

**Bat Survey Report for
Flete House, Shaws Lane,
Hatton, CV35 7JA**



Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

14th March 2024

QUALITY CONTROL

| Date | Version | Name |
|----------|---------------------|--|
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The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, *CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition, Collins, 2023). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

At Flete House on Shaws Lane, near Hatton, planning permission is being sought for a side extension to the house.

As this could impact on features typically used by bats as roosting places, a diurnal inspection was undertaken on 14th March 2024, to assess the house for signs of bat occupation.

All the external and internal structures, especially those associated with the roof and walls of the building were examined.

The suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp* was considered to be negligible, as there were no gaps or crevices. No signs of bat activity or occupation were found.

At the time of the survey, Flete House was not identified as a bat roost, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No birds' nests were found in or on the building.

1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2024, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed by Paul Harper, to undertake a bat survey of Flete House on Shaws Lane, near Hatton, Warwickshire. On 14th March 2024, a visit was made to the property to carry out a diurnal inspection of the house to check for signs of bat occupation.

The result of the survey is contained in this report.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), through inclusion in Schedule 5. In England and Wales this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions, and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994, (or Northern Ireland 1995) (the Habitats Regulations), which defines 'European protected species of animals'.

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004):

- *Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;*
- *Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);*
- *Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;*
- *Damage or destroy roosts;*
- *Possess or transport a bat or any part of a part of a bat, unless acquired legally;*
- *Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.*

The word 'roost' is not used in the legislation, but is used here for simplicity. The actual wording is 'any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection' (WCA), or 'breeding site or resting place' (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to fully assess bat occupation of a particular site, the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) recommends that information gathered from a desk study of known bat records, and a daytime site walkover, is used to inform the type and extent of future bat survey work, potentially including nocturnal emergence surveys.

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) is usually in the form of a diurnal walkover and can be carried out at any time of the year. It provides an opportunity to check for signs of bat occupancy and/or the suitability for bat roosting.

Evidence of bat activity includes droppings, scratch marks, feeding remains, carcasses, or even roosting animals, whilst suitability is determined by the type and number of potential roost features (PRFs) typically used by bats.

Roosting places vary depending on the species. Pipistrelles usually inhabit narrow cracks or cavities around the outside of buildings, but they will roost in similar niches inside larger barns. Typical sites include soffit spaces, gaps behind fascia boards and end rafters, crevices around the ends of projecting purlins, under warped or lifted roof and ridge tiles, or in gaps in stone and brickwork where mortar has dropped out.

Larger species such as Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*, Myotis bats (Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and Whiskered/Brandt's *M. mystacinus*/*M. brandtii*), and Lesser Horseshoes *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, like to roost in the roof voids of buildings, and can often be found hanging singly or in small groups from ridge boards or roof timbers, especially where these butt up against gable walls or chimney breasts. They especially favour older structures with timber frames. Here they squeeze into tight crevices making them difficult to observe.

Where bats are found, or there is evidence of bat occupation or activity, i.e. that bat use is confirmed, a roost characterisation survey is undertaken. The results are used to inform the impact assessment and design of mitigation measures. Roost characterisation includes nocturnal emergence surveys, unless sufficient information has already been collected using robust survey methods with no significant constraints.

Nocturnal emergence surveys allow numbers and species of bats to be confirmed, and should only be undertaken when bats are out of hibernation and in their summer roosts.

The bat active period is generally considered to be between April and October, although particularly cold weather will affect the level and extent of bat activity. Indeed, the air temperature at the start of each survey should be at least 10°C or above, with no strong wind or heavy rain. The survey starts 15 minutes before sunset and continues for one and a half to two hours after sunset.

Visits will be a minimum of three weeks apart, and the number of surveys and timing is dependent on the evidence found or the suitability of the site to bats. This will be determined by the ecologist.

In general, at least two emergence nocturnal surveys will be carried out, but a third visit may be necessary if the results are inconclusive or further information is required.

Nocturnal emergence surveys are also used to determine the presence or absence of bats, where signs of bat activity are indeterminate or absent but the suitability for bat roosting is considered to be low, moderate or high.

For a site with no evidence but low suitability, just one nocturnal emergence survey is required, this to be in the period May to August.

For moderate suitability a minimum of two visits are needed between May and September, of which one must be in the period May to August.

With high suitability, three visits will be necessary between May and September, of which two must be in the period May to August.

Where there is no evidence of bat presence, and no suitability for roosting, no nocturnal surveys will be needed.

The number of surveyors and/or the use of night vision aids (NVAs) is determined by the ecologist, and is dependent on the complexity of the structure. For simple structures just one surveyor using an appropriate number of NVAs will be sufficient, but for larger sites and/or more complex or irregularly shaped structures, e.g. those with multiple elevations and/or roof slopes, more surveyors will be required.

On 14th March 2024 a thorough inspection of the house was made by Mollie Paxford (Natural England bat licence No. 2020-47378-CLS-CLS), including the exterior and interior walls, roof covering, roof void, eaves, gables, window casements and door frames.

10x42 binoculars and a Fenix TK75 torch were used for the inaccessible/unreachable areas. On this occasion an endoscope was not used, as there were no gaps which could not be inspected with a torch or by use of binoculars from a ladder.

The result of the survey is detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

In view of the small scale of the proposed works, the likely low impact on bats, and in line with current guidance on accessing and using biodiversity data (CIEEM, 2016), a background data search was not carried out in this case.

However, within 2.0 km of Flete House, the following development licences for bats were issued by Natural England:

- 2014-919-EPS-MIT – 270 metres to the north, for Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Brown Long-eared;
- 2015-14071-EPS-MIT – 1.2 km to the northeast, for Common Pipistrelle;
- 2019-41902-EPS-MIT – 1.6 km to the northeast for Common Pipistrelle;
- 2016-21369-EPS-MIT – 1.8 km to the northeast for Common Pipistrelle.

3.2 Location

Shaws Lane is located approximately 2.8 km to the northwest of Hatton, in Warwickshire. The lane runs between Five Ways Road and Birmingham Road. Flete House is at the west end of Shaws Lane, on the north side of the road. The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference is SP 22671 69540 and What3Words: snake.necklaces.wing (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

The site comprised a large, detached house with a hipped, tiled roof (Figs. 1 and 2).

At the north end was a large conservatory, and to the east a flat roofed extension.



Figs. 1 & 2 Front (left) and rear (right) of Flete House

There was a large garden which was laid to lawn, with mature shrubs and trees (Figs. 3 and 4).



Figs. 3 & 4 Surrounding area

The layout of the site is shown in the aerial photograph in Appendix 2.

3.4 Building Survey

The daytime inspection was carried out on 14th March 2024 commencing at 13:00. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 1 below.

| Parameter | Value |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Temperature (°C) | 13.0 |
| Cloud cover (%) | 100 |
| Precipitation | None |
| Wind speed (Beaufort scale) | 1-2 SW |

Table 1 Weather conditions during the diurnal survey

3.4.1 Bats

The ridge was intact and although there were some gaps under the hipped ridge tiles, these were carefully inspected and were found to be only very shallow and blocked with cement (Figs. 5 and 6).



Figs. 5 & 6 Ridge tiles

The roof tiles were all tightly overlapping, with none raised, missing, broken or dislodged (Figs. 7 and 8).



Figs. 7 & 8 Roof tiles

The eaves were finished with a timber boxed soffit, which was tightly sealed all round (Figs. 9 and 10).



Figs. 9 & 10 Eaves

There were dormer windows, with flat roofs (Figs. 11 and 12). These will not be impacted by the proposed works.



Figs. 11 & 12 Dormer windows

The roof verges at the north end of the house were sealed with cement, whilst the lead flashing around the chimney was tightly moulded (Figs. 13 and 14).



Figs. 13 & 14 Roof verges

The conservatory was all tightly fitting and sealed to the house with lead flashing, with no gaps (Figs. 15 and 16).



Figs. 15 & 16 Conservatory

Internally there was one large roof void. At the southern end this measured approximately 1.5 metres high and was boarded out and brightly illuminated through the windows (Figs. 17 and 18).



Figs. 17 & 18 Roof void

This opened through into a void space which measured approximately 2.0 metres high and was lined with an insulation membrane (Figs. 19 and 20).



Figs. 19 & 20 Roof void

There were cobwebs hanging from the ridge to joists, with no light penetration other than from the converted end of the void.

No evidence of bat activity or occupation was found in or around the building.

3.4.2 Other species

Apart from spiders and insects, there were no signs of other species using the building, and there were no old or in-use birds' nests.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats tend to be seasonal visitors to properties, and are not usually in occupation all year round. The females normally form maternity colonies during May or June and then leave for adjacent trees and/or woodland during July or August once the young bats are able to fly and become independent. Here they will spend the winter months in hibernation before returning to the house or barn the following spring.

Male bats generally live alone and have a number of favoured roosts. During the summer they visit each of these for a few days at a time, before moving to their chosen hibernation site in mid-late October. Different species have different habits, but this seasonal movement is common to all.

Bats choose their roosts carefully. During the summer they look for sites which are warmed by the sun, and as a result are most often found on the south and western side of buildings.

Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bats, prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of buildings, typical places being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit, barge and eave boarding, between roof felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls.

As such they can be difficult to find, so the suitability for roosting was also assessed.

This was considered to be negligible, as there were no gaps or crevices. Certainly no evidence of bat activity or occupation was found.

Another bat frequently encountered in buildings is the Brown Long-eared. This is also a common species, but unlike pipistrelles, they prefer the dry, warm space of the loft or roof void, and can often be found hanging from roof timbers, especially rafters and the ridge board next to chimney breasts.

No signs of Brown Long-eared Bat activity were found, nor indeed signs of other species which are commonly found in roof spaces, and the interior of the building was considered inaccessible to bats.

At the time of the survey, Flete House was not identified as a bat roost, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No birds' nests were found in or on the building.

5. REFERENCES

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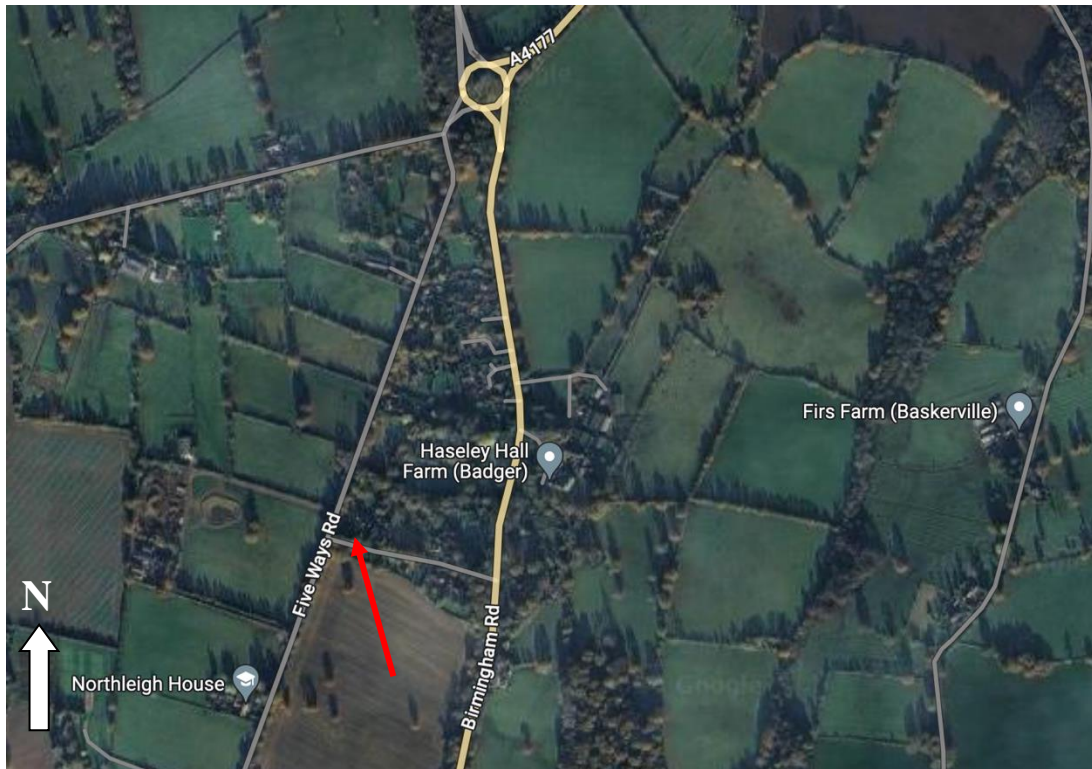
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

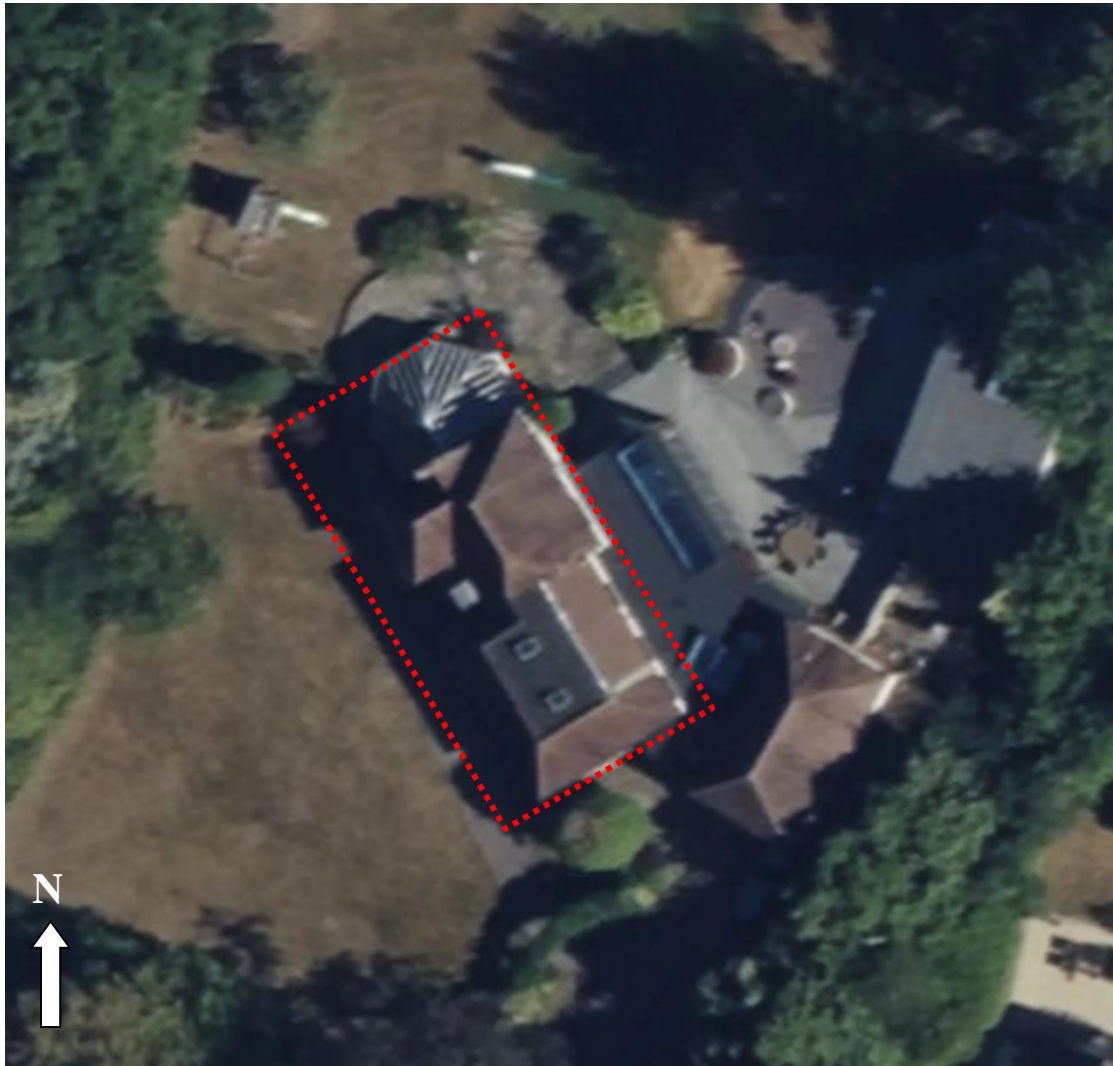
Appendix 2: Site layout

Appendix 1: Location plan



Flete House, Shaws Lane, Hatton

Appendix 2: Site layout



Flete House, Hatton

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Flete House, Shaws Lane, Hatton – Bat Survey Report

To: Paul Harper

Report Number: 4694-CWS-01

Version: 01

Date: 25th March 2024