 a CP was HNS with intermittent foraging activity. At 21:16 a CP was observed foraging around trees to the south. At 21:17 a NOC was HNS commuting over the application site.
21:15-21:30	No bat activity observed however a CP was HNS at 21:34.
21:30-21:45	No bat activity observed.
21:45-22:00	No bat activity observed.
22:00-22:15	No bat activity observed.
Key: CP – Common pipistrelle NOC – Noctule HNS-heard not seen	

5.2.3 Activity was low, pertaining to 4 commuting records, during the survey with infrequent passes from two locally frequent species common pipistrelle and common noctule. Foraging activity from a single common pipistrelle was recorded to the south of Building 1 for short periods.

5.2.4 A single common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from a gap in the brickwork under the barge board (Roost Location 1) at the southern corner of Building 1

(Figure 2). This behaviour indicates a day roost of an individual bat of low conservation significance.

5.3 Bat Dusk Emergence Survey – 31/05/2021

Sunset time: 21:17	Cloud Cover: 0/8	Wind speed: BF0
Start time: 21:02	Start temp: 20°C	Start humidity: 54%
Finish time: 22:47	Finish temp: 17°C	Finish humidity: 64%

5.3.1 Survey effort was focused on characterising the roost within Building 1 and establishing the extent of the roost. Assessments of how bats were using the area adjacent to the survey building were also undertaken.

5.3.2 **Table 2.** Summary of bat activity on dusk emergence survey 31/05/2021.

Time	Activity
21:02-21:15	A NOC was HNS at 21:07 and 21:13 commuting over the site.
21:15-21:30	No bat activity observed.
21:30-21:45	A NOC was HNS at 21:42 commuting over the site.
21:45-22:00	A NOC was HNS at 21:50 commuting over the site. A NOC was HNS at 21:55. A CP was observed emerging the building from the gable end at the southern corner, from Roost Location 1 - a gap in the brickwork under the barge board (Figure 2 and 3) Faint CP foraging calls were recorded after this emergence.
22:00-22:15	A CP was seen commuting from the west to the south at 22:08.
22:15-22:30	No bat activity observed.
22:30-22:47	No bat activity observed.
Key: CP – Common pipistrelle NOC – Noctule HNS-heard not seen	

5.3.3 Bat activity was low during the survey with infrequent passes from common pipistrelle through the site and common noctule over the local landscape.

5.3.4 A single common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from Roost Location 1 from a gap in the bricks under the barge board of Building 1. Foraging activity from common pipistrelle was recorded intermittently along the boundary features after the recorded emergence.

5.4 Bat Dawn Re-entry Survey – 22/06/2021

Sunset time: 04:41	Cloud Cover: 8/8	Wind speed: BF0
Start time: 03:11	Start temp: 10°C	Start humidity: 57%
Finish time: 04:56	Finish temp: 14°C	Finish humidity: 77%

5.4.1 Survey effort was focused on characterising the roost within Building 1 and establishing the extent of the roost. Assessments of how bats were using the area adjacent to the survey building were also undertaken.

5.4.2 **Table 3.** Summary of bat activity on dawn re-entry survey 22/06/2021.

Time	Activity
03:11-03:30	No bat activity observed.
03:30-03:45	No bat activity observed.
03:45-04:00	A NOC was seen foraging at 03:51. A NOC was seen circling the courtyard at 03:54.
04:00-04:15	A NOC was HNS at 04:02.
04:15-04:30	No bat activity observed.
04:30-04:45	No bat activity observed.
04:45-04:56	No bat activity observed.
No bats were recorded entering the building	
Key: CP – Common pipistrelle NOC – Noctule HNS-heard not seen	

5.4.3 Activity was low during the survey pertaining to infrequent passes from a single species, common noctule. One instance of foraging activity was recorded during the survey, when a common noctule was spotted circling the courtyard to the south of Building 1.

5.4.4 No common pipistrelles were recorded using the site during the survey, and no bat re-entries were recorded into Building 1. It is likely that the day roost is one of many common pipistrelle day roosts used within the local area.

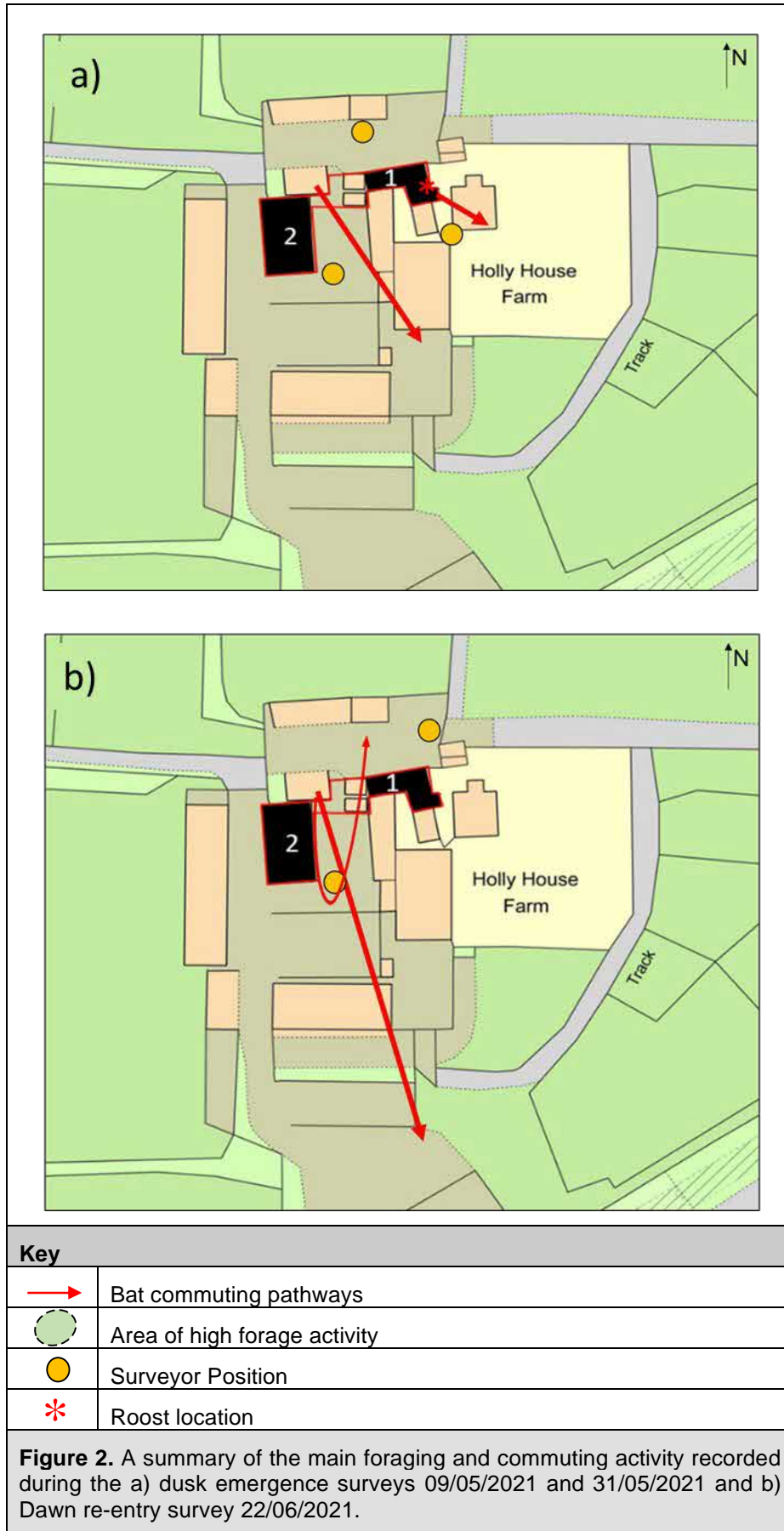




Figure 3. Roost Location 1 circled in red. Pertaining to a cavity within the brickwork behind the barge board. Following inspection, the cavity does not allow access into the interior of the building.

6 Evaluation

- 6.1 The dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys confirmed a day roost for a single common pipistrelle on the exterior of Building 1 Holly House Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire. A single common pipistrelle was confirmed to be roosting within a gap in the brickwork under the barge board on the southern corner of the eastern elevation.
- 6.2 The roost is considered to be of low conservation significance due to the low number of non-breeding individuals from a locally common species recorded. Furthermore, the building and roost location did not support suitability for roosts of higher conservation significance such as maternity or hibernation colonies as the roost location did not extend into a cavity or the interior of the building.
- 6.3 Of the bat species recorded roosting within Building 1, it is considered that common pipistrelles are common in the county, providing local level importance to roosting bats (Wray *et al*, 2010). Foraging activity was considered to be low, with the majority of passes relating to commuting bats. A single foraging area was utilised during the dusk surveys to the southeast elevation of Building 1, in the courtyard (Figure 2).
- 6.4 As the proposed redevelopment does not incorporate external works to the building, and the recorded roost location does not provide access into the building there is no risk or injury, or entrapment of bats during the renovation works. The bat roost will not be impacted by the internal renovation works proposed including the fitting of windows and doors, internal plastering and the addition of internal fixtures and fittings. There are no tasks proposed which would be considered to disturb roosting bats such as timber removal, roofing works, demolition or tasks involving loud machinery, such as concrete breaking with a jackhammer.
- 6.5 Should development proposals to the building change and incorporate works to the external elevations, a Natural England European Protected Species Development Licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence will be required prior to the onset of works to mitigate the damage / loss of a bat roost.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Roosting Bats

The common pipistrelle roost found within Building 1 was considered to be of low conservation significance, however the roost, and inhabiting remain legally protected under wildlife legislation.

As such, the following Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be implemented during the internal renovation;

- a) A single dusk / dawn survey should be conducted pre works to ensure that the status of the roost remains the same, and determine if the bat is present during works, or the roosting behaviours have changed. The ecologist should also check the internal features to ensure the use of the building has not changed.
- b) An ecologist should provide a toolbox talk to site staff alerting them to the presence of bats on site, and their legal protection. The toolbox talk will describe what to do if bats are found unexpectedly during works, and will provide the contact of a bat licenced ecologist should the scope of the works have the potential to change.
- c) Should development proposals to the building change and incorporate works to the external elevations, a Natural England European Protected Species Development Licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence will be required prior to the onset of works to mitigate the damage / loss of a bat roost.

7.2 In order to secure enhancement as a result of the planned works, it is recommended that a suitable bat box, such as an oak Kent bat box, or similar approved, be installed on a mature tree within the site ownership.

7.3 If the works to the building are not complete within twelve months of this initial survey it will be necessary to conduct a re-survey to determine if the characteristics of the roosts on site have changed.

Appendix 1. General References

Bat Conservation Trust (2014) Artificial lighting and wildlife Interim Guidance: Recommendations to help minimise the impact artificial lighting. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bell, S. McGillivray, D. (2006) *Environmental Law*. 6th ed. Oxford University Press.

Butterfly Conservation trust (2014) Nectar Plants, http://mothscount.org/text/64/nectar_plants.html

Collins, J (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, (3rd edition), Bat Conservation Trust, London

Mitchell-Jones A.J. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* 2004. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones A.J. McLeish, A.P. (2004) *Bat Workers Manual* (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Wray S. Wells D. Long E. Mitchell-Jones T (2010) Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment. CIEEM In Practice December 2010.

Appendix 2. Legislation and Guidance Sources

Articles of British wildlife and countryside legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to. The articles of legislation are:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Department for Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework. March 2012

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan 2006

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

Appendix 3. Relevant Ecology and Legislation

(Please note that this is for information purposes only. Clients should seek further legal advice where necessary).

There are 17 species of bats that occur in Britain. Dramatic declines in population numbers initiated the introduction of European and UK legislative protection. British bats and their roosts are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Additional protection is offered under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Buildings and structures which offer roosting potential to bats can be impacted by development and this can result in disturbance to potential roost sites. Bats occupy different roost sites during the year depending on species-specific summer roost and hibernation roost requirements. Bats usually re-use the same roosts, therefore the legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

In the case of development work, activities involving the capture, disturbance and/or relocation of bats are subject to a licence from Natural England. Such licences are only granted:

“For the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, to allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal.”

Under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017., licences can only be issued if Natural England are satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Undertaking work to a bat roost without following appropriate recommendations from Natural England and/or DEFRA could lead to prosecution resulting in imprisonment, fines and confiscation of vehicles/equipment used.

Appendix 4. Design Plans

