Preliminary Roost Assessment

of

12 Wattisfield Road, Walsham Le Willows, Suffolk, IP31 3BD

Carried out for:

Nicole Lane

1st

Prepared by:
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Executive summary

Overview

Abrehart Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Nicole Lane to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of 12 Wattisfield Road, Walsham Le Willows, Suffolk, IP31 3BD (hereafter referred to as the Site). The assessment was required to determine the presence, potential presence or likely absence of roosting bats using the buildings proposed for works, to inform a future permitted development application at the Site.

The site is approximately 136 square metres, comprising of a two-storey residential dwelling and a single garage with associated hardstanding, amenity grassland, scattered trees, and ornamental shrubs.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on the 16th of December 2022 by Sorrel Kiamil BSc (Hons) MSc (level 1 great crested newt license and hazel dormouse license) of Abrehart Ecology Ltd.

Results

The habitats recorded on and adjacent to the Site included:

- Buildings
- Scattered trees
- Amenity grassland
- Hardstanding

One building had features recorded that could provided potential habitat for bats, and during the loft inspection bat droppings were collected and sent off for DNA analysis at SureScreen Scientifics.

Recommended further survey efforts are detailed in Section 4.

1 Background to Commission

1.1 Abrehart Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Nicole Lane to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of a proposed development at 12 Wattisfield Road, Walsham Le Willows, IP313BD (central grid reference TM 0071 5160; Fig. 1; hereafter referred to as the Site).

1.2 The assessment was required to determine the presence, potential presence or likely absence of roosting bats using the building proposed for works, to inform a future permitted development application at the Site: to include an extension to the existing two-storey residential house which will alter the roof and demolish the garage.

Aims of Study

1.3 This report provides results and recommendations based on a bat roost inspection of one building at the Site. The aim of this study was to:

- Assess the suitability of the building to support roosting bats;
- Identify the presence of any evidence of roosting bats, where reasonably possible;
- Determine, where possible, the likely type of roost present, if any;
- To provide the legislative and/or policy protection afforded to any habitats present or bat species assessed as likely to be associated with the site; and
- To recommend any further ecological surveys considered necessary to inform mitigation requirements for the planning application within the Site.

Site Description

1.4 The Site is approximately 136 square metres, comprising of the main residential two storey dwelling and garage surrounded by small areas of hardstanding, amenity grassland, scattered trees, and ornamental shrubs. The building was of brick construction with a pitched clay tiled roof, wooden soffits, and fascia boards. Internally, the structure included a loft space. The garage was a single storey, concrete sheeted single skin walls with a pitched roof (potentially asbestos), there was the occasional ornamental shrub surrounding around the house, with well maintained amenity grassland and a hardstanding driveway and paths.

1.5 The Site is located off Wattisfield Road within the village of Walsham Le Willows. The surrounding landscape includes further areas of residential housing with small pockets of allotments, amenity ground, hedgerows, and scattered trees. The wider landscape beyond the housing consists largely of agricultural land with associated ditches, hedgerows, and boundary tree habitats (see Figure 1).

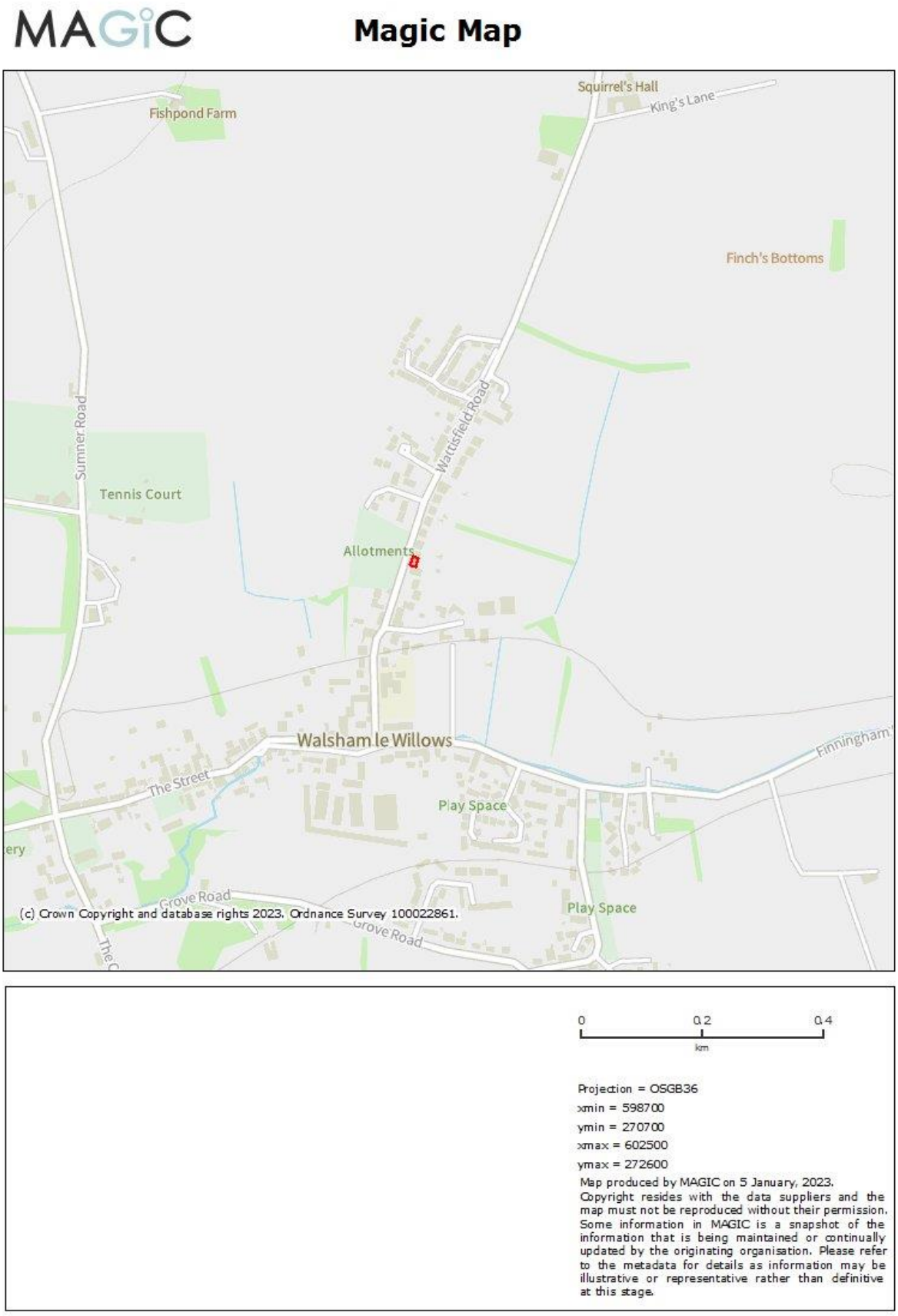


Figure 1. Site location

Relevant Legislation

1.6 All bat species and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- capture, injure or kill a bat;
- disturb a bat; or
- destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 places responsibility on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity in and around developments. Section 40 of the NERC Act requires every public body to "have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". Biodiversity, as covered by the Section 40 duty, is not confined to habitats and species of principal importance but refers to all species and habitats. However, the expectation is that public bodies would refer to the Section 41 list (of species and habitats) through compliance with the Section 40 duty.

1.8 Appendix IV - Relevant Protected Species Legislation details legislation which protects species and groups relevant to the site (bats).

2 Methods

Desk Study

2.1 Data obtained from the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) and were used to conduct a bat data search[1] for any information regarding statutory and non-statutory sites and records of protected and priority species within a 2 km radius of the Site. The data was received on the 9th of December 2022.

Field Survey

2.2 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out by Sorrel Kiamil BSc (Hons), MSc (level 1 great crested newt licence and hazel dormouse licence) on 16th of December 2022 in accordance with standard best practice methodology for roost assessments set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). Weather conditions during the surveys were 40% cloud cover, dry, a light breeze (Beaufort Scale 2), and a temperature of -2°C icy ground, with good visibility.

2.3 The buildings were surveyed externally, and internally where possible, for their suitability to support roosting bats according to Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). The buildings were systematically searched for potential bat roost features (PRFs) and any evidence of roosting bats such as fur staining, urine splashes, droppings, smoothness at entry points, and feeding remains. A torch was used to investigate accessible features where necessary.

Survey Limitations

2.4 There were no limitations to this survey.

[1] *The bat data search identifies priority species identified by the:- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedules 1, 5 & 8; Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 Schedules 2 & 5; Bonn Convention Appendix 1 & 2; ; Habitats Directive Annex 2, 4 & 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41; UKBAP (both local and national); IUCN Red List species.*

3 Results

3.1 The following section details the results of the desk study and field survey. Consideration has been given to species likely to be found in the habitats recorded on site and potential impacts to designated sites within the local area.

Data Search

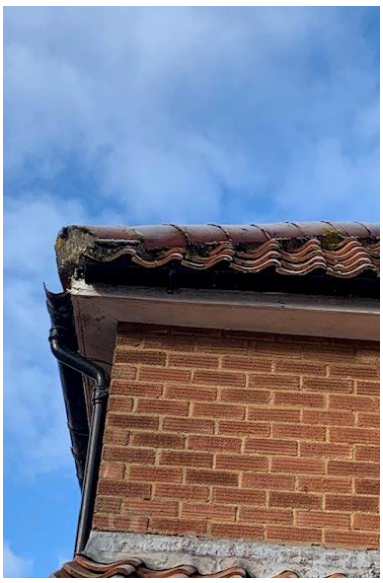
3.2 The data search returned nine records of bats in the area, some of which could potentially roost within the Site (these are detailed with Appendix III – Data Search). The species recorded were common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auratus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), and barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*). All the records were from Walsham-le-Willows. Five of the records were from 414m north of the Site at Willow Farm, these returns were the closest and the most recent (from 2017).

Field Survey

3.3 The survey area included the single residential dwelling within the site ownership boundary Appendix I shows the location of survey areas within the Site. Recorded potential bat roosting features (PRFs) are detailed in Table 1 below and in detail photos can be found in Appendix II – Detailed Results Location and Photos.

Table 1: *Recorded Features During the PRA*

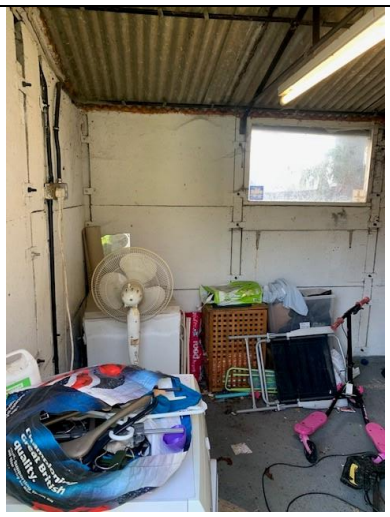
Photo	Description
Exterior	
	Area of proposed extension. The porch and the garage will be removed and the existing roof on the house will be altered.
	The external roof consisted of a pitched multi-level roof with clay pan tiles. There were multiple areas of ingress under the edge tiles adjacent to the fascia boards (all aspects) and lifting tiles to the east. Additionally, to the east there were holes in mortar between the bricks. There were areas of lifting lead flashing around the chimney and above the tiles on the ground floor.

	On the first storey roof to the south was an area of concrete under the tiles, and there was a large hole above the brick.
	On the south-east corner there was an area of rot on the wooden fascia board under the hipped edge.
Loft inspection	
	The loft space had boarded floors (with some areas of insulation), roof lining which was mostly intact, and no insulation on the roof. The southern aspect of the roof will be altered for the proposed extension. The loft height varied from 0.5m – 1.7m. • The loft space had many exposed rough wooden beams with gaps observed between joints. These could provide roosting opportunities for bats. • On the northern end there was gaps in the brick mortar which could provide roosting opportunities. • Bat droppings were observed in the loft (5 max), and these have been collected and sent to SureScreen Scientifics. • No bats were seen at the time of survey.

The Garage

The garage had concrete sheeted walls which were held together by metal bolts and brackets, and there was a window on the southern wall. The roof was pitched with a metal frame, the single layer roofing sheets were potentially asbestos. Around the metal front garage door were significant gaps which allowed a draft through the garage and under the wooden door was a significant gap where the wood had rotted away. The garage was light cold and draughty.

- Gaps and holes were present in multiple places, but these were all significant gaps around doors and joins.
- The concrete and asbestos offered no insulation.
- No bats were seen at the time of survey and the floor and items were searched thoroughly and no bat droppings were observed.



Summary

Loft inspection of the residential house.
The interior of this section contained several features which were suitable to support roosting bats including exposed beams and gaps within the woodwork and between bricks and bat droppings (a maximum of 5) were found.

External inspection of the residential house.
Externally many potential roosting features were identified, including lifting lead flashing, rot on the SE corner fascia board, holes in concrete and between bricks on the south and east faces of the house. And the edge tiles adjacent to the fascia boards had multiple areas of ingress.

Garage inspection.
The garage was considered to have negligible roost potential, and no evidence of bats were observed. The garage was used as storage and even when the doors were closed a significant breeze entered the garage. The gaps around the doors and between the concrete sheets and windows meant internally it was light and the materials offered no insulation, and the walls and roofing were single skin.

Overall, it is considered that the residential house has **high bat roost potential.**

4 Conclusions & Recommendations

4.1 There are no statutory or non-statutory sites within 2 km of the Site, and there were no National Site Network conservation sites within 7 km of the Site.

4.2 The residential building was suitable for supporting roosting bats, with many features noted throughout the external an internal survey. Some bat droppings were also observed within the loft space which have been sent off for analysis. **Therefore, it is recommended that full surveys are carried out – consisting of three emergence/return to roost surveys**, designed or led by a level 2 bat licenced ecologist (to BCT Guidelines). These surveys can be carried out between May and September (weather dependent) but two are to be undertaken between May-August. Further survey should also include the DNA analysis of the droppings.

4.3 It is considered that there will be no significant long-term impacts to the conservation status of protected species in the area, if the proposed development follows precautionary methodologies and recommendations for further surveys set out within this report, and any mitigation measures suggested within subsequent protected species reports or mitigation licences.

5 References

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

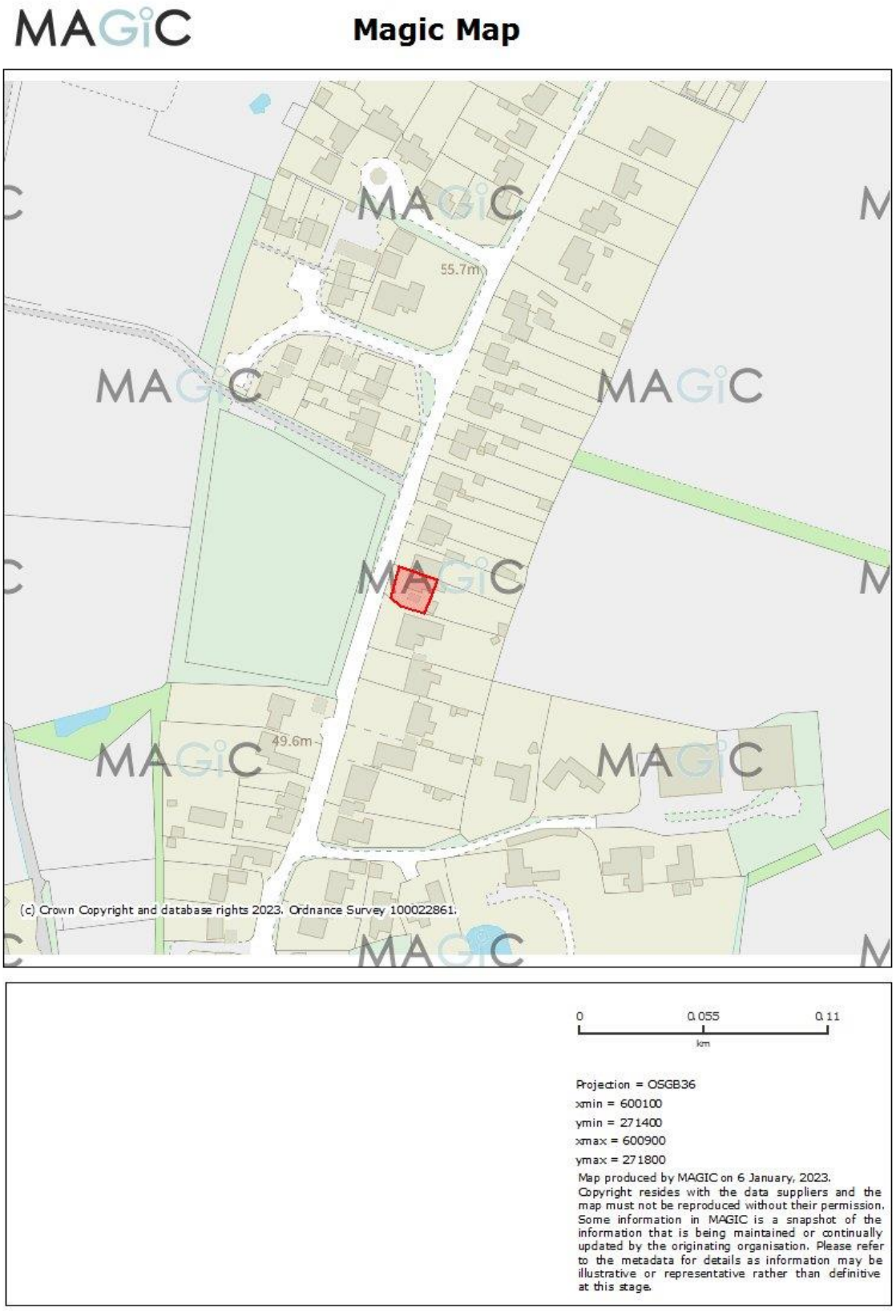
JNCC (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: a technique for environmental audit (revised reprint) JNCC: Peterborough.

Web references

http://www.bats.org.uk/data/files/bats_and_lighting_in_the_uk__final_version_version_3_may_09.pdf

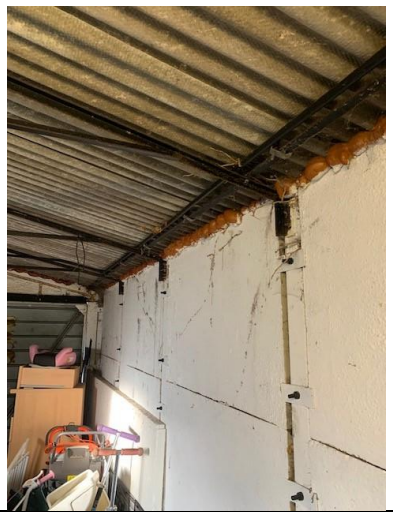
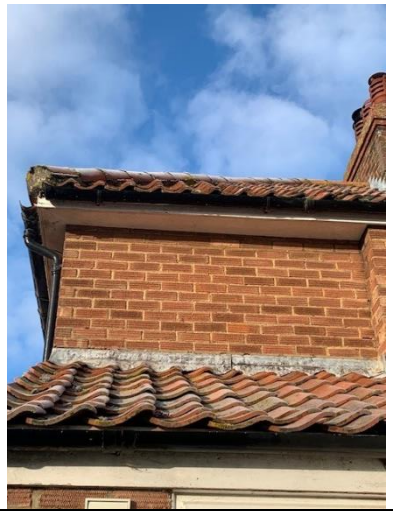
http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx

Appendix I – Building locations



Location of surveyed buildings (red lines indicate surveyed buildings)

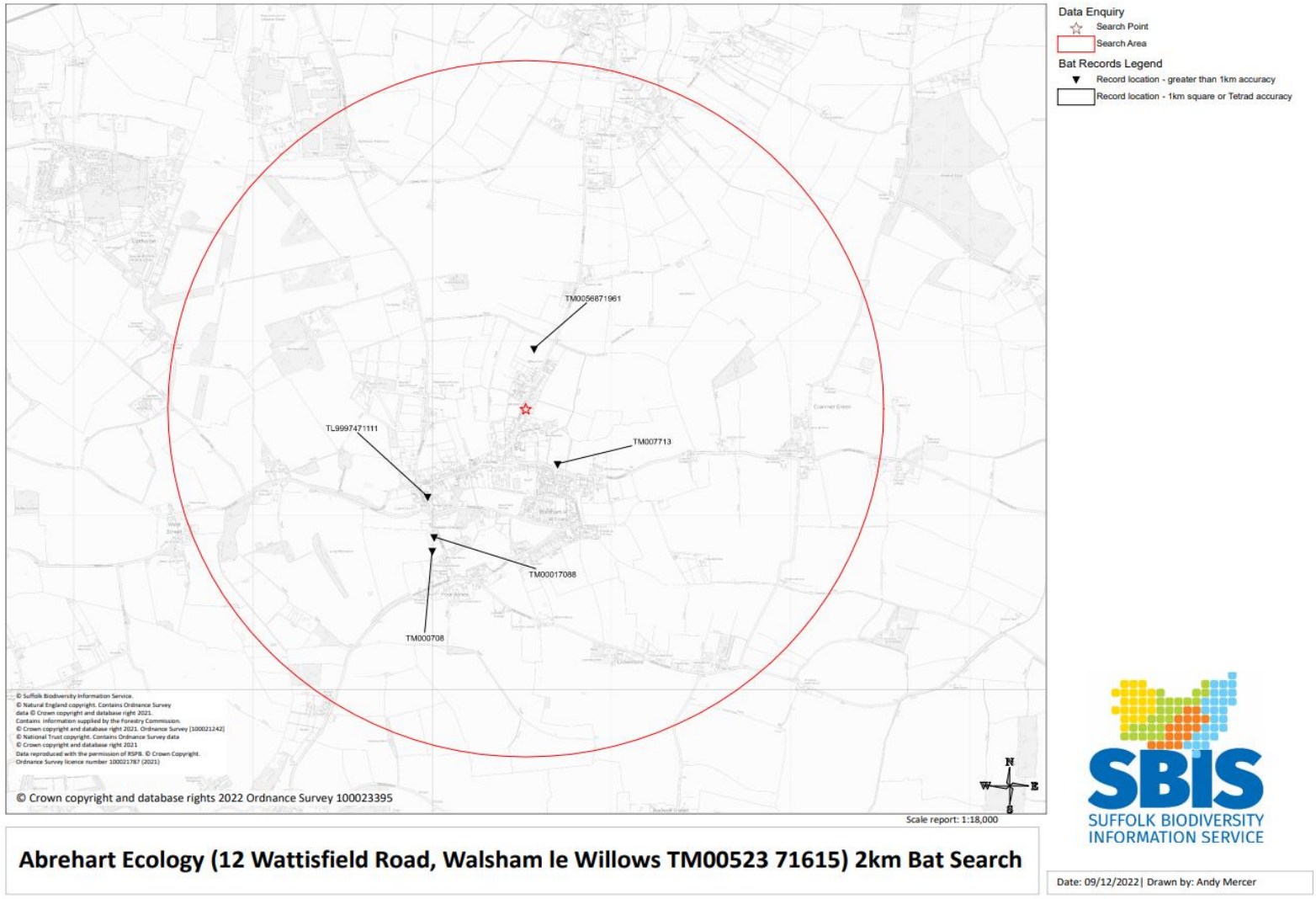
Appendix II – Detailed Results Location and Photos

	
Rotted wood under the side door of the garage.	Concrete sheeted walls of the garage held together metal bolts and plates. Single skin roofing was potentially asbestos.
	
Garage with gaps around the metal door.	Holes under the edge tiles on both stories and gaps between the brick and mortar.

	
View of house, garage, hardstanding, ornamental shrubs, and amenity grassland from the road.	Mature cypress tree to the south of the garage on the boarder of the property. Appeared to of had extensive pruning.

Appendix III – Data Search Figures

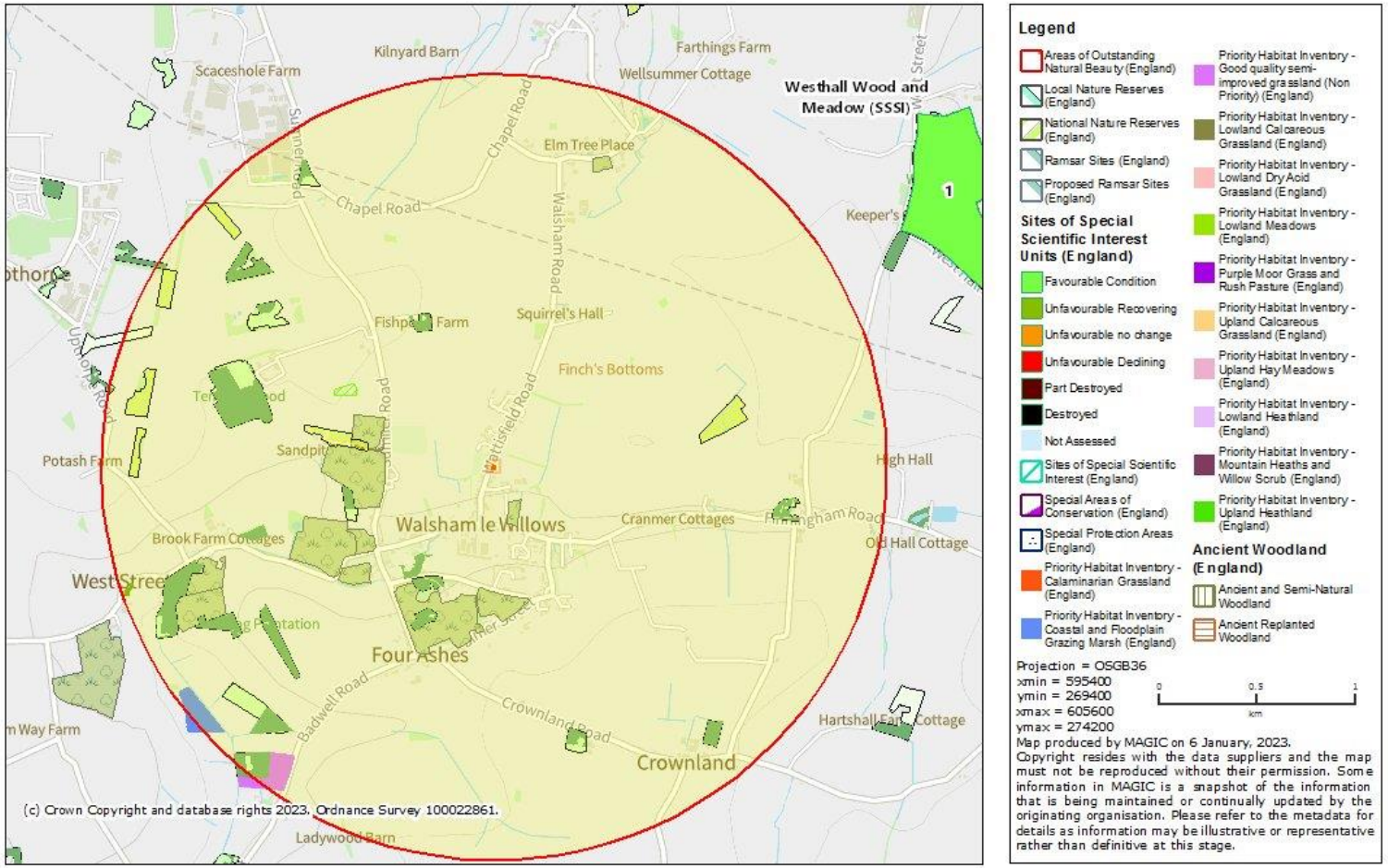
Search for bat records within 2 km of the Site



Habitat Classifications within 2 km of the Site

MAGiC

Magic Map



Legend

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)
- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Proposed Ramsar Sites (England)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Units (England)

- Favourable Condition
- Unfavourable Recovering
- Unfavourable no change
- Unfavourable Declining
- Part Destroyed
- Destroyed
- Not Assessed
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Calaminarian Grassland (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Calcareous Grassland (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Hay Meadows (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Heathland (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Mountain Heaths and Willow Scrub (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Heathland (England)

Ancient Woodland (England)

- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 595400
ymin = 269400
xmax = 605600
ymax = 274200

0 0.5 1
km

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Appendix IV - Relevant Protected Species Legislation

Species	Legislation	Protection
Bats	▪ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) ▪ Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981), Schedule 5 (as amended) ▪ Wild Mammals Act (1996)	It is an offence to: ▪ Intentionally kill, injure or take any bat ▪ Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat ▪ Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost