

Ecological Impact Assessment and Bat Survey

GARDEN COTTAGE, WEST THIRSTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

SUMMER 2022

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Disclaimer:

Ecology surveys are carried out in good faith, to the relevant professional guidelines. Where variation from these guidelines is necessary, this is outlined in the report. Any comments regarding condition of buildings or trees are in relation to the use of the building/tree by bats and birds and should not be considered as a building survey or arboricultural opinion on the condition of those features.

The client should be aware that the mitigation recommendations in ecology reports are often translated directly into planning conditions, and as such these should be studied closely and agreed with any contractors in advance of site works commencing.

Mitigation recommendations should be clearly marked on the Architect's Plans submitted with any planning or other consent.

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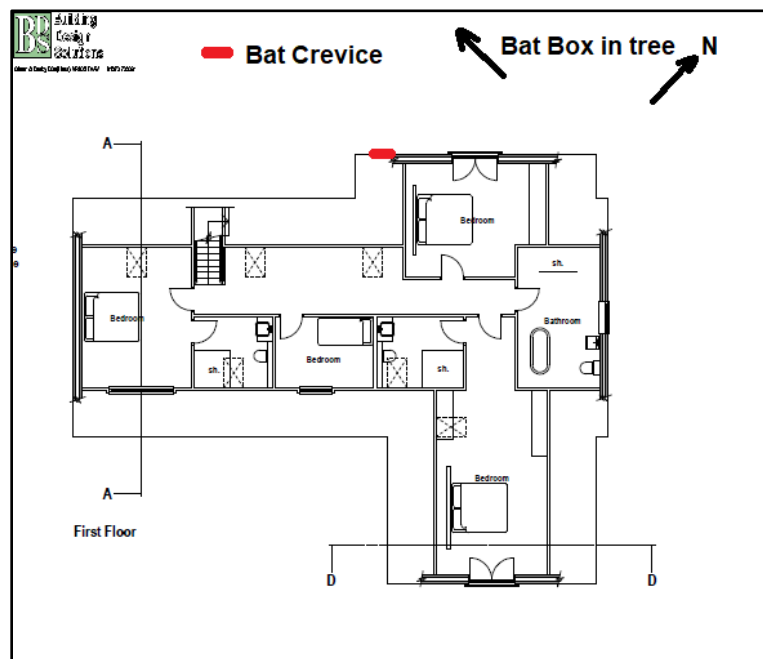
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Ecological Impact Assessment for Garden Cottage, West Thirston, Northumberland

Summary

- An ecological survey was requested primarily for bats and birds for Garden Cottage, West Thirston, Northumberland by Strutt and Parker on behalf of the owners.
- Garden Cottage, West Thirston is situated overlooking agricultural land to the southeast. The building surveyed is stone and brick built with a pitched trussed roof.
- The proposals are to extend upwards into the loft space, entailing the cottage being re-roofed.
- The immediate area to the village is rural and the village is surrounded by agricultural land consisting mainly of improved grassland with some arable. To the west woodlands are linked by the wooded banks of the river.
- Inspection results of the exterior revealed that the building affected by the proposals had the occasional crevice suitable for roosting bats at the gable wall tops and a small scatter of bat droppings was located in the loft space. Due to the moderate roost potential present two surveys were carried out.
- Data search results within 2km of the site consists of numerous maternity roosts of Pipistrelle sp. 150m to the southwest and 200m to the northeast. Pipistrelle 55kHz 265m to the west, and Brown long-eared 510m-1.8km to the northwest and southeast with occasional roosts of Pipistrelle 45kHz. Foraging Noctule, Natterer's, Daubenton's and Whiskered/Brandt's bats have also been recorded within 2km.
- The emergence survey confirmed bat emergence from the property of two Pipistrelle 55kHz bats and after sunset small numbers of Pipistrelle 55kHz bats foraged in the garden to the west with Noctule bats also heard or seen during the survey. The dawn survey identified re-entry into the building of two Pipistrelle 55kHz bats and commuting activity of Pipistrelle 45kHz, Noctule and Brown long-eared bats.
- One bat roost will be affected due to the proposals. Timing of any destructive works to avoid the hibernation period (November to March inclusive) will ensure that the works have as little negative affect as possible on bats, however as the disturbance of a roosting place for bats will take place, the site requires to be registered under a Natural England Licence Low Impact License to proceed.
- Mitigation will be in the form of a bat crevice in the extended building and a bat box will be provided.
- No nesting birds were noted around the area of works. Any nesting bird species though will be allowed access to the nest until the young have fledged.

Figure 1. Ecological Mitigation Plan



1. Introduction.

The inspection was carried out and reported by Ruth Hadden BSc an experienced Ecologist and Licensed Bat Surveyor.

Figure 2. Survey area of the site within red line



Figure 3. Location of site.



2. Relevant Policies and Legislation.

Under Section 25 (1) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) local authorities have a duty to take such steps as they consider expedient to bring to the attention of the public the provisions of Part I of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, which includes measures to conserve protected species.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a Statutory Biodiversity Duty on public authorities to take such measures as they consider expedient for the purposes of conserving biodiversity, including restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states “*When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;” (paragraph 175).

ODPM Circular 06/2005/Defra Circular 01/2005 states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering a development proposal that could harm the species or its habitat.

Appendix 1 details legislation relating to applicable species.

Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. This includes planning decisions.

2.1 Designated Sites

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) citations are for special features of importance to nature conservation. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally important sites protected under laws including The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. LPAs must consult Natural England on planning applications that might affect SSSIs. Operations that could damage special interests require consent by Natural England. It is an offence for any person to intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any of the features of special interest of an SSSI, or to disturb wildlife for which the site was notified.

3. Methodology.

3.1 Scope of the Assessment.

The zone of influence of this development is defined as being the site itself and habitats to the immediate boundaries within 2km.

The assessment has included consideration of:

- designated sites
- habitats and species of principal importance for conservation of biodiversity
- protected species, namely bats.

3.2 Desktop Survey.

Natural England's Magic on the Map website was accessed for details of any designated wildlife sites within 2km.

The Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC) data search has been restricted to bats, as this is the major constraint to any destructive building works.

Natural England's Magic on the Map and OS Explorer 1:12500 maps were used to assess the distance to habitat features close to the site.

3.3 Site Survey

The survey area covered the buildings only within the red line boundary as shown within Figure 2 and included searching for signs of any wildlife using the site with the key aspects listed below.

The survey included an assessment of habitats on site for use by bats following the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition, 2016) and Natural England's definitions except where indicated. The survey effort at the site has taken account of the recommendations of the BCT Good Practice Survey Guidelines, taking proportionality into account and the proposals.

Field Survey for Bats and Birds

Visual Inspection

A close inspection of the building was made in good light, and by torch where required. The exterior and loft of the building was examined as far as was feasible for signs of bats: droppings, urine streaks, clean cobweb-free areas on the ridge boards or crevices and potential roost exit holes. All external and internal crevices were checked using a torch and possible roosting sites were noted. Crevice loving bats can be difficult to find especially when bats are present between the roofing felt and slate/tiles. Emergence surveys were therefore used to check for the presence of bats missed during the visual inspections. Beneath ledges the ground was examined for feathers, pellets and birdlime that could indicate occupation by barn owls.

Emergence Survey

As dusk fell 2 surveyors, each using visual observations and bat detectors (Echo Meter Touch), and two-way radios, carried out the evening emergence surveys, covering all aspects of the buildings. Bat detectors convert bat echo-location signals into audible sounds, enabling the identification of some species, and aid the monitoring of the number of bats present. Two-way radios help to determine the emergence and flight paths of a bat seen by surveyors around the site and allow the bat activity of the whole site to be understood, whilst at the site.

Surveyors are on site for at least quarter of an hour before sunset and up to 1½ hours after sunset or until darkness falls as reduced visibility does not allow bats to be seen emerging from the building being surveyed. After this time any bats picked up by detector, cannot

be guaranteed to have emerged from the building in question, but confirms if additional species are present in the area or not. If bats or a maternity colony is present the bats are counted until no bats have left the roost for 10 minutes for as long as it takes.

Re-entry Survey

A dawn survey was also carried out. For a dawn survey, surveyors are on site one and a half hours before sunrise until a quarter of an hour after sunrise.

Timing and Weather Conditions

Survey	Date	Timings	Weather
Inspection	4 July 2022	Externally and internally (40 mins).	Fine and dry
Emergence	4 July 2022	9.30pm – 11.15pm (Sunset 9.48pm)	Fine, clear and still 14-12°C
Re-entry	9 August 2022	4.00 – 5.45am (Sunrise 5.28am)	Fine, light cloud and still. 13°C

Personnel

Ruth Hadden – Bat Consultant since 1996, Class Survey Licence CL20 2015-13665-CLS-CLS (Bat Survey Level 4). Licensed to handle bats and enter known roosts since 1986. Qualifications BSc Joint Honours Zoology & Plant Biology, Newcastle upon Tyne. MCIEEM

Ben Hadden BSc – Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2). Registration number 201514223-CLS-CLS. 15 years of experience.

3.4 Assessment.

The assessment has been conducted according to the *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*, CIEEM, September 2018. Impacts are considered for during construction and occupation.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Reports (PEAR) which CIEEM guidelines¹ states can be used to support a planning application where it can be determined that the project would have no significant ecological effects, no mitigation is required, and no further surveys are necessary. PEARs though can also provide;

- the results of initial ecological surveys associated with a proposed development
- identify further ecological surveys necessary to inform an EcIA
- identify ecological constraints to a project
- make recommendations for design changes
- highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions

4.1 General

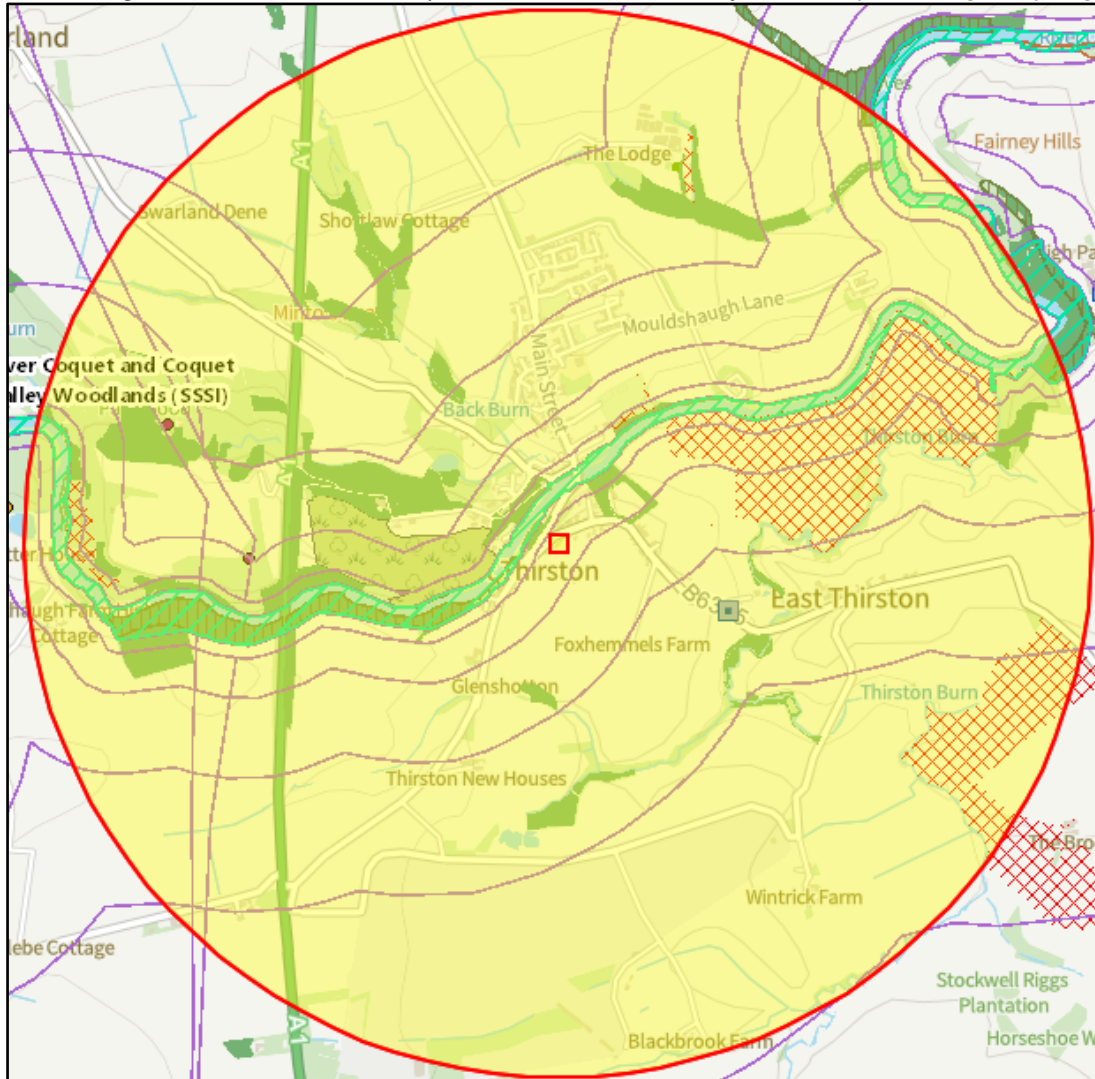
The buildings surveyed are located at NU184000 as shown below

¹ *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing Second Edition* December 2017

4.2 Designated Sites

There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the site, River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, present within c 100m to the northwest; the development site falls within the impact risk zones for this SSSI.

Figure 4. Designated Sites and Priority Habitats within 2km of the site (from magic.defra.gov.uk)



4.3 Habitats

Figure 4 shows BAP Priority Habitats, within 2km (listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006). These habitats are mainly deciduous woodland, ancient and semi-natural woodland, traditional orchard and wood pasture and parkland and are present mainly to the northwest of the site. Other areas with no specific habitat types are present to the northeast.

4.4 Species and Species Groups

4.4.1 Desktop Search

Records from the Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC) show results from within 2km of the site for bats. There is one granted European Protected Species licence for bats and none for great crested newts within 2km.

4.4.2 Habitat description

Garden Cottage is located in a residential area which backs onto a rural location, to the southeast agricultural land is present consisting mainly of improved grassland with some arable. Deciduous woodland and wood pasture and parkland both priority habitats are present to the northwest and both the River Coquet 100m to the northeast and Thirston Burn 560m to the south have wooded banks.

The garden is mainly amenity grass with horticultural beds and trees.

The area has good, sheltered feeding and protection present. Bat roost potential will be present in the local residences and any suitable mature trees present in the area.

4.4.3 Bats

Pre-existing information on the species at the site.

There are no known pre-existing records for the site. The closest record is for flight records of Pipistrelle 45kHz, Pipistrelle 55kHz, Daubenton's, Natterer's and Noctule bats within 250m to the north (2011) (ERIC North East).

Status of species in the local/regional area.

Data search results within 2km of the site consists of numerous maternity roosts of Pipistrelle sp. 150m to the southwest (1992) and 200m to the northeast (1990). Pipistrelle 55kHz 265m to the west (1985), and Brown long-eared 510m-1.8km to the northwest and southeast (2010/2011/2015) with occasional roosts of Pipistrelle 45kHz. Foraging Noctule, Natterer's, Daubenton's and Whiskered/Brandt's bats have also been recorded within 2km. (ERIC North East - A full data set can be made available upon request).

The granted European Protected Species Licence for bats was for occasional Pipistrelle 55kHz 700m to the southeast (2010) (Magic Site).

Locally and regionally, the Common Pipistrelle is the most common bat. Both Pipistrelle 45kHz and 55kHz bats are frequent in northern England, although Pipistrelle bats are the most abundant species, they are thought to have declined by 70% between 1978 and 1993 (National Bat Colony Survey). Since 1997 monitoring by the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) has shown that bat numbers seem to be steady with small fluctuations up or down depending on the species and survey type carried out. The Brown long-eared bat is occasional with colonies much smaller in numbers than the Pipistrelle. Daubenton's, Natterer's and Whiskered/Brandt's bats are also occasional but widespread in Northumberland with an average colony size being about 35 adult bats. The Nathusius' Pipistrelle is a rare bat, has migratory habits and has been proved to fly across the North Sea from Bristol to Holland and has occasionally been recorded in Northumberland throughout the season.

Bats – Daytime Risk Assessment

Inspection results of the exterior revealed that the single storey building affected by the proposals is stone built on the northwest aspect and is brick on the gables and southeast aspects. No crevices in the masonry are present and the soffits are well sealed, however crevices appear to be present at the gables. The trussed, pitched roof, which is resin tiled, had a bitumen sarking present. There were small bat droppings, consistent with Pipistrelle species, present at the north end of the loft, the insulation was otherwise clean allowing

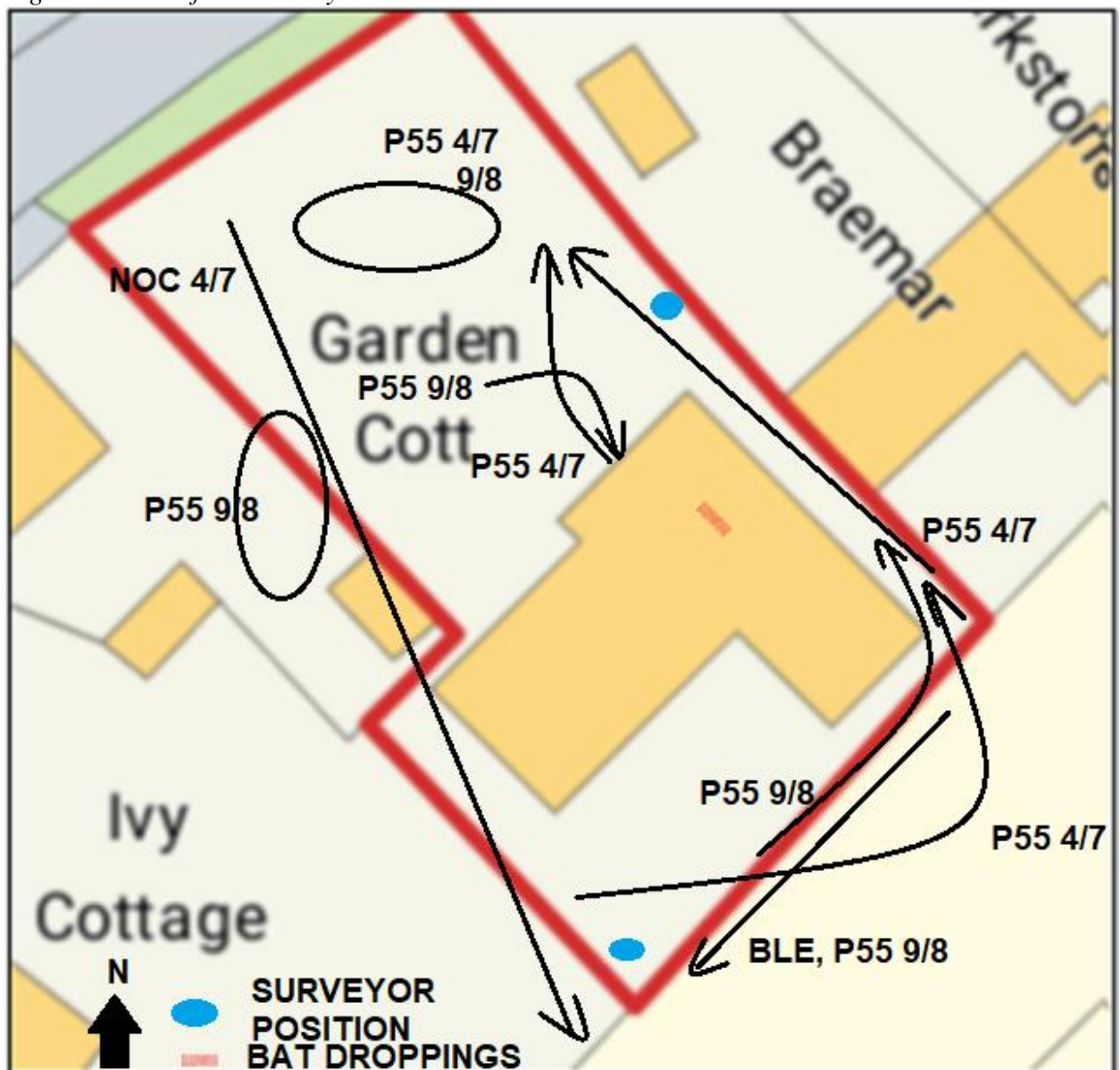
droppings to be easily seen. Due to the roost potential giving a moderate risk two surveys were carried out.

No potential bat hibernation sites were identified in the building; however, bats may be present in any suitable crevice, deep in the walls.

Bats – Activity Surveys

The emergence survey confirmed bat emergence from the property of two Pipistrelle 55kHz bats and after sunset small numbers of Pipistrelle 55kHz bats were foraging over the site with Noctule bats also heard or seen during the survey. The dawn survey identified re-entry into the building of two Pipistrelle 55kHz bats and commuting activity of Pipistrelle 45kHz, Noctule and Brown long-eared bats. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

Figure 4. Plan of Bat activity



4.4.4 Bird Assessment

No evidence of birds was noted.

4.4.5 Amphibians & Reptiles

Status of species in the local/regional area.

There are two records of great crested newt (GCN) within 2km (Magic). Two ponds surveyed in the area, are 1.2-1.5km to the northwest and west had GCN present, however these are to the west of the busy A1 and north of the River Coquet both which will act as a commuting barrier. (Magic Site 2019).

Survey

No standing water is present on site. There are no ponds within 500m of the site.

4.4.6 Other Species

No other wildlife was noted during the survey.

5. Photographs of the Site



From the south

Garden Cottage from the northwest



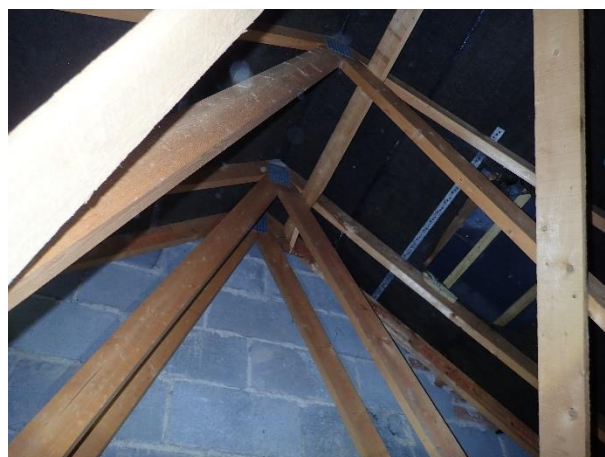
From the south looking north

Soffits well sealed



Trussed roof with insulation

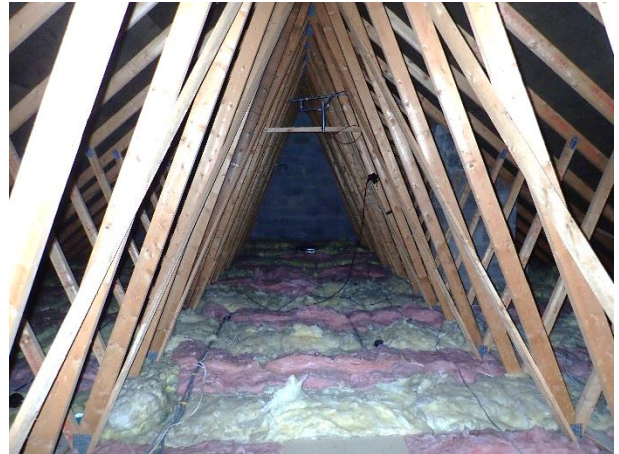
No ridge board





Insulation otherwise clean

Area of bat droppings



Garden area, amenity grass that will be lost due to extending the parking area

Northwest gable were bats exited and re-entered.

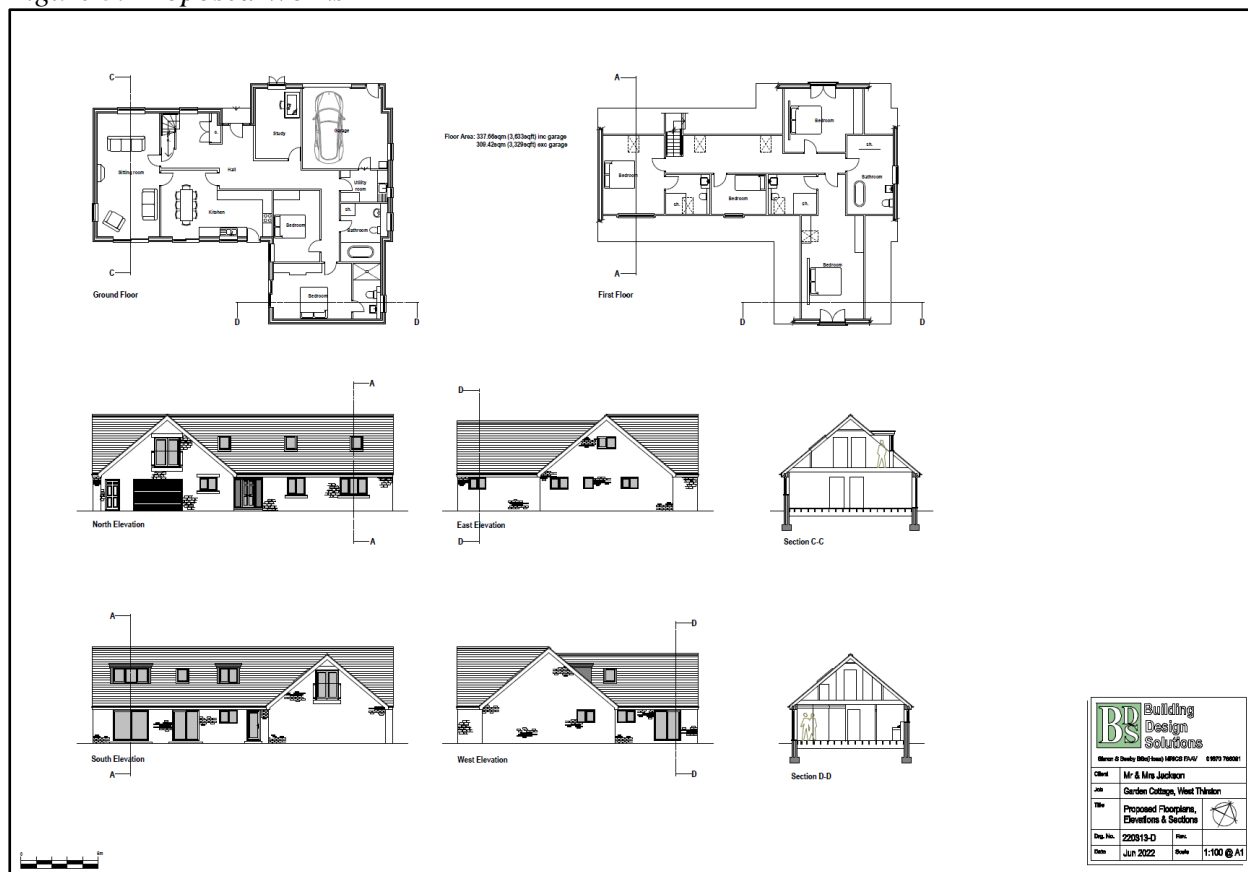


6. Description of Proposed Development.

The proposals are to convert the loft space entailing Velux windows and additional windows to be created, to provide further bedrooms, shower rooms and a bathroom. This will also entail re-roofing the building.

An area of amenity grass will be lost, see photograph above, however no trees will be felled.

Figure 5. Proposed Works



7. Assessment of Impacts

7.1 Constraints

No constraints.

7.2 Site Based Impacts.

The building due to be extended into the loft has low conservation significance for bats as a roost site at present. One small day roost is present. This assessment takes into account the location of the building and the good feeding habitat and shelter within 300m, the results of the inspection and survey, the construction of the building and the potential of the building as a maternity bat roost site.

Pre-activity impacts are negligible with no changes being made to the use of the buildings.

Mid-activity impacts will be high for bats if no precautions are undertaken. The works may cause disturbance, injury and death to bats or birds, if no mitigation is carried out in the eventuality of an animal being located during any destructive works. With mitigation and the reinstatement of the roosts any impacts would be low.

Site Assessment

The site is considered to have low conservation significance for bats.

7.3 Impacts on the SSSI.

The development site does fall within the risk impact zones for the nearby SSSI's in the area, however the works are unlikely to greatly impact these designated areas if pollution prevention is undertaken.

8. Mitigation and Enhancement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the planning system minimizes impacts on biodiversity and provides net gains. The following recommendations will likely be translated into conditions placed on any planning consent. They are intended to reduce the risk of this development to protected species and habitats.

Natural England guidelines on mitigation states timing constraints and like-for-like replacement is a minimum requirement.

8.1 Pollution Prevention

To protect any nearby waterways, measures to be made to ensure that there is no runoff (herbicides, wheel washing, cement washings etc.) either during construction to prevent pollution or sediment issues, or after development. (See Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG5)) for guidance.

8.2 On Site Mitigation

Timing

As a bat roost is present which will be impacted, the site will require to be registered under a Natural England Mitigation Licence (Low Impact) before the works can proceed. This is applied for after any necessary consents are granted and can take up to 2 weeks (10 days). Surveys have to be current in the year of registration. The surveys recorded in this report are current up to April 2023.

An external crevice will be retained as at present on the northwest gable walltop of the building. This will be in the form of an access gap measuring 20mm by 15mm created between the slates/tiles and the gable wall top through the mortar fillet into a larger crevice on the wall top below the slates/tiles, resembling a 'flattened bottle' measuring c.100 x c.200 x 20mm. This provides a small space that acts as a suitable bat roost for the occasional bat. Please see Appendix 3 for detail and plan at Fig. 6 for locations.

Wooden beams and timbers will be treated only with 'bat friendly' products, permethrin or cypermethrin as insecticides for example. Further information is available if the contractor requires it.

A traditional bitumen felt (F1) or wood sarking that would give bats some grip will be used in the region of any bat roost potential and not a more modern smooth or breathable roofing membrane (BRM) that may fray and entrap bats. **No BRM (Breathable Roofing Membrane) to be used in any areas where bats could gain access to roof as a result of new roost provisions.**

Any external lights will be set on a motion detector and short timer and be positioned in such a way that they do not shine on any of the bat access positions or the buildings, as this

can deter bats. Please see references Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance 2018.

A Low Profile WoodStone bat box will be positioned on a tree to the west, facing to the northeast at a height of 3+m and will be maintained for five years.

To prevent any disturbance to the trees or hedges on this site the tree root protection areas will be cordoned off to prevent machinery access and stored items from being dumped in between trees causing damage and disruption to vegetation and the tree roots.

8.3 Mitigation Summary

To maintain bat and bird populations in the area the following will be carried out:-

- A Method Statement for bats will be followed for the extension of the building, please see Appendix 3.
- Bat provision will be provided.
- Any external lighting will be on a relatively short timer, directed away from bat roost access points and flight paths and motion-sensitive only to large objects.
- Any nesting bird species that may be present will be allowed access to the nest until the young have fledged between April and October.

Figure 6. Mitigation Locations

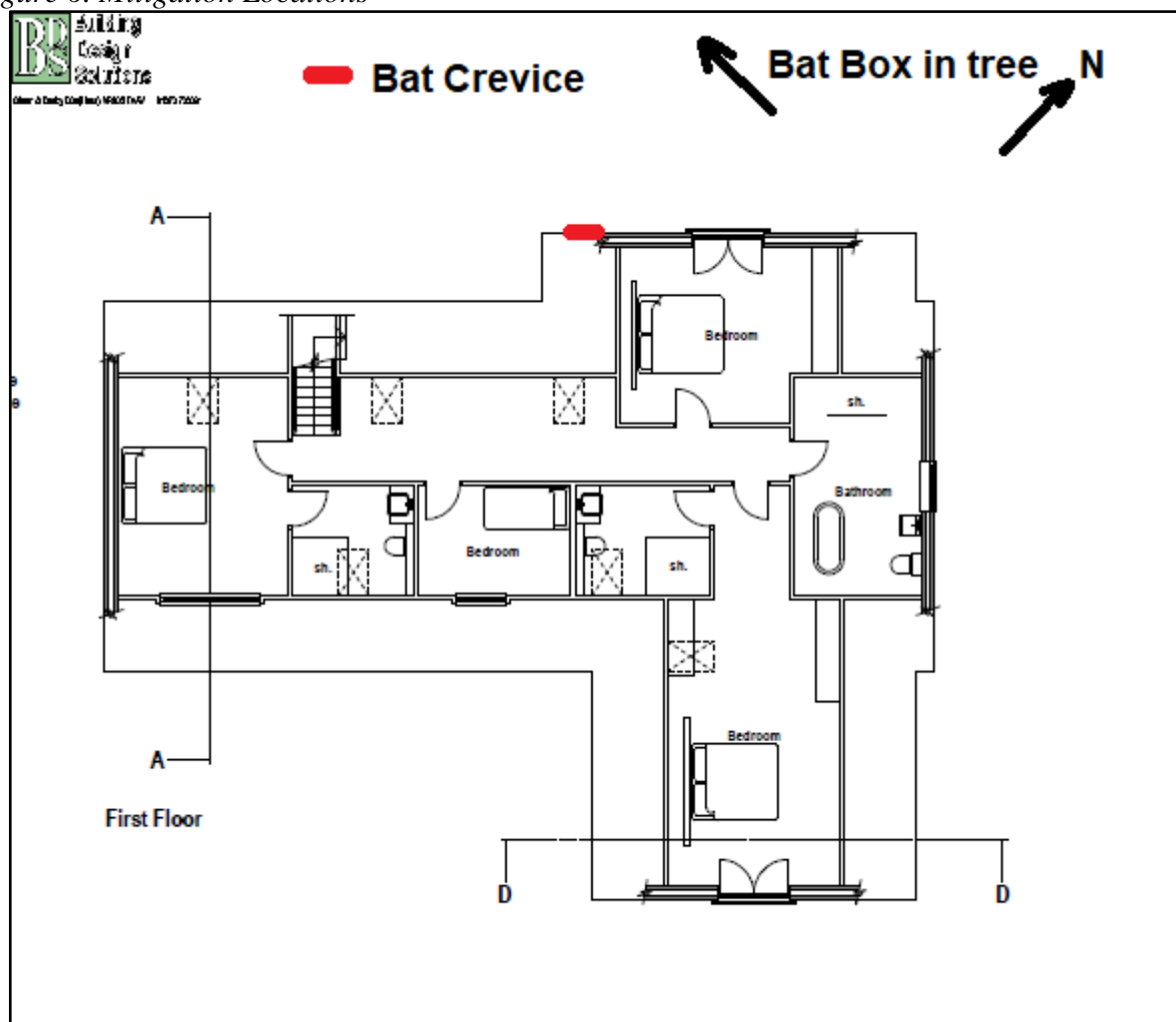


Table 1 Mitigation Summary

Location	Mitigation Type
Extended building	Bat access will be retained at the eaves at the south eaves corner wall top.
Tree	A Low Profile WoodStone bat box will be positioned facing to the northeast at a height of 3+m

8.4 Enhancement

Not applicable.

8.5 Monitoring

Due to low impact on bat activity on site, by the proposals, no monitoring after the development is completed will be required to assess the success of mitigation. (Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004, Section 7.2). Ruth Hadden available to liaise with the owners as required regarding the mitigation.

8.6 Conclusions

- Without any mitigation the proposed works will result in low impact on any bat population that may be present.
- The provision of mitigation in the form of a timing and care will reduce the impact to negligible.
- The provision of mitigation in the form of roosting opportunities for bats beneath the slate/tiles and a bat box will maintain the net biodiversity over the existing building.

9. References

Barn Owl Trust (2002), Barn Owls on Site. English Nature
 Chartered Institute and Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017). Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2nd Ed.
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 Institution of Lighting Professionals/Bat Conservation Trust (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK, Guidance Note 08/18.
 Joint Nature Conservancy Council (2004) The Bat Workers Manual. JNCC.

Bat boxes: <https://www.nhbs.com/low-profile-woodstone-bat-box>
Build-in WoodStone Bat Box <https://www.nhbs.com/build-in-woodstone-bat-box>
Barn Owl Box : <http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/infopage.html?Id=41>
Sparrow Terrace: www.nhbs.com/lsp-schwegler-sparrow-terrace
Swift boxes: <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-cambridge-swift-nest-box>
Bird box : <https://www.nhbs.com/lb-schwegler-nest-box>

APPENDIX 1. LEGISLATION RELATING TO PROTECTED SPECIES

Bats

All bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (Schedule 5). They are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation Regulations 2017. The Act and Regulations make it illegal to:

Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) bats

Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not)

Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 extended the protection given to bats to cover *reckless* damage or disturbance.

A bat roost is interpreted as 'any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection', whether or not bats are present at the time.

Barn Owls

Similarly, the Barn Owl is protected under Part 1 of the Countryside Act 1981 and is listed on Schedule 1, which gives them special protection. It is an offence, with certain exceptions to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) any wild barn owl.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy any wild barn owl nest whilst in use or being 'built'.
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild barn owl egg.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild barn owl whilst 'building' a nest or whilst in, on, or near a nest containing young.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependant young or wild barn owls.

Hedgehog

The hedgehog is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (Schedule 6) and is a priority species in the UK BAP and Northumberland BAP.

The Act and Regulations make it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) using certain methods.
- Hedgehogs are closely linked with urban and in particular garden areas and can be commonly found hibernating beneath garden litter.

Biodiversity

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) to seek to deliver biodiversity enhancement through the planning system, see paragraphs 9, 109 and 118. In particular Paragraph 109 includes a statement:

The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- 'minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity.'

APPENDIX 2. SURVEY DATA

Table 2 Emergence survey results.

Date	Bat Activity
4 July 2022	
9.48pm	Sunset.
10.03pm	Noctule bat heard and seen commuting to the west of the site, north to south
10.05-10.12pm	2 Pipistrelle 55kHz bats emerged from the north gable from beneath the fascia near to the apex
10.07pm	Noctule bat heard not seen
10.10pm	Pipistrelle 55kHz bat flew to the west, north of the house.
10.11pm	Noctule bat heard not seen
10.12-11.15pm	2-3 Pipistrelle 55kHz bats foraging in the garden to the west.
10.25-11.10pm	Pipistrelle 55kHz bat occasional passes to the south (6 passes)
10.15pm	Survey concluded.
9 August 2022	
4.12am	Pipistrelle 435kHz bat heard with social calls.
4.15-4.55am	Pipistrelle 55kHz bat foraging and social calling to the west of the house
4.25am	Silent bat flew northeast followed by social calling Pipistrelle 55kHz bat, along boundary
4.29am	Pipistrelle 45kHz bat flew northeast also seen to the northwest
4.32am	Pipistrelle 55kHz bat foraging to the southwest of the house.
4.55-5.05am	2 Pipistrelle 55kHz bats entered beneath the gable fascia
5.28am	Sunrise
5.45am	Survey concluded

APPENDIX 3. BAT METHOD STATEMENT FOR CONTRACTORS

This statement should be copied to the site owner, architect, clerk of works and to those contractors whose work may affect bat roosts including those involved in conversion, stone treatment, roofing and building works.

Bats are fully protected by law. To avoid breaking the law by damaging or disturbing bat roosts, resulting in possible imprisonment, fines or confiscation of equipment, certain procedures have to be followed.

Legislation

All bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (Schedule 5). They are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation Regulations 2017. The Act and Regulations make it illegal to:

Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) bats

Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not)

Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 extended the protection given to bats to cover *reckless* damage or disturbance.

A bat roost is interpreted as 'any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection', whether or not bats are present at the time.

Similarly the Barn Owl is protected under Part 1 of the Countryside Act 1981 and is listed on Schedule 1, which gives them special protection. It is an offence, with certain exceptions to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) any wild barn owl.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy any wild barn owl nest whilst in use or being 'built'.
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild barn owl egg.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild barn owl whilst 'building' a nest or whilst in, on, or near a nest containing young.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependant young or wild barn owls.

Identifying roosts

Pipistrelle the most common bat, favours small crevices and spaces between brickwork, stone and roofing felt. Bats are small mammals and when at rest the bodies are only 4-6 cm long, their fur colour can range from brown to pale and dark grey. When disturbed the bat is likely to be torpid and unable to fly effectively for some minutes, because of this they are vulnerable to injury as they are not fast moving and may fall to the ground, breaking bones or be accidentally crushed. Basically, when material from the roof and tops of the walls is removed any crevices underneath should be checked to ensure that no bat has been disturbed.

Other traces that can indicate a past presence of bats are their droppings. These resemble mouse droppings but unlike mouse droppings can be crumbled to dust between finger and thumb. Droppings may be found on wall tops and beneath slates and tiles on top of any sarking.



Photo showing disintegrated bat droppings beneath coping stones. If examined carefully, in the black dust exoskeletons of insects can be seen shining.

Timing

Any development work involving the removal of the existing roof materials or stonework will be carried out avoiding the hibernation period (November to March inclusive). Periods of cold weather (below 5°C including night temperatures) will also be avoided if possible as any bats present will be in hibernation torpor and be extremely vulnerable. If torpid bats are encountered and disturbance is unavoidable the bat will be taken into care and fed until suitable conditions for release at the site is possible.

Contractors

All contractors will be aware that bats may be present in the area and could be present within the loft space and may be found torpid in crevices if any. Table 1 below highlights where bats may be found and the recommendations. Any bats found during operations will have the cavity re-covered for its safety and any work in the vicinity will cease. Ruth Hadden to be informed for advice immediately (01661 886562). As only licensed bat handlers can move bats and the contractors are not permitted to handle bats, the bat will be allowed to disperse of its own accord overnight.

Table 1 General Methodology for Renovation Works

STRUCTURE	METHOD	INSPECT
Roofs	Remove any ridge tiles, tiles/slates or roof coverings including loose felt by hand, lifting vertically to prevent any bats from being crushed. Removal of any timbers/beams.	Check any crevices underneath the roofing materials including the underside, as it is removed. Check any crevices around the beams as work proceeds.
Walls/Eaves	Expose the wall tops. Remove any gutters. Dismantle any walls required, by hand.	Examine for bat droppings and any wall cavities for bats.
Walls - Pointing	Only point crevices where the full depth can be seen otherwise leave as at present.	Check deep crevices for the presence of bats using a torch.
Windows/doors	Remove windows, doors and frames by hand, where gaps exist around the frames.	Examine any wall cavities exposed. Avoid blocking any external pre-existing gaps.

If a barn owl is found unexpectedly during operations the cavity will be re-covered or protected and work will cease in that area. Ruth Hadden to be informed (01661 886562) immediately for assistance. Any nesting bird species will be allowed access to the nest until the young have fledged between April and October.

Mitigation Summary

An external crevice will be retained as at present on the northwest gable walltop of the building. This will be in the form of an access gap measuring 20mm by 15mm created between the slates/tiles and the gable wall top through the mortar fillet into a larger crevice on the wall top below the slates/tiles, resembling a 'flattened bottle' measuring c.100 x c.200 x 20mm. This provides a small space that acts as a suitable bat roost for the occasional bat. Please see below for locations.

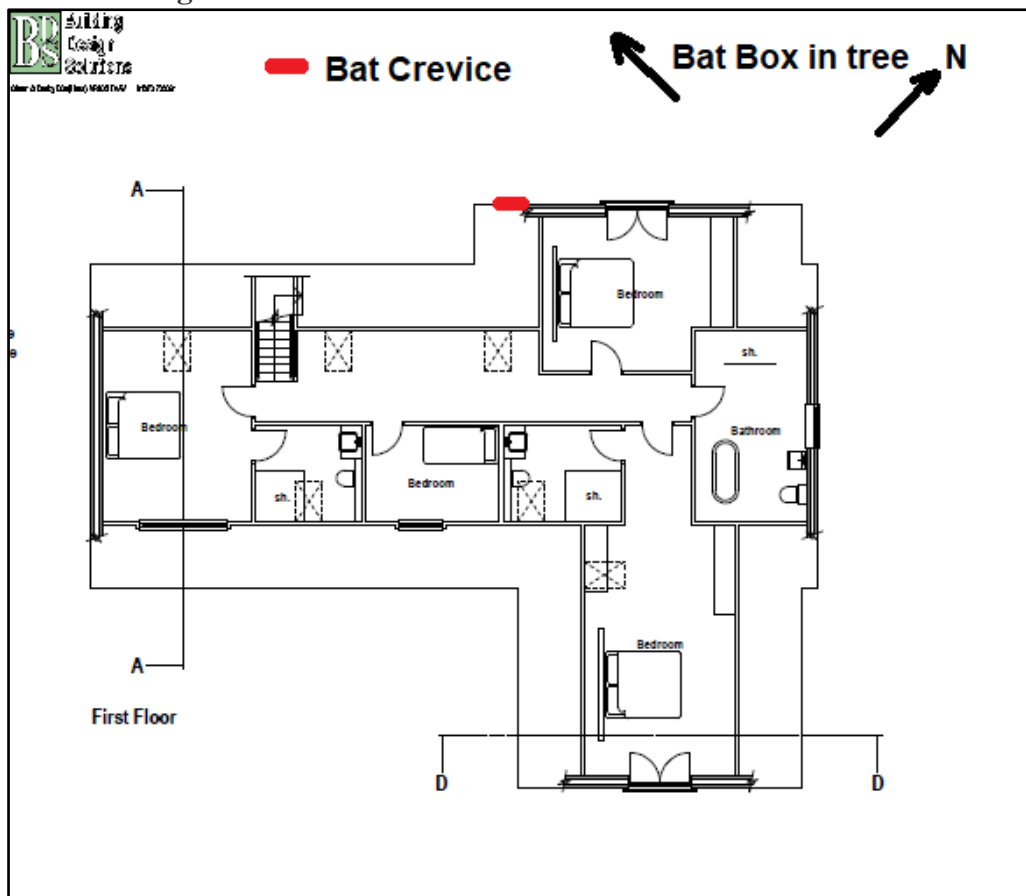
Wooden beams and timbers will be treated only with 'bat friendly' products, permethrin or cypermethrin as insecticides for example. Further information is available if the contractor requires it.

A traditional bitumen felt (F1) or wood sarking that would give bats some grip will be used in the region of any bat roost potential and not a more modern smooth or breathable roofing membrane (BRM) that may fray and entrap bats. **No BRM (Breathable Roofing Membrane) to be used in any areas where bats could gain access to roof as a result of new roost provisions.**

Any external lights will be set on a motion detector and short timer and be positioned in such a way that they do not shine on any of the bat access positions or the buildings, as this can deter bats. Please see references Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance 2018.

A Low Profile WoodStone bat box will be positioned on a tree to the west facing to the northeast at a height of 3+m and will be maintained for five years.

Location of Bat Mitigation



Gable wall crevice

