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BAT PRESENCE / ABSENCE SURVEY

At

Centron House
Rowlandsway
Wythenshawe
Manchester
M22 5QZ

NGR: SJ 82843 87062

Prepared for:	Shift Project Management Ltd
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Tom Kenwright

Date:	8th June 2026
UES reference:	UES05337/02

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Centron House was subject to an external inspection as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Greengage Environmental Ltd on the 26th February 2026 (issue date: March 2026; author: Ryan Evans).

An updated external inspection and additional internal inspection was undertaken by United Environmental Services (UES) on 11th May 2026. The building was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023).

Centron House is located within the town centre of Wythenshawe, in the Greater Manchester area. The majority of the 0.52-hectare site consists of a hardstanding car park, with trees and hedgerows surrounding the car park along the east, west and southern site boundaries. Centron House is a 6-storey office block arranged in a 'T' shape; in addition to Centron House, a former electrical substation connects to the main Centron House building. It is understood that the buildings are to be demolished as part of proposed redevelopment plans for the site. The local surrounding area consists of the town centre of Wythenshawe, and areas of residential housing.

The main building on site was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, due to a number of potential roosting features (PRFs) in the form of gaps within the concrete structure, and beneath stonewash rendering surrounding the building. As such, additional bat presence / absence surveys were recommended, which were carried out by UES in May and June 2026.

The objective of the presence / absence surveys was to establish whether 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 surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) publications.

The habitats on site provide low quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, with habitats increasing in quality further afield. Onsite habitats are limited to hedgerows and lines of trees at the site boundaries, with the majority of the site composed of a hardstanding carpark. As the site is located within the town centre of Wythenshawe, much of the immediate surrounding area is composed of hard standing surfaces with high amounts of light and noise disturbance present. The local surrounding area primarily consists of residential housing with amenity gardens, which will provide higher foraging and roosting opportunities for bats. The wider surrounding area further increases in habitat quality, including areas of woodland and Gatley Brook to the east.

A single species of bat was recorded during the presence / absence surveys: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. The species was observed to be commuting over vegetation along the south-eastern site boundary.

No bats were found to be roosting within the building during the survey. Due to the absence of roosting bats, no further surveys, mitigation or compensation measures are required, with regards to roosting bats.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the vegetation, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance should take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not

possible and the works need to take place during this period, a pre-commencement nesting bird nest check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Feral pigeons *Columba livia* were identified within the building onsite, and feral pigeons are known to breed all year round. Given the number of pigeons present and the potential for birds to be nesting at the time of the proposed works, it may be necessary to engage the services of a pest control contractor to remove the feral pigeons under general licence, provided that all the necessary criteria have been met.

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 Matthew Inthone Chao, BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyor present included:

- Harry Fox, BSc, MRes, UES Graduate Ecologist. Harry is listed as an accredited agent on the bat survey licence of Toby Hart (2025-85916-CL19/20-BAT (level 3 & 4)). As such, he has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using an endoscope to survey for bats.

- Bethan Beeston, BA, UES Sub-contractor. 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 (2025-85916-CL19/20-BAT (level 3 & 4)). As such, she has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using an endoscope to survey for bats.

- Duncan Morrison, BSc, MSc, UES sub-contractor.

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) "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 April 2026 by Shift Project Management Ltd to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Internal and external building inspections (where accessible) 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 the demolition of the building onsite.

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 6, 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 Bat Conservation Trust (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 inspections

The building on site was subject to an external inspection as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Greengage Environmental Ltd on the 26th February 2026. An updated external inspection and additional internal inspection was undertaken by UES on 11th May 2026. The building was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023).

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection of the building was carried out from ground level using binoculars, in addition to 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
- Windowsills 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 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 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
- Floors or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate.

2.3 Emergence and re-entry surveys

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

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.

ANABAT SCOUT 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.

Nightfox Whisker Night Vision Binoculars were used in conjunction with Nightfox XB5 940nm Low Glow Infrared LED Flashlights to monitor part of the building during the surveys. The Binoculars were positioned alongside surveyors to cover potential roost access points and recorded video footage to be reviewed post-survey. Surveyors can use the binoculars during the survey as a night-vision aid.

2.3.2 Weather conditions

Surveys were undertaken in suitable weather conditions as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Weather conditions and survey timings

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	TIMINGS	SUNSET / SUNRISE	TEMP.	WIND	RAIN	CLOUD COVER
11/05/26	Emergence	20:40 – 22:25	20:55	11°C	Mild breeze	Dry	10%

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	TIMINGS	SUNSET / SUNRISE	TEMP.	WIND	RAIN	CLOUD COVER
01/06/26	Emergence	20:11 – 22:56	21:26	17°C	Moderate breeze	Moderate rain	50%

2.4 Survey limitations

Due to the presence of fencing and dense vegetation along the southern site boundary, surveyors' views of the southern elevations of the building were partially restricted from some surveyor locations. As a result, the south-eastern aspect could not be observed in its entirety from a single vantage point. However, this elevation was partially visible from multiple surveyor positions, allowing substantial coverage of the building during the surveys. It is therefore considered unlikely that any significant bat activity associated with these elevations would have gone undetected.

Weather conditions during the survey undertaken on the 1st June included intermittent periods of moderate rainfall, which may have temporarily reduced levels of bat activity and therefore the likelihood of recording bats. However, the survey undertaken on the 11th May was completed under suitable weather conditions, with no rainfall and temperatures and wind speeds within accepted survey parameters. Furthermore, bats were recorded as active during both surveys, and the same level of bat activity was recorded on both surveys. This indicates that the intermittent rainfall experienced during the second survey likely did not have a discernible effect on bat activity levels or survey results. The combination of two surveys undertaken during the active bat season, including one completed under optimal conditions, is therefore considered sufficient to provide a robust assessment of the building's use by bats.

Nightfox Whisker Night Vision Binoculars were not utilised at Surveyor Position 4 (see Appendix 1) due to health and safety concerns associated with using expensive equipment within a publicly accessible area at night and the conditions around the surveyor position at the time of the survey. Despite this, the surveyor undertook continuous visual observations using standard survey equipment and the survey position retained good visibility of the relevant sections of the building. Furthermore, this aspect of the building was partly covered by Surveyor Position 3. As such, this limitation is not considered to have materially affected the survey results or conclusions.

Overall, whilst the above constraints introduced minor limitations, sufficient survey coverage was achieved across both survey visits to enable a robust assessment of bat activity and roosting behaviour. These limitations are therefore not considered significant and are unlikely to have affected the validity of the survey findings or recommendations.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

Centron House is located within the town centre of Wythenshawe, in the Greater Manchester area. The majority of the site consists of a hardstanding car park, with trees and hedgerows surrounding the car park along the east, west and southern site boundaries. As foraging and commuting opportunities are limited to the boundary features, the site has low suitability for bats. In addition, as the site is located within an urban centre, there is a high amount of light and noise disturbance from the surrounding area.

The local surrounding area (within 0.5km) consists of the town centre of Wythenshawe, and areas of residential housing. Habitats within the town centre are limited to lines of trees, which additionally are well lit, and subject to noise disturbance. Amenity gardens associated with the residential housing will provide higher foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local surrounding area. Park Wood, a small woodland, is located 340m north-east of the site, which will provide more substantial foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats.

The wider surrounding area (within 2km) is primarily composed of residential housing and schools, with pockets of woodland scattered throughout. The amenity gardens and playing fields associated with the residential housing and schools will provide higher foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. The pockets of woodland, primarily located to the east of the site, will provide further foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats. Additionally, Gatley Brook is located 1.1km east of the site, which will provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, as well as provide connectivity to the wider surrounding landscape.

3.2 Building inspections

3.2.1 External inspection

Centron House is a 6-storey office block, primarily composed of concrete. Stonewash rendering and large windows are present on all aspects of the building (Appendix 3 - Photograph 1). The southern half of the building is elevated over Wavell Road, supported by concrete pillars (Appendix 3 - Photograph 2). The roof is flat, with the sixth storey walls slightly sloped towards the roof, composed of flashings and windows. Small gaps are located within the roof flashings on the north-facing aspect (Appendix 3 - Photograph 3). The majority of the windows were found to be closed, without any noticeable breaks or access points. Numerous small gaps were observed between the stonewash render and concrete structure on all aspects of the building (Appendix 3 - Photograph 4). A smaller number of gaps in the form of damaged areas to the concrete structure of the building were observed (Appendix 3 - Photograph 5).

The building was found to be in the similar condition as described in the PEA produced by Greengage Environmental Ltd. No bats, or field signs of bats were recorded during the external inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

An internal inspection was not conducted as part of the initial survey conducted by Greengage Environmental Ltd. As such, UES undertook an internal inspection prior to the emergence survey on 11th May 2026.

The internal structure of Centron House is composed of defunct office space (Appendix 3 - Photograph 6). Areas of plasterboard paneling have been removed or damaged, exposing the wooden cladding and concrete walls (Appendix 3 - Photographs 7 & 8). No gaps which could provide internal access were observed upon the interior concrete walls. Large windows are located on all aspects, providing high amounts of light exposure. A false ceiling is present on each level, containing a loft void approximately 0.5m in height (Appendix 3 - Photograph 9). Evidence of nesting birds was observed through excessive bird droppings, as well as present live and deceased pigeons *Columba livia* within the building (Appendix 3 - Photographs 10). Several small vents are located at the corners of the office space, which are partially open to the exterior (Appendix 3 - Photograph 11). The top level of the building features sloping walls. The flat roof of the building is visible through an access door (Appendix 3 - Photograph 12).

No bats, or field signs of bats were recorded during the internal inspection.

3.3 Activity summary

Bat activity recorded during the surveys is detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Bat activity summary

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	SPECIES	NOTES
11/05/26	Emergence	Common pipistrelle	A single common pipistrelle was heard commuting along the south-eastern site boundary at 21:58.
01/06/26	Emergence	Common pipistrelle	A single common pipistrelle was seen commuting along the south-eastern site boundary at 22:32, flying north to south.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

In summary, the habitats onsite provide low quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, with habitats increasing in quality further afield, away from the site. Onsite habitats are limited to hedgerows and lines of trees at the site boundaries, with the majority of the site composed of a hardstanding car park. As the site is located within the town centre of Wythenshawe, much of the immediate surrounding area is composed of hard standing surfaces with high amounts of light and noise disturbance present. The local surrounding area primarily consists of residential housing with amenity gardens, which will provide higher foraging and roosting opportunities for bats. The wider surrounding area further increases in habitat quality, including areas of woodland and Gatley Brook to the east.

The building on site was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, due to a number of PRFs present (discussed in section 3.2). Numerous gaps between the stonewash rendering and concrete structure were observed, in addition, gaps are present in the form of damaged areas of concrete throughout the exterior of the building.

A single species of bat was recorded during the presence / absence surveys: common pipistrelle. This species was observed to be commuting over vegetation along the south-eastern site boundary, likely towards higher quality habitats in the form of pockets of woodland and gardens that are located within the surrounding local area. No bats were observed using the building to roost during the emergence surveys.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

Due to the absence of roosting bats, no further surveys, mitigation or compensation measures are required for the building, with regards to roosting bats.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the vegetation found at the site margins, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance should take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and the works need to take place during this period, a pre-commencement nesting bird check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Feral pigeons were identified within the building onsite, and feral pigeons are known to breed all year round. Given the number of pigeons present and the potential for birds to be nesting at the time of the proposed works, it may be necessary to engage the services of a pest control contractor to remove the feral pigeons under general licence, provided that all the necessary criteria have been met.

5 CONCLUSION

Centron House is situated in an area that presents limited habitat for foraging, roosting and commuting bats, with high amounts of light and noise disturbance present within the local area. Higher quality habitats located within the wider surrounding area, including pockets of woodland, and Gatley Brook located approximately 1.1km to the east.

Due to the absence of roosting bats, no further surveys, mitigation or compensation measures are required for the building, with regards to roosting bats.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the vegetation found at the site margins, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance should take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and the works need to take place during this period, a pre-commencement nesting bird nest check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Feral pigeons were identified within the building onsite, and feral pigeons are known to breed all year round. Given the number of pigeons present and the potential for birds to be nesting at the time of the proposed works, it may be necessary to engage the services of a pest control contractor to remove the feral pigeons under general licence, provided that all the necessary criteria have been met.

6 REFERENCES

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

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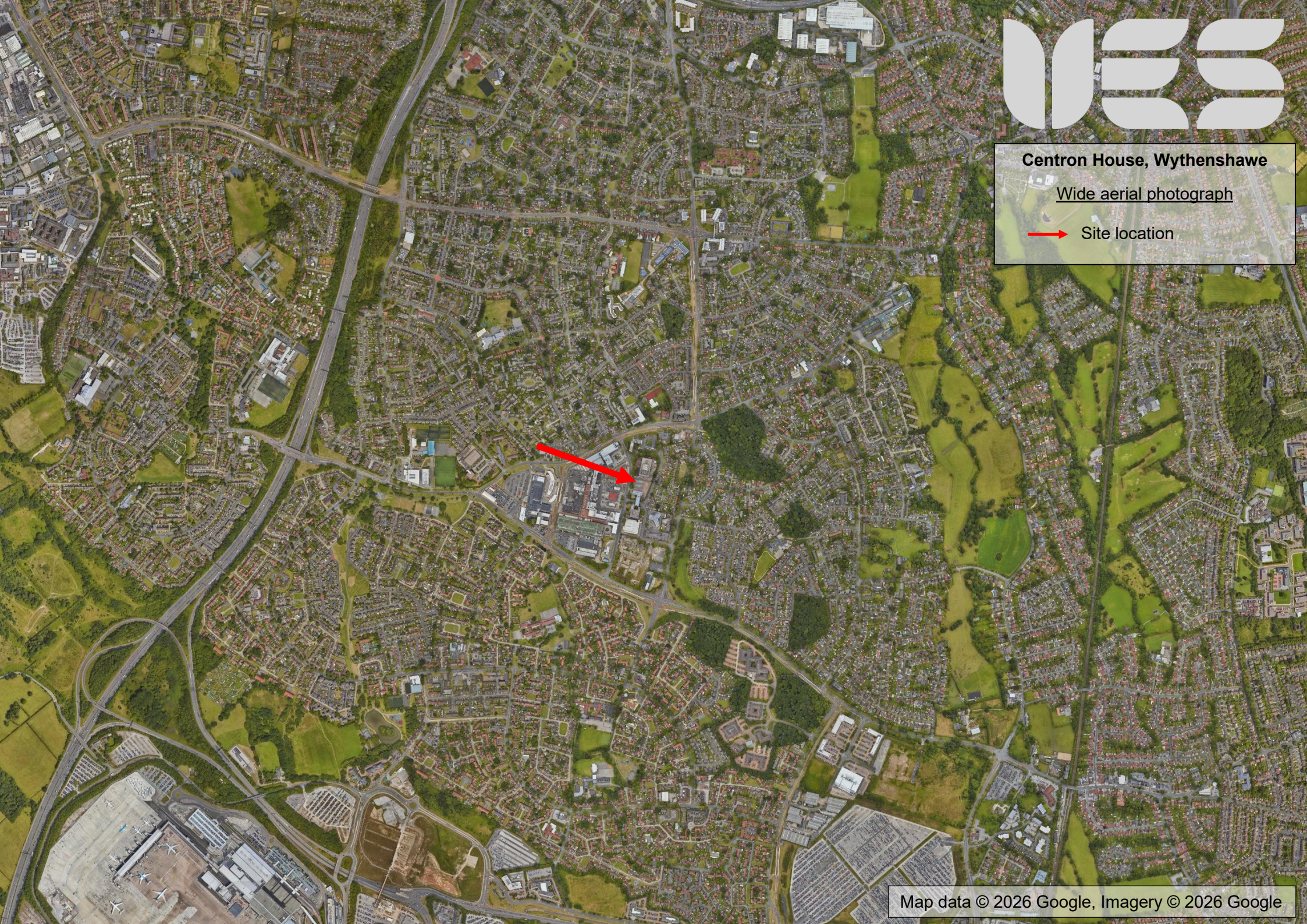
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan


N
Centron House, Wythenshawe
Site Plan
Site boundary
Building
Surveyor position
Surveyor field of view
Bat flight path
1
2
3
4
Map data © 2026 Google, Imagery © 2026 Google

Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs


Centron House, Wythenshawe
Close aerial photograph
Site boundary
Map data © 2026 Google, Imagery © 2026 Google


Centron House, Wythenshawe
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2026 Google, Imagery © 2026 Google

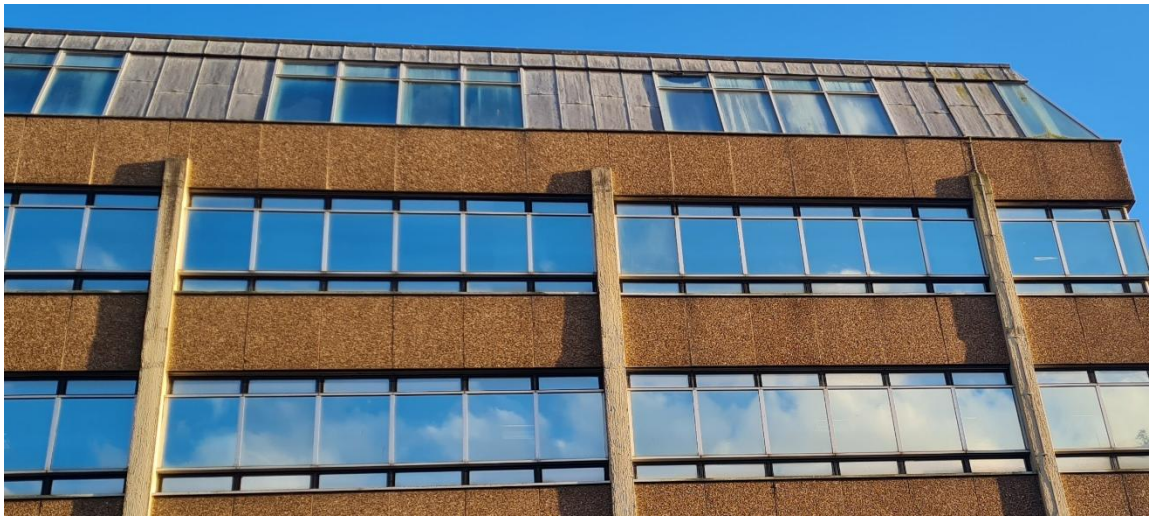
Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Centron House, a 6-storey office building with large windows and stonewash rendering upon all aspects.



Photograph 2 – Southern half of the building, elevated over Wavell Road.



Photograph 3 – Flashing on the 6th storey of the building, with some gaps present.



Photograph 4 – Example of a gap between the concrete structure and stonewash rendering.



Photograph 5 – Example of damaged concrete upon the building.



Photograph 6 – Defunct office space, which composed the interior of the building.



Photograph 7 – Example of an area of removed plasterboard, with wooden cladding and concrete exposed.



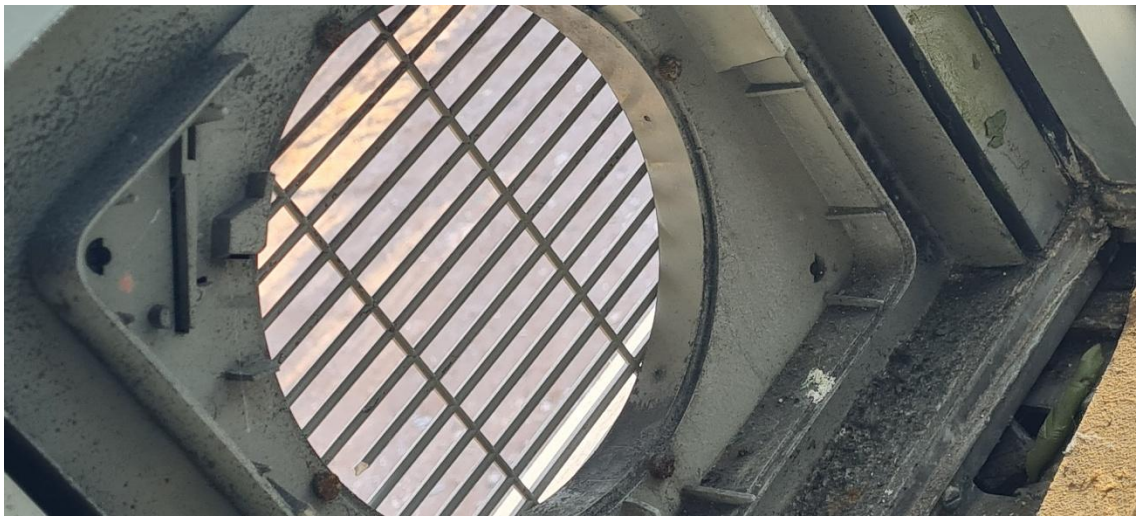
Photograph 8 –Example of an area of damaged plasterboard.



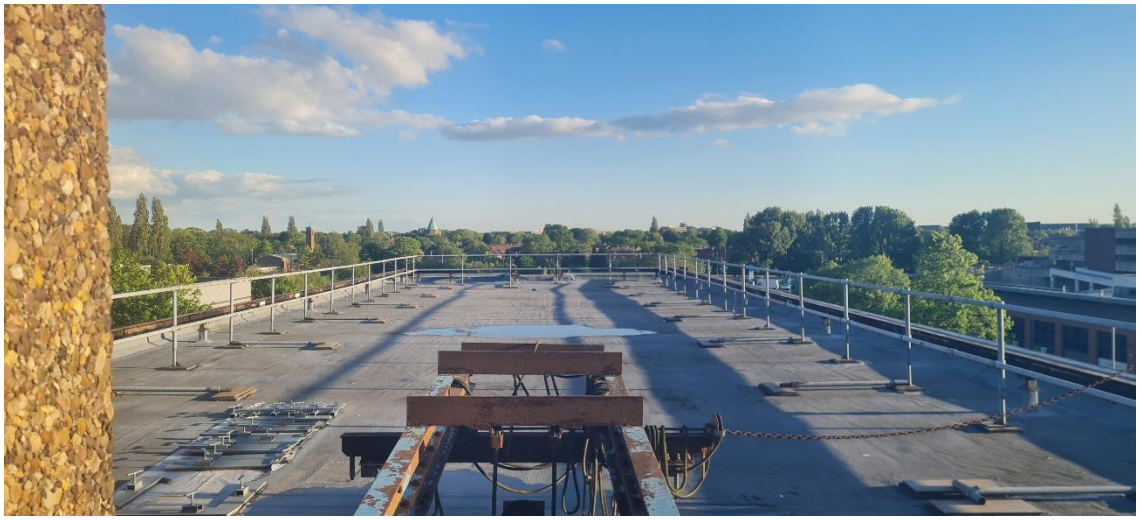
Photograph 9 – Loft void within false ceiling.



Photograph 10 – Deceased feral pigeon.

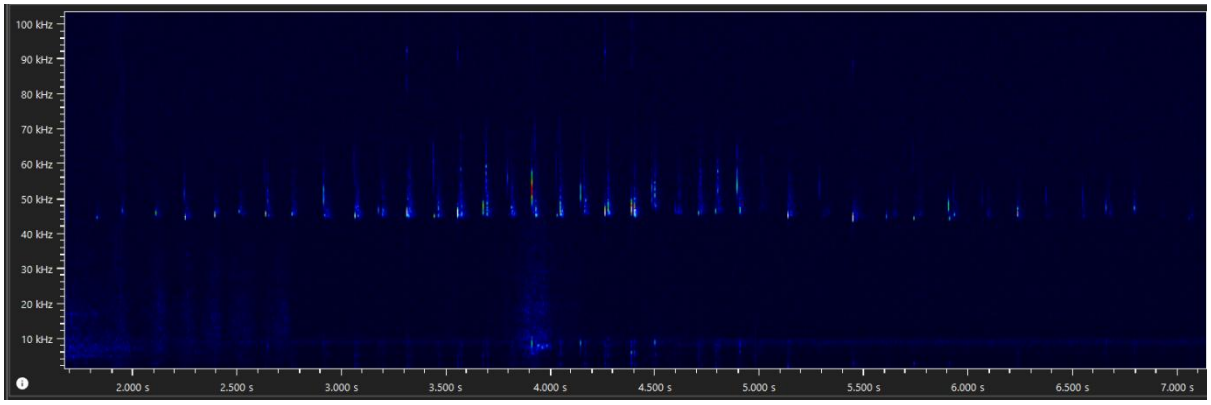


Photograph 11 – Small vent, which are open to the exterior.

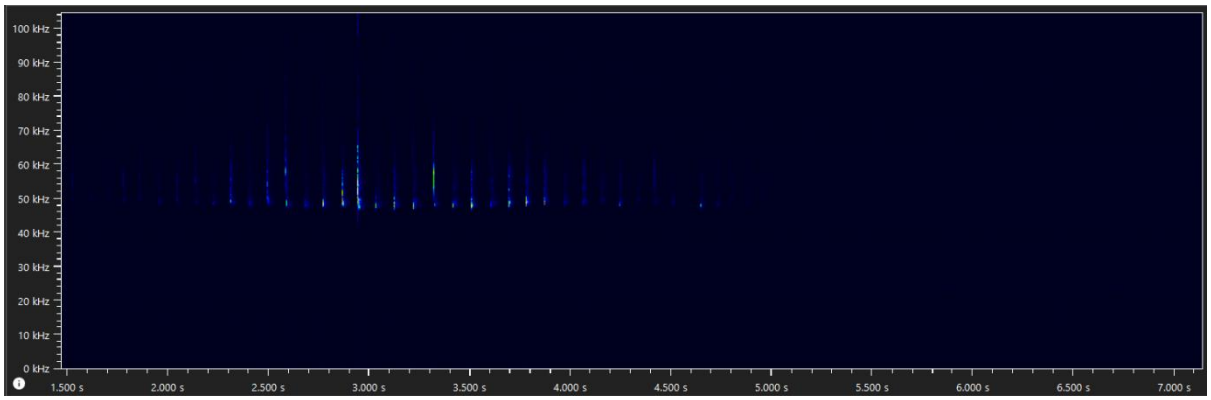


Photograph 12 – Roof of the building.

Appendix 4 – Results



Sonagram 1 – A common pipistrelle commuting near the south-eastern site boundary at 21:58 on 11th May 2026.



Sonagram 2 – A common pipistrelle commuting near the south-eastern site boundary at 22:32 on 1st June 2026.

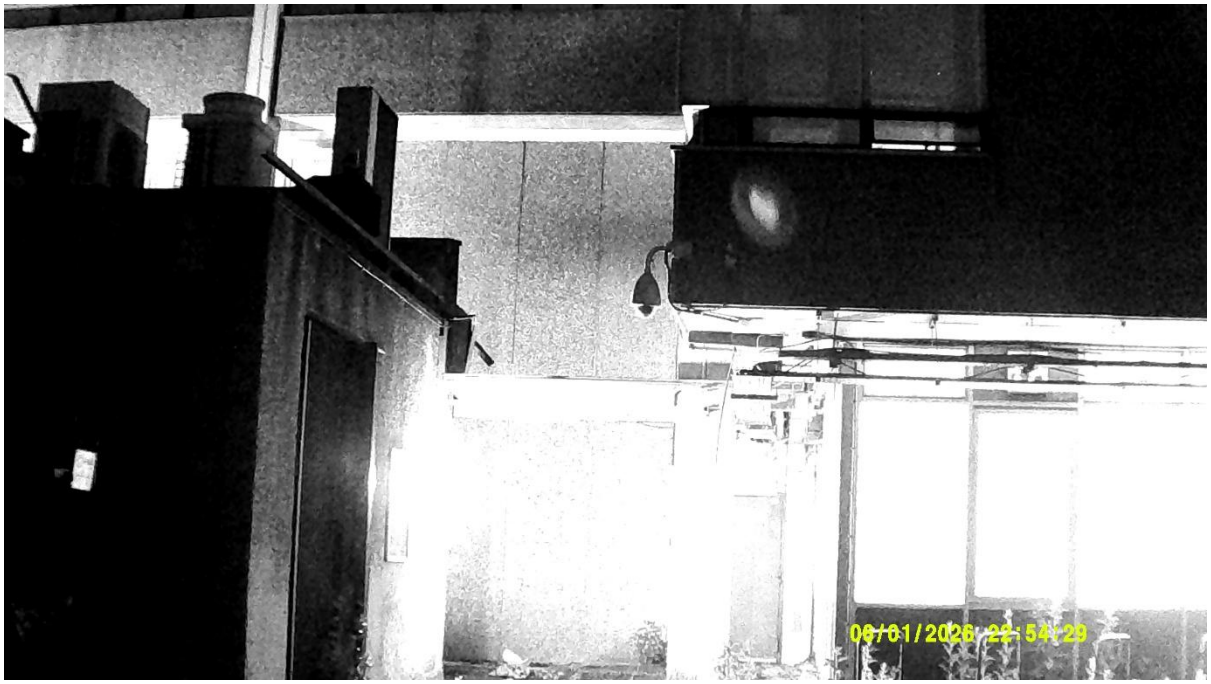
Appendix 5 – Infrared Photographs



Photograph 1 – Infrared photograph of Surveyor position 1, taken at the darkest point of the survey at 22:56 on 1st June 2026.



Photograph 2 – Infrared photograph of Surveyor position 2, taken at the darkest point of the survey at 22:54 on 1st June 2026.



Photograph 3 – Infrared photograph of Surveyor position 3, taken at the darkest point of the survey at 22:54 on 1st June 2026.

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 Regulations 2017 (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.

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.