



Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment

1 The Stables, Bowling Bank, Wrexham LL13 9QF

Tim Pluves

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Executive summary

Arbtech Consulting Ltd. undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment at 1 The Stables, Bowling Bank, Wrexham LL13 9QF on 30/10/2018. The aim of the assessment was to consider the value and suitability of the structures for roosting bats.

The development proposals are for the conversion of existing outbuilding into living accommodation, extending existing property from a 2-bed dwelling into a 3-bed dwelling. A planning application has been submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council.

Recommendations - This is work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent

Survey feature	Recommendations
B1 (Bats) - Negligible	No further surveys. Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats as a result of the proposed works.
B1 (Birds) – No nests found during the survey	Any building/tree and scrub removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building/trees and scrub to be removed should be undertaken immediately prior to clearance by an experienced ecologist. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

For full justification of these recommendations, please go straight to section [4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations](#). Otherwise, the full report starts below.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech were commissioned by Tim Pluves to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 1 The Stables, Bowling Bank, Wrexham LL13 9QF. The assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust Publication *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, J. (Ed) 2016).

No previous reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd. A Preliminary Roost Assessment by J W Ecological Ltd was carried out in November 2011 and planning permission was granted to for conversion of barn to residential accommodation and tiles were reroofed.

1.2 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 40693 48987 and comprises an area of approximately 0.0.7ha. There are two buildings within the site boundaries. One building was surveyed as this will be affected by the proposed development.

1.3 Scope of the report

This report provides a description of all features suitable for roosting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on constraints to the proposals as a result of roosting bats, and summarises the requirements for any further surveys, to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve Planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

The aim of the assessment was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how they could use the site. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out, information will need to be requested from the local Records Centre COFNOD.
- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external survey and internal inspection where possible.
- An outline of likely impacts on any known roosts has been provided, based on current development proposals
- Recommendations for further survey and assessment have been made, along with advice on European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing if appropriate

A survey plan is presented in Appendix 1, the proposed Project Plan is included in Appendix 2 (where available), desk study results are provided in the Appendix 3 and a summary of relevant legislation can be found in Appendix 4.

1.4 Project Description

This report is prepared in support of a planning application that is being prepared for submission to Wrexham County Borough Council. The proposed development is described as: The conversion of existing outbuilding into living accommodation, extending existing property from a 2-bed dwelling into a 3-bed dwelling.

The proposed site plan is included in Appendix 2 (where available).

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study methodology

Existing bat records relating to the site and a surrounding 2km radius (the study area) are required to conform to national guidelines and these will need to be requested from COFNOD. The data search is confidential information that is not suitable for public release.

A review of the following information sources has also been undertaken to inform the assessment:

- Landscape structure using aerial images from Google Earth and OS maps
- Designated sites, habitat and granted EPSL records held on Magic.gov.uk.

2.2 Site Survey methodology

The survey was undertaken by Louise Sawrey (accredited agent Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22119-CLS-CLS from 23/08/2018) on 30/10/2018.

All features that will be impacted by the project proposals were assessed for their bat roosting and/or commuting habitat. The surveyor systematically surveyed all features suitable for bats and signs of bat activity.

For any surveyed buildings:

A non-intrusive visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the building(s) for potential access/egress points, and for signs of bat use. An internal inspection of the building was also made, including the living areas of derelict or abandoned buildings and the accessible roof spaces of all buildings, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space.

For any surveyed trees

A visual inspection from ground level using binoculars and where accessible an internal inspection of suitable roosting features using an endoscope, torch and ladders.

2.3 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for barn owls *Tyto alba*.

2.4 Suitability Assessment

All affected survey features on site were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present, in line with best practice guidelines (Collins, J. (ed) 2016). The features that dictate the likelihood of roosting bats are summarised in Tables 1 and 2 below. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of building and its context
Higher	Buildings/structures with features of particular significance for roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data).
Lower	A small number of possible roost sites/features, used sporadically by more widespread species. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

Table 2: Features of a tree that are correlated with use by bats

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of tree and its context
Higher	A tree 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.

Lower	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
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2.5 Limitations – evaluation of the methodology

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 the site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study.

There were no specific limitations to the survey.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results is provided below; full details are included in Appendix 3.

3.2 Designated sites

There are two statutory designated sites and no known non-statutory sites within the study area. Their location and extent are illustrated in Appendix 3. Table 3 provides details of the designated site including their reasons for notification.

Table 3: Designated sites within 2km radius of the site

Designated Site Name	Distance from Site (approx.)	Reasons for Notification from Natural England and/or BRD or LPA policy maps
Statutory Sites		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) – River Dee	900m west	The River Dee is notified for its nationally important transition through a range of river types from mesotrophic to eutrophic. It is also notified for Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> , otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> , club-tailed dragonfly <i>Gomphus vulgatissimus</i> and fluvial geomorphology. The River Dee lies within both England and Wales, and is notified as separate SSSIs –the River Dee (England) and the Afon Dyfrdwy-River Dee SSSI in Wales. The features for which the two SSSIs are notified, in particular the range of river types and migratory fish, depend upon the whole river ecosystem. The fluvial geomorphological interest occurs in both England and Wales. The English sections of the river are therefore notified as components of the whole ecosystem for which the river is a nationally important example, and because the otter, club-tailed dragonfly and the geomorphological interest occurs on the English reaches.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales) - River Dee and Bala Lake	900m west	As above.
Non-statutory Sites		
None	N/A	N/A

3.3 Landscape

A review of the designated sites, aerial photographs (Figure 1), the Magic database and OS maps has been undertaken. Collated together, the site's local bat habitat is described below:

The site is in a rural area of Wrexham. The landscape is dominated by arable fields with connecting hedgerows and trees. There are small, scattered woodland copses and tree lines around the area, which could be used for foraging and commuting. There are some residential dwellings in the surrounding area which provide bats with suitable roosting features i.e. missing and loose roof tiles. The River Dee is approximately 900m to the west of the site running north to south and this provides a further commuting route and key foraging resource for bats.

Priority habitats within 2km of the site are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Priority Habitat Inventory within 2km (Magic.gov.uk):

Habitat	Closest distance from site
Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)	~1850m southeast
Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non-Priority) (England)	~1950m east
National Forest Inventory (GB) – Broadleaved Woodland	~550 southeast
National Forest Inventory (GB) – Woodland (Young Trees)	~800m southeast
National Forest Inventory (GB) – Mixed Woodland (Mainly Conifer)	~1485m southwest

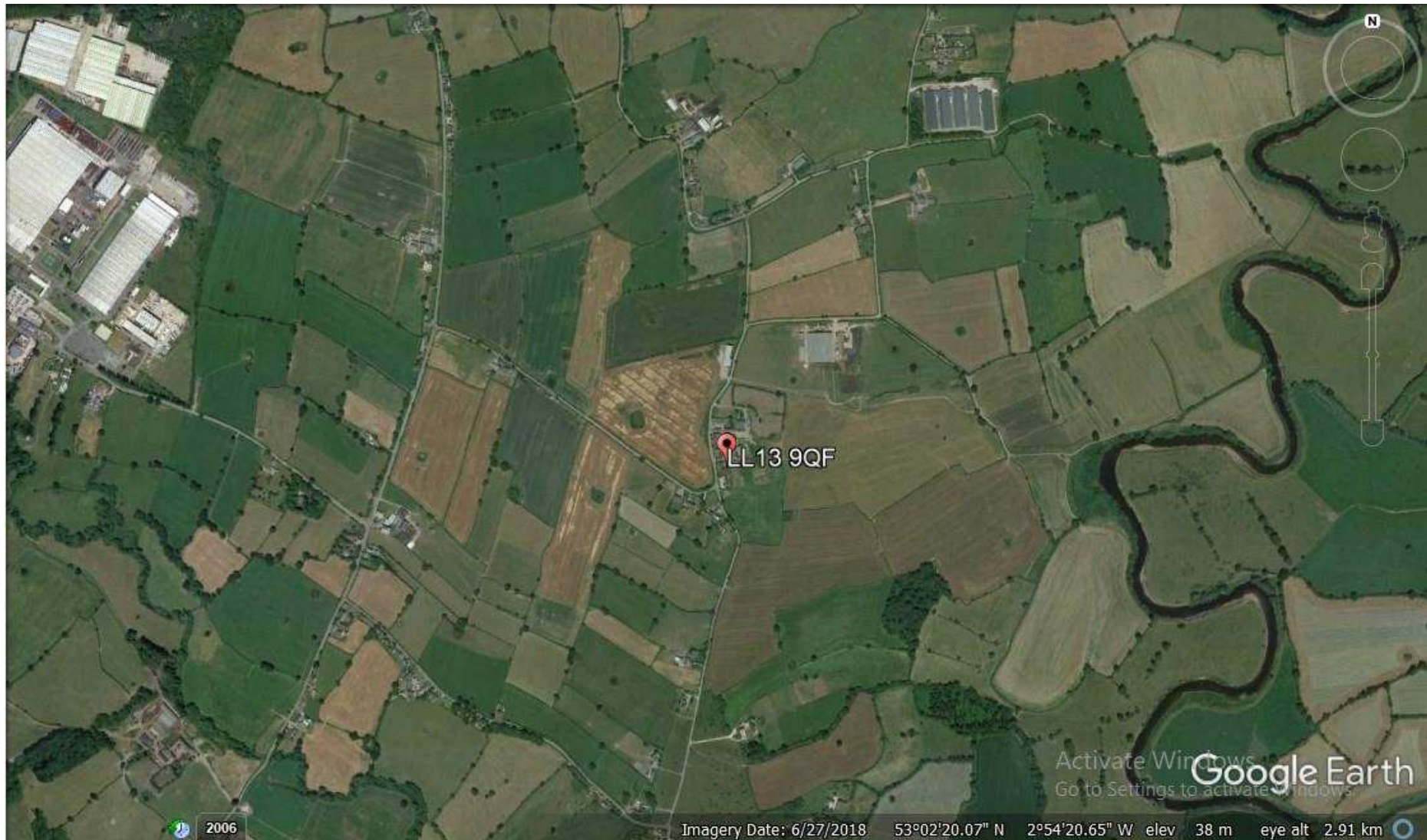


Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, showing landscape structure

3.4 Historical records

The County biological records centre COFNOD have been commissioned to provide bat records for within 2km of the site. These are analysed and summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Historical records of bats within 2km of the site

Common name	Scientific binomial	Number of records	Number of roost records	Maternity roost records
Unknown Bat	<i>Chiroptera</i>	3 records between 01/06/1991 and August 1992 200m from site.	0	0

There are common birds recorded within 1km of site. One barn owl was recorded 515m from site in 2011. No evidence of barn owls was found at the property during the survey.

A search of the Magic database for granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSMLs) for bats within a 2km radius found no licenced sites.

Table 6: Granted EPSMLs (bats) within 2km of the site

Case reference of granted application	Approx. distance from site	Bat Species Effected	Licence Start Date:	Licence End Date:	Impacts allowed by licence
None					

3.5 Field Survey Results

There is one survey building. This building is designated as B1 and is illustrated in the map in Appendix 1. The environmental variables recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Environmental variables during the survey

Date: 29/10/2018	
Temperature	5°C
Humidity	81%
Cloud Cover	34%
Wind	2mph
Rain	None

3.6 Site Feature descriptions and photos

Building B1 Description

Exterior Description

B1 is brick-built outbuilding with slate tiles which are in good condition as the building was re-roofed approximately five years ago as per previous Preliminary Roost Assessment by J W Ecological Ltd November 2011.

The east elevation is an open elevation.

There is a small storage area attached on the south elevation of B1 as shown by the red arrow in the photo opposite.

The open elevation will result in this area being less suitable for roosting bats as it is exposed to the elements and will therefore not provide the stable internal conditions (i.e. temperature and humidity) required.

Photos



The north and west elevation shown in the photo opposite.

There are three sky lights present on the west elevation which are tight fitting as they were installed within the last five years.



The plastic fascia boards have been replaced within the last five years and are tightly sealed with no gaps. The north elevation shown in photo opposite. The mortar at the edges of the tiles roof is in good condition.



The west elevation shown in the photo opposite.
The three skylights allow daylight into B1 which will
deter bats from roosting inside.



Interior description

The north gable end shown in the photo opposite.

The roof tiles are lined with a Breathable Roof Membrane (BRM) which has no tears.

The gaps in the gable end are sealed with expanding foam and therefore provide no suitable roosting areas for bats.

Photos



Tim Pluves

The roof structure of B1 facing the northern gable is shown in the photo opposite.

Timber beams are present within B1. These are in a good condition with no gaps present e.g. in mortice and tenon joints that could be utilised by bats.

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The northern subdividing wall of the storage area shown in the photo opposite.

The roof is lined with a Breathable Roof Membrane (BRM).

The gable end is tightly sealed with expanding foam providing no gaps for roosting bats.



The south elevation of B1 shown in photo opposite.
The gable end is tightly packed with insulation
preventing access by bats or birds.



Evidence of bats

No evidence of bats was located internally or externally during the survey.

Breeding birds and other incidental observations

No evidence of nesting birds was located internally and externally during the survey.

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

4.1 Informative guidelines

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation Regulations; see Appendix 3 for a summary of legislation protecting bats in the UK. Legislation protects all wild birds whilst they are breeding, and prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of any wild bird or their nests and eggs. Certain species of bird, including the barn owl, are subject to special provisions; it is an offence to disturb any bird or their young during the breeding season.

There are three possible outcomes of this survey, each with specific recommendations. These are outlined below:

Confirmed bat roost

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommends additional surveys for confirmed roosts. Three further surveys are required to characterise the bat roost present including species, roost type and access points to inform a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) application with Natural England. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). At least two of the surveys should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey (Collins, J. 2016).

Low, moderate or high likelihood of a bat roost present

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommends additional surveys for features assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats. One, two or three further surveys are required to confirm presence/likely-absence of a bat roost, based on a low, medium or high roost likelihood evaluation. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). If more than one survey is recommended, at least one of them should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey (Collins, J. 2016). The survey effort recommended at this stage is iterative and if bats are recorded emerging from the buildings, a further survey will be required to provide sufficient information to inform an EPSML application to Natural England.

Negligible likelihood of a bat roost present

Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. However, if bats are found during any stage of the development, work should stop immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted to seek further advice.

Appropriate justification for this assessment is provided in Section 3 and Tables 1 and 2 of this report.

4.2 Evaluation

Taking the desk-based assessment and site survey results into account, the following value for roosting bats has been placed on each site survey feature.

Table 8: Evaluation of building on site

Ref	Survey assessment conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations	Enhancements
B1	This building has negligible potential for bats.	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats as a result of the proposed works.	No further surveys. In the highly unlikely event that a bat is found at any point of the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for advice.	The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF and circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99 The developed site can be enhanced for bats by installing a minimum of two bat boxes on retained buildings e.g. 1FF Schwegler Bat Box (buildings & trees) Improved Cavity Bat Box (buildings & trees) Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south/south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance. Bat boxes should also be positioned away from any artificial light sources.

B1	No evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey; however, birds could use the open barn for nesting.	Any works which affect the building could have an impact on nesting birds.	Any building/tree and scrub removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building/trees and scrub to be removed should be undertaken immediately prior to clearance by an experienced ecologist. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.	Install three Schwegler bird boxes on retained trees/buildings on site e.g. Schwegler No 17 swift nest box, Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace Schwegler 1B nest boxes, Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes. Nest boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.
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5.0 Bibliography

- British Trust for Ornithology (2016) www.bto.org/about-birds/nnbw/putting-up-a-nest-box
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?
- Google Earth (2018) accessed on 30/10/2018.
- Magic database (2018) <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> accessed on 30/10/2018.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Appendix 1: Survey Plan

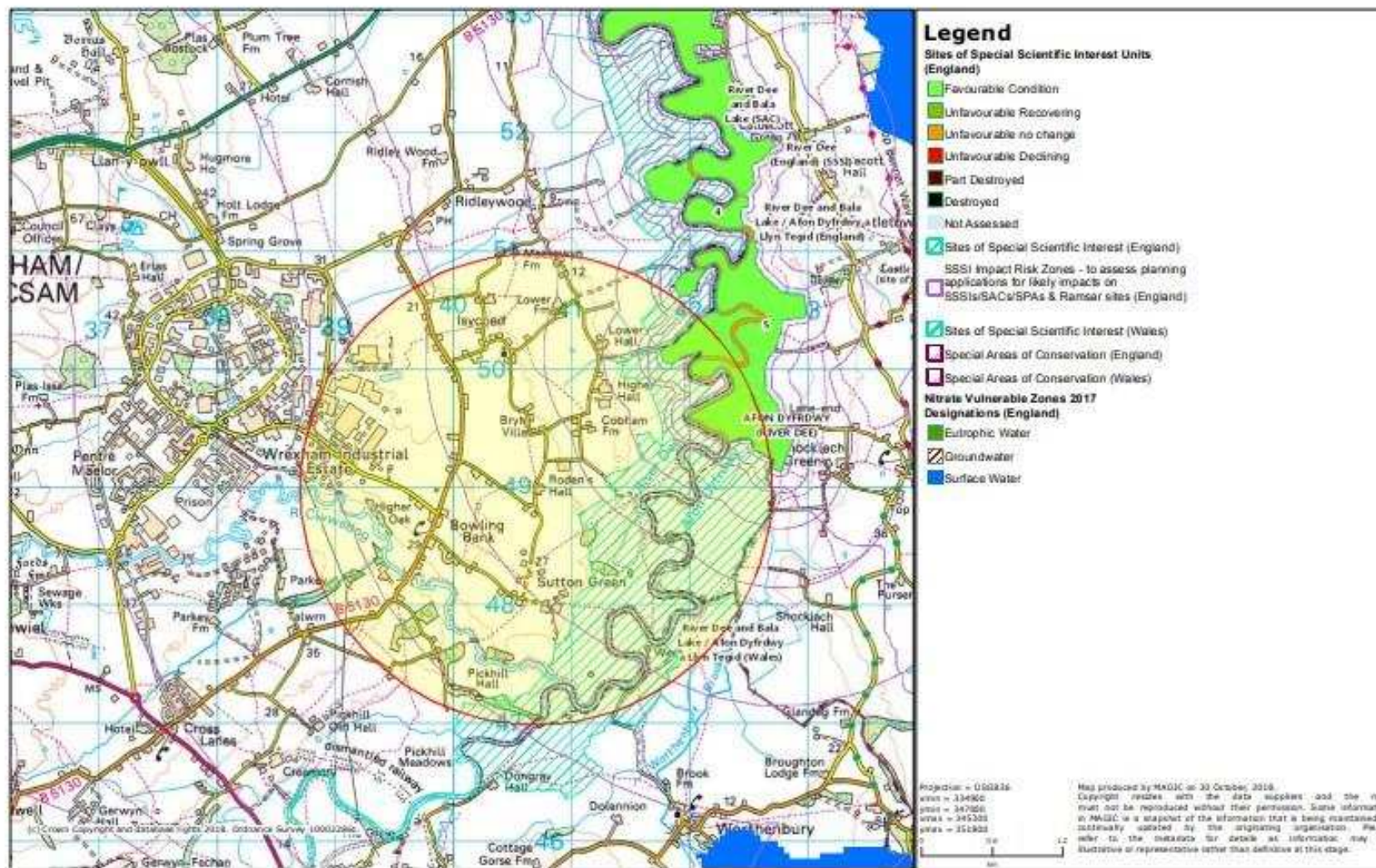


Appendix 2: Proposed Site Plan

Appendix 3: Desk Study Information

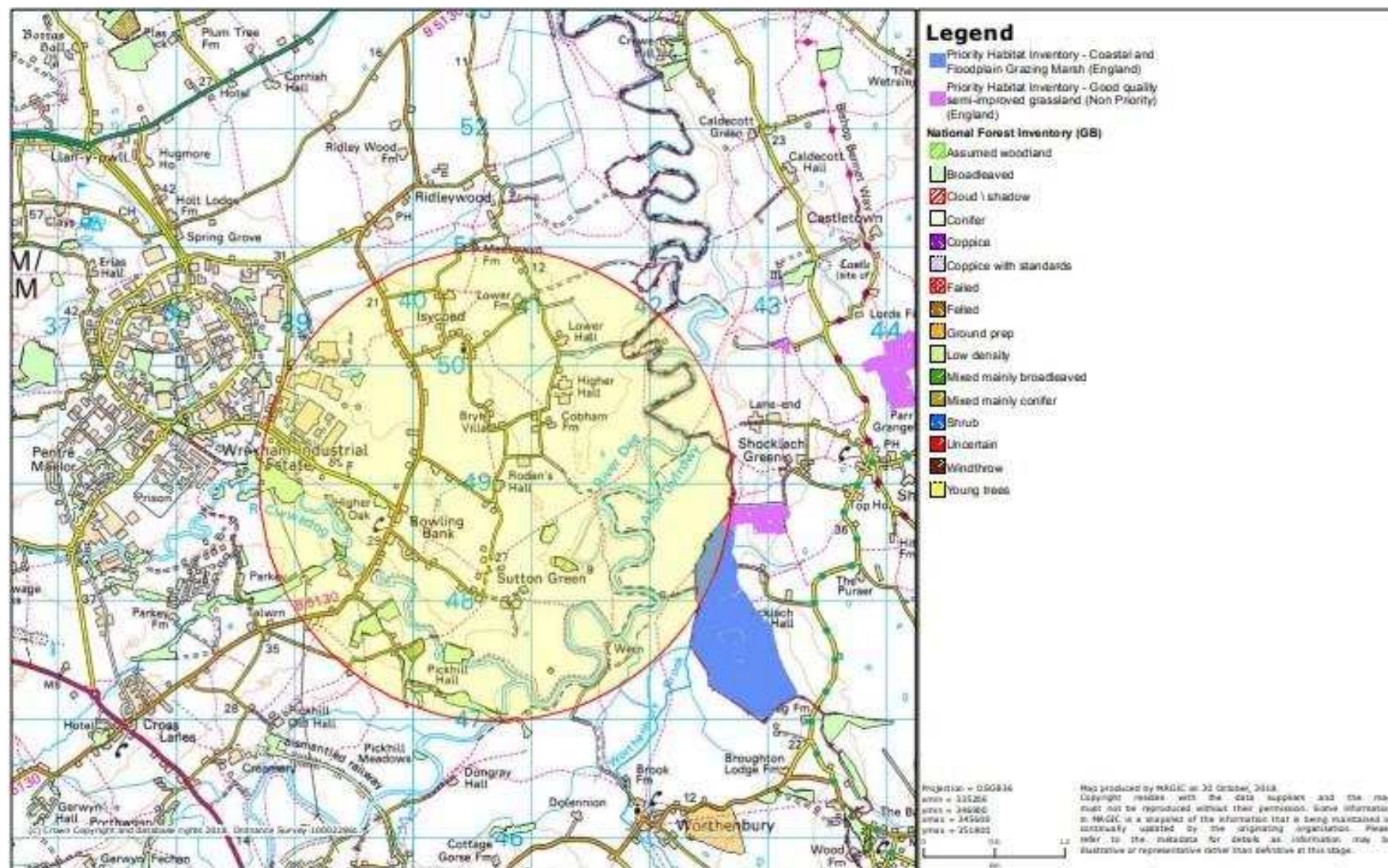
MAGiC

Designations within 2km of site



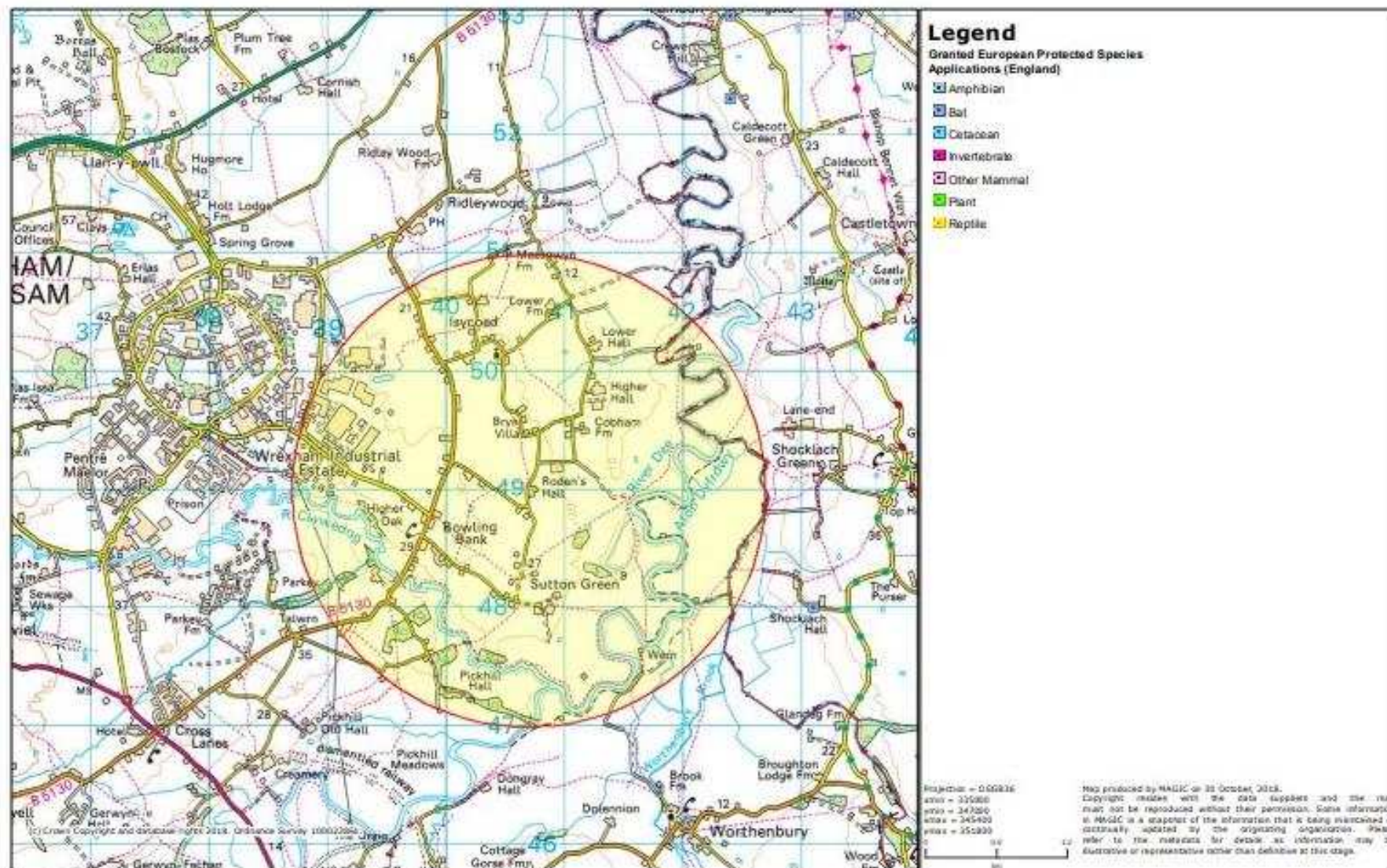
MAGiC

Habitats



MAGiC

EPSLs within 2km



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy related to bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. all bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species as:
 - a) to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

Effect on development works:

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant statutory authority (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored.

The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)***National Planning Policy Framework***

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.