

BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)



Chapel Barn-Rabley Heath Road - Welwyn - AL6 9UA

Report No: J3272

Report Date: 22/10/2024

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Chartered
Institute of
Ecology and
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Management



SUMMARY

On the instructions of Michelle Sweeney, Clague Architects on behalf of Pinel & Alan Burke, Morgan & Stuckey Ecological Consultants carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment for the site of Chapel Barn, Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 9UA.

Proposals for the site is obtaining listed building consent to undertake internal and external alterations.

No bats or evidence of bats was found within either B1 or B2 during the survey. As a result of the structure and condition of the buildings, it is considered there is negligible potential for roosting bats.

Therefore, no further surveys are required, however, should bats be found at any point during works, all works must stop, and an ecologist consulted.

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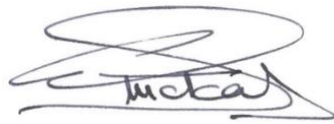
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Preliminary Roost Assessment
The Client:	Pinel & Alan Burke Chapel Barn- Rabley Heath Rd- Welwyn-AL6 9UA

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Report Number J3272	Status FINAL	Date of issue 24/10/2024
Survey conducted by	Clive Herbert, Natural England Class Survey Licence WML-CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2) registration number 2015-13348-CLS-CLS	
Prepared by	Clifford Stuckey BSc (Hon’s) PhD CEnv MCIEEM Ecologist	
Reviewed by		
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Biological Records of species identified during this survey, the date, their location and a brief description of the circumstances of their identification, may be passed on to Biological Records Centre’s, local wildlife groups, the Wildlife Trust, Natural England and other interested parties unless written instructions not to do so are received within 30 days of receipt of this report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

On the instructions of Michelle Sweeney- Clague Architects, on behalf of Pinel & Alan Burke, Morgan & Stuckey Ecological Consultants carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment for the site of Chapel Barn, Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn, AL6 9UA

Proposals for the site include for obtaining listed building consent to undertake internal and external alterations.

The aim of the daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment was to view the existing site layout and to inspect the exterior and interior of the property (see photographs below) to assess its suitability to act as a bat roost site(s) by identifying the presence of any 'potential roost features' that bats could utilise.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study was carried out to identify the presence of any statutory or non-statutory sites within 2,000m of the centre of the study area together with any records of bats.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was consulted to find records of Natural England Protected Species (NEPS) licences granted for bats and statutory sites within the search area.

The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) were asked to provide bat records within the search area.

2.2 FIELD SURVEY

2.2.1 SURVEYOR INFORMATION

This work was carried out under *Natural England* Class Survey Licence WML-CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number 2015-13348-CLS-CLS, issued to Clive Herbert, a bat ecologist with over 35 years' experience working in and around Hertfordshire.

The assessment was conducted according to the current 'best practice' standards as published in the 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines' (Bat Conservation Trust, 4th edition, 2023) and with due regard to the Standing Advice to LPAs (Bats: advice for making planning decisions) published by *Natural England* on 28th March 2015 and updated on 14th January 2022.

Deviation from the guidelines is permitted where appropriate.

Expertise and professional judgement

1.1.3 The guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience.

1.1.4 It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of surveys carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate.

1.1.5 However, in such scenarios an ecologist should provide evidence of (a) their expertise in making this judgement and (b) the ecological rationale behind the judgement.

1.1.6 Equally, it would be inappropriate for someone with no knowledge or experience to read these guidelines and expect to be able to design, carry out, interpret the results of and report on professional surveys, simply by following the guidelines without the ability to apply any professional judgement.

1.1.7 Training and experience is necessary to carry out *all of the surveys* described in these guidelines and interpret the survey results appropriately (see para 2.5.1 onwards).

A detailed internal and external search for any direct evidence of past or current bat occupancy, such as droppings, staining on walls, rafters, windows etc., was also conducted at the unit.

The exterior and interior of buildings included in the proposed development plans were inspected for any sign of bats or bat use, e.g., droppings/ feeding remains,

or possible access points and features known to be used by bats for roosting, e.g., gaps/ crevices.

Equipment available for the assessment included torches, camera, ladders, mirror, endoscope and binoculars.

2.3 CONSTRAINTS

There were no constraints on this assessment and no deviation from the guidelines were taken.

The absence of a bat roost at the time of the survey cannot rule out the possibility of a bat roost being present or developing at another time. Bats are highly mobile and regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of year. This assessment and report will be valid for one year from the date of this report, after which updated surveys will be required.

3 RESULTS

3.1 STUDY AREA

The desk study is centred on National Grid Reference TL 2240 1796 and Postcode AL6 9UA

The site is in Rabley Heath Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire and is an occupied Grade II Listed period two-storey residential dwelling, dating from the Tudor period. It is situated to the southeast of the village of Codicote.

It is surrounded by low density housing and mostly agricultural land, with allotments both west and south of the search area.

The nearest water bodies are found approx. 320m west and 700m to the east, and 300m to the south. The river Mimram runs diagonally from the northwest to the southeast.

Welwyn cemetery lies to the south with the Evangelical Church and St Mary's Church southeast of the search area. Codicote church and village lies to the west and Woolmer Green further to the east.



Figure 3.1 Site Location

3.1.1 MAGIC

Interrogation of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) generated the following results:

One Natural England Protected Species licence (NEPS) for bats (brown long-eared bat) was granted within the search area, approx. 969m to the northwest: Licence No. 2017-32287-EPS-MIT.

There are no statutory sites within the search area, however, the site lies within the Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone (SSSI IRZ) for Knebworth Woods SSSI ~4.5km north and the Sharrordspark Wood SSI ~4km south.

The current development type is not listed in the SSSI IRZ citation as requiring consultation by the Local Planning Authority.

There are three LNR's within the search area, Mardley Heath ~2.25km east, Singlers Marsh ~1km south and Danesbury Park ~1.45km southeast also supporting good quality semi-improved grassland

Within the search area there is an area of Ancient Woodland ~1.9km east and a few Traditional Orchards, the closest ~360m west. Within the search area are many areas of Deciduous Woodland, the closest being ~200m west

There are two Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh areas (CFPGM) ~1.2km southwest and ~1.7km west.

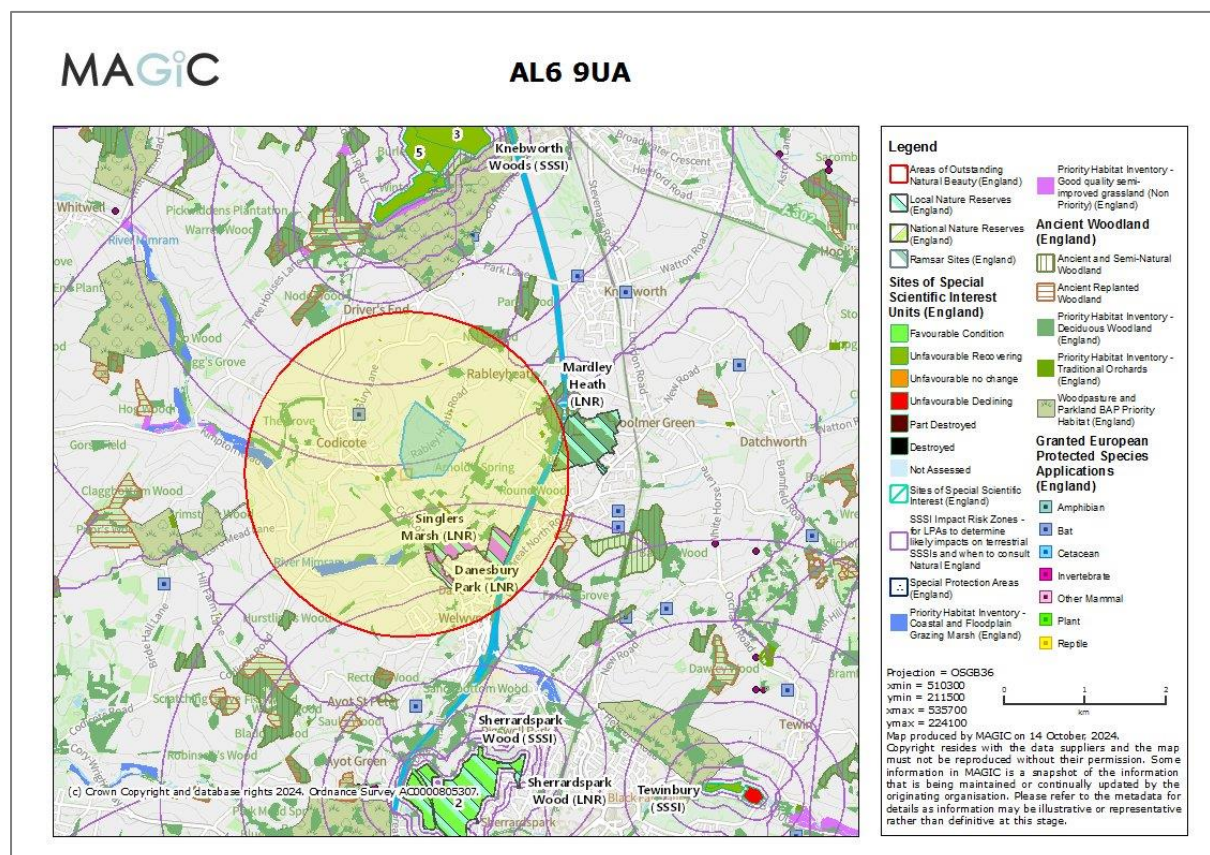


Figure 3.2 MAGIC - 2,000m Search Area

3.1.2 BIOLOGICAL RECORDS

The records provided by Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre are summarised below.

Table 3.1 Bat Records

Species	No. of Records	Most Recent	Closest
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	24	2013	~560m (100m)
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>)	3	2014	~560m (100m)
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	4	2013	~1150m (100m)
Brown Long-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus auratus</i>)	1	2014	~1800m (100m)
Daubenton's Bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	2	2012	~960m (100m)
Natterer's Bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	6	2012	~960m (100m)
Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	1	2013	~1510m (100m)

3.2 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Table 3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment Findings

Description	Image
Main Building (B1)	
The property is a residential dwelling, dating from the Tudor period, that is Grade II listed. It has a pitched and tiled roof.	

There are no standard chimneys present, only modern boiler 'flues'.

The flashings at their bases are all tight-fitting with the roof.



The roof and ridge tiles on the building are in good condition and the mortar between is unbroken



Within B1, the original roof void has been subject to a loft conversion with only one section remaining. This is felt lined, in excellent condition and standard fibreglass



insulation is present throughout the void.



The various eaves and soffits, together with the weatherboarding, also appeared to have no gaps and no potential access points for bats were noted during the inspection.



Outbuilding (B2)

A small modern outbuilding is present in the rear garden (B2) with a pitched felt covered roof. Within, the ceiling is timber with no loft void present. It has a double door at one end and is used for storage of garden equipment. There are windows on one side creating a well-lit interior.



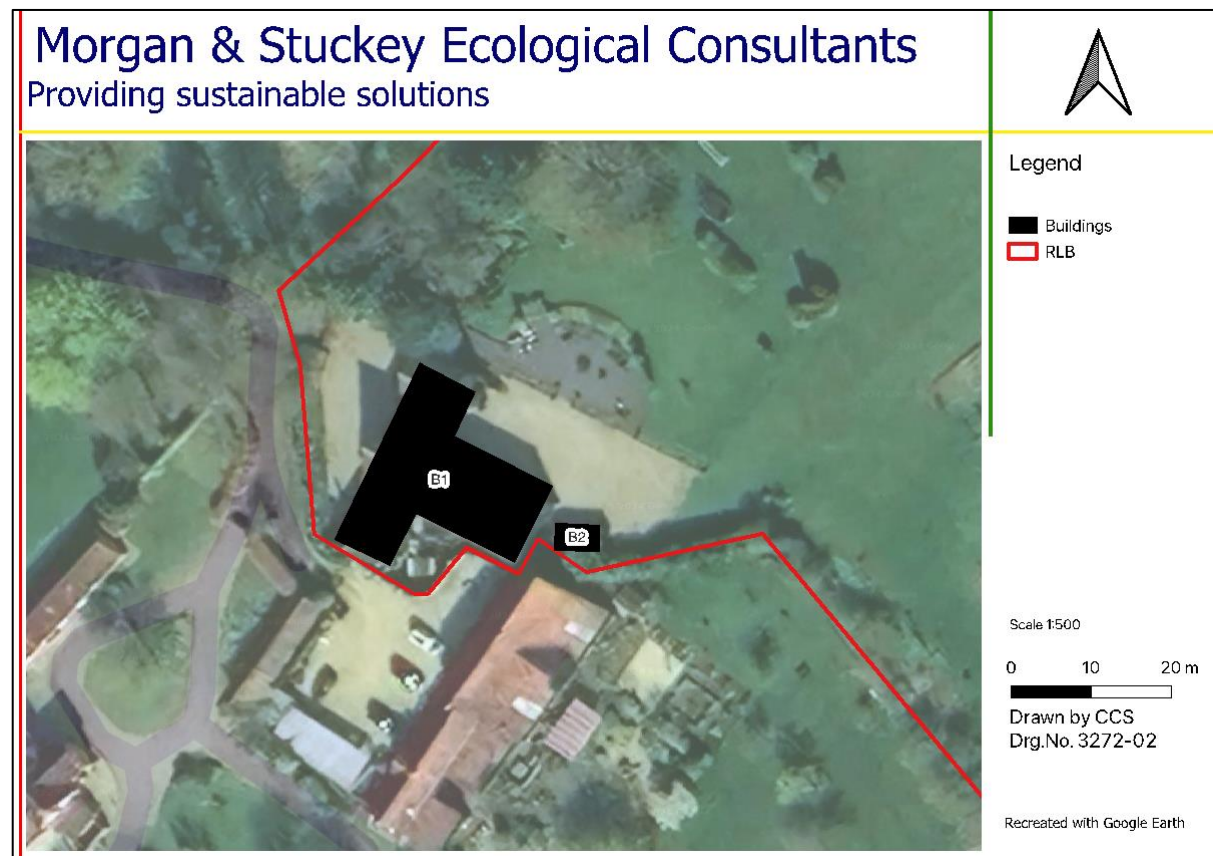


Figure 3.3 Site Plan

4 CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

No bats or evidence of bats was found within either B1 or B2 during the survey. As a result of the structure and condition of the buildings, it is considered that there is negligible potential for roosting bats.

Therefore, no further surveys are required, however, should bats be found at any point during works, all works must stop, and an ecologist consulted.

Recommended suggested enhancements for the site are found in Section 5.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 ENHANCEMENTS

To provide an enhancement for bats on site it is recommended that two integrated bat boxes be installed on the gable ends or under the eaves.

Ideally, these should face north or south and be no less than 3m above ground level. These require no maintenance and can be faced in any material for aesthetic purposes.

If the building does not allow for integrated bat boxes, then external boxes can be installed instead. These should be hung on the building or suitable trees within the grounds, face south/southwest, be no less than 3m above ground level and be placed away from any neighbouring ledge to avoid opportunities for predators to access the box.

Integrated bat boxes do not require any maintenance. External boxes should be checked annually for damage in the winter by observation from a distance. If the boxes are damaged and require replacement, an ecologist must be present.



Built in bat box ([Bird Brick Houses](#))

6 LEGISLATION

6.1 ANIMALS (EXCEPT BADGERS)

Wild animals listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or Schedules 2 and 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)

	Sections of the Act applicable
Bats	9 (1), (2) (4 a&b) of the WCA and Regulation 39 (1 a-c) of the Habitats Regulation

Species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are afforded protection subject to the provisions of Section 9. A person will be guilty of an offence if they:

1. intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5,
2. have in their possession or control any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5 or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal,
- 3.
4. intentionally or recklessly—
 - a. damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
 - b. disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
 - c. obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.
5. Subject to the provisions of this Part,
 - a. sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal; or
 - b. publish or cause to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things,
6. In any proceedings for an offence under subsection (1), (2) or (5)(a) relating to an act which is mentioned in subsection (1), (2) or (5)(a), the animal in question shall be presumed to have been a wild animal unless the contrary is shown.

Species listed on Annex II and Annex IV of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (the Habitats Regulations) which transpose into UK law Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (often referred to as the 'Habitats [and Species] Directive.') are afforded further protection. The former Annex relates to the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for some species.

Inclusion on Annex IV ('European protected species') means that member states are required to put in place a system of strict protection as outlined in Article 12, and this is done through inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Regulation 39 makes it an offence to:

Deliberately capture or kill an animal listed on Schedule 2 [Regulation 39(1)(a)]

Deliberately disturb an animal listed on Schedule 2[Regulation 39(1)(b)]

Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of an animal listed on Schedule 2
[Regulation 39(1)(c)]

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an animal listed on
Schedule 2 [Regulation 39(1)(d)]

Where applicable legislation applies to all life stages of a species.