BRITISH STANDARD 5837 TREE SURVEYS ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATION STUDIES TPO/PLANNIG ADVICE/ PROJECT MANAGEMENT
TREE INVENTORIES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLANS TREE PLANTING SCHEMES TPO RE-SURVEY



Villa Kontich,
Higher Barnes, Whitchurch

Bat Scoping Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology has carried out a Bat Scoping Assessment of a detached bungalow located at Villa Kontich, Higher Barnes, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3BA (National Grid Reference SJ 473 431).

The assessment has been carried out to identify any ecological constraints which should be considered during the proposed works. Development proposals are to convert the loft space and extend the property, including the construction of two new gable ends on the eastern and western elevations.

The survey was led by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking bat, habitat and protected species surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty-five years' experience. Richard holds a Level 4 Bat Class Licence, a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) and a Level 1 Barn Owl Licence.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides the findings of the bat scoping survey undertaken at the site.

The field survey examined the habitats present, with a focus on the building's suitability to support roosting bats. The survey also examined the suitability of the site to support other protected species, including breeding birds. The survey comprised a daytime assessment examining the interior and exterior of the building and the surrounding grounds.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of the habitats present, the report goes on to make recommendations for further survey work, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

Should bats be found during any subsequent surveys or during the works themselves, further survey work may be required and the works would likely need to be carried out under an appropriate European Protected Species (EPS) licence issued by Natural England.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ('EC Habitats Directive') which defines European protected species of animals.

British bat species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as 'any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection' (Bat Conservation Trust *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition 2023). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

1.3.2 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

The field survey comprised a site visit and an inspection of the building and surrounding grounds. The survey aimed to assess the site as to its suitability to support roosting bats and to identify suitable habitats for any other protected or notable species, including breeding birds. The survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures where required to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Daytime Bat Inspection

The building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following the standard methodologies prescribed in Natural England's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)[1] and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition (BCT 2023)[2].

The survey, comprising an inspection of the interior and exterior of the building, was undertaken during daylight conditions on 15th June 2026 using binoculars and a high-powered torch.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost, the survey aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs. The survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void, access points into the building such as gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and loose tiles, the complexity of any roof void, and daytime light levels within the void. Surrounding habitat features that could influence roost potential include the wider setting of the building and its proximity to significant linear features such as watercourses, mature hedgerows and wooded lanes, or to areas of woodland.

[1] Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

[2] Bat Conservation Trust (2023) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition'

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability with reference to the criteria set out in Table 1 below, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition. The survey also assessed the suitability of the site to support breeding birds.

Table 1 – Bat Roost Suitability Criteria

Suitability	***Description of Potential Roosting Habitats***
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels.
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. Structure has Negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground of features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or 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.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description

The study site comprises a detached bungalow located in a rural setting at Higher Barnes, near Whitchurch. The bungalow sits within a small vegetated garden, with a mixture of ornamental and native hedges along the southern, eastern and western boundaries and a length of fencing marking the northern boundary. A single small, semi-mature Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) is present at the south-eastern corner of the site.

The surrounding land use is predominantly agricultural, comprising mainly pasture with associated hedgerows and scattered areas of woodland. These habitats provide foraging opportunities for bats and connectivity within the wider landscape, which is considered to offer foraging habitat of moderate value. The site itself offers more limited foraging value to bats.

Photographs of the site are provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bat Scoping Assessment

The property comprises an early to mid-twentieth-century detached bungalow of brick construction with a hipped roof clad in Rosemary tiles with ceramic ridge and hip tiles. A small flat-roofed extension is present to the rear, the north-western face of which is rendered.

External inspection found the roof to be intact and in good condition, with the ridge and hip tiles well mortared in place. No missing or displaced tiles were observed, and all tiles appeared tightly fitted. The brickwork runs tight to the underside of the eaves and the masonry is well pointed throughout. No obvious external bat roosting features were identified.

The loft space was accessed and inspected internally. The void measures approximately 8 metres by 12 metres and is approximately 2.5 metres in height at the ridge. The loft is uninsulated and the internal face of the roof is unlined, with the internal face of the tiles comprising mortar which is largely intact. The ridge and hip beams were observed to be heavily cobwebbed. No bat droppings or other evidence of bat use were recorded, and no obvious potential bat access points were identified during the internal inspection.

Taking account of the well-sealed and well-maintained condition of the building fabric, the absence of any obvious potential roosting features, and the complete absence of any evidence of bat occupation, the building was assessed as offering **negligible** bat roosting potential.

3.2.2 Trees

A single small, semi-mature Scots pine is present at the south-eastern corner of the site. Owing to its small size and semi-mature form, the tree does not contain any potential roost features and is assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential.

3.2.3 Breeding Birds

The ornamental shrubs and boundary hedges within the garden offer suitable nesting habitat for birds during the breeding season. The building itself offers limited opportunity for nesting birds, given the well-pointed masonry and the tightly sealed eaves.

3.3 Summary & Recommendations

3.3.1 Habitats

A Bat Scoping Assessment has been completed of a detached bungalow located at Villa Kontich, Higher Barnes, Whitchurch, Shropshire. The site lies within a rural setting surrounded by pasture, hedgerows and scattered woodland. This wider landscape provides foraging habitat of moderate value and connectivity for bats. None of the habitats present within the site itself are considered to be of significant biodiversity value.

3.3.2 Bats

The daytime bat scoping inspection examined the building with regard to its suitability to support roosting bats. The building was assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential. The roof is intact and well maintained, with the ridge and hip tiles well mortared, tiles tightly fitted throughout, masonry running tight to the eaves and well-pointed brickwork. No potential bat roosting features were identified during the external or internal inspections, and no evidence of current or historic bat occupation was recorded.

No further bat surveys are considered necessary. Nevertheless, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is adopted during the works, whereby the roof is stripped in a careful manner, with the ridge and hip tiles removed by hand. In the unlikely event that any evidence of roosting bats is found during any phase of the works, operations should cease immediately and further advice be sought from a licensed bat ecologist. Should bats be found, the works would likely need to proceed under an EPS licence issued by Natural England.

3.3.3 Breeding Birds

The ornamental shrubs and boundary hedges within the garden could support nesting birds during the breeding season. Should any of these shrubs or hedges be cleared as part of the works, it is recommended that such vegetation removal avoids the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive). Where this is not possible, a check for nesting birds should be completed immediately prior to clearance by an appropriately qualified ecologist. Should an active nest be found, it must be left undisturbed until all young have fledged.

3.3.4 Other Protected Species

No other protected species are considered likely to be present at the site.

3.4 Enhancement Recommendations

3.4.1 Bat and Bird Boxes

It is recommended that the development be enhanced for bats and breeding birds through the installation of integral boxes within the brickwork of the two new gables. This should comprise at least one integral bat box (a suitable model being the Vivara Pro built-in bat box or similar) and at least one integral swift/sparrow box (a suitable model being the Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Box or similar). Swift bricks are also used by house sparrows and other small bird species and are therefore considered a 'universal bird brick'. The bat box should be fitted to the south west facing gable, whilst the swift box should be fitted to the north east facing gable.

The boxes can be built into the brickwork of the new gables so as to remain visually unobtrusive and to be permanently fixed in place. The integral bat and bird boxes should be positioned as close to the gable apex as possible, at a minimum height of 4 metres above ground level, Lighting proposals for the site should ensure that the bat box location is not illuminated by any artificial lighting.

4 Appendix

Photographs

Photograph 1 – South and east face of Bungalow



Photograph 2 – North face of bungalow



Photograph 3 – brickwork runs tight to eaves



Photograph 4 – Intact hip, ridge and roof tiles



Photograph 5 – View of loft space



Photograph 6 – Cobwebbed ridge and internal roof moratr

