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BAT SCOPING AND PRESENCE / ABSENCE SURVEY

At

68 Claude Road
Chorlton
Manchester
Greater Manchester
M21 8DF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is written by Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM, Ecologist at United Environmental Services Ltd (UES). The report was updated in July 2025 by Toby Leverett BSc MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. It provides an assessment of the potential impacts on bats as a result of the proposed residential development at 68 Claude Road, Chorlton. The applicant plans to demolish the existing outbuilding and construct an extension to the existing residential property.

A bat scoping survey was undertaken on 6th May 2020. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the buildings on site to support roosting bats, based on a site specific survey and habitat assessment. The outbuilding was searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016). An external inspection of where the proposed extension will join to the existing residential building was also undertaken. An internal inspection of the residential building was inspected due to the proposed changes in development planning.

The areas surrounding 68 Claude Road, Chorlton provide low-moderate quality habitat for bats. The presence of watercourses, woodland and grassland, particularly within Cholrton Ees and Ivy green local nature reserve (LNR), will provide an array of food sources and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area. However, the residential areas and roads in the immediate vicinity are well-lit with security and street lighting, reducing the suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Roosting opportunities are also of a low-moderate quality due to the number of residential buildings and mature trees.

The quality of roosting habitats within the outbuilding is low, with a number of external potential roosting features (PRFs) such as gaps behind raised barge boards and ridge tiles with missing mortar. PRFs within the buildings are limited. The residential building, where the proposed development will join, is in excellent condition and is considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

Therefore, a single presence / absence (emergence) survey was undertaken for the outbuilding on 7th May 2020 by UES. The objective of this survey was to establish whether or not bats are using the outbuilding on site to roost, and if so to assess the type and importance of roosts in order to inform the planning process. The survey was carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) publications.

An updated internal inspection was conducted on 3rd July 2025 as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023). This inspection found that conditions within the building had not changed. Following this an updated presence / absence survey was conducted. No bats were recorded emerging from the building.

Three species of bat were recorded during the survey in 2020: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*.

Three species of bat were recorded during the survey n 2025: common pipstrelle, soprano pipistrelle and myotis *Myotis sp.*

No bats were found to be roosting within the buildings on site. Therefore, no further survey or mitigation work is required for the development to proceed, with regards to bats.

This report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 6, which provide visual representations of the survey results and statutory and planning context.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM UES Ecologist. Emily is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2019-39350-CLS-CLS (level 2). The report was updated by Toby Leverett BSc MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Daniel Smith BSc MScRes, UES Ecologist. Daniel is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2024-12117-CL18-BAT (level 2).
- Bethan Beeston BA, UES Field Ecologist. Bethan is licensed by Natural England to survey all species of bats by observation using an artificial light under licence number 2024-12098-CL17-BAT (level 1). Bethan is listed as an accredited agent on the bat survey licence of Toby Hart (2015-15898-CLS-CLS (level 3) and 2015-15899-CLS-CLS (level 4)). As such, she has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using an endoscope to survey for bats.
- Josie Wynn BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist
- Stephen Atkinson, UES Sub-contractor

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in May 2020 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats
- Confirm bat presence or likely absence by conducting emergence and re-entry surveys of the outbuilding
- Assess the type and importance of the roost(s), if present
- Recommend appropriate mitigation and compensation, if applicable

1.3 Proposed development

The applicant plans to demolish the existing outbuilding and construct an extension to the existing residential property.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 5, which give visual representations of the survey results.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and through studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The building on site was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016). This was conducted on 6th May 2020 by Emily Clark.

An updated internal inspection was conducted on 3rd July 2025 as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023).

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspections of the buildings were carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Boxed soffits
- Fascia and barge boards
- Window sills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Air bricks
- Grills
- Vents

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspections covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the buildings.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Emergence surveys

Potential roost access points were identified during the building inspections. These points were covered by a surveyor during the dusk emergence period.

Bat echolocation, flight and habitat characteristics were recorded where possible, in order to determine the species. The level and type of bat activity was also recorded to establish how bats are using the site.

2.3.1 Equipment

BATLOGGER M bat detectors and recorders were used during the surveys. This device records bat echolocation calls across the full spectrum, with a sensitivity range of 10 – 150 kHz. The integrated heterodyne live monitoring also allows the observer to hear the echolocation calls in real time, with automatic tuning. The recordings are individually time/date, GPS and temperature stamped, and are of high enough quality to produce time expansion quality sonograms.

2.3.2 Weather conditions

Table 1 - Weather conditions and survey timings

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	TIMINGS	SUNSET / SUNRISE	TEMP.	WIND	RAIN	CLOUD COVER
07/05/20	Emergence	20:35 – 22:20	20:50	20°C	Still	Dry, rain during first 15 minutes (until 20.50)	100%
03/07/25	Emergence	21:24 – 23:09	21:39	17°C	Light breeze	Dry	80%

2.4 Survey limitations

It rained during the first fifteen minutes of the survey. However, the rain stopped at approximately 20:50 and bats were still recorded as being active during the survey, therefore, this is not considered to have significantly affected the results.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

68 Claude Road is located in Chorlton, Greater Manchester and comprises a semi-detached residential building and one two-storey detached outbuilding with associated driveway and gardens. The rear garden is bounded by species poor amenity hedges and semi-mature to mature trees. Chorlton Brook is lined with mature trees and flows immediately adjacent to the garden, along the northern boundary. The garden on site and Chorlton Brook provides low to moderate quality foraging and commuting habitats for bats in the local area.

The immediate surrounding area is suburban in nature, with numerous residential properties present, particularly to the north and south. The residential areas and roads in the immediate vicinity of site are well-lit with security and street lighting, reducing the suitability for foraging and commuting bats. However, Chorlton Ees and Ivy green LNR is located approximately 220m west and is connected to site via Chorlton Brook. Chorlton Ees and Ivy Green LNR, with its mix of woodland, semi-improved grasslands and waterbodies will provide opportunities for roosting, foraging and commuting bats in the local area.

In the wider surrounding area, habitats are similar in composition; with residential and urban areas of Chorlton, Old Trafford, Stretford and Withington located to the north, east and west of site. To the south there are corpses of deciduous woodland, waterbodies and the River Mersey. Chorlton Water Park LNR is also located 1km south east of site. These habitats will provide good quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats as well as roosting habitats. However, the M6 motorway is located 1.5km south and will limit connectivity to habitats further afield.

3.2 Building inspections

The survey focused on the detached outbuilding within the rear garden of 68 Claude Road because it will be demolished as part of the proposed development.

An external and internal inspection where the proposed development will join to the existing residential building was undertaken in 2025 due to the changes in the proposed development plans.

3.2.1 External inspection

The outbuilding is a detached two-storey building currently used for storage of garden equipment. The walls are of a brick-and-mortar construction that have been rendered (see Appendix 3, Photographs, Photograph 1, 5 and 9). It has a pitched roof that is clad with interlocking tiles and concrete ridge tiles, most of which are tightly sealed. One ridge tile is missing mortar on the eastern aspect of the building (Photograph 6). One small section on the eave on the northern gable end is slightly broken, which may provide access between the tiles and sarking boards (Photograph 4). There are two skylights present, one on each side of the roof, which have lead flashing around the edges. The windows are in good condition and the lead flashing is tightly sealed.

Wooden cladding is present on the northern and southern gable ends. The cladding on the southern aspect is slightly raised, however this was thoroughly inspected with an endoscope, and no evidence of roosting bats was identified. Wooden barge boards are also present on all

aspects of the building, most of which are in good condition and tightly sealed. However, the barge board on the northern aspect of the building is slightly raised (Photograph 2 and 3).

The windows are single glazed with wooden frames and are in good condition and tightly sealed. The first-floor door is wooden and there is a garage-style wooden door on the second floor, both are in good condition and tightly sealed.

Finally, on the eastern aspect, decking joins the building (Photograph 7). There is a slight gap between the building and decking. This gap was thoroughly inspected, and no evidence of roosting bats identified.

The residential property is semi-detached and is a brick-and-mortar construction with rendered walls (Photograph 13). The roof is hipped and clad with interlocking tiles that are in excellent condition and tightly sealed. The ridge tiles are also in excellent condition. The wooden eaves present on the northern and western aspects of the building are tightly sealed. The brickwork and render are in excellent condition, as are the windows and doors which are UPVC. No PRFs were observed within the residential dwelling.

No bat droppings or other field signs were found during the external building inspection. This was also the case during the updated external inspection from 2025.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

The outbuilding has no loft, but the roof is of a closed couple roof construction and sarking boards line the roof. The gable ends have wooden paneling present that is well sealed with no gaps for crevice dwelling bats (Photograph 11). The majority of building is well-lit due to the large skylights and windows, reducing its suitability internally for roosting bats (Photograph 10 and 12). Furthermore, the roof, windows and doors are well sealed, limiting access for bats internally. All windows and windowsills were searched for evidence of roosting bats, but no evidence was recorded. As the building is used for storage and is regularly accessed which will also reduce its suitability for bats and no bat droppings or other field signs were found within the building; only a low number of mouse droppings.

An internal inspection of the loft space of there residential building that is due to be impacted. A single loft space is present within part of the building. The majority of the loft space is boarded up and well-let by a sky light (Photograph 14). When inspecting this loft, a section of the boarding was found to be damaged, allowing access into a loft void (Photograph 15). The roof here is lined with bitumen felting which was in good condition, no internal PRFs were found to be associated with the loft void.

No bat droppings or other field signs were found during the internal building inspection. The internal conditions were found to be unchanged during the 2025 internal inspection.

3.4 Activity summary

Table 3 – Bat activity summary

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	SPECIES	NOTES
07/05/20	Emergence	Common and soprano pipistrelle	Common pipistrelles were recorded frequently during the first half of survey, but the activity significantly decreased during the second half of the survey. Soprano pipistrelles were only recorded during the first twenty minutes after sunset. Bats were foraging and commuting within the gardens, adjacent to the buildings.
		Noctule	One noctule pass was recorded but not seen.
03/07/25	Emergence	Common pipistrelle	Common pipistrelles were recorded throughout the survey foraging over the property and commuting past the site.
		Soprano pipistrelle	A single soprano pipistrelle was recorded foraging and commuting past the site during the last ten minutes of the survey.
		Myotis species	A single myotis bat was recorded commuting past the development.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

The areas surrounding 68 Claude Road, Chorlton provide low-moderate quality habitat for bats. The presence of watercourses, woodland and grassland, particularly within Cholrton Ees and Ivy green LNR, will provide an array of food sources and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area. However, the residential areas and roads in the immediate vicinity are well-lit with security and street lighting, reducing the suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Roosting opportunities are also of a low-moderate quality due to the number of residential buildings and mature trees in the local area.

The outbuilding on site has a small number of roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats with gaps where mortar is missing on one ridge tile and behind the raised barge board and damaged eaves on the northern aspect.

The residential building, where the proposed extension will join, is in excellent condition and is considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

Three species of bat were recorded during the bat presence / absence survey: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule. Activity was high during the first half of the survey, with common and soprano pipistrelles foraging in the garden continuously. However, activity significantly decreased during the second half of the survey and common pipistrelles were recorded occasionally foraging within the garden. One noctule was also recorded but not seen by surveyors.

During the updated survey conditions on site were found not to have changed. During the bat presence / absence survey three species of bat were identified: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and myotis species.

Despite the favourable conditions, no bats were recorded roosting in the outbuilding on site.

4.3 Mitigation and compensation measures

No bats were found to be using the outbuilding on site to roost and the residential dwelling, where the proposed development will join, is considered to have negligible potential. Therefore, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

5 CONCLUSION

The habitats at 68 Claude Road, Chorlton provides low to moderate quality foraging and commuting habitats for bats in the local area. The outbuilding on site has a low number of potential roosting features for bats.

The site is situated in an area which provides moderate quality habitat for bats, with the presence of watercourses, woodland and grassland, particularly within Cholrton Ees and Ivy green LNR which will provide foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats in the local area. However, the residential areas and roads in the immediate vicinity are well-lit with security and street lighting, reducing the suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

Having said this, no field signs of bats, such as droppings, were found during the building inspections. Furthermore, no bats were recorded roosting in the outbuilding on site during the presence / absence survey, despite the favourable conditions.

No bats were found to be using the outbuilding on site to roost and the residential building is considered to have negligible potential, where the proposed development will join. Therefore, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

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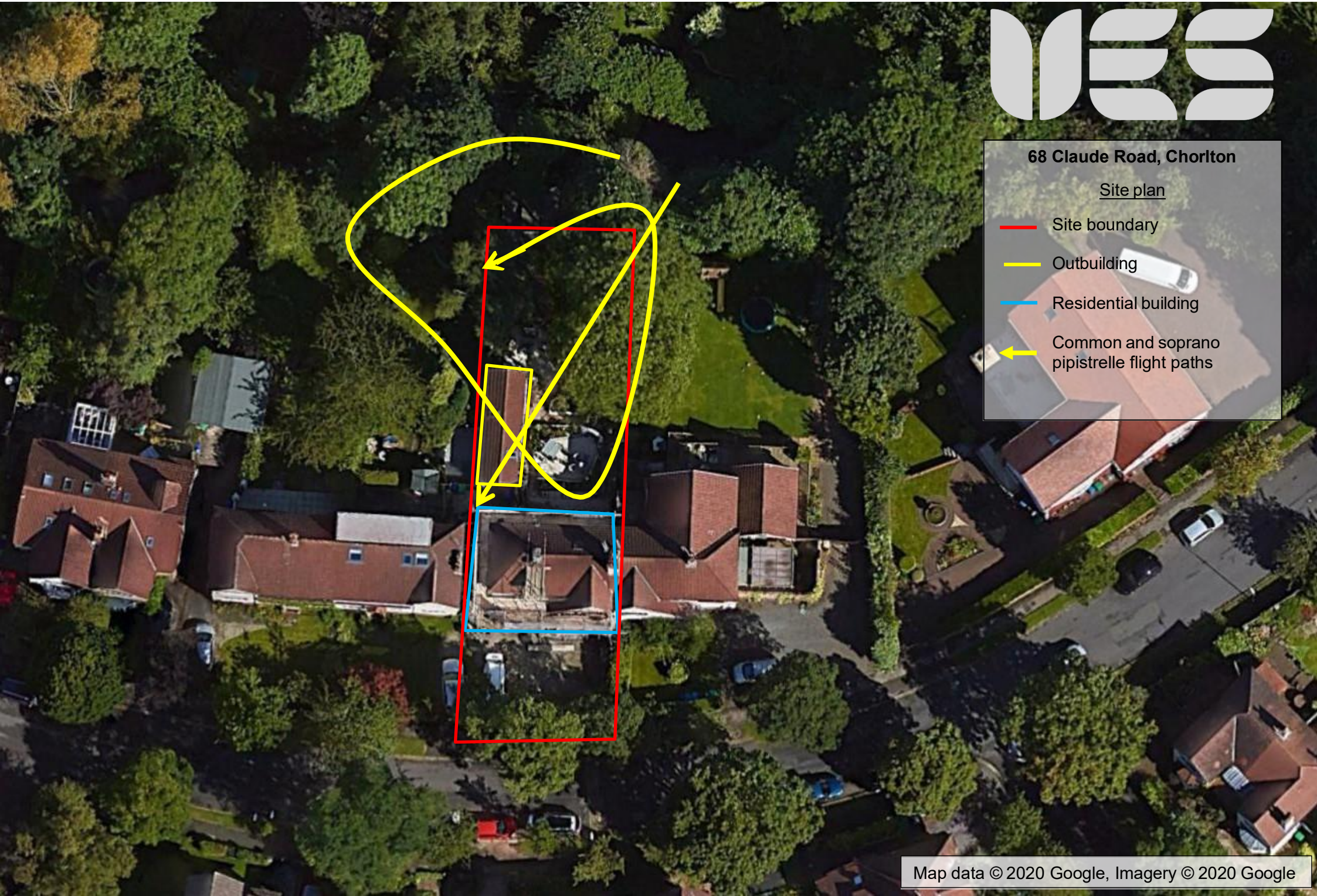
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan


68 Claude Road, Chorlton
Site plan
Site boundary
Outbuilding
Residential building
Common and soprano pipistrelle flight paths
Map data © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020 Google


68 Claude Road, Chorlton
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020 Google

Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs


68 Claude Road, Chorlton
Close aerial photograph
Site boundary
Outbuilding
Residential building
Map data © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020 Google


68 Claude Road, Chorlton
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020 Google

Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – North and eastern aspect of the outbuilding.



Photograph 2 – Example of gaps behind raised wooden barge board on the northern aspect of the outbuilding.



Photograph 3 – Example of gaps behind raised wooden barge board on the northern aspect of the outbuilding.



Photograph 4 – Gap where section of eaves is broken on northern aspect of the outbuilding.



Photograph 5 – Eastern aspect of outbuilding.



Photograph 6 – Gap where ridge tile is missing mortar on the roof of the outbuilding.



Photograph 7 – Small gap between the outbuilding and decking. Gap was thoroughly inspected with an endoscope.



Photograph 8 – Western aspect of outbuilding.



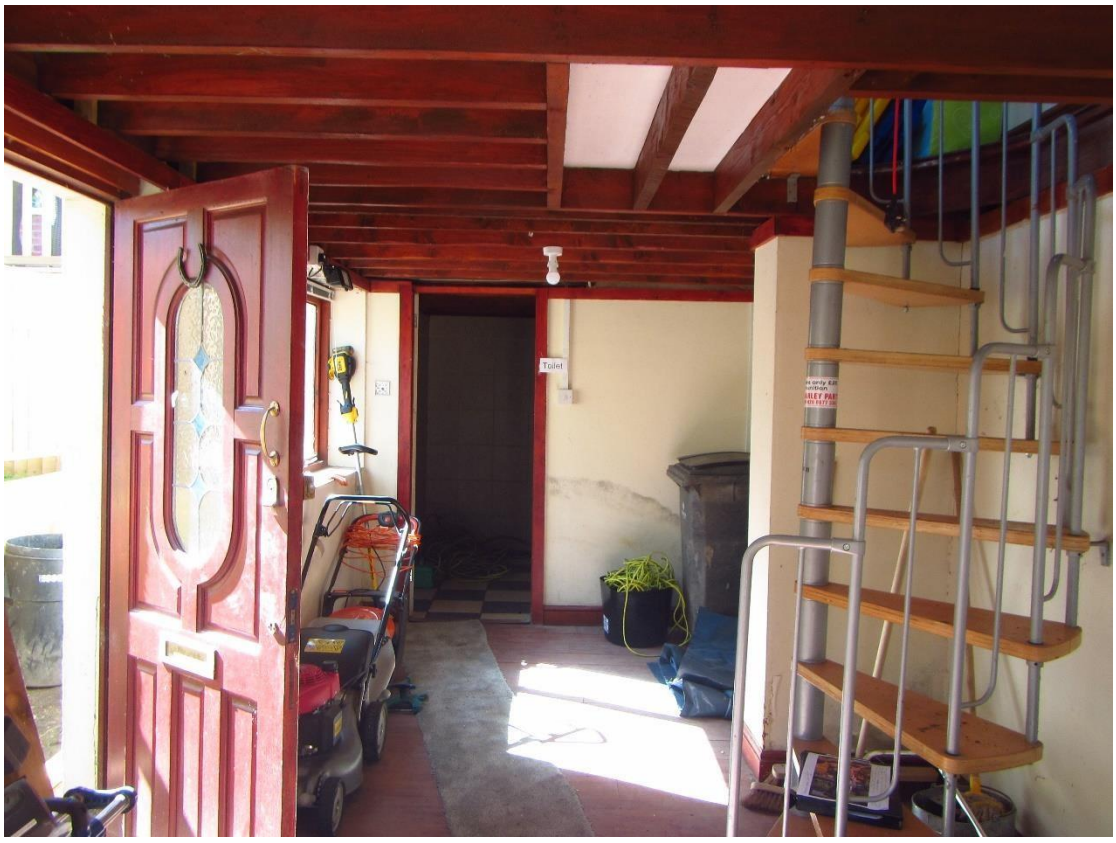
Photograph 9 – Northern and western aspects of outbuilding.



Photograph 10 – Second floor of outbuilding.



Photograph 11 – Northern gable end of outbuilding which is tightly sealed.



Photograph 12 – Ground floor of outbuilding.



Photograph 13 – Northern aspect of the residential building.

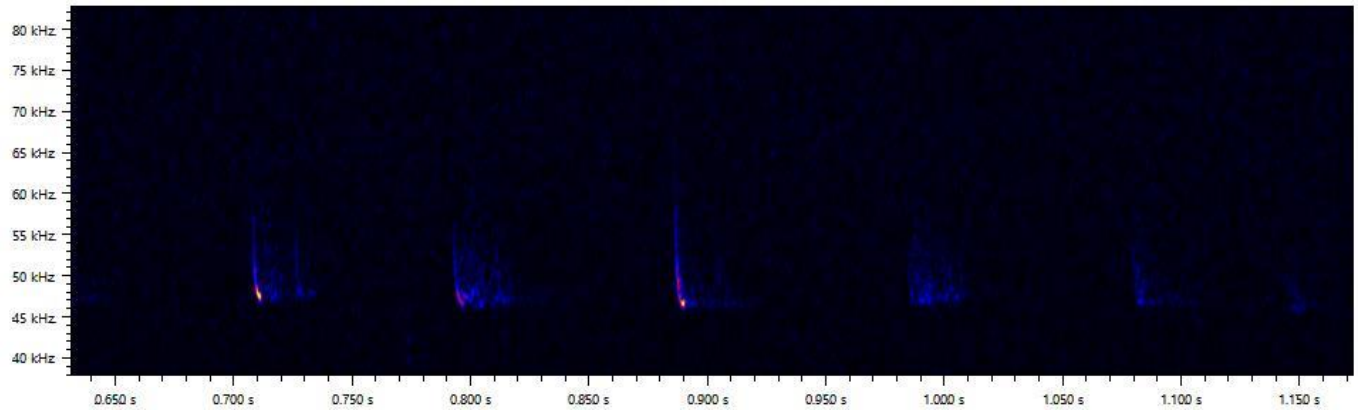


Photograph 14 – View of the loft space within the residential building on site.

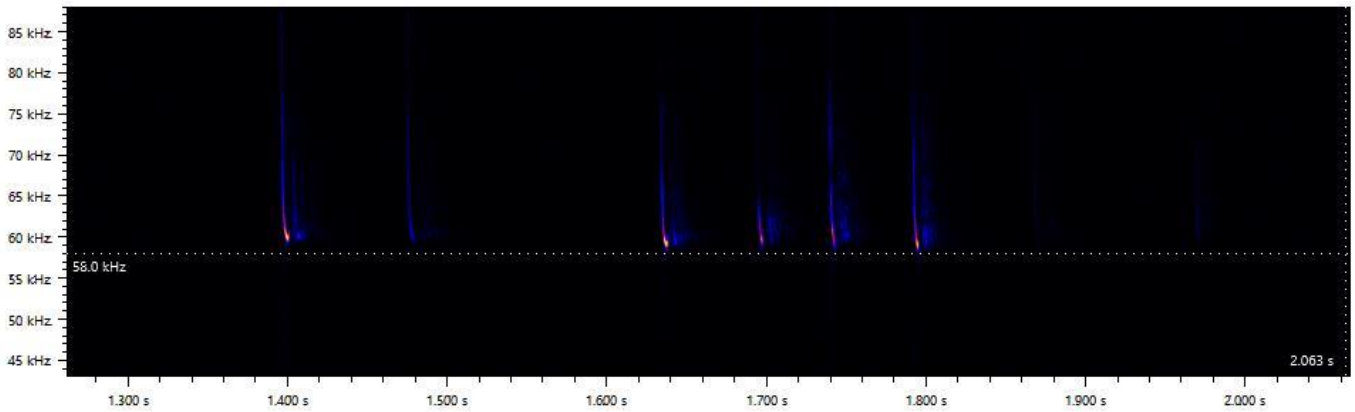


Photograph 15 – View of the loft void within the residential building on site.

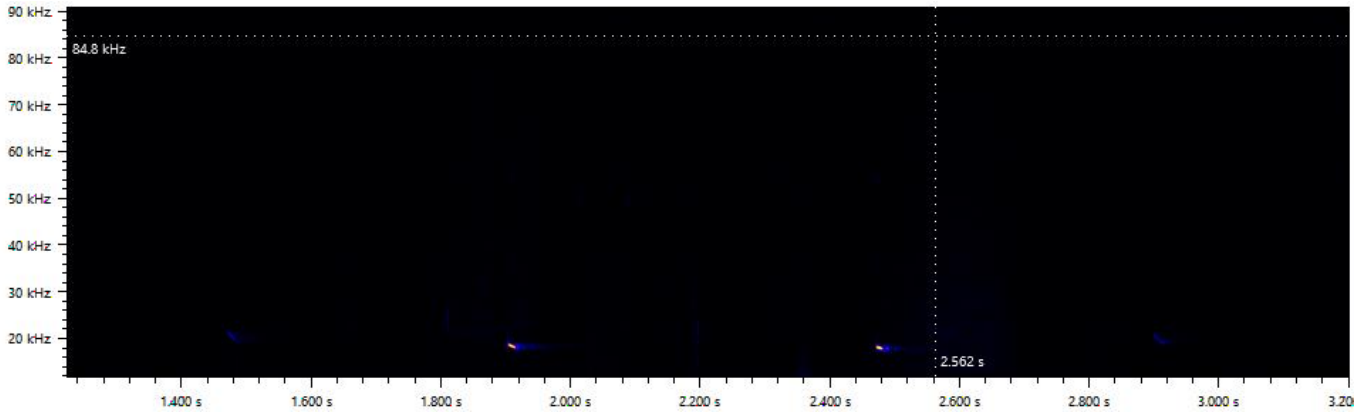
Appendix 4 – Results



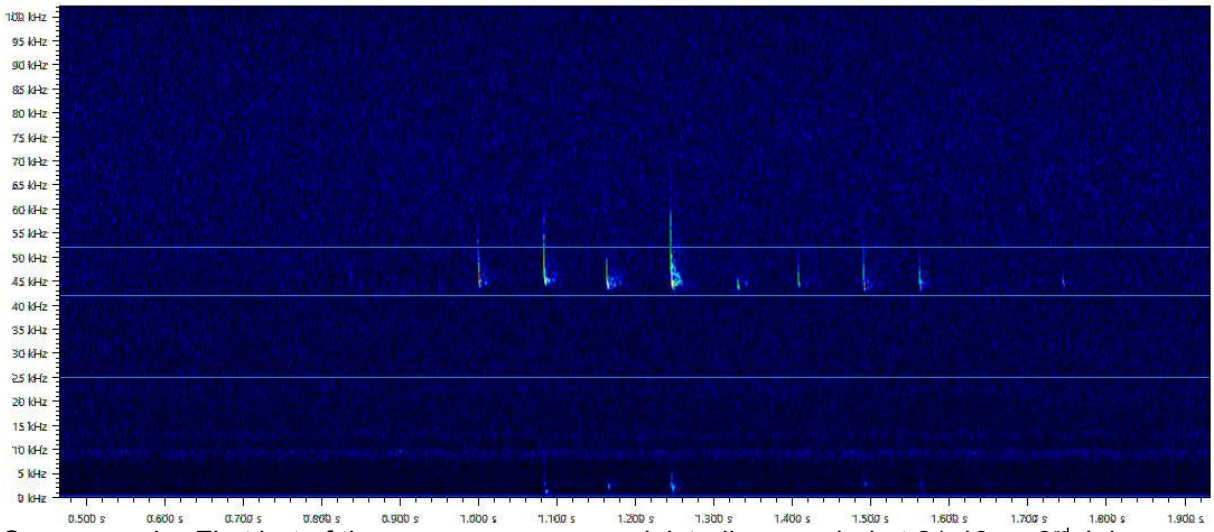
Sonogram 1 – Common pipistrelle pass recorded at 21:04:38 pm on the 7th May 2020.



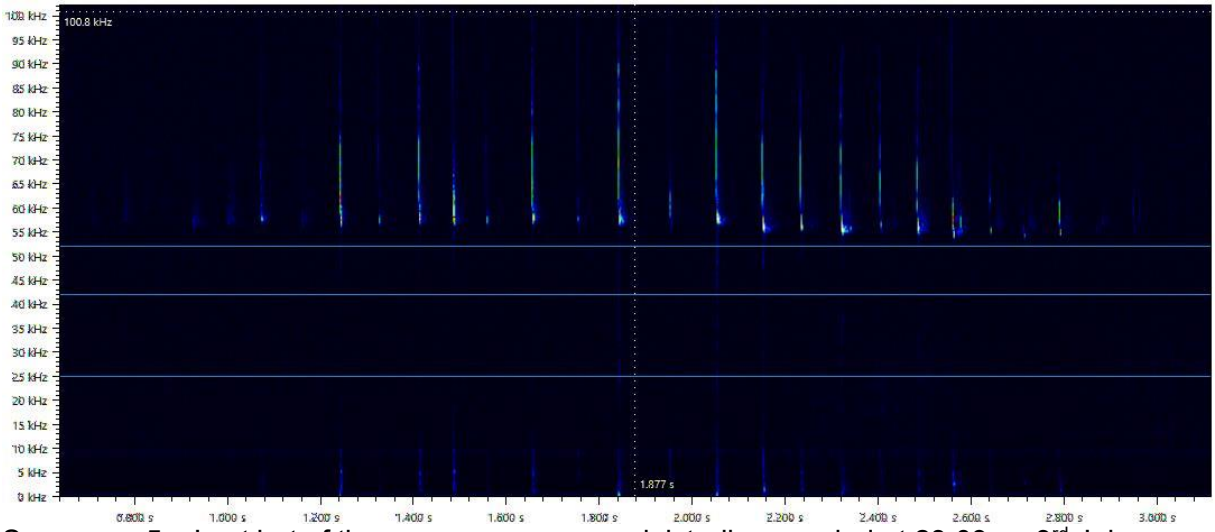
Sonogram 2 – Soprano pipistrelle pass recorded at 21:08:25 pm on 7th May 2020



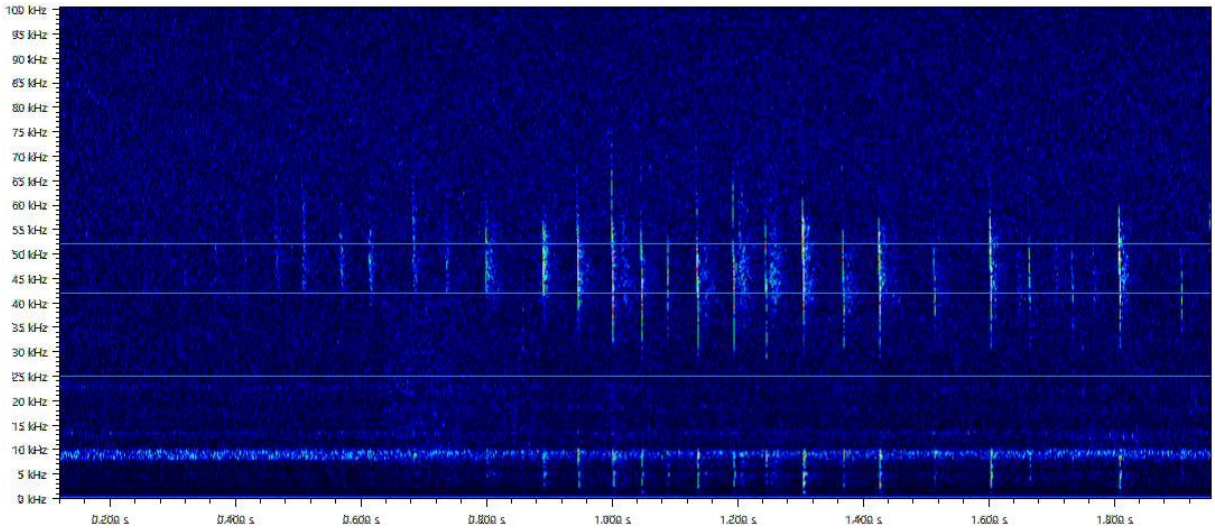
Sonogram 3 – Noctule pass recorded at 21:17:36 on 7th May 2020



Sonogram 4 – First bat of the survey,a common pipistrelle recorded at 21:46 on 3rd July 2025.



Sonogram 5 – Last bat of the survey, a soprano pipistrelle recorded at 23:09 on 3rd July 2025.



Sonogram 6 – Example of a myotis bat recorded at 22:31 on 3rd July 2025.

Appendix 5 – Infrared Images



Photograph 1 – Infrared image taken of the rear of the building at the darkest point of the survey at 23:09 on 3rd July 2025.



Photograph 2 – Infrared image taken of the outbuilding recorded at the darkest point of the survey at 22:42 on 3rd July 2025.



Photograph 3 – Infrared image taken of the rear of the building at the darkest point of the survey at 23:09 on 3rd July 2025.

Appendix 6 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] … uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Birds

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status' of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats, and hedgehogs;
e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) 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[68]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[69]; and
b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement 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

193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) 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;

b) 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 special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) 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[70] and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.