ACP

Balancing Growth with Green

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Sharad Karia
Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ

December 2025

Project Information

Title	**Preliminary Roost Assessment**
Project No.	31939
Sector	Environment
Report	EC
Client	Sharad Karia
Revision	B
Status	Final
Date of Issue	12th December 2025

Authors

Author(s)	**David Stanley** BSc (Hons.), MSc., TechArborA Relevant Qualification: BSc Ecology and Wildlife Conservation. MSc Biodiversity Conservation Member of CIEEM
Reviewer	**Brydie Stacey** BSc (Hons.), MSc Relevant Qualification: MSc Conservation Ecology
Approver	**Dr Ayan Chakravartty** BEng (Hons). PGDip, MSc (Double), MRes, MPhil, PhD. Relevant Qualification: MRes (Ecology and Conservation)

Disclaimer

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Sharad Karia ('the client') is seeking consent for a proposed development at Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ thereafter referred to as the 'potential development site'), which is within the Hillingdon Borough Council (HBC).

The proposal involves the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of new residential dwellings. Existing and proposed plans are provided in Appendix A.

ACP Consultants Ltd. was instructed by the client to conduct a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, led by Ayan Chakravartty (Level 2 Bat Licence number - 2024-12540-CL18-BAT), to accompany the planning application to HBC, seeking consent to undertake the proposed work. The purpose of the Preliminary Roost Assessment is to determine the presence of roosting bats and identify the need for any further surveys, where necessary. If necessary, appropriate mitigation measures are to be identified and recommended.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment report has been prepared to determine the presence/likely absence of roosting bats for this proposed development and identify need for any further consideration.

Local Authorities are tasked with determining new development and local planning applications against a wide range of social, economic, and environmental criteria. The purpose of this report is to assess whether the development proposal is compliant with the relevant local policies in terms of ecological impact as a result of the proposed residential development.

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with good practice guidelines, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and applicable local supplementary guidance. Planning policy is located in Appendix C.

The remainder of this report is presented in the following order:

- Section 2: Methodology.
- Section 3: Results and Evaluation.
- Section 4: Recommendations for Further Survey, Mitigation and Enhancement.
- Section 5: Conclusions.

1.2 Objectives

- To gain an understanding of the importance of the defined survey area for bats.
- To identify potential bat roosts provided by buildings within the site.
- To determine the presence/likely absence of roosting bats within suitable features.
- To determine levels of bat foraging and commuting activity within habitat potentially affected by the proposed development.

2 Methodology

To achieve the objectives outlined in Section 1.2, a desktop study was completed followed by a site visit undertaken by Ayan Chakravartty (Level 2 Bat Licence number - 2024-12540-CL18-BAT) and Brydie Stacey.

2.1 Desktop Study

The desk study was undertaken by referring to the following data sources:

- Defra (2025). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

Satellite mapping, Ordnance survey, road map, habitat, and designated site data from Defra (2025) was used to assess the value of the surrounding habitat for bats in the area at a landscape scale (5km), including any potentially important habitat corridors (linear habitat features), feeding grounds or potential roost opportunities, such as large expanses of woodland. The features and habitats immediately surrounding the site (local area) were also assessed at a finer scale as these influence the likely presence of bats within the survey site. Defra was also used to determine if any Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats are present with 2km of the site.

2.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

On the 22nd of August 2025, an inspection of the site was undertaken by Ayan Chakravarty and Brydie Stacey during daylight hours to determine the suitability for bats. This was to establish, if possible, whether bats are using the buildings or have been using the buildings in the past. An assessment of the buildings was undertaken in accordance with the latest published best practice guidance (Collins, 2023).

All accessible parts of the buildings were inspected internally and externally, to look for bats and signs of the presence of bats, including:

- Droppings.
- Feeding remains including moth and butterfly wings.
- Staining from urine or oils near crevices or holes or on timber (such as roof beams), walls, chimney breasts etc.
- Scratch marks on walls and timber.
- Squeaking or chattering calls.

The assessment outside the building included inspection of all walls, windows, windowsills, and tiles, including a search for any crevices under tiles, missing mortar, gaps in the ridge or gable end of the roofs, crevices in render and brickwork, gaps tiles and any other potential bat roost opportunities.

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the proposed development site for bats (from Collins, 2023).

Suitability	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats	Number of activity survey visits required
None	*No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).*	*No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).*	None

Suitability	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats	Number of activity survey visits required
Negligible	*No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.*	*No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.*	None
Low	*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).*	*Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.* *Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.*	One
Moderate	*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).*	*Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens* *Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.*	Two
High	*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or*	*Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.* *High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.*	Three

Suitability	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats	Number of activity survey visits required
	classic cool/stable hibernation site.	*Site is close to and connected to known roosts.*	

2.3 Limitations

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by ACP Consultants Ltd. are representative at the time of surveying.

Any third party and external data sources used may vary due to the quality and scale, the supporting information used to define locations/boundaries and sensitivity of the data itself. ACP Consultants Ltd. cannot take responsibility for the accuracy of external data sources and as such discrepancies and inaccuracies may occur. Any distances, locations or dimensions appearing in the report should be considered as estimates.

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study.

A thorough inspection of the building, including cavities, cannot be conducted without specialist access equipment, meaning only accessible areas have been surveyed. Therefore, a negative result does not definitively prove the absence of protected species. The absence of bats can only be fully confirmed with bat activity/emergence surveys.

It should be noted that the garage was inaccessible and could not be assessed internally. As a result, a full evaluation of the structure's suitability for bats was not possible. Accordingly, precautionary survey measures may be required.

We encourage the client and authorised users of the report to remove any information containing records of protected species locations within the report prior to publishing in the public domain to prevent human interference.

3 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Overview

The following section sets out the existing conditions in relation to ecology for the proposed development. Relevant ecological information is available from several sources including local, regional, and national ecological reports and websites. For the purpose of this assessment, some data has been obtained from Defra provided geographical sources[1].

3.2 Designated Sites and Existing Landscape

Details of any statutory designated sites within a 5km radius of the proposed development including their reasons for notification, are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Designated sites within a 5km radius of the survey site.

Site Name	Designation	Distance from Site	Area
Ruislip Woods	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1.6km south	307.45 Hectares (Ha)
Croxley Common Moor	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2.2km north	39.64 Ha
Old Park Wood	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	3.2km south-west	17.14 Ha
Harefield Pit	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	3.7km south-west	1.8 Ha
Mid Colne Valley	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	3.9km south-west	147.73 Ha

Defra (2025) has been used to undertake a review of the proposed site and surrounding area. The site is situated in a suburban area located in Northwood. The landscape within the immediate vicinity of the site comprises of residential buildings and associated gardens. There are areas of scattered woodland within 2km listed in Table 3 below. These areas could provide suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Table 3: Priority habitats within 2km of the site

Habitat Type	Number of Parcels within 2km
Broadleaved Woodland	51
Waterbodies	8
Ancient Broadleaved Woodland	5
Conifer Woodland	3
Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland	2
Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh	1

Defra (2025). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

3.3 Data Search and Historical Records

Defra (2025) was used to provide bat records for within 2km of the site. This was primarily due to the nature of the proposed development. Results of Granted European Species Applications for bats within a 2km buffer can be seen below in Figure 3.1 and show that a total of 12 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats are present within 2km of the site. The closest Granted European Protected Species Application was 0.4km north-east and started on the 18th of January 2016 (ending on the 17th of January 2021) for soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

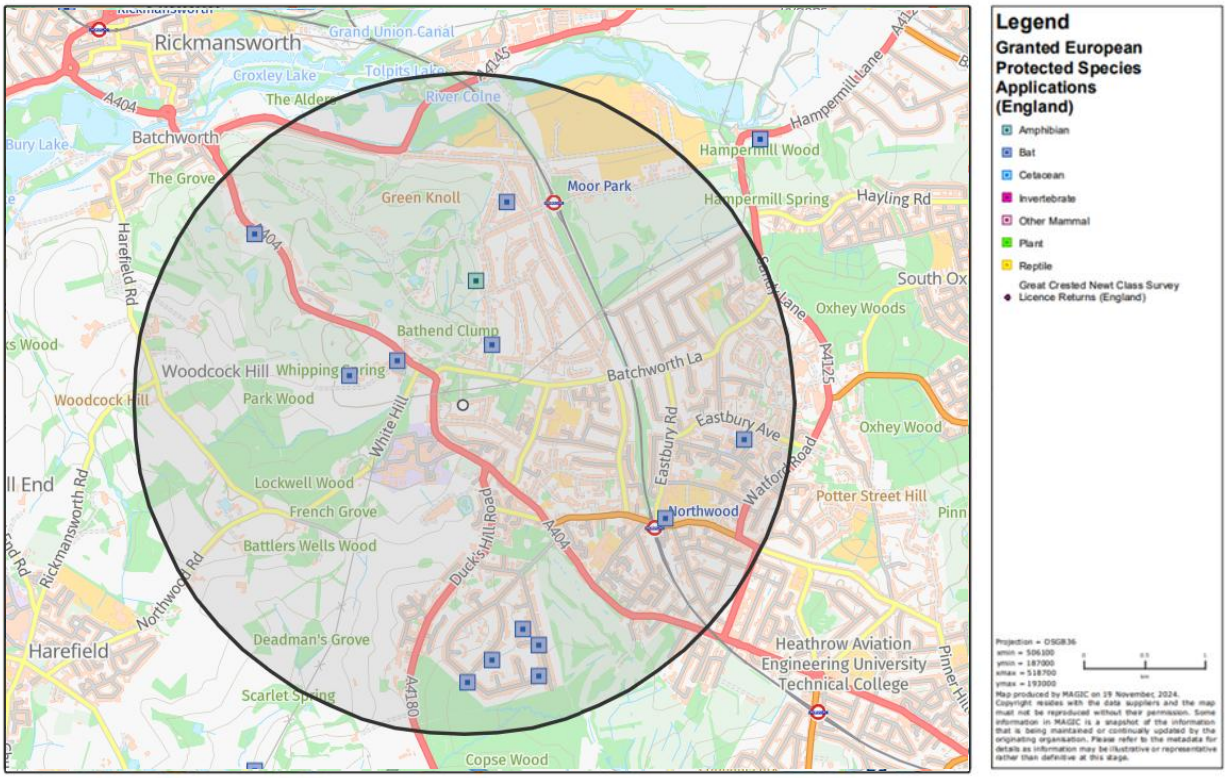


Figure 3.1: Granted European Protected Species Applications within 2km of the site *(Source: Defra)*.

3.4 Field Survey Results

The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of conditions during survey

Abiotic Factor	Survey 1
Survey Type	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment
Date Completed	22.08.2025
Precipitation	0
Weather Conditions	Partially cloudy

3.5 Site Features

The results of the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment are summarised in Table 5 below. Photograph references (Appendix B) relate to the building descriptions below.

Table 5: Site features and descriptions linking to photos in Appendix B.

Building Reference	Internal or external	Description (if applicable)	Use by birds	Bat Signs, Access Points and Features
A	External	Exterior walls/roof	None recorded	N/A
B	External	Exterior roof	None recorded	Potential access points (raised tiles).
C	External	Soffit box	None recorded	N/A
D	External	Exterior walls	None recorded	N/A
E	External	Exterior walls/roof	None recorded	N/A
F	External	Roof/soffit box	None recorded	N/A
G	External	Exterior walls/roof	None recorded	N/A
H	External	Soffit box	None recorded	N/A
I	External	Soffit box	None recorded	Potential access point (ventilation/pipes)
J	Internal	Interior loft	None recorded	N/A
K	Internal	Interior loft	None recorded	Potential access point (light ingress)
L	Internal	Interior loft	None recorded	Inaccessible void (loft lining)
M	Internal	Interior loft	None recorded	Potential access point (light ingress).
N	Internal	Interior loft	None recorded	Staining
O	External	Shed exterior	None recorded	Ivy coverage
P	Internal	Shed interior	None recorded	N/A
Q	External	Garage exterior	None recorded	N/A
R	External	Garage exterior	None recorded	Potential access points (soffit box)
S	External	Garage exterior	None recorded	Potential concealment (ivy coverage)

3.5.1 Exterior of Buildings

The residential building on-site comprised rendered brick exterior walls and a pitched roof covered in interlocking tiles (Building References A-I). Overall, exterior walls were well maintained and kept in good condition, with no visible cracks or holes that could be utilised by roosting bats. The roof also appeared to be in reasonable condition, although some tiles were slightly raised which may provide roosting opportunities for certain species (Building Reference B). A potential access point was also present and was located on the soffit box (Building Reference I).

The exterior of the existing garage structure is shown in Building References Q-S. The roof looked to be in good condition with no raised, missing or damaged tiles observed. There were small gaps present in some sections of the soffit box which may provide potential roosting opportunities (Building Reference R). A degree of vegetation coverage was also present (Building Reference S), which had the potential to conceal roosting features.

A disused shed also exists on-site (Building Reference O). Due to internal conditions explained in Section 3.5.2, this structure was not considered to offer any potential roosting opportunities for bats.

3.5.2 Interior of Buildings

The loft of the residential building was also assessed, and comprised timber truss frames, wooden boarding, fibreglass insulation between the joists and loft lining (Building References J-N). A number of potential access points were identified due to light ingress (Building References K and M). Areas of loose loft lining (Building Reference L) may also provide a crevice that could be utilised by roosting bats. Moreover, staining was observed (Building Reference N).

It is worth noting that the garage was inaccessible and could not be assessed internally. Therefore, a full assessment of the suitability of this structure for bats could not be made. Precautionary survey requirements may therefore need to be in place.

Whilst the shed structure has potential access points and a high degree of vegetation coverage, internal conditions shown in Building Reference P show that levels of natural light are too high to support bat roosts. Moreover, there are no internal voids present that could be utilised by roosting bats. This structure is therefore considered to be of negligible suitability for bats.

3.5.3 Results

From our external and internal inspection of the building on site, the suitability of the residential building and garage for bat roosts is low. Multiple factors are present that require further consideration, such as the number of priority habitat parcels in close proximity to the site (Table 3), the presence of 12 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats within 2km (Figure 3.1), limited accessibility and the presence of potential access points on the exterior/interior of the building (Building References B, I, K, M and R).

4 Recommendations for Further Survey, Mitigation and Enhancement

Due to the low suitability and risk of proposals harming bats or their roosts (as explained in Section 3), a further emergence survey are required for the residential building and garage. One further emergence survey is required in line with the guidance laid out in Table 1.

This is primarily due to the number of priority habitat parcels in close proximity to the site (Table 3), the presence of 12 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats within 2km (Figure 3.1), limited accessibility and the presence of potential access points on the exterior/interior of the building (Building References B, I, K, M and R).

The emergence survey should take place within the optimal survey season (May-August) and must be led by a licensed ecologist. During the survey, particular attention should be paid to any potential roosting features outlined in this report.

Further guidance regarding bat legislation can be found in Appendix D.

5 Conclusions

This report provides an assessment and evaluation of a Preliminary Bat Roost Survey of the following potential key impacts associated with the proposed development at Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ. The aims were:

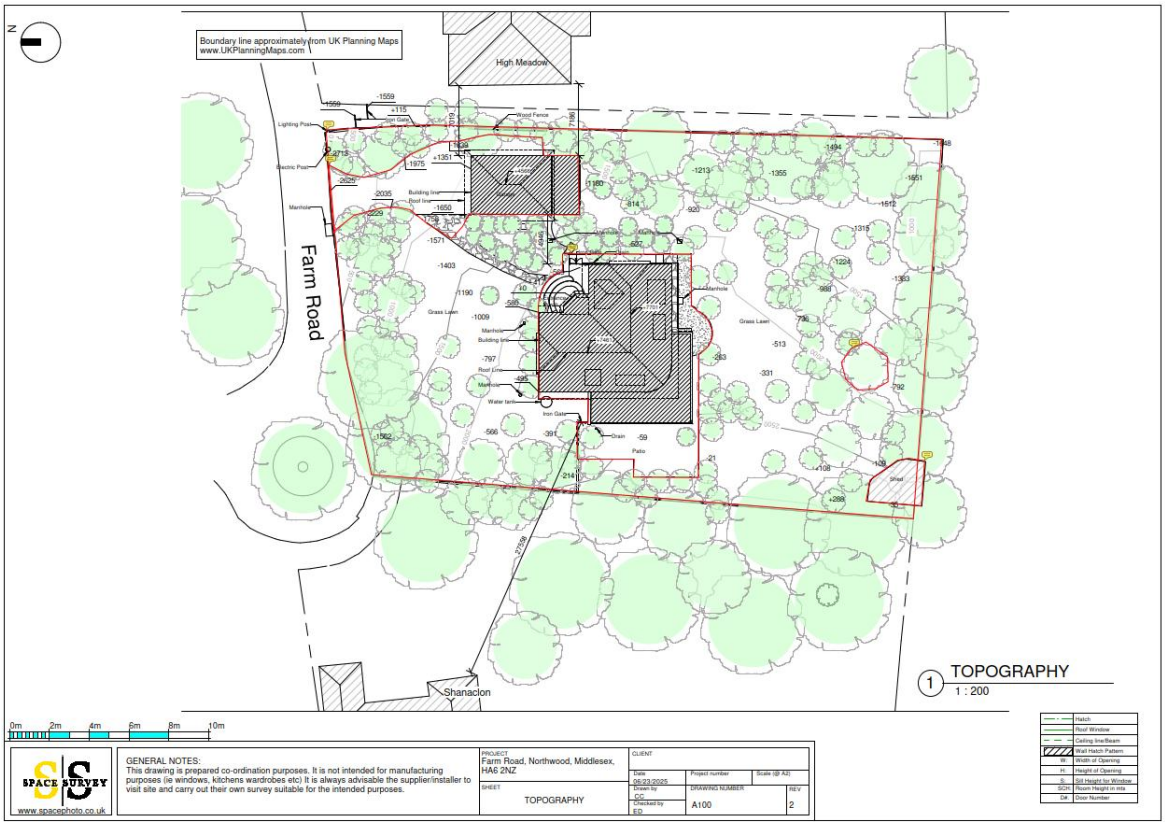
- To gain an understanding of the importance of the defined survey area for bats.
- To identify potential bat roosts provided by buildings within the site.
- To determine the presence/likely absence of roosting bats within suitable features.
- To determine levels of bat foraging and commuting activity within habitat potentially affected by the proposed development.

Due to the number of priority habitat parcels in close proximity to the site (Table 3), the presence of 12 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats within 2km (Figure 3.1), limited accessibility and the presence of potential access points on the exterior/interior of the building (Building References B, I, K, M and R), the suitability of the residential building and garage for bats is considered to be low.

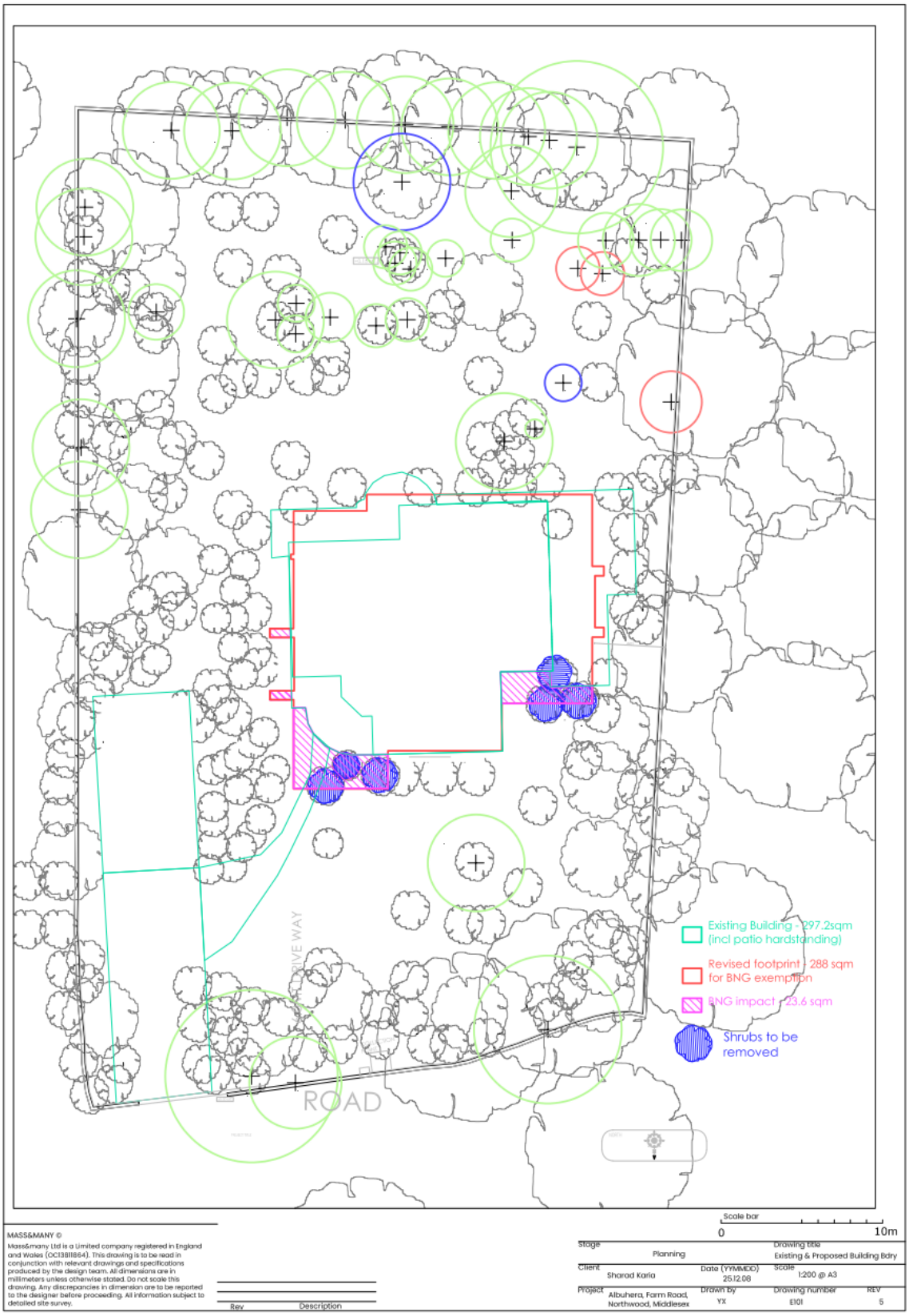
The proposed work is considered to have potential to cause disturbance that would significantly affect the ability for bats to survive, breed, reproduce, nurture young and hibernate if bat roost(s) are found within the building. Therefore, one further emergence survey has been recommended for the residential building and garage.

Appendices

Appendix A: Existing and Proposed Plans

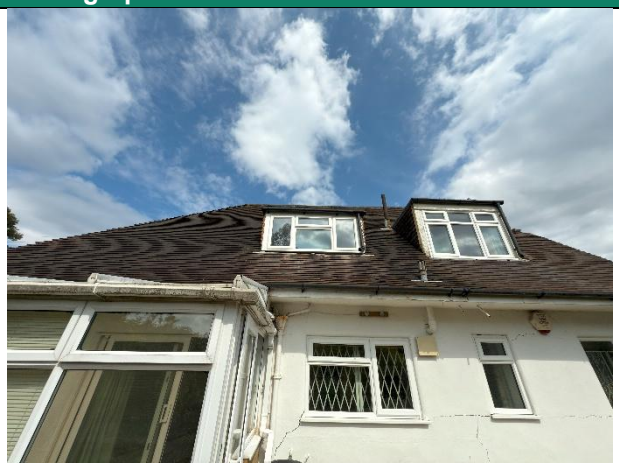


Existing Site Plan. Source: Client

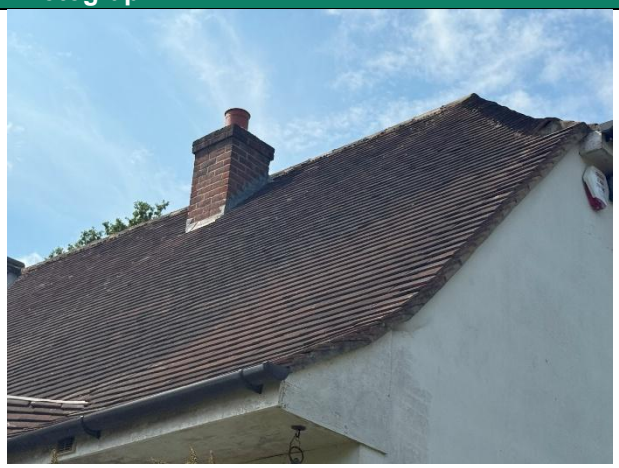


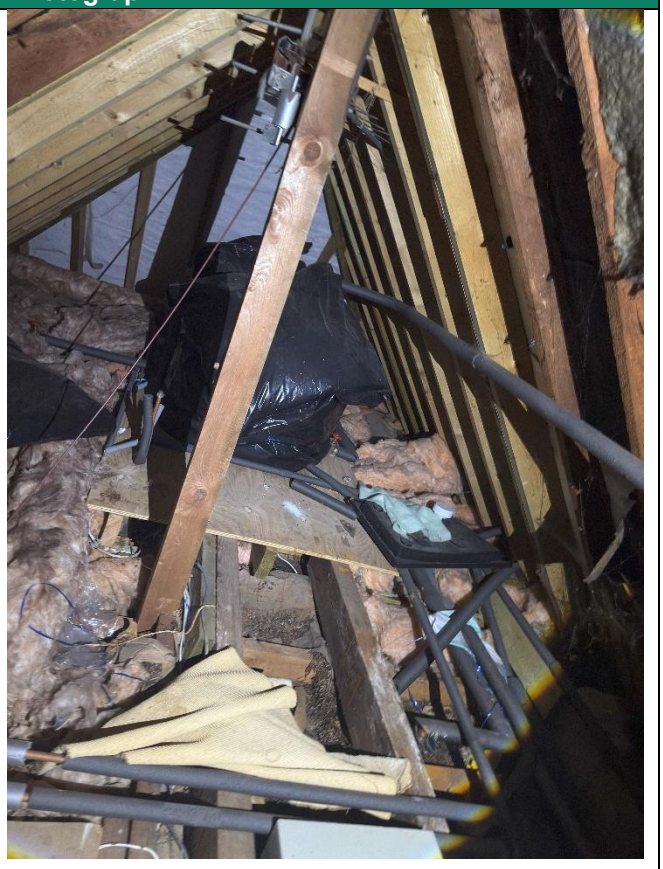
Proposed Plan. Source: Client

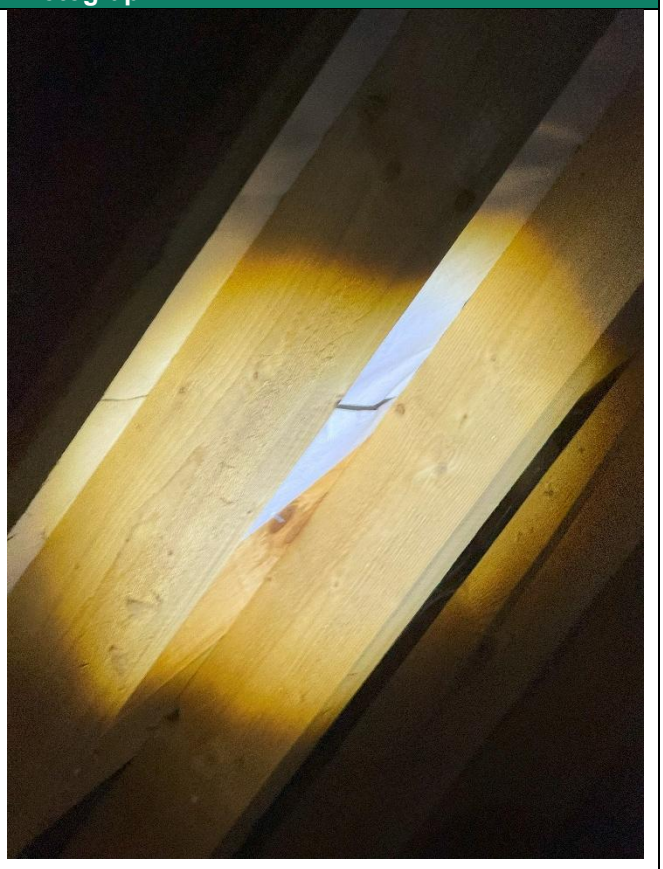
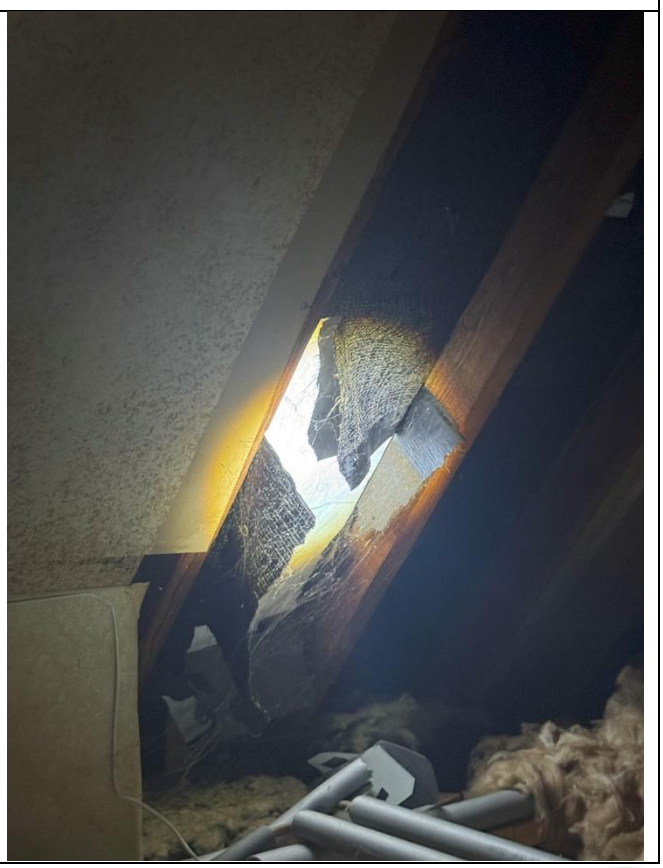
Appendix B: Site Photographs

Building Reference	Photograph
A	
B	
C	

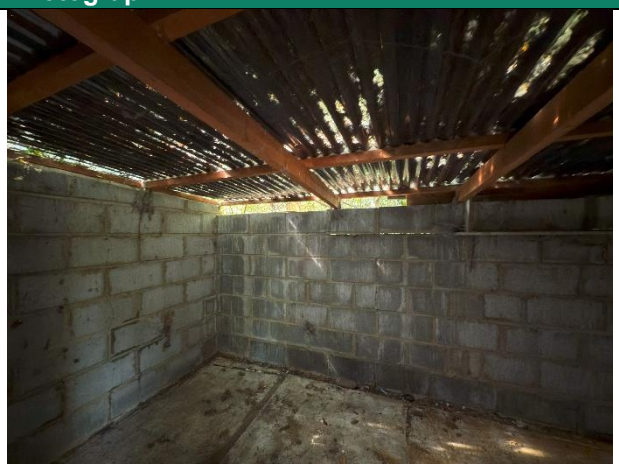
Building Reference	Photograph
D	
E	
F	

Building Reference	Photograph
G	
H	
I	

Building Reference	Photograph
J	
K	

Building Reference	Photograph
L	
M	

Building Reference	Photograph
N	
O	

Building Reference	Photograph
P	
Q	
R	

Building Reference	Photograph
S	

Appendix C: Planning Policy & Legislation

This section summarises the relevant National and Local legislative and policy background, statutory and non-statutory guidelines relevant to the potential commercial development.

National Policy

National Planning Policy (December 2024)

The principal national planning policy guidance with respect to the potential development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The most recent update of the NPPF was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This guidance sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Three dimensions to sustainable development have been identified in the NPPF: economic, social, and environmental.

The NPPF Section 187 states that:

"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."

Section 188 states that:

"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."

Section 189 states that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads[63]. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."

Section 190 states that:

"When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development[64] other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."

Section 192 states that:

"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; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; 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."

Section 193 states that:

"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 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."

Section 194 states that:

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

Relevant National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2016)

NPPG is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

The guidance note on 'Natural Environment' explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements. This has been referred to when preparing this report. It states that:

"Planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications. Guidance on the law affecting Habitats Sites, protected species and SSSIs.

Natural England has issued standing advice on protected species. A protected species mitigation licence from Natural England may be required before any work can start."

The PPG also states that:

"Information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application consultation and the application itself). An ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate. Pre-application discussions can help to scope whether this is the case and, if so, the survey work required.

Even where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed, it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present or where biodiverse habitats may be lost.

As with other supporting information, local planning authorities should require ecological surveys only where clearly justified. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. Further guidance on information requirements is set out in making an application."

Biodiversity net gain is mentioned in the PPG and states that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. It may help local authorities to meet their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006."

Species and Habitats Legislation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidates all various amendments made to The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into national law.

Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive list (respectively) habitats and species for which member states are required to establish and monitor SACs. The EC Birds Directive provides a similar network of sites (SPAs) for all rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I and all regularly occurring migratory species, with particular focus on wetlands of international importance.

Together with SACs, SPAs form a network of pan-European protected areas known as 'NATURA 2000' sites.

The Habitats Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade on the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, cut, uproot, destroy or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4.

This legislation was amended in January 2021: The main changes to the 2017 Regulations are:

- "the creation of a national site network within the UK territory comprising the protected sites already designated under the Nature Directives, and any further sites designated under these Regulations
- the establishment of management objectives for the national site network (the 'network objectives')
- a duty for appropriate authorities to manage and where necessary adapt the national site network as a whole to achieve the network objectives
- an amended process for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Regulations, given that the UK no longer provides reports to the European Commission
- arrangements replacing the European Commission's functions with regard to the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test where a plan or project affects a priority habitat or species
- arrangements for amending the schedules to the Regulations and the annexes to the Nature *Directives that apply to the UK."*

The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979)

The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979) aims to ensure conservation and protection of all wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats (listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention), to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to afford special protection to the most vulnerable or threatened species (including migratory species).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)

The WCA is the primary UK mechanism for statutory site designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]) and the protection of individual species listed under Schedule 1,2,5 and 8 of the Act, each subject to varying levels of protection.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

This legislation strengthens the provision of the 1981 WCA (as amended), both in respect of statutory sites such as SSSIs and protected species. It also places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities and other public bodies to further conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, thus providing a statutory basis to the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process, which began in 1994. Section 74 of the Act lists the habitat types and species of principal importance in England. The UK Biodiversity action Plan has now been superseded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' (July 2012), however, many of the species and habitats in the UK and local BAPs have not been updated and are still considered relevant to date.

A Bill to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to extend the right of public access to the countryside, including to woodlands, the Green Belt, waters and more grasslands; and for connected purposes is currently in second reading in the House of Commons (November 2022).

Appendix D: Bat Legislation

All bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by law - they're European protected species.

You may be able to get a licence from Natural England if you cannot avoid disturbing them or damaging their habitats, or if you want to survey or conserve them.

What you must not do

You're breaking the law if you do certain things including:

- *deliberately capture, injure or kill bats*
- *damage or destroy a breeding or resting place*
- *obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places*
- *possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it's in a structure or place of shelter or protection*

Either or both of the following could happen if you're found guilty of any offences:

- *you could be sent to prison for up to 6 months*
- *you could get an unlimited fine*

Activities that can harm bats

Activities that can affect bats include:

- *renovating, converting or demolishing a building*
- *cutting down or removing branches from a mature tree*
- *repairing or replacing a roof*
- *repointing brickwork*
- *insulating or converting a loft*
- *installing lighting in a roost, or outside if it lights up the entrance to the roost*
- *removing 'commuting habitats' like hedgerows, watercourses or woodland*
- *changing or removing bats' foraging areas*
- using insecticides or treating timber

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences