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BAT PRESENCE / ABSENCE SURVEY

At

2 Turnpike Walk

Beswick
Manchester
M11 3TH

NGR: SJ 86953 98055

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Hart', is positioned below the 'Approved by:' line.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications	4
1.2 Survey objectives.....	4
1.3 Proposed development	4
1.4 Structure of the report	4
2 METHODOLOGY	5
2.1 General.....	5
2.2 Building inspection	5
2.3 Re-entry survey	6
2.4 Survey limitations.....	7
3 RESULTS.....	8
3.1 Habitat assessment	8
3.2 Building inspections	8
3.3 Activity summary.....	10
4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
4.1 Evaluation of results.....	11
4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures	11
5 CONCLUSION.....	12
6 REFERENCES	13
APPENDICES.....	14
Appendix 1 – Site plan.....	14
Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs.....	15
Appendix 3 – Photographs	16
Appendix 4 – Results.....	17
Appendix 5 – Statutory and planning context.....	18



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat scoping survey was undertaken at 2 Turnpike Walk, Beswick, by United Environmental Services (UES) in January 2023 (see corresponding report UES03961/01). The building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats, and as such a single presence / absence survey was recommended in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines.

A bat presence / absence survey was undertaken at Turnpike Walk, Beswick by UES on 22nd May 2023. The objective of this survey was to establish whether or not bats are using the building 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. The development proposals involve demolition of the building on site.

2 Turnpike Walk is located in a suburban area in Beswick, Manchester, that provides low-quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats. There are a limited number of green spaces and many well-lit roads that reduce connectivity for commuting bats. The wider surrounding area contains Clayton Vale, a local nature reserve north-east of the site, and pockets of green spaces surrounding the River Medlock and Ashton Canal. These habitats will provide higher quality foraging opportunities for bats, however there is little connectivity between these and the site.

The quality of roosting habitats within the building itself is low, with a number of external potential roosting features (PRFs) such as gaps underneath the wooden barge boards and PVC capping, gaps at the top of the wall plates, and holes in the rendered wall on the northern aspect of the building.

The loft spaces have a limited number of PRFs including cavities in the internal stone render walls. Potential access points were also identified around the central ventilation systems where the ridge tiles can be viewed, and at the external plastic polyethylene membrane that surrounds the ventilation tube which enters the loft space. Bird's nests were identified in Flats 9 and 11, and mouse droppings were found in Flats 9, 11 and 13. However, no bat droppings or other field signs were found, suggesting no historical or present use by roosting bats.

One species of bat was recorded during the bat presence / absence survey: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Activity was low, with three common pipistrelles recorded commuting along the adjacent road and to the north of the building during the survey.

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

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the building at the time of development, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist, and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

This report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 5, 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 Ysobella Cox BSc MBiol, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Toby Hart BSc MCIEEM PIEMA, UES Managing Director. Toby is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence numbers 2015-15898-CLS-CLS (level 3) and 2015-15899-CLS-CLS (level 4). Toby is also a registered consultant of the bat mitigation class licence (RC090).
- Tom Kenwright BSc MSc ACIEEM, UES Senior Ecologist. Tom is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2023-11076-CL18-BAT (level 2).
- Robert Mooney MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist

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 January 2023 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

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

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed plans involve demolition of the building on site.

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 inspection

The building on site was subject to internal and external inspections as part of a bat scoping survey undertaken on 27th January 2023 by Toby Hart and Ysobella Cox. The building was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016).

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection of the building was 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 | • Gaps under felt |
| • Lead flashing | • Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding |
| • Eaves | • Gaps in brickwork and mortar |
| • Boxed soffits | • Air bricks |
| • Fascia and barge boards | • Grills |
| • Window sills and panes | • Vents |
| • Walls | |

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building.



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 Re-entry survey

Potential roost access points were identified during the building inspection. These points were covered by a surveyor during the dusk emergence and dawn re-entry periods.

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 survey. 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.

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2.3.2 Weather conditions

Table 1 - Weather conditions and survey timings

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	TIMINGS	SUNRISE	TEMP.	WIND	RAIN	CLOUD COVER
22.05.23	Re-entry	03:29 – 05:14	04:59	9°C	Still.	Dry	90%



2.4 Survey limitations

No limitations were encountered during the re-entry survey; however, the following limitations were encountered during the bat scoping survey.

The survey was carried out in January at a time when bats are spending most of the time in torpor within hibernation sites. For this reason, exposed droppings from summer roosts may not be evident as they are likely to have decomposed or have been washed away. Internal field signs should still be evident at this time of year, as should droppings in sheltered locations.

Access was limited to the first-floor flats (Flats 9, 11, 13 and 15) that had loft spaces and one ground floor flat. Three of the ground floor flats could not be accessed during the survey, but they do not have a loft space.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

2 Turnpike Walk is located within a residential area in Beswick, East Manchester. The habitats located on site include amenity grassland lawn, a limited number of shrubs, and a tree. Therefore, the immediate habitats provide low quality foraging and commuting opportunities.

The surrounding area consists of further residential buildings and gardens that provide some roosting opportunities but there are many well-lit roads that reduce connectivity. There are a limited number of green spaces in the surrounding area, including Bradford Park, that provide low quality habitat. The Manchester City Etihad Football Stadium is located approximately 400m north of the site. Furthermore, there is an industrial area 600m south of the site, including a railway line, that will likely cause both light and noise pollution.

There are some moderate quality habitats including North Ridge recreation area and Orion's community orchard which are located next to the River Medlock approximately 1km west of the site. These habitats will support an abundance of invertebrates and provide foraging, roosting, and commuting opportunities.

The wider surrounding area contains additional green spaces, including Clayton Vale local nature reserve located approximately 1.16km north of the site, and Philips Park which surrounds the River Medlock approximately 985m north of the site. These areas provide good quality habitat that will provide commuting, roosting and foraging opportunities. Ashton Canal also runs through the wider area, with the closest point from the site being approximately 715m to the north-east. These areas of higher quality habitat are isolated from the site by urban habitats including busy and well-lit roads.

There are additional suburban areas surrounding the site including Clayton, located approximately 1.33km north-east, and Openshaw which is approximately 1.48km to the south-east. Both of these areas contain residential buildings and gardens that provide roosting opportunities, but the number of well-lit roads may reduce connectivity for bats.

3.2 Building inspections

3.2.1 External inspection

2 Turnpike Walk is a 'H' shaped block of residential flats that are currently unoccupied. The building consists of four ground floor and four first floor flats, and a central corridor that connects the two sides of the building (Photographs 1 to 3).

The building has a pitched roof structure, with interlocking roof and ridge tiles. Both the tiles and the mortar along the ridge tiles are in good condition with minimal gaps (Photograph 4). There are grills covering the ventilation shafts on the roof of Flats 9 and 13, however, they have gaps on the side of them which could provide potential access to the loft space (Photograph 4). There are also ventilation covers on the roof of Flats 11 and 15 that have gaps which may also provide a potential access point into the loft spaces (Photograph 5). There are four ventilation tubes on the roof of the building, one above each of the first-floor flats, that are surrounded by a plastic polyethylene membrane. The membrane is slightly raised which could provide a PRF or access point to the loft space (Photographs 4 and 5).

There are wooden barge boards at the eaves of the building that provide multiple PRFs, including a gap between the barge board and the top of the wall plate on the eastern aspect



of Flat 15, that measures approximately 10mm (Photograph 6). A bird's nest was also identified in a gap underneath the wooden barge board on the eastern aspect of Flat 13 (Photograph 7). There was an additional gap in the barge board on the northern facing side of the central corridor section that provides a PRF (Photograph 2).

The wall plates have a PVC capping which has small gaps underneath it on the southern aspect of the building, approximately 2m west of the apex that provides a PRF (Photograph 8). There is also a gap between the PVC capping and a ventilation cover on the eastern aspect of Flat 15 that provides a PRF (Photograph 6). The walls are constructed from redbrick, and the upper half of the wall has a pebble dash render. Several PRFs were identified at the top of the wall plate on the eastern aspect of the building, including two gaps between the wall plate and wooden barge boards at the corner of two separate windows (Photographs 9 and 10).

The walls are in relatively good condition except for the wall on the northern aspect of the building. This is due to the presence of four holes in the render that provide PRFs (Photograph 11). The features could not be inspected from the ground level due to their height.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

The structure of the internal loft space is the same across Flats 9, 11, 13 and 15, consisting of a queen's post truss with a maximum height of 1.7m from floor to ridge beam (Photograph 12). The roof is lined with bitumen felt and the floor is insulated with mineral wool insulation. All of the loft spaces have a central ventilation system that has a gap around it, with a viewpoint of the ridge tiles (Photograph 13). These features could provide a potential access point into the loft space.

Each loft space contains two internal stone render walls, on the northern and southern aspects that separate the adjacent lofts (Photograph 14). The walls are in good condition in Flats 11 and 13, but several cavities were identified in Flats 9 and 15.

Flat 9 is located on the north-eastern aspect of the building. The internal stone render wall on the northern aspect of the loft space had multiple cavities (Photograph 15). One cavity measures approximately 3 x 3 x 15cm and provides a PRF. There is a potential access point in the loft space where the bitumen felt lining should be. Bird droppings and a starling *Sturnus vulgaris* or house sparrow *Passer domesticus* nest were identified within the loft space during the survey (Photographs 16 and 17). Mouse droppings were also identified (Photograph 18), but there was no evidence of roosting bats.

Flat 11 is located on the south-eastern aspect of the building. There is a potential access point by the external polyethylene flashing around the ventilation tube on the western aspect of the loft space. A house sparrow nest was located near the ventilation tube on the western aspect of the loft space and a wasp nest was located on the eastern aspect (Photographs 19 and 20). In addition, a single old mouse dropping was identified (Photograph 21). The loft space was fully inspected, but no evidence of roosting bats was found.

Flat 13 is located on the north-western aspect of the building and was fully inspected but no evidence of roosting bats was found. A small number of mouse droppings were identified in the loft space (Photograph 22).



Flat 15 is located on the south-western aspect of the building. Multiple cavities were identified in the stone render wall on the northern aspect of the loft space (Photographs 23 and 24). One of the cavities measures approximately 3.5 x 3.5 x 40cm and was identified as a suitable PRF. The loft space was fully inspected but no evidence of roosting bats was found.

No bat field signs were found during the internal building inspection.

3.3 Activity summary

Table 2 – Bat activity summary

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	SPECIES	NOTES
22.05.23	Re-entry	Common pipistrelle	Very low levels of common pipistrelle activity were recorded during the survey. A single individual was recorded commuting west to east just to the north of the building at 03:40, and another two commuted westwards along Albert Street at 04:17. All aspects of the building were very well-lit during the survey (Photograph 25), except for the northern aspect.



4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

In summary, the areas that immediately surround 2 Turnpike Walk, Beswick, provide low quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats. This is due to the limited number of suitable green spaces and many well-lit roads that will likely reduce connectivity. The wider surrounding area contains both the River Medlock and surrounding green spaces to the west, and Clayton Vale local nature reserve to the north-east. These habitats will likely support an abundance of invertebrates and provide foraging opportunities for bats, although they are typically sited far from the site and separated by poor quality habitat.

The building on site presents a number of potential roosting features which could be used by bats. Having said this, no field signs of bats, such as droppings, were found during the building inspection.

One species of bat was recorded during the bat presence / absence survey: common pipistrelle. Activity was very low, with a total of three common pipistrelles recorded commuting during the survey.

No bats were recorded roosting in the building on site.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

4.2.1 Bats

As no bats were found to be using the building or structures on site to roost, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

4.2.2 Birds

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the building at the time of development, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist, and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.



5 CONCLUSION

2 Turnpike Walk is located in a suburban area in Beswick, Manchester, that provides low quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats. There are a limited number of green spaces and many well-lit roads that reduce connectivity for commuting bats. The wider surrounding area contains Clayton Vale, a local nature reserve north-east of the site, and pockets of green spaces surrounding the River Medlock and Ashton Canal. These habitats will provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, however their connectivity to the site is poor due to busy, well-lit roads.

The building on site presents a number of low-quality potential roosting features which could be used by bats. Having said this, no field signs of bats, such as droppings, were found during the building inspection. Furthermore, no bats were recorded roosting in the building on site.

As no bats were found to be using the building on site to roost, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the building at the time of development, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist, and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.



6 REFERENCES

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

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Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan



2 Turnpike Walk, Beswick

Site Plan



Building



Surveyors



Bat flight Paths



Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs



**2 Turnpike Walk, Beswick,
Manchester**

Close aerial photograph

 Survey boundary





**2 Turnpike Walk, Beswick,
Manchester**

Wide aerial photograph



Site location



Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1. The southern aspect of the building.



Photograph 2. The northern aspect of the central corridor.



Photograph 3. The western aspect of the building.



Photograph 4. The grills covering the ventilation shaft above Flat 13.



Photograph 5. The cover over the ventilation shaft above Flat 15, the eastern aspect of the building.



Photograph 6. The gap between the wooden barge board and the top of the wall plate on the eastern aspect of Flat 15. Also, the gap between the PVC capping and the ventilation cover.



Photograph 7. The bird's nest and gap under the barge board on the eastern aspect of Flat 13.



Photograph 8. The gaps underneath the PVC capping on the southern aspect of the building.



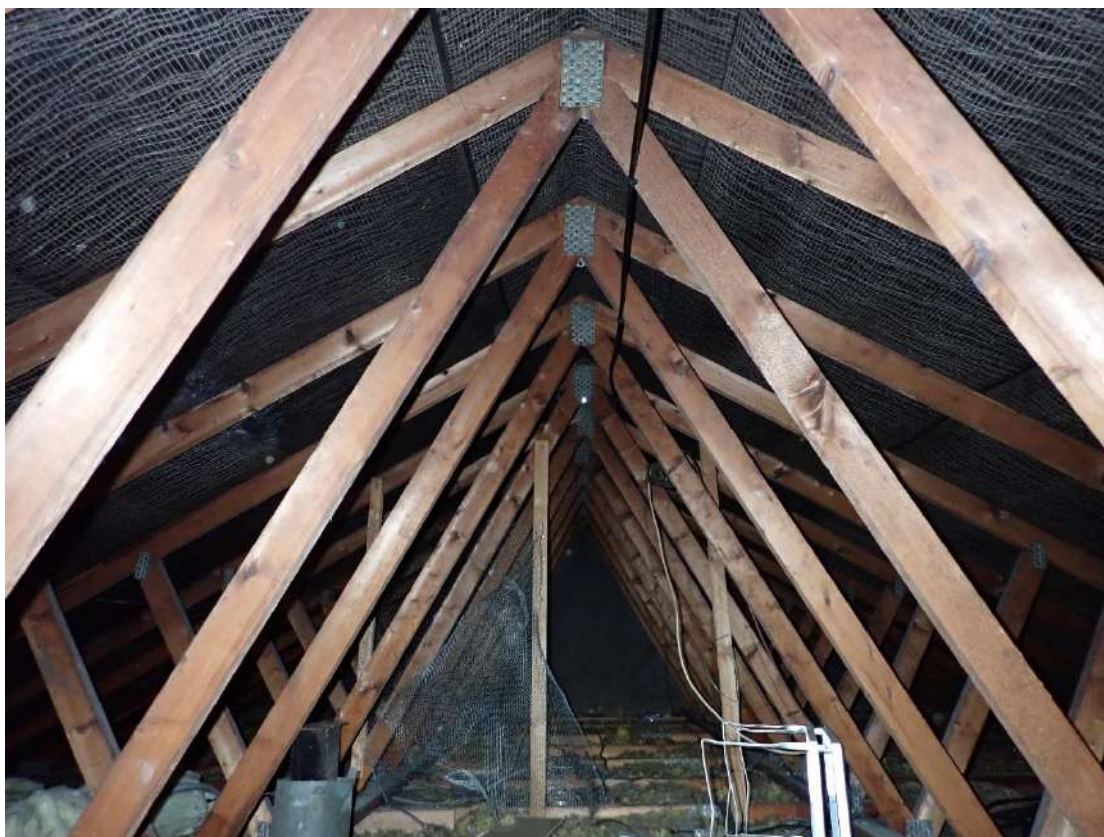
Photograph 9. A small gap between the wooden barge board and the top of the wall plate on the eastern aspect.



Photograph 10. A gap between the top of the wall plate and barge board on the eastern aspect.



Photograph 11. Four holes located on the northern aspect of the building.



Photograph 12. The queen's post truss structure in the loft space of Flat 9.



Photograph 13. The viewpoint of the ridge tiles from the centre of the loft space in Flat 9.



Photograph 14. The internal stone render wall in Flat 9.



Photograph 15. The cavities in the stone render wall, in the loft space of Flat 9.



Photograph 16. The bird's nest identified in the loft space of Flat 9.



Photograph 17. The bird droppings in the loft space of Flat 9.



Photograph 18. The mouse droppings found in the loft space of Flat 9.



Photograph 19. House sparrow nest identified in the loft space of Flat 11.



Photograph 20. Wasp nest identified in the loft space of Flat 11.



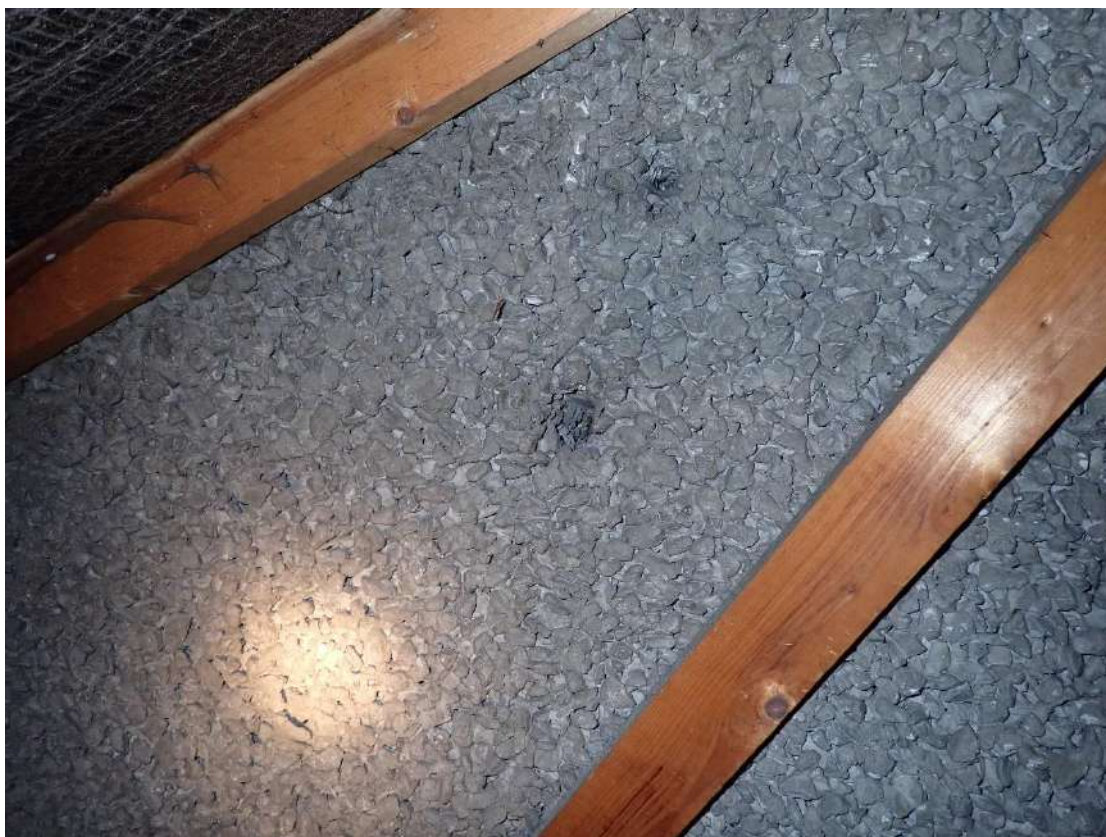
Photograph 21. Mouse droppings identified in the loft space of Flat 11.



Photograph 22. Mouse droppings identified in the loft space of Flat 13.



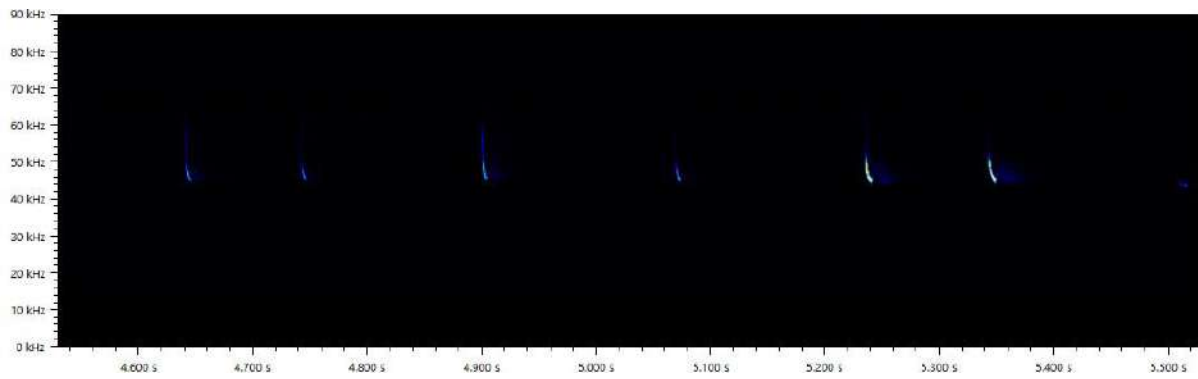
Photograph 23. The gap around the top of the wall plate in the loft space of Flat 15.



Photograph 24. The cavities in the stone render wall in the loft space of Flat 15.



Appendix 4 – Results



Sonogram 1. Common pipistrelle recorded at 03:40am on 22nd May 2023.



Appendix 5 – 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 2021 (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 2021 (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;

- 174.** 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;
 - 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.
- 179.** 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 biodiversity⁶¹; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation⁶²; 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
- 180.** 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 reasons⁶³ 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.