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Site: Kirby Manor Barns, Northfield Road, Ashwell, SG7 5JQ
Client: Sam Sheppard



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Author / Surveyor.

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Antony Aslam	AA	29/7/2025	1.1

Summary:

We were appointed by Sam Sheppard to undertake an appraisal of Kirby Manor Barns, Northfield Road, Ashwell, SG7 5JQ in order to assess the potential ecological constraints to a planning proposal.

The proposed development entails the partial demolition and adaptive conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to deliver eight new residential dwellings. The scheme will retain select structural features where structurally viable, with integrated hard and soft landscaping, and provision for improved vehicular access. In line with findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (April 2025), appropriate design measures will be required to address the confirmed presence of roosting bats and ensure compliance with relevant protected species legislation.

During the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment walkover carried out on the 3rd April 2025, all buildings underwent full internal and external inspection. Full details are outlined in the Preliminary Roost Assessment Report 23_PRA_05_17 (ROAVR GROUP). Buildings B1 and B2 were classed as having high potential to support roosting bats.

All UK bat species are legally protected species and they are capable of being material considerations in the planning process. A summary of the legislation protecting bats is included. This section also provides some brief information on the ecology of British bat species.

Emergence surveys were carried out on the 2nd of June, 23rd of June and 14th July 2025. With the use of night vision aids and surveyors, the buildings were monitored and bats were confirmed as roosting in building B3.

No more than three individual bats emerged during each survey. Species present included common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

The consistent small group size and emergence behaviour suggest the bats are using the site as a **day roost** rather than a maternity roost.

The proposed works may result in the destruction of this roost; therefore a development licence from Natural England is required and the following mitigation is proposed:

Recommendations:

R1: Installation of three woodcrete bat boxes on nearby trees to the south of B3 prior to the commencement of works.

R2: A pre-works 'toolbox' talk with site operatives.

R3: Supervision, by a licensed bat worker, of the destruction/disturbance of the confirmed and any high potential bat roosting locations (areas within 5-10m of all roosting locations).

R4: Retention of roosting locations for pipistrelle bats within the building, where possible and where any are lost, replaced on a like for like basis.

R5: Installation of two Schwegler 1FR (or similar) bat tubes within the area of any roofline changes.

Should works commence more than 18 months (December 2026) after the nocturnal activity surveys were completed, an updated dusk survey will be required.

R6: In accordance with best practice guidance relating to lighting and biodiversity (Miles et al, 2018; Gunnell et al, 2012), any new lighting should be carefully designed to minimise potential disturbance and fragmentation impacts on sensitive receptors, such as bat species.

Consideration could also be made to enhance the site through planting of native shrubs along the site boundaries and installation of a small number of bird boxes on the building; full details of possible enhancements are provided in the report.

*Matt Harmsworth
Lead Consultant
ROAVR Group.*

Note: As a bat roost/resting place has been identified in Building B3, no unlicensed work can be undertaken which will contravene the legislation outlined in this report. Prior to any works being undertaken which are likely to result in a breach of the legislation, a development licence must be obtained from Natural England. The licence application process will include the submission of a method statement detailing the current status of bats on site and how the favourable conservation status of the bat population will be maintained. Prior to a licence being issued, planning permission must be granted and relevant conditions relating to protected species and habitat issues must be discharged. Nocturnal emergence and dawn re-entry survey data, in line with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023), is required to inform the licence application. An appropriate level of survey work has been undertaken within this study, however should any delays occur in the planning process which results in a delay in the bat licence application beyond December 2026, the bat activity surveys must have to be updated.

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1. Introduction

Brief and Site Location

This report presents the findings of three nocturnal emergence surveys of buildings at Kirby Manor Barns, Northfield Road, Ashwell, SG7 5JQ located at OS Grid Reference TL 2629 4255.

Proposed Works

The proposed development entails the partial demolition and adaptive conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to deliver eight new residential dwellings. The scheme will retain select structural features where structurally viable, with integrated hard and soft landscaping, and provision for improved vehicular access. In line with findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (April 2025), appropriate design measures will be required to address the confirmed presence of roosting bats and ensure compliance with relevant protected species legislation.

Legislation and Planning Policy

Bats

All UK species of bat are protected species. Their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which continues to apply in UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) ['CHSAEU'] Regulations 2019. Works affecting bats are subject to licensing procedures by Natural England (NE). The legal protection and licensing procedures are summarised in Appendix 1.

Survey Scope

In line with the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023), three separate bat surveys were carried out consisting of three nocturnal emergence bat surveys with the aid of infrared and thermal cameras across the summer of 2025. The aim of these surveys was to detect whether bats are roosting within the buildings and to enable a profile of site utilisation by bats to be compiled.

Project Ecological History

The ecological survey work on the site has been documented through several key assessments.

In April 2025, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was conducted. This assessment aimed to evaluate the site's overall ecological value and identify habitats, potential protected species, and ecological constraints. It served as a foundational document for subsequent studies.

Following the PEA, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was carried out. This specific survey focused on identifying potential roosting habitats for bats within structures and trees on the premises, categorised by their roosting potential.

Building on these findings, detailed Bat Surveys were undertaken during the summer of 2025. These surveys involved dusk emergence surveys and observations to confirm the presence and identify species of bats using the site. The results provided precise data essential for the conservation management plan and adherence to legal protections for bats.

Reporting

This report aims to:

- Outline the survey methodology used;
- Present the results of the survey;
- Provide an interpretation of the survey results;
- Determine the need for further targeted surveys; and
- Provide suitable recommendations in line with planning policy and wildlife law, including potential licensing requirements, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.

2. Methods

Field Study

Nocturnal Emergence Survey

In line with the specifications detailed in Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023), the nocturnal surveys commenced 20 minutes prior to sunset and continued until 120 minutes after sunset. The nocturnal emergence survey was conducted using electronic bat detectors (EchoMeter Touch Pro) to facilitate the detection of bats and to aid in the determination of species of bat using the site. Audio files were analysed using Kaleidoscope Pro Analysis Software to identify bat species through call frequencies post-survey.

Due to the difficulty in detecting late emerging bats, two Canon XA series camcorders with infrared recording capability, with two supplementary infrared illuminators (Nightfox Torches) were also used during the survey. In addition two Sony cameras with standalone IR illuminators were utilised to assist in detecting late emerging bats. The NVAs were further supported by 2 x TP2Pro thermal cameras. The camcorder footage was later analysed using FCPX video slow and fast speed ramp software to allow slowing down the video in line with the recorded bat call to ensure the location of bat movement was captured to conclude if the bat emerged from potential roosting features associated with the site. The location of the infrared camcorders remained the same during the survey to ensure a full coverage of the areas of the building to be affected by the proposals.

Thermal imagery gives either a white or red indicator of a bat prior to emergence and does not need detailed review. Thermal imagery can instantly highlight the point of emergence. The only limitation is the field of view which is much narrower than a camcorder with IR capability.

Constraints

General Temporal Constraints An ecological survey can only identify what is present on site at the time it is conducted. However, habitat usage by species can change over time.

3. Survey Results

Surveyors' Experience

The lead surveyor for the bat surveys was Matt Harmsworth. Matt is a member of the British Ecological Society (BES), The Arboricultural Association (AA), The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICFor). Matt Harmsworth has gained a wide range of ecological skills through academic and professional experiences. He has worked in ecological consultancy during numerous survey seasons and has experience undertaking protected species surveys. Matthew has a BSc in Environmental Science, a HND in Countryside Recreation and Environmental Science and a Foundation Degree in Arboricultural. Matthew has gained a wide range of ecological and arboricultural skills and knowledge through a combination of academic and practical experience.

Max Shaw is an ecologist with three-years experience working in ecology undertaking desktop studies, assisting with report writing and carrying out field work. Max holds a BSc (Hons) Environmental Science from Sheffield Hallam University and is a member of CIEEM. Max has attended numerous formal bat courses and has two years experience undertaking emergence surveys.

Connor Harmsworth is a field ecologist and arboricultural consultant at ROAVR Group. Connor is a member of the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), Connor has 5-years continuous ecology and arboricultural field work experience and one years experience in carrying out desktop assessments. Connor has attended numerous CPD courses including Ecology Training UK studies in bat surveying. Connor has four years protected species surveying experience in relation to bats.

Antony Aslam is an ecologist at ROAVR Group and is in his first year of bat activity surveys.

ROAVR Group is a nationwide arboricultural and ecological consultancy with directly employed staff nationwide supporting those passing through the planning process. Established in 2013, we have twelve years of experience conducting surveys and reporting work and several bat licensed ecologists within the company.

Dusk Emergence Surveys.

The site occupies approximately 0.56 hectares and lies within a rural landscape under the jurisdiction of North Hertfordshire District Council. Positioned to the west of Steeple Morden, the site is accessed via Northfield Road and comprises a group of former agricultural buildings collectively known as Kirby Manor Barns (grid reference TL 2629 4255). The area is predominantly hardstanding, with sporadic patches of poor-quality neutral grassland (Habitat Condition Score 2/5) along the northern and eastern site boundaries, and additional compacted bare ground created by heavy vehicle movement in the northeast corner.

The main structures on site include Building 1 (B1), a large, N-shaped brick-built barn with a deteriorating corrugated iron roof and open interior. This building exhibits signs of significant structural degradation and supports a confirmed barn owl (*Tyto alba*) nesting site in its northwestern segment (TN1), indicating its ecological importance.

Building 2 (B2), located to the east of the site, is a disused concrete and iron-clad structure in poor condition, with numerous open access points suitable for wildlife entry.

Additional buildings include Building 3 (B3), a long, low-profile brick structure with partial slate roofing (site of bat emergence) and Building 4 (B4), a small brick outbuilding almost entirely enveloped in mature ivy cover. The site is bordered by arable fields and woodland, the latter of which supports an active badger sett (TN2), as recorded in both the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and PEA.

Survey 1 – 2nd June 2025

The first dusk activity survey was undertaken on 2nd June 2025 in favourable conditions. Three surveyors were positioned to monitor Building B3 and the surrounding habitat. The first confirmed activity occurred at 21:40 hrs when a common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed foraging within B3, with calls continuing until 22:03 hrs. Subsequent sound recordings and visual observations confirmed further common Pipistrelle activity at 21:48 and 22:01 hrs, suggestive of emergence behaviour, with emergence points possibly located within the southwestern and northern sections of B3. These observations were supported by strong echolocation detections at circa 50 kHz, typical of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.

At 22:18 hrs, a single common Pipistrelle was observed commuting eastward from the hedgerow north of the site. Throughout the survey period, foraging activity continued within and immediately adjacent to Building B3, with multiple passes and directional movements across the site's western and southern boundaries recorded.

Survey 2 – 23rd June 2025

The second dusk emergence survey was conducted under suitable weather conditions on 23rd June 2025. Widespread bat activity was again recorded in association with Building B3. At 21:54 hrs, a group of three to four common Pipistrelles was observed emerging from the same west/southwest location as recorded previously. Further emergence events were identified between 22:00 hrs and 22:14 hrs, including an individual exiting the northeastern corner of B3 and briefly re-entering. Foraging was observed intensively along the western façade of B3, particularly near the main access road, continuing with regular flight passes and short periods of hover-feeding.

Between 22:00 hrs and 22:47 hrs, surveyors observed up to three common Pipistrelles foraging in the sheltered inner courtyard and interface margins of B3. Continued activity around the northern and southern edges of the barn, particularly near the open-access points, further supports the likelihood of multiple roosting locations.

Survey 3 – 14th July 2025

The third and final dusk survey was undertaken on 14th July 2025 under calm and clear weather conditions. The earliest recorded bat activity occurred at 21:43 hrs, with a common Pipistrelle emerging from the southeastern corner of Building B3 from beneath a partially enclosed loft or former storage platform. The same bat was later observed foraging in the open-sided extensions to the south and east of the same structure, making repeated circular passes within these semi-enclosed spaces before commuting north.

Frequent foraging activity was noted throughout the survey period beneath the open barn areas, between inner building voids and adjoining spaces. Significantly, a second common Pipistrelle emerged later in the survey from the same southeastern location and joined the first in active foraging within the southern end of the structure.

Additionally, at 22:18 hrs and 22:39 hrs, a Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was detected acoustically at frequencies between 60–80 kHz, though the individual(s) were not visually confirmed. These records suggest periodic high-altitude commuting activity above and adjacent to the site.

Bat Records:

2nd June 2025

Sunset: 21:12
Survey Start: 21:00
Survey End: 23:30

Surveyor Position 1
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Commuting (east to west along west elevation of B3)
Emergence from subject building: No

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging along western elevation of Building B3
Emergence from subject building: No

Surveyor Position 2
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Emergence from northeast corner of B3, flew east
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Emergence and re-entry behaviour around northern façade of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging within courtyard; re-entered B3 (north side)
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Surveyor Position 3
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Emergence from southwest doorway of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging along western boundary and within B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

23rd June 2025

Sunset: 21:25
Survey Start: 21:00
Survey End: 23:30

Surveyor Position 1
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Group emergence (3–4 bats) from west/southwest elevation of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging in and around open barn area
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Surveyor Position 2
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Emerged from northeast corner and re-entered multiple times
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging flights within interior courtyard
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Surveyor Position 3
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Repeated emergence from southwest corner of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging around yard, courtyard, and building periphery
Emergence from subject building: Yes

14th July 2025

Sunset: 21:15
Survey Start: 21:00
Survey End: 23:30

Surveyor Position 1
Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Emergence from southeast corner of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Species: common pipistrelle
Activity Type: Foraging within open-sided extension of B3
Emergence from subject building: Yes

Surveyor Position 2

Species: common pipistrelle

Activity Type: Repeated foraging returns to loft void and open barn of B3

Emergence from subject building: Yes

Surveyor Position 3

Species: Possible noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Activity Type: High-level commuting above and to the north of site

Emergence from subject building: No

NVA Use:

Daylight Pre-Start Screenshots

The pre-survey screenshots captured during daylight hours provide a clear and well-composed record of NVA positioning across the site. The cameras are shown positioned facing the western and southern elevations of Building B3, capturing key potential emergence features above accessible doorways, eaves and loft vents. The image quality is sharp with good exposure and visibility of the building footprint and architectural features.

IMG_6698 and IMG_6699 document NVAs directed towards the northern elevation, offering clear surveillance of recessed openings and the courtyard interface. These images are well-framed, with sufficient daylight to distinguish potential roost features and vegetation structure along wall plates and lead flashing.

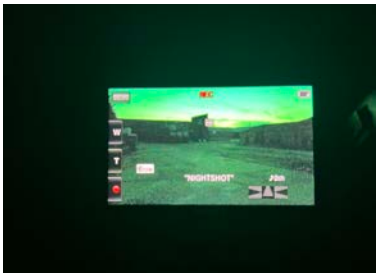
IMG_6700 through IMG_6703 capture the eastern and internal courtyard-facing sides of B3 from various compass directions. The positioning ensures cross-coverage of key voids, open barn sections and ridgeline structures. Visibility in all frames is high, with camera orientation and detection zones clearly identifiable.

Night End-of-Survey Screenshots

The night-time screenshots (IMG_6704 to IMG_6711) serve as a reliable visual confirmation of camera function and final placement as of survey completion. Though intermittently affected by low light, camera exposure and infrared modes are sufficient to discern silhouettes of the structure and confirm field of view at the cessation of the survey.

IMG_6705, IMG_6709 and IMG_6710 are particularly valuable, illustrating continued coverage of loft openings and barn apertures likely to support bat movement. Infrared imaging overlays subtle roofline separation and detect zones. The inward-facing cameras positioned within the courtyard (e.g., IMG_6708 and IMG_6711) also capture contrast and movement points effectively, despite variable ambient luminosity.

Together, the pre- and post-survey captures robustly support the methodology by evidencing correct and consistent placement of survey equipment in relation to identified bat access points observed during the PRA and confirmed in activity records.

Camera	Daylight Screenshot	Night Screenshot
Camera 1		
Camera 2		
Camera 3		
Camera 4		

4. Conclusion and Required Actions

A suite of dusk activity surveys was undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance outlined in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) (Collins, 2023), following findings from a Preliminary Roost Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal conducted in April 2025. These earlier assessments determined that Building B3 and its associated structures presented features of high suitability for roosting bats, necessitating a minimum of two survey visits spaced across the active season. In line with these recommendations, three surveys were undertaken between early June and mid-July 2025 to ensure robust temporal coverage.

Definitive emergence were recorded, building B3 supported consistent levels of bat activity, primarily by common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). These observations, predominantly characterised by foraging and light commuting behaviours, were spatially associated with particular elevations and features of B3, including the western façade, internal courtyard and semi-open barn structures. The survey data align with the previous PEA/PRA conclusions that the site holds limited albeit routine value to bats, principally as a foraging and commuting corridor within a semi-rural context.

Key considerations:

- The site was subject to three dusk activity surveys using combined human observation and static detector data, meeting the recommended minimum survey effort for a building of moderate suitability under Collins (2023).
- Foraging and commuting activity by common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was recorded on all survey dates, particularly along the western and northern façades of B3 and within the courtyard and open barn areas.
- Across two surveys, up to four common Pipistrelle were recorded emerging from B3.
- No evidence was found to suggest the buildings present maternity or hibernation potential. The use of the site by individual bats appears opportunistic and low-level with B3 being used as a day roost.

Per Survey Summary:

2 June 2025

- Foraging and commuting by *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* around western and northern elevations of B3.
- Possible emergence behaviour observed but not confirmed.

23 June 2025

- Higher levels of activity recorded in comparison to the first survey.
- Repeated foraging loops and interaction with known potential access points, with confirmed emergence
- Activity primarily confined to open elevations and courtyard edges.

14 July 2025

- Continued foraging activity within the internal barn and along the southern façade. Emergence observed and verified.
- No change in usage pattern compared with previous visits.

There is a confirmed bat roost for three to four common pipistrelle bats in the roof space of Building B3. The loss of this non-breeding pipistrelle roost will have a low impact upon the local population of the species. The consistent small group size and emergence behaviour suggest the bats are using the site as a **day roost** rather than a maternity roost.

The proposed work will result in the destruction of this roost; therefore a development licence from Natural England is required and the following mitigation is proposed:

Recommendations:

R1: Installation of three woodcrete bat boxes on nearby trees prior to the commencement of works. The trees to the north of the site would be ideal.

R2: A pre-works 'toolbox' talk with site operatives.

R3: Supervision, by a licensed bat worker, of the destruction/disturbance of the confirmed and any high potential bat roosting locations (areas within 5-10m of all roosting locations).

R4: Retention of roosting locations for pipistrelle bats within the building, where possible and where any are lost, replaced on a like for like basis.

R5: Installation of two Schwegler 1FR (or similar) bat tubes within the area of roofline changes.

Should works commence more than 18 months after the nocturnal activity surveys were completed, an update dusk survey will be required. Small bat roosts with one or two non-breeding bats can be virtually impossible to identify at any time in the year. Therefore, precautionary methods of work are recommended.

The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) process used in this assessment follows Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance (2016).

For species, conservation status is determined by the sum of influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations within a given geographical area.

During the nocturnal surveys, three-four common pipistrelle bats were observed emerging from the building during surveys two and three.

Due to the difficulty of detecting individual pipistrelle roosts, it is possible that other non-breeding roosting locations used by single bats may be present within the building.

Regular foraging by a small number of bats was also recorded during the nocturnal activity surveys; much of this activity was concentrated in the courtyard area.

Loss / Disturbance of Bat Roost Sites

In the absence of appropriate mitigation, it is considered that the works could result in the loss of one, non-maternity common pipistrelle bat roost. The loss of this roost would result in a low impact upon the population of these bat species (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). This impact should be reduced through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that the population levels of bats on site are maintained at a favourable conservation status, and that bats are not harmed during works. The low magnitude impact will not result in a significant effect on the species in the local area.

Common pipistrelle bats are relatively common and widespread throughout England and in the local area. The population statuses nationally are considered to be favourable.

The bat roost present in the building will likely be lost as part of the proposed works but this should be confirmed prior to any planning submission.

Proposed lighting for the site is not known. Bat foraging and roost sites can be affected by lighting (see “*Artificial lighting and wildlife*” (BCT, 2014)). Light falling on a bat roost exit point, regardless of species, will at least delay bats from emerging. This shortens the amount of time available to them for foraging. As the main peak of nocturnal insect abundance occurs at and soon after dusk, a delay in emergence means this vital time for feeding is missed.

At worst, the bats may abandon the roost. Bats are faithful to their roosts over many years and disturbance of this sort could have a significant effect on the future of the colony.

Loss of Bat Foraging Areas

It is not thought that the development works will entail any significant changes to the surrounding habitat, therefore a loss of foraging habitat for bats is not anticipated.

To ensure compliance with best practice guidance and mitigate impacts of artificial lighting on bats and other nocturnal fauna, a sensitive lighting strategy shall be implemented. This strategy follows the recommendations outlined in **ILP GN08/23** (Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night) and **BCT guidance** (2023), and is proportionate to the small common pipistrelle day roost identified on site.

Objectives:

- Prevent light spill onto known or potential roost access points;
- Maintain dark corridors along key foraging and commuting routes, especially around Building B3 and along boundary vegetation;
- Minimise disruption to bat emergence timing and feeding behaviour.

Lighting Design Measures:

- **Lux levels:** External lighting shall not exceed **1 lux** at or near any confirmed or retained bat roost access point or adjacent commuting routes (e.g. along the western, northern and southern façades of B3).
- **Directional fittings:** All external lighting will use **downward-directed, cowled luminaires** to prevent upward or lateral light spill.

- **Light source:** All luminaires will use **warm white LEDs** with a **colour temperature of <3000 Kelvin**. Blue-rich lighting (e.g. metal halide or cool LEDs) will not be used.
- **Timing and control:**
 - External lights will be controlled by **motion sensors** (PIR) and **timers** to ensure they are only activated when necessary.
 - Lighting will be **set to switch off automatically** no later than 22:00 hrs to coincide with peak bat activity periods.
- **Placement:** No new lighting will be installed within 10 m of:
 - Roost access points;
 - Tree lines or hedgerows;
 - The open-sided sections of B3 or the internal courtyard.

Construction Phase:

- Any required temporary lighting during construction will also adhere to these principles, with all illumination directed away from roost features, trees, and vegetated site boundaries.

4.1 Licensing Requirements for Bats

Due to the confirmed presence of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) roost within Building B3, the proposed development will result in the loss or disturbance of a bat roost. As such, a development licence will be required from Natural England prior to the commencement of works that could impact this roost. The licence application must be submitted under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), which transpose the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive into domestic law.

To obtain a bat mitigation licence, three statutory tests must be met:

1. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

The proposed development will deliver eight residential dwellings through conversion of redundant agricultural buildings, supporting housing delivery and rural regeneration in the district. The project aligns with Local Plan housing policies and national planning objectives under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021), contributing to the supply of sustainable housing. The conversion of these underutilised structures will prevent further degradation of the site and promote long-term land use viability. These are considered valid social and economic reasons of overriding public interest.

2. No Satisfactory Alternative

A 'do-nothing' approach would result in the continued deterioration of the existing buildings, which poses a structural and health and safety risk and would not deliver any ecological or public benefit. Retaining the buildings without alteration would not meet the client's objectives or local housing need. Alternative design options were reviewed at pre-application stage, and the final scheme has been sensitively developed to retain key building features where viable and to integrate roost mitigation features. As such, there is no satisfactory alternative that would avoid impacts on bats while achieving the project aims.

3. Favourable Conservation Status (FCS)

The affected roost is a small non-maternity day roost used by a maximum of four common pipistrelles. The species is widespread and of favourable conservation status both nationally and locally. The proposed mitigation measures include:

- Pre-works toolbox talk by a licensed ecologist;
- Supervised soft-strip of affected areas;
- Installation of two Schwegler 1FR bat tubes integrated into the converted building, providing like-for-like roosting opportunity;
- Installation of three woodcrete bat boxes in suitable nearby trees;
- Timing restrictions and update survey, if required, prior to works.

These measures are proportionate and appropriate for the low conservation status roost present, and will ensure no net loss of roosting opportunity. They are designed to maintain or enhance the conservation status of the species in the local area in line with the licensing requirements.

4.2 Avoidance, Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Measures for Bats

The mitigation strategy for the proposed works should ensure that bats are not harmed during works and that roosting opportunities remain during and after works. The mitigation measures proposed are appropriate for non-maternity roosts of a small number of pipistrelle bats.

The aim of the strategy is to retain roosting areas where possible. Where this is not feasible, the roosts should be replaced/reinstated on a like-for-like basis.

The strategy includes:

- Installation of bat boxes on nearby trees prior to the commencement of works.
- A pre-works 'toolbox' talk with site operatives.
- Supervision, by a licensed bat worker, of the destruction/disturbance of the confirmed and any high potential bat roosting locations (areas within 5-10m of all roosting locations).
- Retention of roosting locations for pipistrelle bats within the building, where possible and where any are lost, replaced on a like for like basis.
- Installation of two Schwegler 1FR bat tube (or similar) on the upper north-western aspect of the building to replace that which will be lost

The surveys have indicated that the building is being used by a small number of non-breeding common pipistrelle bats. As such, the timing of the works is not critical (assuming that the status of the roost does not change).

If there is any suspicion that breeding is taking place (i.e. during the update surveys or at any time during the supervised roof strip etc.), then work in that area might have to be delayed, once all the young bats are flying and have dispersed from the roost (early September). In this event, it will be necessary to apply for an amended licence from Natural England to cover the change in the status of the roost.

It would be prudent to undertake one final nocturnal survey immediately prior to works taking place.

4.3 Longevity of Report

Survey data should ideally be from the last survey season before a planning or licence application is submitted, although the length that survey data remains valid should be decided on a case-by-case basis and is dependent upon several factors (Collins, 2023). If development works do not begin within eighteen months to two years of the date of this report, an updated survey may be required in accordance with guidance in BS 42020:2013 and CIEEM (2019), to determine if conditions and bat use has changed since described in the current report.

5. Limitations

ROAVR Group has prepared this Report for the sole use of the above named Client/Agent in accordance with our terms of business, under which our services were performed. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by us.

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Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

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7. Appendix 1

Bat Ecology

There are 17 known breeding species of bat found in the UK, with additional species recorded as migrants or vagrants. All of them are small, nocturnal, flying, insectivorous mammals that are under conservation threat, and many have undergone massive population declines over the last century. Some species, such as common (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) and soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus) are relatively common and widespread in the UK, while others, such as greater horseshoe (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum) bats, have an extremely restricted distribution.

Most bats will use a variety of roosts of different types throughout the year. The winter hibernation sites typically have cool, humid conditions with a stable microclimate and low levels of disturbance. Most British bats hibernate in caves or artificial structures that fulfil such requirements, such as mines, tunnels and cellars. Bats emerge from hibernation around late March or early April and move into transition or intermediary roosts. Around early May, female bats gather in colonies to form summer or maternity roosts, and it is here where they will give birth between late May and early July. A colony may consist of many individuals (sometimes hundreds of bats) of mixed age and sex. Roosts occur in a variety of habitat types, including tree-holes, caves, buildings and other secure crevices or internal spaces with appropriate stable temperatures and humidity. Bats may change roost locations many times during a year, and colonies may split up and reform during this period. Males occupy solitary roosts in autumn, to which they attract females for mating.

Legislation

All British bat species and any place used for shelter or protection, or a breeding site or resting place (their roosts) are fully protected under the amended Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion in Schedule 5. The roosts are protected irrespective of whether bats are present at the time. All bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) ['CHSAEU'] Regulations 2019.

These pieces of legislation make it illegal to deliberately or recklessly:

- kill, injure or capture bats;
- disturb bats;
- damage, destroy, or obstruct access to bat roosts (including sites that are currently unoccupied);
- possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat unless acquired legally; or
- sell, barter or exchange bats or parts of bats.

Disturbance is defined as any activity that is likely to impair bats ability:

- to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
- to hibernate or migrate; or
- to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Habitats Regulations Licensing

If a European Protected Species will be affected by a development, Natural England (NE) can issue licences under the Habitats Regulations to permit otherwise prohibited acts. Licences for certain activities can be granted providing “three tests” are satisfied, that is:

1. the purposes of “preserving public health or safety, or for reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”;
2. there must be “no satisfactory alternative”; and,
3. the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

Where Planning regulations apply, NE will only issue a licence after planning consent has been granted.

The licence application will require the production of a detailed method statement, which sets out the activities to be carried out under the licence to minimise the risk of bats being harmed during construction works and ensure that bats will be conserved during the development of the site. This will need to detail the mitigation proposed (such as the replacement or compensation roost), the timescale and schedule of works, the number, size and locations of bat access points to be provided, the type of materials to be used (roofing material, roof lining, fascias, soffits and bargeboards etc.), lighting proposals, action to be taken in the event bats are found during works and a post-development monitoring programme. The method statement will need to be accompanied by scaled plans and maps detailing the bat mitigation features.

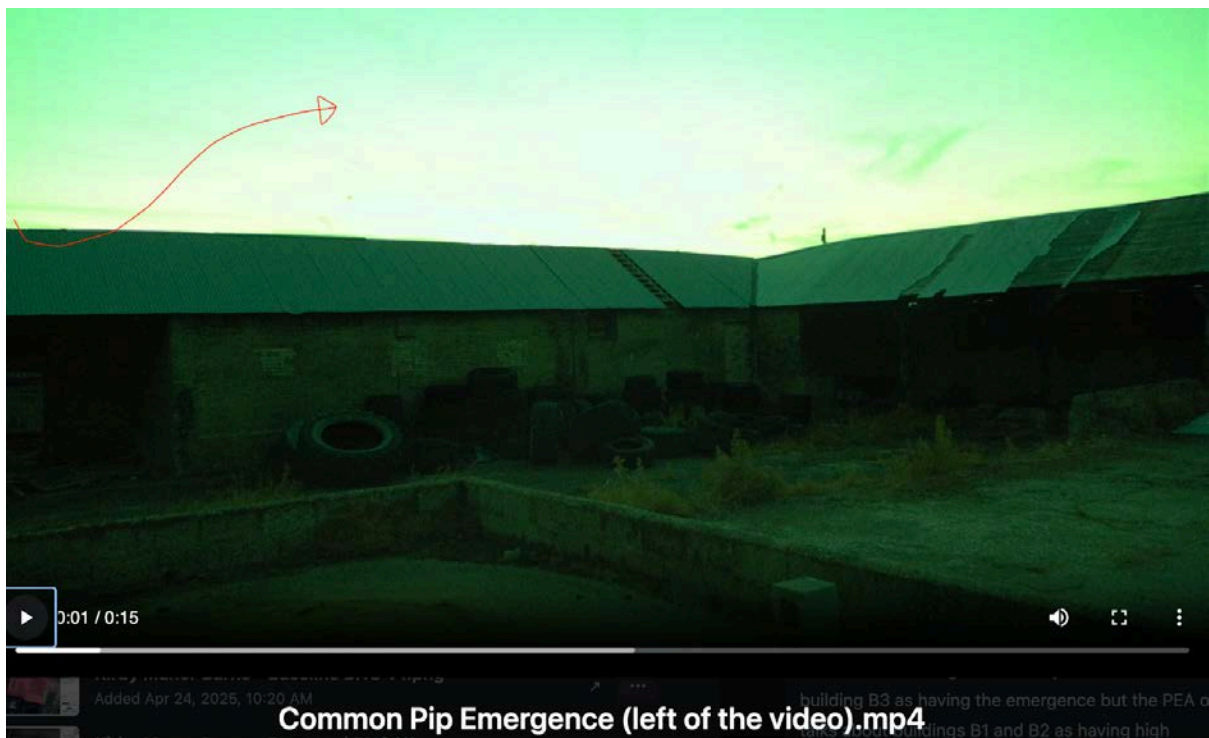
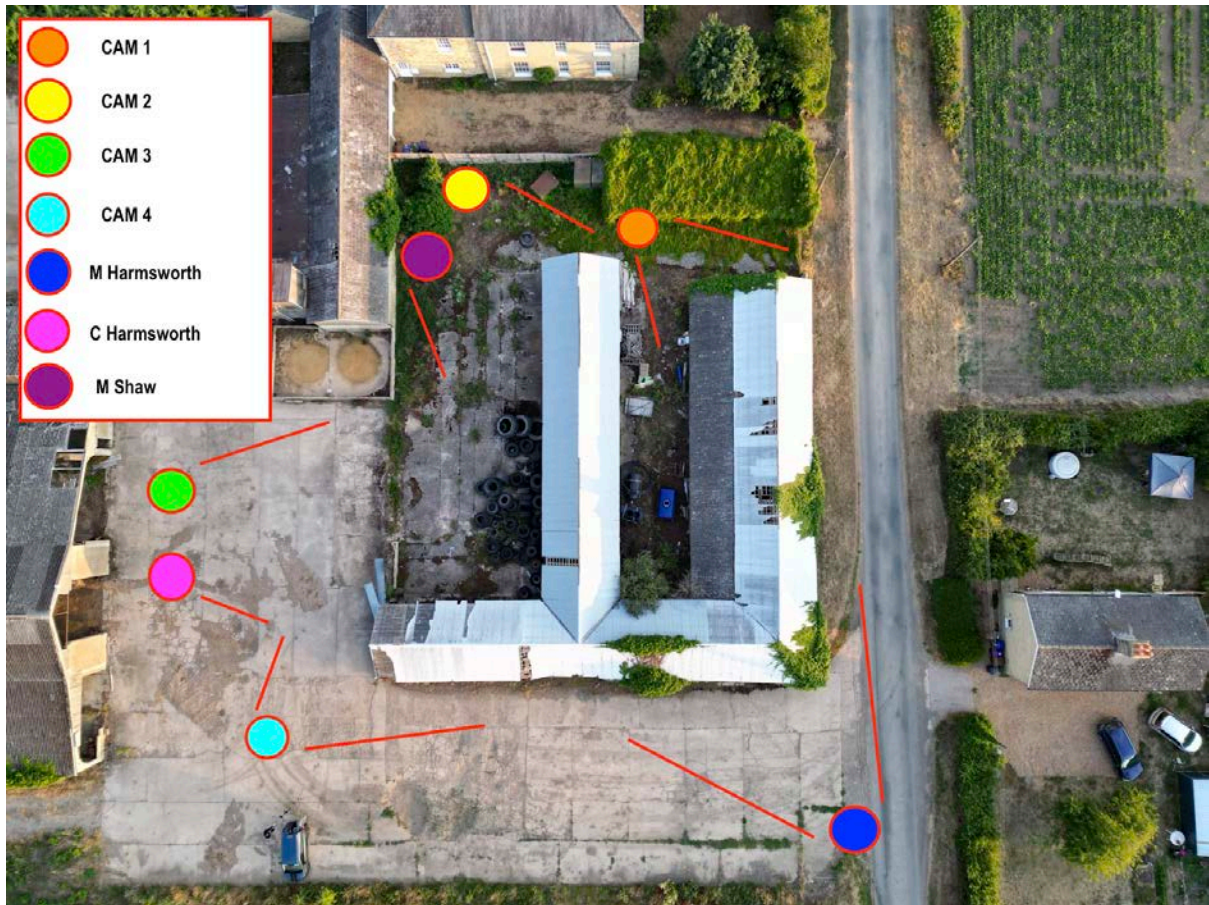
A cross-section of the access points and roost space is often required. The method statement must ensure that provision is made for new or continued roosting opportunities after the completion of development works. In some instances, a method statement is requested by Natural England before the planning application is determined.

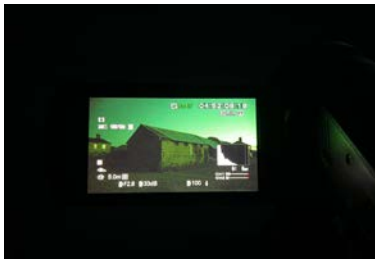
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), Local authorities have a duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions. The duty affects all public authorities and aims to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity, to clarify existing commitments regarding biodiversity, and to make it a natural and integral part of policy and decision making. Seven of the UK species of bat (soprano pipistrelle, barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats) have been listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plans (2007) as conservation priorities.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/2005

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Biodiversity and Geological Conservation–Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System Circular (06/2005) state that the presence (or otherwise) of a protected species is a material planning consideration and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development must be established before planning permission is granted. Otherwise, all relevant considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.

Appendix 1: Map 1 Nocturnal Emergence Bat Survey Results



Camera	Daylight Screenshot	Night Screenshot
Camera 1 - Sony.		
Camera 2 - Sony		
Camera 3 - Canon XA		
Camera 4 - Canon XA		



General Image 1.



General Image 2.



General Image 3.

