Preliminary Roost Assessment

Lavender Cottage, The Street, Crookham Village, GU51 5SJ

Anthony Goss

Status	Issue	Name	Date
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Reviewed	1.1	Lizi Pimlott BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB, Principal Ecologist	18/08/2023
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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

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

Proportionality

> The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.
>
> The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.
>
> (BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Anthony Goss to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Lavender Cottage, The Street, Crookham Village, GU51 5SJ (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the existing conservatory followed by a two-storey rear extension and alterations (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

The following is work you will need to commission to comply with planning policy and legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Table 7 of this report.

Feature	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations
Roosting bats B1	B1 has a confirmed roost, as identified by approximately 30 bat droppings found below the ridge beam in the loft space. There are gaps between the timber inlay and brickwork on the eastern elevation which could be access points into the loft for void dwelling bats such as brown long eared bats. There are roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats such as lifted roof tiles and hanging tiles.	The rear extension will result in the renovations of the gable wall clad in hanging tiles. The hanging tiles could provide opportunity for crevice dwelling bats to roost and could result in the destruction of any roosts present.	Three bat emergence and re-entry surveys are required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to characterise the roosts present. An EPSL application to Natural England will be required.
Foraging and commuting bats	Hedgerows and scattered trees could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site.	The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats. The proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development.

Contents

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Anthony Goss to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Lavender Cottage, The Street, Crookham Village, GU51 5SJ (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the existing conservatory followed by a two-storey rear extension and alterations (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development"). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting. This has been undertaken with due consideration to the "Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines" publication (Collins, 2016). No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SU 79493 52493 and has an area of approximately 0.1ha comprising a residential dwelling, garden, outhouse, and driveway. It is surrounded by urban infrastructure such as residential dwellings and a road to the south. The wider landscape comprises arable lands with good connectivity to pockets of woodland which would provide suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all features suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on possible constraints to the proposed development as a result of bats and summarises the requirements for any further surveys to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

A desk study has been carried out.

A field survey has been undertaken, including an inspection of built structures, to determine the presence or the suitability of any features which bats could use for roosting and to assess the suitability of the site's bat foraging and commuting habitat.

An outline of potential impacts on any confirmed or unidentified roosts has been provided, based on the proposed development.

Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made, along with advice on the requirements for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) application if appropriate.

Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for roosting, foraging and commuting bats have been set out.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study included a 2km radius review of statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests and granted EPSL records for bats held on magic.gov.uk database. An assessment of the surrounding landscape structure was also completed using aerial images from Google Earth and OS maps.

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken by Romany Poole (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2018-37888-CLS-CLS) on 14/8/2023.

The PRA focussed on one built structure which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat.

For any surveyed buildings:

A non-intrusive visual appraisal was undertaken from the ground, using binoculars to inspect the external features of the building for features which bats could use for roosting, including access or egress points and for signs of bat use including droppings, scratch marks, insect remains and urine smear marks. An internal inspection of the building was also made, including the living areas and any accessible roof spaces, using a torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space,

2.3 Breeding Birds and Other Incidental Observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for barn owls.

2.4 Suitability Assessment

Built structures were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present and the types of roost that the identified features could support. This is summarised in Table 1 below. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats.

Classification	Feature of building and its context
High	Buildings or structures with features of particular significance for larger numbers of roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data). Buildings with high suitability could support roosts of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.
Moderate	Buildings or structures with one or more features suitable for more regular roosting due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.

	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape which could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees, linked gardens. Foraging habitat in the surrounding area such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low	Buildings or structures with one or more features suitable for use sporadically by individual or small numbers of bats. Potential roost features may be suboptimal for reasons such as shallow depth, poor thermal qualities or upwards orientation with exposure to inclement weather or predators. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but largely isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features.
Negligible	Unsuitable for use by bats.

2.5 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study. Bats are highly mobile creatures that switch roosts regularly and therefore the usage of a site by bats can change over a short period of time.

There were no specific limitations to the survey.

No biological records data was available at the time of writing this report. This should be obtained, and the report updated to enable a robust ecological impact assessment to be completed.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Designated Sites

Details of any statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests within a 2km radius of the site, including their reasons for notification, are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests within 2km radius of the site.

Designated site name	Distance from site	Reasons for notification from Natural England
Basingstoke Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	500m to the southeast	The Basingstoke Canal, together with associated 'flashes' and heathland, is nationally important for aquatic plants and invertebrates. The hinterland of woodland, heath, unimproved meadows, and fens through which the Canal flows increases the value of the aquatic habitats. The invertebrate fauna is correspondingly rich and therefore it is highly likely that bats will forage here.

3.2 Historical Records

Bat records will be included once they have been returned by Hampshire Bat Group within 2km of the site. Records from the last ten years are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Historical records of bats within 2km of the site

Common name	Number of records	Dates of records	Roost records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. EPSL records for bats are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Granted EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site. The closest EPSL is located 700m east of the site for destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place.

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Impacts allowed by licence
EPSM2013-6611	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
EPSM2013-6158	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
2019-39092-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat	Destruction of a resting place
2019-41005-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
2019-42649-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's bat, common pipistrelle, and soprano pipistrelle	Damage of a resting place and breeding place
2020-49731-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, and soprano pipistrelle	Damage of a resting place and breeding place
2017-31216-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
2014-3760-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place

3.3 Field Survey Results

The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 5. The results of the field survey are detailed in Table 6 and illustrated in Appendix 3.

Table 5: Weather conditions during the survey

Date:	14/08/2023
Temperature	18°C
Humidity	94%
Cloud Cover	80%
Wind	13mph
Rain	None

Table 6: PRA Results

Feature	Description	Photographs
Bat foraging and commuting habitat	Habitats onsite consist of hedgerows, shrubs and scattered trees. There is direct connectivity from the site to pockets of woodland located to the north. Bats are highly likely to forage and commute here.	

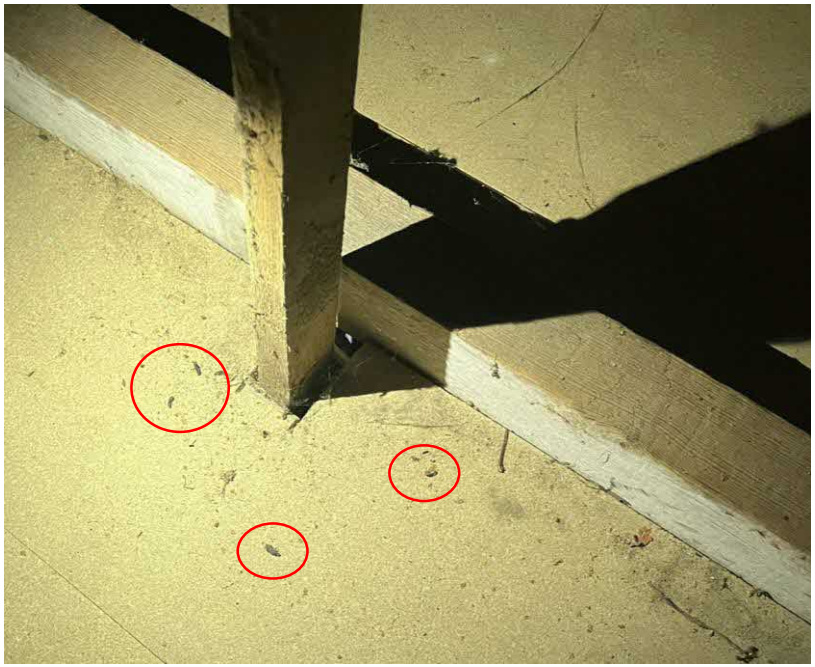
B1 - overview	B1 is a two-storey semidetached cottage with a conservatory located on the northern elevation. The roof is clad in clay tiles which appear to be raised throughout. There are hanging tiles located on the northern gable end which have some gaps located between the brickwork and the tiles. There is a timber inlay located on the eastern and southern elevation.	 

B1 – southern elevation	There are approximately 10% of raised tiles located on the roof of the southern elevation. This provides opportunities to crevice dwelling bats to roost. The lead flashing around the base of the chimney appears to be in good condition with no gaps.	 

B1 – eastern elevation	There is a gap between the bargeboard and the brickwork that extends from the top to the bottom. The gap is wide enough for a crevice dwelling bat to roost. There are four gaps between the timber beams and the brickwork which could allow access into the loft space for void dwelling bats. There are holes in the timber suitable for crevice dwelling bats.	 

B1 – northern elevation	There is a gap between the leas flashing and the roof tiles located around the base of the dormer window. The gable end and the dormer window are clad in hanging tiles which could provide opportunities for crevice dwelling bats to roost. The roof tiles are raised throughout with numerous gaps suitable for a bat to gain access. There are gaps between the tiles and leas flashing that could allow crevice dwelling bats to roost.	 

B1 – interior	There is one loft space within the main roof void of B1. The roof structure is built from timber beams including the ridge beam. The roof is lined with which is in very good condition with no gaps or tears. The floor of the loft space is lined with mineral wool insulation and there are timber boards covering the floor. There are gaps between the timber inlay and the brickwork which could be a potential access point for void dwelling bats. There are also two gaps located along the edge of the roof which could allow void dwelling bats access.	 

B1- interior	Approximately 30 droppings were found below the ridge beam. A sample was taken for DNA analysis. Approximate internal dimensions: 8m long x 4m wide x 2m high (floor to ridge height).	
B1 – suitability assessment	In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed) 2016) B1 is assessed to have 'moderate' habitat value for roosting bats due to the presence of suitable roost features such as high levels of lifted tiles on all elevation, gaps between the bargeboards and between the brickwork and timber beams. Alongside this, the building is also located in an area with abundant roosting, foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Bat droppings were found internally in the loft space during the survey.	
B1 - breeding birds and other incidental observations	No evidence of nesting birds was found internally or externally during the survey.	

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, Table 7 presents an evaluation of the value of the site for bats and also details any other ecological constraints identified such as nesting birds in relation to the proposed development which will comprise the demolition of the conservatory followed by the erection of a two-story rear extension with alterations.

Table 7: Evaluation of the site for bats and any other ecological constraints

Building	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations	Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities[1]
Roosting bats B1	B1 has a confirmed roost, as identified by approximately 30 bat droppings found below the ridge beam in the loft space. There are gaps between the timber inlay and brickwork on the eastern elevation which could be access points into the loft for void dwelling bats such as brown long eared bats. There are roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats such as lifted roof tiles and hanging tiles.	The rear extension will result in the renovations of the gable wall clad in hanging tiles. The hanging tiles could provide opportunity for crevice dwelling bats to roost and could result in the destruction of any roosts present.	Three bat emergence and re-entry surveys are required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to characterise the roosts present. At least two of the surveys should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive. Infra-red cameras should be used as an aid. Surveys should be a minimum of two weeks apart. Three surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building. An EPSL application to Natural England will be required. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission. A Material Changes Check will be required within three months of the EPSL submission, if no survey work has been undertaken within that period. If bat droppings were found during the PRA, a sample will need to be sent off for DNA analysis to confirm the bat species present, to inform the EPSL application. Biological records data will also need to be obtained to inform the application.	To be confirmed upon completion of the surveys.

[1] The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021).

Foraging and commuting bats	Hedgerows and scattered trees could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site.	The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats. The proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures: Light spill on to hedgerows and scattered trees should be avoided. Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light. Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin. Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal. Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only. External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on. Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimmable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.	None.

Nesting birds B1	The building offers no opportunities for nesting birds by the nearby hedgerows and scattered trees could provide nesting habitat.	None.	None.	The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on trees around the site boundaries will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Woodstone Nest Box Or a similar alternative brand. Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.
Other ecological constraints	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.0 Bibliography

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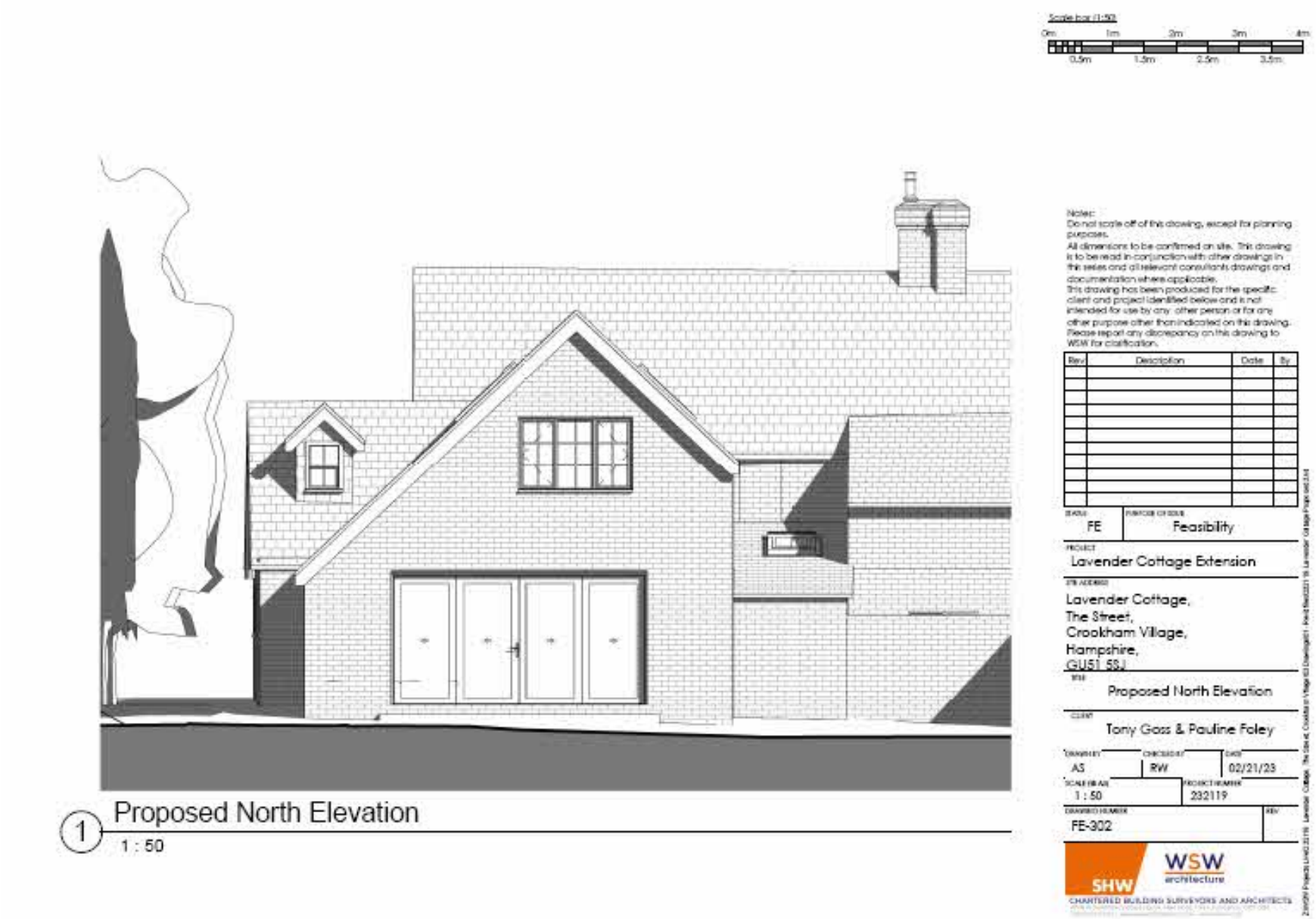
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



1 Proposed East Elevation
1 : 50

Scale bar (1:50)
0m 1m 2m 3m 4m
0.5m 1.5m 2.5m 3.5m

Notes:
Do not scale off of this drawing, except for planning purposes.
All dimensions to be confirmed on site. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with other drawings in this series and all relevant consultants drawings and documentation where applicable.
This drawing has been produced for the specific client and project identified below and is not intended for use by any other person or for any other purpose other than indicated on this drawing.
Please report any discrepancy on this drawing to WSW for clarification.

Rev	Description	Date	By

STATUS: FE
PURPOSE OF ISSUE: Feasibility

PROJECT: Lavender Cottage Extension

SITE ADDRESS:
Lavender Cottage,
The Street,
Crookham Village,
Hampshire,
GU51 5SJ

TITLE: Proposed East Elevation

CLIENT: Tony Goss & Pauline Foley

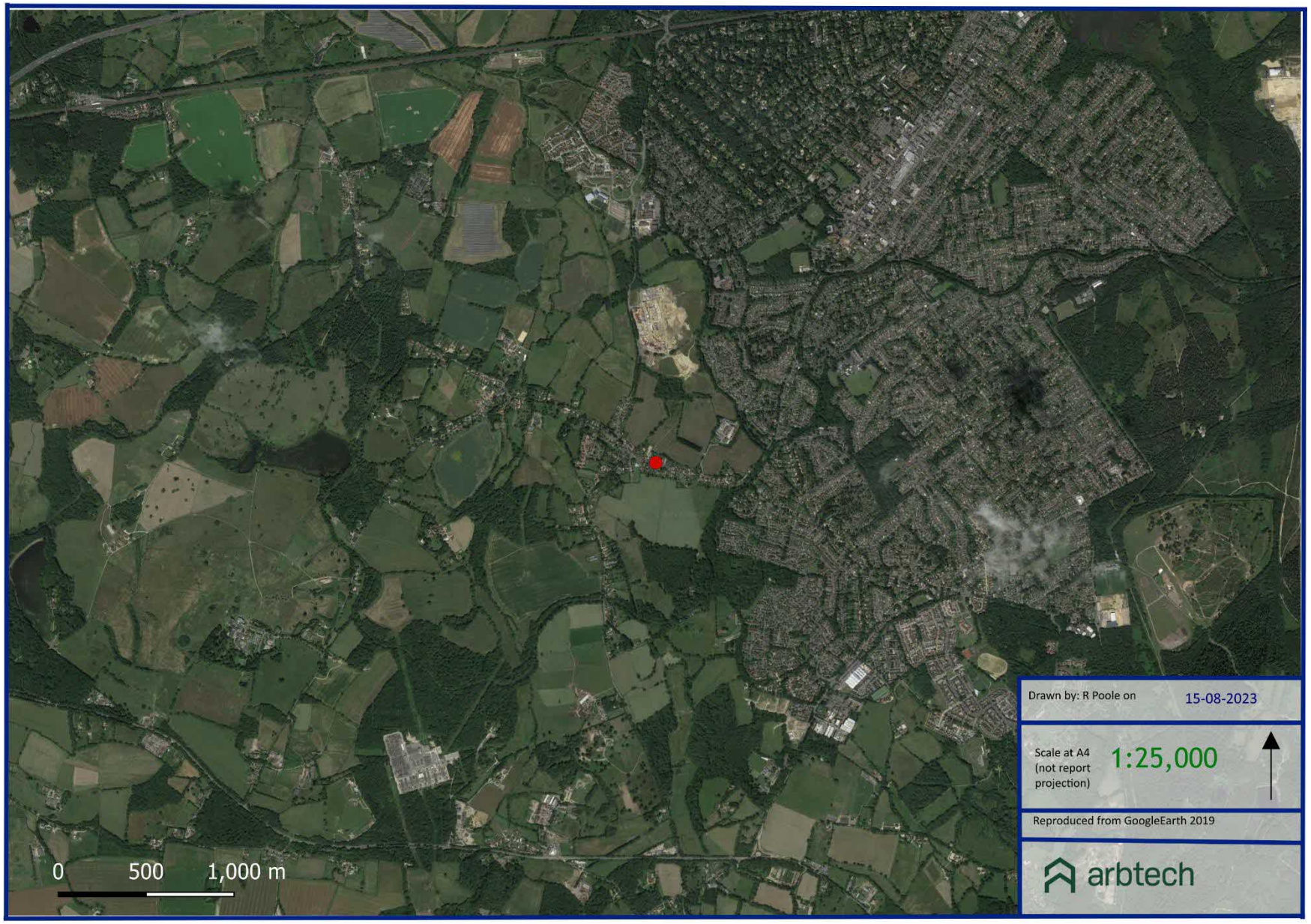
DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	DATE
AS	RW	02/21/23

SCALE (@ A3)	PROJECT NUMBER
1 : 50	232119

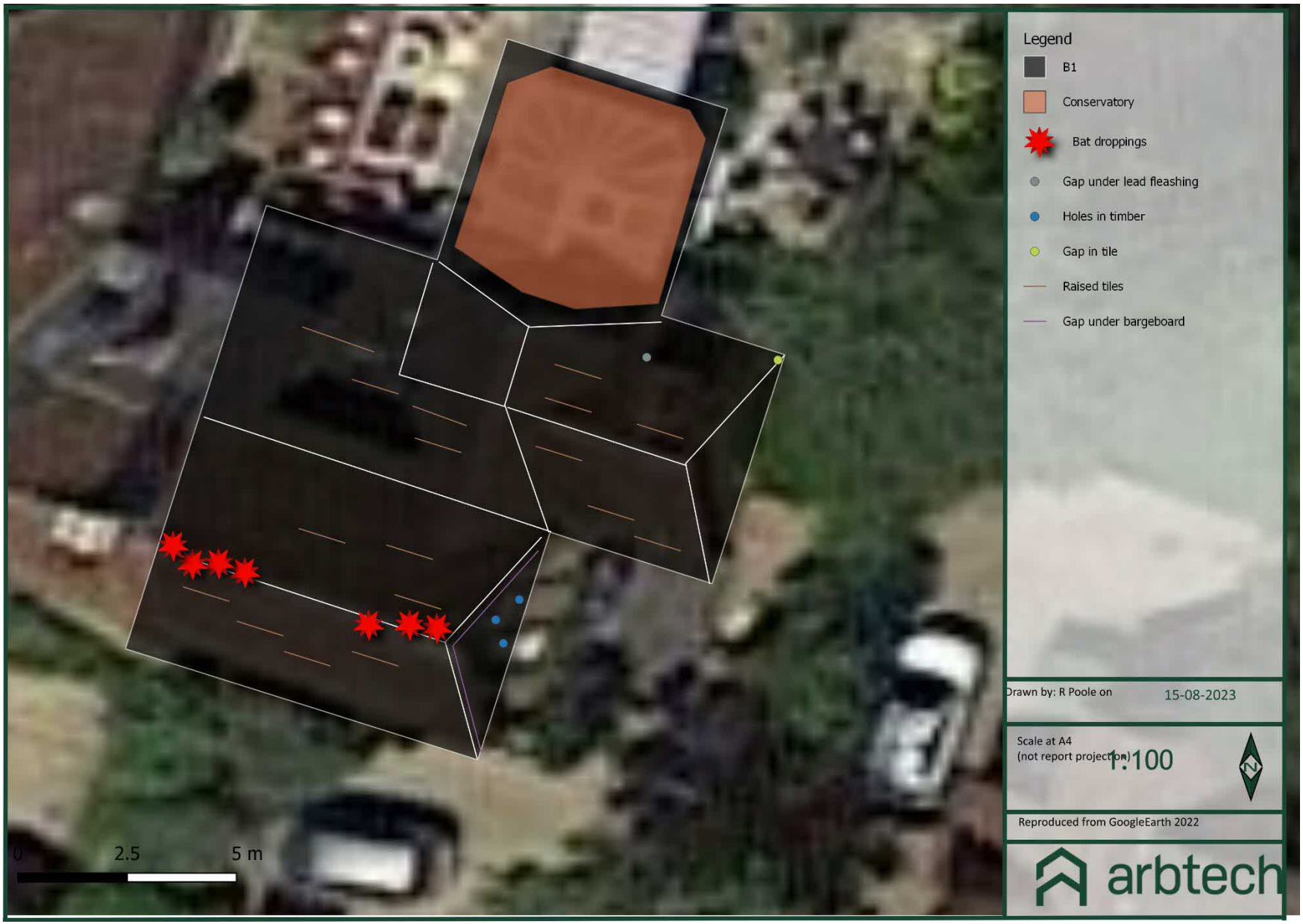
DRAWING NUMBER: FE-301
REV:

SHW WSW architecture
CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS AND ARCHITECTS

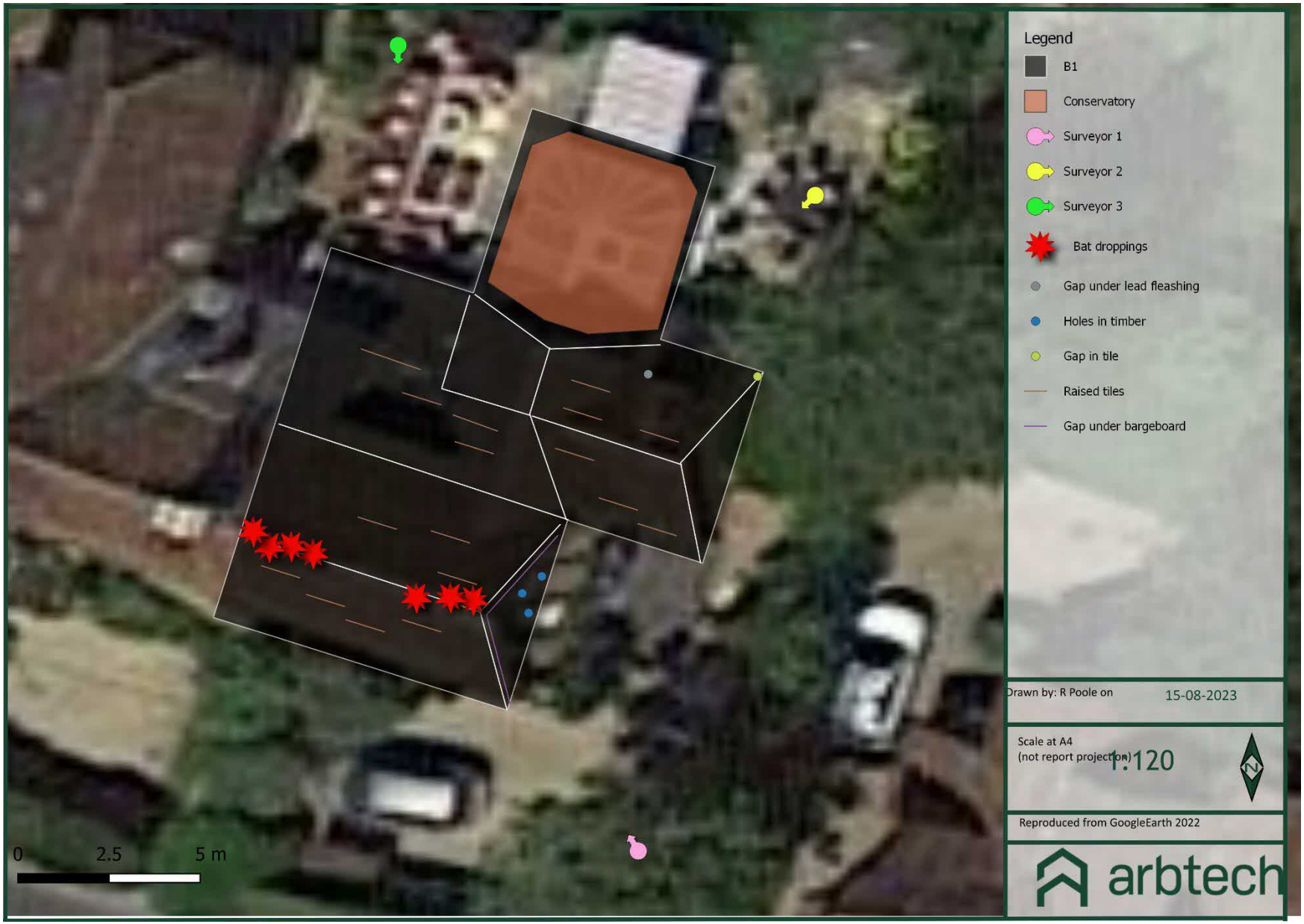
Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3a: PRA Plan



Appendix 3b: Proposed BERS Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy Related to Bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 43: Protection of certain wild animals - offences

(1) A person is guilty of an offence if they:

(a) Deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,

(b) Deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,

(c) Deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or

(d) Damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

(a) To impair their ability:

(i) To survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or

(ii) In the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

(b) To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)

Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Hart Local Plan (2032 formally adopted)

The following planning policies have implications for developers in relation to bats:

Policy NBE 4 Biodiversity -

- In order to conserve and enhance biodiversity, new development will be permitted provided: a) It will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international, national or locally designated site including the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and National and Local Nature Reserves (NN Rs and LN Rs).

  a) The level of protection afforded to these sites is commensurate with their status within this hierarchy and gives appropriate weight to their importance and contribution to wider ecological networks.
  b) It does not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.
  c) Opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity are taken where possible, including the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.

All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible. If significant harm 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, or, in the case of European Protected sites does not comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, then planning permission will be refused.

Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)

The Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan can be viewed here: https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/2999.pdf

All bat species are included in the plan.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by Natural England will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored. The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded de facto protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008).

There are 17 species of bat breeding in England and Natural England issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

Licences are issued for specific purposes stated in the Regulations, if the following three tests are met:

The purpose of the work meets one of those listed in the Habitats Regulations (see below);

That there is no satisfactory alternative;

That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range

The Habitats Regulations permits licences to be issued for a specific set of purposes including:

1. include preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
2. scientific and educational purposes;
3. ringing or marking; and,
4. conserving wild animals.

Development works fall under the first purpose and Natural England issues bat mitigation licences for developments.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;

Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;

Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,

Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.