

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Emergence Survey Report

LOCATION: Little Court, London Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, SG4 7NE

CLIENT: Diedre & Chris Saliba

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1. Report summary

Bat Tree Surveys were instructed to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and dusk emergence surveys at Little Court, London Road, St Ippolyts, SG4 7NE, on behalf of the clients Deirdre and Chris Saliba. This assessment was recommended to support a planning application involving the removal and remodelling of the existing roof and a two-storey extension at the front of the property.

The PRA involved a detailed assessment of the main property and the surrounding gardens and habitat to determine the potential of the building to support roosting bats. Multiple potential roost features or access points were observed on the front and rear of the property, mainly under lifted roof tiles and gaps around the eaves which lead directly into the loft space. The internal inspection of the loft space found a number of accumulated bat droppings beneath the ridge beams. The numbers of droppings suggested regular use by an individual or small number of bats. DNA analysis carried out on a sample of droppings confirmed the species as Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). The building was classified as a confirmed roost and considered to have high potential to support roosting bats. Further surveys were recommended during the bat active season (May to September) to establish bat presence/likely absence and characterise the roost.

The dusk bat emergence surveys were carried out on the 9th August, 30th August, and 22nd September by four experienced surveyors, two of which hold a Class 2 bat licence. The surveys revealed a single Common pipistrelle roosting between a timber beam and brick on the front of the property. Subsequent inspection by endoscope revealed a further 3 roosts within cavities in timber beams on the same side of the house. A single Pipistrelle bat was found roosting in one of these cavities and bat droppings were found within all 3 spaces. DNA analysis conducted on a sample of droppings taken from two cavities established the species as Common pipistrelle.

Based on the findings, the works must be carried out under a Bat Mitigation Class Licence to ensure the development is carried out lawfully, that bats are not harmed during the works, and the favourable conservation status of the species identified is maintained.

2. Introduction

2.1. Project background

In July 2025, the client commissioned Bat Tree Surveys to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment at Little Court, London Road, St Ippolyts, SG4 7NE (hereinafter referred to as the 'site'). This assessment was recommended to inform a planning application involving the removal and remodelling of the existing roof and a two-storey extension at the front of the property.

2.2. Site description

The site is situated in St Ippolyts, a village and civil parish on the southern edge of Hitchin, Hertfordshire (Grid Reference TL 19041 27815). The parish includes the hamlet of Gosmore and southern built-up parts of Hitchin in which the property lies. The building subject to development is a brick-built part rendered 5-bedroom detached house with associated front drive and rear garden. The property is surrounded by further residential housing and arable fields further east and south.

2.3. Legislation

All UK bat species and their roosts are legally protected under European and UK legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Provisions of these regulations include making it an offence to

- Deliberately kill, injure or take (capture) bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats in a way that would
 - (i) be likely to impair their ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate
 - (ii) significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong
- Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place used by bats
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection (even if bats are not in residence at the time)

In accordance with the Habitats Regulations Natural England must apply the three derogation tests as part of the process of considering a licence application. These tests are

- The activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety
- There must be no satisfactory alternative
- The favourable conservation status of the species concerned must be maintained.

Foraging and commuting habitats are also a consideration within planning processes under the National Planning Policy Framework. Further details of legislation and legal protection of all British bat species are provided in Appendix 2.

2.4. Objectives

The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment and emergence surveys were:

- Determine presence or likely absence of roosting bats within the building on site
- If present, identify the species, numbers, usage and access points of the roost
- If necessary, recommend further surveys, mitigation, compensation, or enhancement measures and licencing requirements to inform the planning application for the proposed development at the site
- Determine the impact of the proposed development on local bat populations within the area

3. Methodology

3.1. Desk study

The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping was consulted for information on local and regional special protection areas within 5km of the site. Granted European Protected Species Applications were also searched for within 2km of the site. The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) was referred to for species records within 5km.

3.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment

A daytime roost assessment was undertaken following best practice guidelines as issued by the Bat Conservation Trust¹. The survey took place on 6th August 2025. The weather conditions during the survey were 25°C, with no breeze (Beaufort Scale 0) and 50% cloud cover.

The building was first surveyed from the outside to assess for potential access points, as well as evidence of bat use including staining, droppings, scratch marks, and feeding remains. The internal loft area was also assessed for the same evidence.

Equipment used to investigate the building included binoculars, a high-power torch, ladder, and an endoscope (Teslong Articulating endoscope, TD450s).

Following completion of the survey, the potential of the building to provide suitable bat roosting habitat was assessed as either negligible, low, moderate, high, and/or confirmed as a roost (see Table 1).

During the PRA, the structure and features were also assessed for their suitability to be used by hibernating bats outside of the active season.

Table 1: Classifying bat roost suitability of buildings (Collins, 2024)

Category	Description	Further surveys required
Negligible	Little to no features within the site likely to be used by roosting bats	No further surveys needed
Low	One or more features that could be used by individual bats, but unlikely to support maternity or hibernation roost. Features or surrounding habitats not considered suitable conditions for a maternity or hibernation roost	A minimum of one nocturnal emergence / re-entry survey carried out between May and September
Moderate	One or more potential roost features that could be used by bats, characterised by their shelter, size, conditions, and surrounding habitat	A minimum of two nocturnal emergence / re-entry survey carried out between May and September, spaced three weeks apart
High	One of more potential roost features suitable for large numbers of bats on a regular basis or for longer periods of time characterised by their shelter, size, conditions, and surrounding habitat	A minimum of three nocturnal emergence / re-entry survey carried out between May and September, each spaced three weeks apart
Confirmed	Evidence of bat occupation found, i.e. droppings or bats themselves	A minimum of three nocturnal emergence / re-entry survey carried out between May and September, each spaced three weeks apart

¹Collins, J. (ed.) (2024) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London

3.3. Dusk emergence surveys

Three bat emergence surveys were undertaken by four experienced surveyors, two of which hold a Class 2 bat licence (licence refs: 2024-11948-CL18-BAT & 2024-11947-CL18-BAT) on 9th August, 31st August, and 22nd September 2025, in accordance with methodology outlined by best practice guidelines¹. Surveyors were positioned on four elevations of the building to enable observation of all roosting features and access points identified in the initial scoping survey. Surveys were carried out 15 minutes before sunset until 90 minutes after.

All surveyors were equipped with an Echometer Touch 2, a Nightfox Whisker infrared camera, and additional Nightfox XB5 infrared torches. Surveyors recorded any bat activity or emergences/ re-entries at identified potential roosting entry/exit points. Species were identified by call frequencies using the full spectrum bat detectors. Recordings of bat calls were made to allow for subsequent computer analysis and identification of bat species using bat analysis software Kaleidoscope, where necessary. Footage from infrared cameras was analysed after each survey against recorded bat registrations to identify potential missed emergences.

A map of surveyor and NVA positions during the surveys is shown in Figure 1 below. Stills of the darkest point of the surveys taken from each infrared camera are shown in Appendix 4.

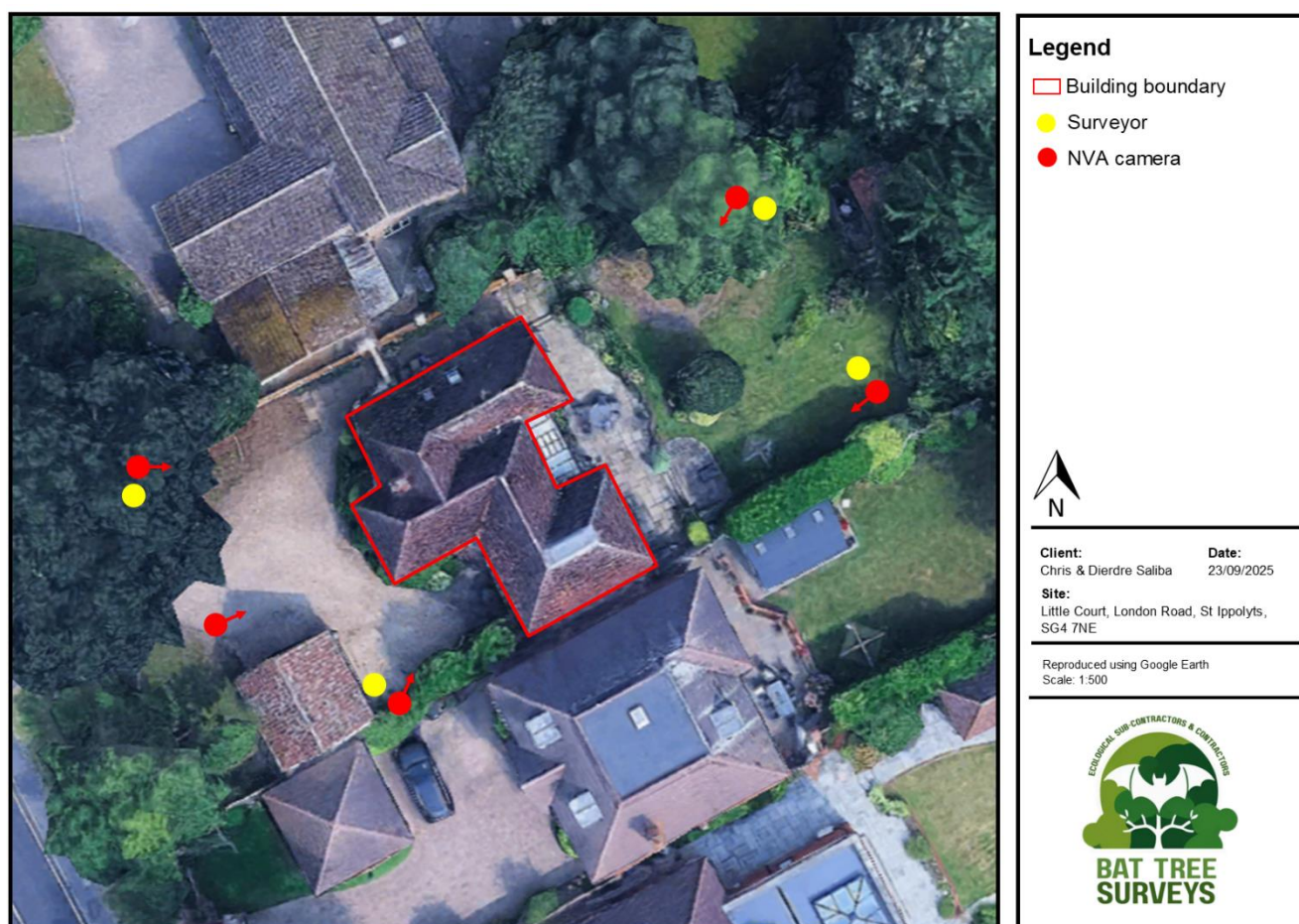


Figure 1: Surveyor and NVA camera locations during the emergence surveys

¹Collins, J. (ed.) (2024) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London

3.4. Limitations and assumptions

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 the 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.

A Local Records Centre (LRC) data search was not undertaken due to the low impact and small-scale nature of the development. The data search results are considered unlikely to impact the decision-making process, and there is limited potential for key information to have been missed. This approach is consistent with CIEEM's Guidelines for Accessing and Using Biodiversity Data (Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management, 2020), which states that in low impact/small-scale scenarios, such as loft conversions or alterations to the roof, a LRC search may not be necessary.

Each emergence survey was undertaken during the period of peak bat activity and in good weather conditions. The results are considered to be a good representation of bat roosting activity at the site at the time of the surveys. However, it should be noted that surveys such as these provide a snapshot of bat roosting activity at the time of survey visits. Bat roosting patterns vary depending on weather conditions, breeding cycle, and levels of disturbance.

Assuming conditions of the site and the proposed development remain the same, results of the preliminary roost assessment are likely to remain valid for 12 to 18 months (CIEEM, 2019; Collins, 2024). An updated assessment may be necessary if works have not yet commenced in this time.

4. Results

4.1. Desk study

There are no designated statutory nature sites within 2km of the search area.

Patches of Priority Habitat deciduous woodland are found within a 2km radius. The closest area of approximately 300m east of the site in Ippollitts Brook, which also features a stream and associated ponds. Habitats such as these offer suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

A total of 4 bat mitigation licences have been granted within 2km of the site. The details of these licences are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Granted bat mitigation licence applications

Case reference	Bat species	Distance and direction to nearest (m/km)	Licence start & end dates
EPSM2012-5034	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	900m NW	11/12/2012 to 30/09/2014
2017-32120-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	1400m SE	22/12/2017 to 31/12/2024
EPSM2009-533	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Brown Long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	1500m SE	03/06/2009 to 01/05/2011

EPSM2012-4641	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Brown Long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	1870m SW	24/08/2012 to 31/08/2015
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The National Biodiversity Network shows species records within 5km of the site as follows (NBN Trust, 2025).

Table 3: Bat records within 5km of the site

Species	Number of records	Most recent record (year)
Barbastelle <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	-	-
Brown Long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	11	2022
Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	20	2023
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	5	2006
Leisler's <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	-	-
Nathusius' Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	-	-
Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	59	2023
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	3	2008
Serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	-	-
Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	-	-
Whiskered bat <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	-	-

4.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment results

The property subject to development is a 5-bedroom brick-built detached house with part rendered walls and exposed painted timber beams. The multiple hipped roof is laid with terracotta plain tiles and features a brick chimney stack. A gravel driveway and detached garage lie to the southwest front and a garden bordered by mature trees is positioned to the northeast rear.

A continuous gap was visible beneath the eaves of the house, potentially allowing access into the loft space. A few lifted roof tiles and ridge tiles were observed on the northeast roof. Some gaps were also observed between (and within) timber beams and brickwork providing potential roosts for crevice dwelling bats.

The loft space was supported by timber beams and roofing membrane with insulation lining the floor between joists. Roofing felt was largely intact but torn in places leaving roof tiles visible. Small gaps in the southern loft space were evident by light spillage. Scattered bat droppings were found in the southeastern loft space, with a greater accumulation within the northeast loft. Droppings in the

north-east loft were concentrated below central ridge beams. DNA analysis carried out on a sample of droppings confirmed the species as Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

In accordance with Table 1 and the guidance in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2024), the property is confirmed as being used by roosting bats and considered to have high potential to support roosting bats. It would not be typical for bats to be found over wintering in this type of structure, especially as occupation during the winter months can cause fluctuations in temperature due to the use of central heating. The temperature within the loft space was recorded as 28°C. However, due to the uncertain nature of hibernation occurring with the *Pipistrellus* genus (Korsten *et al.*, 2015) unexpected incidents of hibernation could occur.



Figure 2: Southwest front



Figure 3: Northeast rear



Figure 4: Gaps along eaves (southeast)

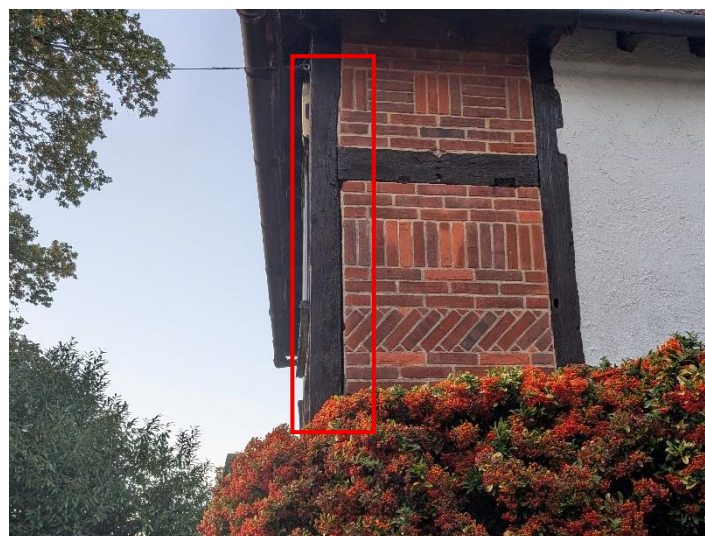


Figure 5: Gaps between brick and timber beam (southeast)



Figure 6: Gap under ridge tile (northeast)

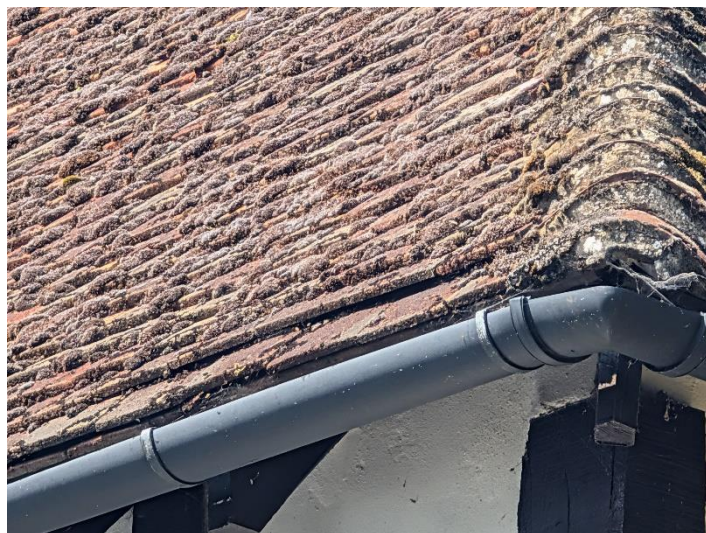


Figure 7: Lifted roof tiles (northeast)

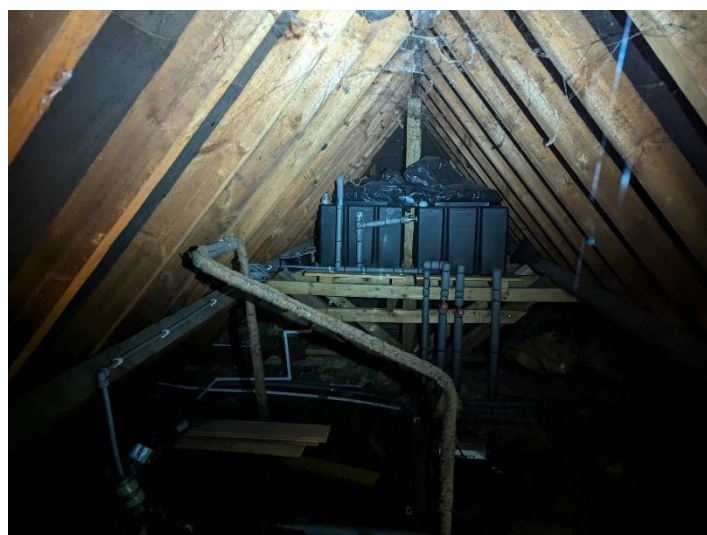


Figure 8: Interior of loft space



Figure 9: Torn roofing membrane



Figure 10: Accumulated bat droppings



Figure 11: Bat droppings below central ridge beam

4.3. Dusk emergence survey results

Dates, times, and weather conditions for each survey are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Survey timings and conditions

Date	Survey start/end time	Weather conditions (start)	Weather conditions (end)
9 th August 2025	Sunset: 20:36 Start time: 20:21 End time: 22:10	Temperature: 21°C Relative humidity: 48% 0 cloud cover Light air (Beaufort scale 1) Dry	Temperature: 18°C Relative humidity: 60% 0% cloud cover Calm (Beaufort scale 0) Dry
31 st August 2025	Sunset: 19:50 Start time: 19:35 End time: 21:20	Temperature: 18°C Relative humidity: 61% 0% cloud cover Light breeze (Beaufort scale 2) Dry	Temperature: 15°C Relative humidity: 71% 0% cloud cover Light breeze (Beaufort scale 2) Dry
22 nd September 2025	Sunset: 18:59 Start time: 18:44 End time: 20:29	Temperature: 15°C Relative humidity: 40% 0% cloud cover Calm (Beaufort scale 0) Dry	Temperature: 10°C Relative humidity: 58% 0% cloud cover Calm (Beaufort scale 0) Dry

The following descriptions summarise bat activity during the surveys.

- 9th August 2025

No bats were seen emerging from the property during the survey. The first registration was a Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) heard at 20:47. Constant foraging by Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed in the rear garden between 20:52 and 21:30, with two individuals seen at 20:52. Intermittent passes (8 in total) of Common pipistrelle were heard by the surveyors at the front of the property, with one period of foraging at 21:51. Following the constant foraging in the rear garden, surveyors recorded frequent Common pipistrelle passes until the end of the survey.

- 31st August 2025

A single Common pipistrelle emerged from between a timber beam and brick wall on the southeast front of the property at 20:07 (see Figure 12). A Noctule was seen commuting from southeast to northwest over the site at 19:57. Common pipistrelles were heard for the remainder of the survey, with an individual bat observed commuting in the rear garden from north to south and vice versa at 20:07, 20:08, and 20:13. Foraging was heard and seen at 20:18 and 20:29 in the rear garden but was heard consistently at the front of the property between 20:39 and 21:03. Continuous social calls and distant passes were also heard throughout this time and continued until the end of the survey.



Figure 12: Emergence location of 1 x Common pipistrelle on 31st August 2025

- 22nd September 2025

Prior to the survey, the emergence location of the Common pipistrelle on the 31st August was observed with a torch, during which a single unidentified Pipistrelle sp. was seen roosting. No bats were seen emerging from the property during the survey. The first registration was a Common pipistrelle seen flying northeast to southwest over the rear garden at 19:17. Common pipistrelles were seen flying over the property and in front of the property at both the front and rear on a few occasions during the survey. Foraging by the same species was heard and observed in the rear garden between 19:36 and 19:40. A single Noctule was heard at 19:26. Common pipistrelle social calls were the last registration heard at the front of the property at 20:22.

An additional inspection via endoscope of potential external roosting features was conducted on 28th September 2025. A further 3 roosting locations were identified based on the presence of bat droppings within cavities in timber beams. Two pipistrelle bats were found within one cavity. A small number of old and fresh droppings were found within each roost, including the location where a bat emerged. DNA analysis carried out on a sample of droppings that could be accessed confirmed the species as Common pipistrelle.



Figure 13: Roosting locations identified by droppings



Figure 14: Bat droppings found within the emergence point identified on 31st August



Figure 15: Bat droppings found within timber cavity



Figure 16: Bat droppings found within a timber cavity where a roosting pipistrelle was found



Figure 17: Pipistrelle bats found within timber cavity (bottom left roost on Figure 13)

5. Impact assessment and mitigation recommendations

5.1. Interpretation of findings

During the Preliminary Roost Assessment in August 2025, the building was classified as a confirmed bat roost due to the presence of bat droppings within the loft space. Droppings were largely accumulated in the northwest loft below central ridge beams. No live bats were discovered during the initial inspection. The exterior of the property supports multiple entry/exit points including a continuous gap along the eaves of the roof. Potential roosting features within the exterior of the building were identified including crevices between timber beams and brick and cavities within timber beams.

DNA analysis carried out on a sample of bat droppings within the loft space and within the external cavities confirmed the species present as Brown Long eared bat and Common pipistrelle, respectively (see Appendix 6). The number of droppings found during the PRA and the subsequent inspection were not indicative of a maternity roost but rather a regularly used day roost by an individual or small number of bats.

The results from the emergence surveys confirmed the presence of a Common pipistrelle roosting in a cavity between an external timber beam and brickwork. The bats present in all roosts are likely to be males, non-breeding females, or juveniles. It is likely a single bat or small number of bats are switching between the roosts in close proximity to each other on the front elevation of the house.

Two bat species were recorded at the site over the course of the dusk surveys: Common pipistrelle and Noctule. Activity was low to moderate on all surveys with occasional passes by Pipistrelles and foraging in the rear garden. On the final survey, Common pipistrelles social calls were heard frequently at the front of the property, a typical pattern of behaviour for the time of year the survey was carried out.

5.2. Mitigation and enhancement

Reference to Natural England's Bat Mitigation Guidelines informs appropriate mitigation measures depending on the species and roost characterisation. Common pipistrelles are the UK's most common bat species. Brown long-eared bats are also common and widespread across the UK. The conservation significance of individual bats of common species is low. Thus, the damage or destruction of such roosts would likely have low impacts on the local bat population.

As the proposed development includes removal and renovation of the existing roof, the destruction of the Brown long-eared bat roost within the loft space cannot be avoided. The single pipistrelle roost on the southeastern wall at the front of the property will also be destroyed as a result of a proposed extension. Therefore, the development will need to be registered under a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) prior to works commencing. Planning permission must be granted before the application can be made. Natural England aim to process applications within 10 working days of receipt. The remaining identified roosts on the southwest front of the building will remain intact during and after the development is complete. Bats within these roosts will be subject to noise and vibration disturbance during the construction phase.

A full European Protected Species License (EPSL) is not considered appropriate for the numbers and species of bats present.

6. Mitigation measures

Little Court, London Road is assessed as a roosting site of relatively low significance used by individual bats of common species. In line with the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2023), a roost of this status required flexibility over timing and provision of replacement roosting opportunities. Below outlines the mitigation measures that must be followed to ensure the safeguarding of bats roosting at the site during the development.

- The requirements of a BMCL application mean an updated inspection of the building must be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist within three months prior to submitting the licence application
- Although there is no restriction on the time of year works can take place, destructive works should only be undertaken in favourable weather conditions, not during heavy rain, high winds, or night temperatures below 6°C. Caution must still be taken during winter months in the event the loft used as a non-classic hibernation site, and due to the uncertain nature of hibernation in the *Pipistrellus* genus
- Immediately prior to destructive works, one Schwegler 2F bat box (or similar design and construction) will be fixed to a mature tree, pole, or building within the site boundary, as chosen by the supervising ecologist. The box will be placed 3-4m high, facing between southeast and southwest, and away from excessive disturbance or external lighting. The bat box should be left in-situ as part of the enhancement measures
- Following the installation of the bat box, known roosting areas will be inspected (where possible) by a licenced bat ecologist. An endoscope will be used where necessary to inspect inside roosting features to confirm the presence or absence of bats.
- The supervising ecologist will provide a toolbox talk to contractors undertaking destructive works at the site. This will cover information on bat ecology, bats and the law, and what to do if signs of bats, or bats themselves, are found during the works
- To ensure bats are not killed or injured during the works, careful removal (soft strip) of identified roosting areas will be carried out under supervision of a licenced bat ecologist. If a bat is discovered, it will be removed by the licenced ecologist and transported to the previously installed bat box

7. Retaining opportunities for bats

Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes (NBCRMs) will be avoided where bat roosting features are to be retained (i.e. within the reconstructed loft space). NBCRMs has been found to pose a significant entangling risk to bats. The only safe roofing membrane to be used is bitumen 1F felt that is non-woven and short fibred.

One wall mounted or integrated box is to be installed on the southeast aspect of the new extension (or northeast aspect of the existing property) at a height of 4-6m and away from potential disturbance. Examples of integrated boxes and wall mounted boxes can be seen in Figure 4. The bat box installed on the tree, pole, or building prior to the development will remain in place after the development is complete. These boxes are required as compensation; any additional boxes would be an enhancement measure of biodiversity benefit. Please note, after installation, these boxes can only be moved or checked by an appropriately licenced bat worker.

To avoid disturbing commuting and foraging bats near the property, the proposed development should incorporate a lighting scheme in line with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (see Appendix 4). Bright lights can disrupt bat activity and cause them to deviate from normal flight

routes (Stone *et al.* 2015). Artificial Light At Night (ALAN). ALAN can also negatively impact invertebrates, and other nocturnal animals. If exterior lighting is to be installed at the site, the following measures will be taken (see Appendix 3 for more detail):

- No lighting to be directed at bat boxes, hedgerows, trees, vegetation, or the sky
- Use of hoods or directional lighting to avoid excess light spillage
- Security lighting to be set on motion sensors and on short timers
- Red spectrum should be considered instead of white lighting due to bats sensitivity to white light
- LED luminaires to be used where possible due to the quick cut off, lower intensity, better colour rendition, and dimming capabilities



Figure 4: Schwegler 2F bat box (left), Schwegler 2FR integrated bat tube (middle) and Beaumaris woodstone bat box (right)

8. Conclusions

The dusk bat emergence surveys conducted at Little Court, London Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, identified the presence of a non-breeding roost of Brown long-eared bat within the loft space and two non-breeding roosts of Common pipistrelle (one on the south-west wall and one on the southeast wall) within external wall cavities. No emergences were observed from the main loft space during the dusk surveys, but the condition of the droppings suggest a recently used roost by a small number of bats. The surveys also revealed occasional foraging and commuting at the site. Species encountered included Common pipistrelle and Noctule.

To mitigate impacts of the renovation works on bats, a BMCL (or Low Impact) licence will be obtained from Natural England. The measures set out in this report will ensure necessary legal protections are in place and the favourable conservation status of the species concerned is maintained.

Recommendations for enhancing the site for roosting bats have been made to support local bat populations and biodiversity in line with National Planning Policy.

9. References

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Appendix 1 – Site map



Figure 1: Boundary of site

Appendix 2 – Legislation and planning policy

Bats and their roosts receive legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations 2017) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (Habitats Regulations 2019). They receive further legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, as amended. This protection means that bats, and the places they use for shelter or protection, are capable of being a material consideration in the planning process.

Regulation 41 of the Habitats Regulations 2017, states that a person commits an offence if they:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roost (breeding site or resting place).

Disturbance of animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

It is an offence under the Habitats Regulations 2017 for any person to have in his possession or control, to transport, to sell or exchange or to offer for sale, any live or dead bats, part of a bat or anything derived from bats, which has been unlawfully taken from the wild.

Changes have been made to parts of the Habitats Regulations 2017 so that they operate effectively from 1st January 2021. The changes are made by the Habitats Regulations 2019, which transfer functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant.

The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of species do not change. A competent authority is a public body, statutory undertaker, minister or department of government, or anyone holding public office.

Whilst broadly similar to the above legislation, the WCA 1981 (as amended) differs in the following ways:

- Section 9(1) of the WCA makes it an offence to *intentionally* kill, injure or take any protected species
- Section 9(4)(a) of the WCA makes it an offence to *intentionally or recklessly** damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which a protected species uses for shelter or protection
- Section 9(4)(b) of the WCA makes it an offence to *intentionally or recklessly** disturb any protected species while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

As bats re-use the same roosts after periods of vacancy, legal opinion is that roosts are protected whether or not bats are present. The reader should refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

The following bat species are Species of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation in England: barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. Species of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation in England are material considerations in the planning process. The list of species is derived from Section 41 list of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and
- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications, local authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- If significant harm to biodiversity 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, then planning permission should be refused.
- Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments, should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of specific scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can be secured measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The following should be given the same protection as habitat sites:

- Potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Sites of Conservation; listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for

adverse effects on habitat sites, potential Special Protected Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plan or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site

ODMP Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The presence of a protected species is a 'material consideration' when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal. (Paragraph 98 Circular 06/2005), when a planning authority is considering a development proposal and as such where impacts upon a protected species are likely to occur from a proposed development, surveys must be undertaken and provided to support a planning application.

Paragraph 99 Circular 06/2005 states;

'It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted'.

Where there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and affected by a development the surveys should be completed and any necessary measure put in place, through conditions and / or planning obligations before the permission is granted.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) also lists the Bat as a species of principal importance under Section 41 and Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions (in relation to Section 41 species) to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the propose of conserving biodiversity'; therefore making the Bat a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed survey before planning permission can be granted.

As a protected species, bats are a material consideration for planning applications with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) and the British Standard BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity Code of practice for planning and development. The BS 42020:2013 clause 9.2.4 details that:

"The presence or absence of protected species, and the extent to which they could be affected by the proposed development, should be established before planning permission is granted; otherwise all material considerations might not have been considered in making the decision. The use of planning conditions to secure ecological surveys after planning permission has been granted should therefore only be applied in exceptional circumstances[...]."

Appendix 3 – Guidance on artificial light

Bright external lighting can have a detrimental impact upon foraging and commuting bat flight paths, but more importantly can also cause bats to remain in their roosts for longer. Artificial lighting can also cause significant impacts to other nocturnal species, most notably moths and other nocturnal insects. It can also result in disruption of the circadian rhythms of birds, reducing their fitness.

Guidelines issued by the Bat Conservation Trust should be referred to when designing the lighting scheme. Note that lighting designs in very sensitive areas should be created with consultation from an ecologist and using up-to-date bat activity data where possible. The guidance contains techniques that can be used on all sites, whether a small domestic project or larger mixed-use, commercial or infrastructure development. Lighting design should be flexible and be able to fully consider the presence of protected species.

Where bat habitats and features are considered to be of lower importance or sensitivity to illumination, the need to provide lighting may outweigh the needs of bats. Consequently, a balance between a reduced lighting level appropriate to the ecological importance of each feature and species, and the lighting objectives for that area will need to be achieved. The following are techniques which have been successfully used on projects and are often used in combination for best results:

- Dark buffers, illuminance limits and zonation
- Sensitive site configuration, whereby the location, orientation and height of newly built structures and hard standing can have a considerable impact on light spill
- Consideration of the design of the light and fittings, whereby the spread of light is minimised ensuring that only the task area is lit. Flat cut-off lanterns or accessories should be used to shield or direct light to where it is required. Consideration should be given to the height of lighting columns. It should be noted that a lower mounting height is not always better. A lower mounting height can create more light-spill or require more columns. Column height should be carefully considered to balance task and mitigation measures. Consider no lighting solutions where possible such as white lining, good signage, and LED cat's eyes. For example, light only high-risk stretches of roads, such as crossings and junctions, allowing headlights to provide any necessary illumination at other times
- Screening, whereby light spill can be successfully screened through soft landscaping and the installation of walls, fences and bunding
- Glazing treatments, whereby glazing should be restricted or redesigned wherever the ecologist and lighting professional determine there is a likely significant effect upon key bat habitat and features
- Creation of alternative valuable bat habitat on site, whereby additional or alternative bat flightpaths,
- Dimming and part-night lighting. Depending on the pattern of bat activity across the key features identified on site it may be appropriate for an element of on-site lighting to be controlled either diurnally, seasonally or according to human activity. A control management system can be used to dim (typically to 25% or less) or turn off groups of lights when not in use

The Bat Conservation Trust recommends the following specifications for lighting on developments to prevent disturbance:

- Lighting spectra: peak wavelength >550nm
- Colour temperature: <2700K (warm)
- Reduction in light intensity
- Minimal UV emitted
- Upward light ratio of 0% and good optical control.

Appendix 4 – Night Vision Aids (NVAs) darkest points



Figure 1: Screenshots of the darkest points from cameras positioned at the front (top) and rear (bottom) of the property on 9th August 2025



Figure 2: Screenshots of the darkest points from cameras positioned at the front (top) and rear (bottom) of the property on 31st August 2025



Figure 3: Screenshots of the darkest points from cameras positioned at the front (top) and rear (bottom) of the property on 22nd September 2025

Appendix 5 – DNA analysis results



Results

Sample ID: EG-2474-1

Sample information:

Sample type: Faecal

Species group: Bats

Suspected species: BLE

Site Location: SG4 7NE

Comments:

Laboratory information:

DNA Extraction Code: EG-2025-1785

Identification method: qPCR

Analysis Procedure Notes:

All UK bat species tested for - only a single species detected in this sample.

Laboratory Comments:

None

Species Identified:

Species 1: *Plecotus auritus* (Brown long-eared bat)

qPCR Ct Value: 20

Figure 1: DNA results from droppings within the loft



Results

Sample ID: EG-2711-1

Sample information:

Sample type: Faecal

Species group: Bats

Suspected species: Pipistrelle sp.

Site Location: SG4 7NE

Comments:

Laboratory information:

DNA Extraction Code: EG-2025-2417

Identification method: qPCR

Analysis Procedure Notes:

All UK bat species tested for - only a single species detected in this sample.

Laboratory Comments:

None

Species Identified:

Species 1: Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Common pipistrelle bat)

qPCR Ct Value: 19

Figure 2: DNA results from droppings within external cavities