Ecological Impact Assessment
At Bettisfield Methodist Church,
Bettisfield, Whitchurch
SY13 2LJ
On 24th June, 14th July
and 5th August 2026

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Ref: BE0626

Survey by:
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[redacted]

Requested by:
Kirsten Oakes
Site address

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1. Summary

The purpose of the report is to assess the potential ecological impacts of proposed work at a former chapel at Bettisfield, Whitchurch and advise on any mitigation measures to comply with local planning policy and government legislation.

The proposed scheme involves the conversion of a former chapel to a dwelling

The building and adjacent land were examined to establish the presence of or evidence of use by protected species of animals. A visual inspection was carried out to assess the potential or actual use by bats and birds, of the exterior and interior of the building. Dusk emergence surveys were carried out.
No evidence of use by birds or bats was found.

If any birds should gain access to the building and begin constructing nests during the development, then the work in that area must stop until the young have left the nests.
There is not considered to be any threat to the conservation status of bats or significant danger of harm to individuals. However, the site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.
A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/
If any bats are discovered during the work then work in that area should stop and a licensed bat worker contacted for advice.

Bat and bird boxes will be required as enhancement.

If the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures are taken there should be no impact on conservation status or danger of harm to any species and no loss of roosting sites, and a gain in biodiversity.

2. Introduction

Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM is an experienced wildlife surveyor, licensed bat worker and voluntary bat roost visitor. Registration number CLS0895 2015-12555-CLS-CLS (CL15 Bat Roost Visitor Level 1) and registration number CLS 0895 2015-12556-CLS-CLS (CL18 Bat Survey Level 2) (Natural England) and S086005/1 (Natural Resources Wales);
Licensed great crested newt worker, registration number 2016-19947-CLS-CLS (NE)
and S086057/1 (NRW)
This report was commissioned by the owner.
The site comprises a former chapel surrounded by hard standing.
The proposed scheme involves the conversion of a former chapel to a dwelling.
The purpose of the report is to identify and address any significant ecological effects which are likely to occur as a result of the proposed work. This is necessary to comply with local planning policy and government legislation and avoid any offence being committed. Also, to describe any compensation, mitigation and enhancement measures which should be taken.

3. Methodology

3.1. Scope of the Assessment

The report incorporates an ecological impact assessment, searching for use or potential use by any rare, threatened, endemic and non-native invasive species which might be associated with such a site in accordance with:
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and listed in:
Schedule 2. European protected species of animals
Schedule 5. European protected species of plants
[redacted]
Protected species which might be associated with such a site include bats and birds.
Dusk emergence surveys on were carried out in accordance with *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn)* (Collins 2016) and the Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys (*Bat Conservation Trust, May 2022*)

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3.2. Field Survey

The building was examined to establish the presence of or evidence of use by protected species of animals. A visual inspection was carried out to assess the potential or actual use by bats and birds, of the exterior and interior of the building. It was searched systematically for any signs of bats, including droppings, rub marks and urine stains at entrances to roosts and insect remains, such as moth or butterfly wings. Crevices were checked where possible.
Powerful lamps (LED Lenser P7) were used for examination under eaves. Binoculars were used to examine parts which were not otherwise accessible. Photographs were taken of all areas and those of relevance are shown in the appendices.

The preliminary survey was carried out on 24th June 2026 by Susan Worsfold. The building was assessed as having moderate potential for use by bats due to its location, structure, access to the roof and lack of physical evidence of bat use.

Dusk emergence surveys were carried out on 14th July and 5th August 2026 by Susan Worsfold, Anne Thackwell and Craig Thomas, who are experienced observers.
These were done in accordance with *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn)* (Collins 2016) and the Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys (*Bat Conservation Trust, May 2022*)
Frequency division detectors were used to record any bat sounds around the building for later analysis on the computer. These were Echo Meter Touch 2. The whole building was in view of the observers and infrared night vision aids (NVAs) were used alongside the observers as well as in areas where more detail was useful. These were Nightfox Whisker mounted on tripods, with additional IR torches.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions/Results

4.1 Designated Sites

The nearest designated site is Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 2 (Ramsar), Fen's Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses (NNR) and Fen's Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses (SSSI and SAC) 1km east.

4.2 Habitats

Site: Rural village location. The building is surrounded by hard standing on all sides. Adjacent land was pastoral/arable. The canal was 140 m north. The nearest pond was 280m south east and there were two others apparent or according to maps within 500m. There were several trees within 100m and a small area of woodland 150m west.. There was no significant woodland with 500 m. There was a good network of hedgerows within 500m, with several trees.
Chapel: Currently in use as storage. It is of one storey with a small loft which was inaccessible. Walls were of brick with no cavity, plastered internally. Doors and windows were intact. The roof was of slate, pitched, with no loose or damaged slates. There were a few small gaps between slates and at the verges. There were no verge boards or soffits.

4.3 Species and Species Groups

Birds
No evidence of use by birds was found.

Bats
No bats were seen to emerge from the building. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats. Three species of bat were recorded during the surveys.

Other protected species
There was no evidence of [redacted] and the site was not suitable for use by any other protected species.

5. Description of the Development

The proposed scheme involves the conversion of a former chapel to a dwelling. This will involve intrusive work to the roof due to the addition of rooflights at both pitches.

6. Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures

Designated Sites:
It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant impact on any designated sites due to the small scale of the development and distance from the sites.

Habitats:
No priority habitat is affected by the proposal. No significant vegetation is to be lost.

Species:

Birds
If any birds should gain access to the building and begin constructing nests during the work, then work in that area must stop until the young have left the nests.

Bats
There is not considered to be any threat to the conservation status of bats or significant danger of harm to individuals. However, the site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.
A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/
If any bats are discovered during the work then work in that area should stop and a licensed bat worker contacted for advice.

Residual Effects
None anticipated.

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit

A woodcrete crevice dwelling bat box to be fitted to the south west gable end, e.g. Vivaro Pro Low Profile Woodstone Bat Box. Further information is given in the bat box information pack available at https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes.
A woodcrete bird box suitable for small birds such as robin, tit species and sparrow to be fitted to the north east gable end, e.g. Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow Nest Box
Bat and bird boxes should be placed at least 2 m from the ground. They are available from NHBS, Wildcare and other suppliers.

9. Ecological Constraints

None identified.

10. Monitoring

Not considered necessary.

11. Conclusions

If the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures are taken there should be a gain in biodiversity and no net loss of roosting or nesting sites, nor any danger of harm to any species.

12. Bibliography

Bat Conservation Trust available at: http://www.bats.org.uk

BCT and ILP Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting available at: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Collins J. (Ed) (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora available at: jncc.defra.gov.uk

Google Maps available at: https://maps.google.com/maps

Magic Maps available at: http://magic.defra.gov.uk

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines,* Peterborough: English Nature

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLeish, A. P. (2004) *Bat Worker's Manual,* Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

UK BAP Priority Habitats available at: jncc.defra.gov.uk

Wildlife and Habitat Conservation available at: https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation

Appendix 13.1: Activity Surveys

Survey Conditions

Date	Sunset/ Sunrise	Start Time	End Time	Temp. Start °C	Temp. End °C	Cloud %	Wind 0-6	Rain
14/7/26	21:29	21:15	23:00	22	20	5	1	None
5/8/26	20:57	20:40	22:30	16	14	50	2	None

Observer or area	*Equipment*
Sue Worsfold (SW) north corner	Echo Meter Touch 2 + Nightfox Whisker
Anne Thackwell (AT) south corner	Echo Meter Touch 3 + Nightfox Whisker

14/7/26

Bats recorded:

First bat: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) 22.11
Others:
Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Bats observed:

22.02 1 bat flew from behind chapel SW to NE
22.13 1 bat in front of chapel
22.15 1 bat flew SW to NE
22.17 1 bat flew along road SE to NW to cul de sac and foraged around tree and gardens
22.20 1 bat foraging in front of chapel
22.25 2 bats flying together S to N
Sobsequent frequent foraging nearby 1-2 bats until 22.40

5/8/26

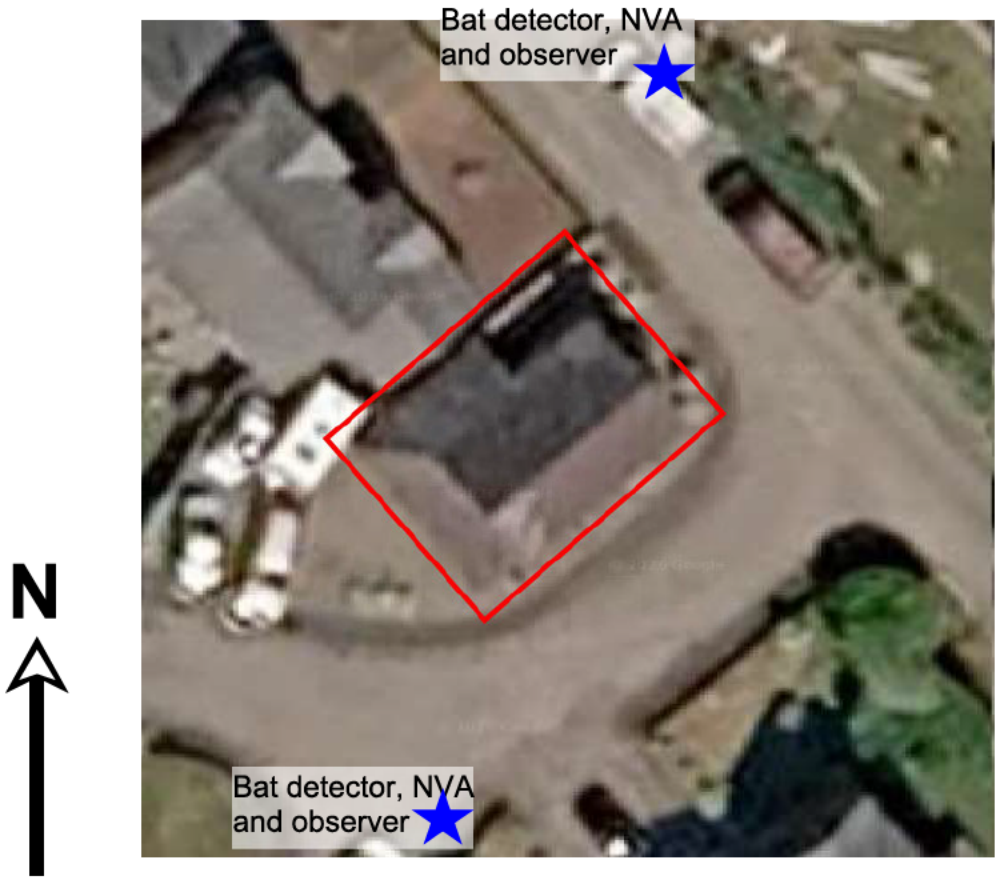
Observer or area	*Equipment*
Sue Worsfold (SW) north corner	Echo Meter Touch 2 + Nightfox Whisker
Craig Thomas (CT) south corner	Echo Meter Touch 3 + Nightfox Whisker

Bats recorded:

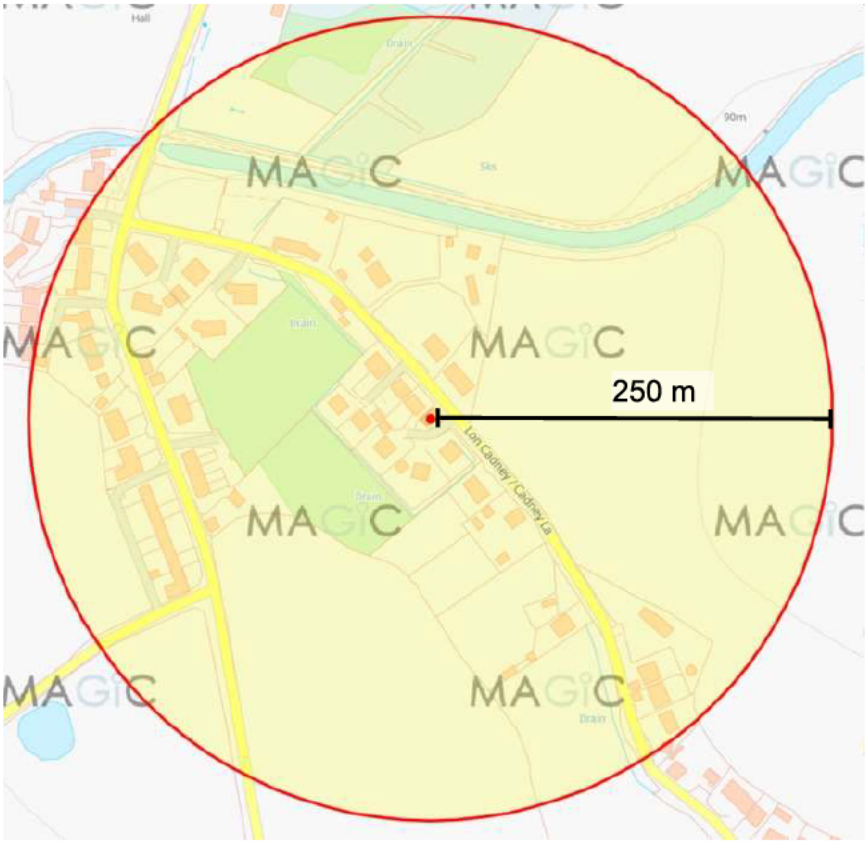
First bat: Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) 21.19
Others:
Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

Bats observed:
21.19 1 bat flew along road SE to NW
21:24 1 bat flew along road SE to NW
21.27 1 bat near gable end of adjacent building, then activety in same area until 21.33
21.30 1 bat SW to NE from cul de sac to road then went NW
21:37 1 bat flew SE to NW along road
21.38 1 bat flew SE to NW along road
21.52 1 bat flew SE to NW along road

Appendix 13.2: Aerial Photograph Showing Position of Observers



Appendix 13.3: Location map with Zones of Influence



Appendix 13.4: Photographs

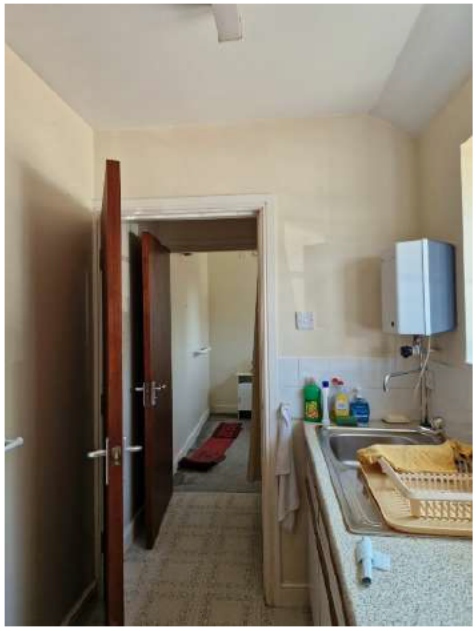






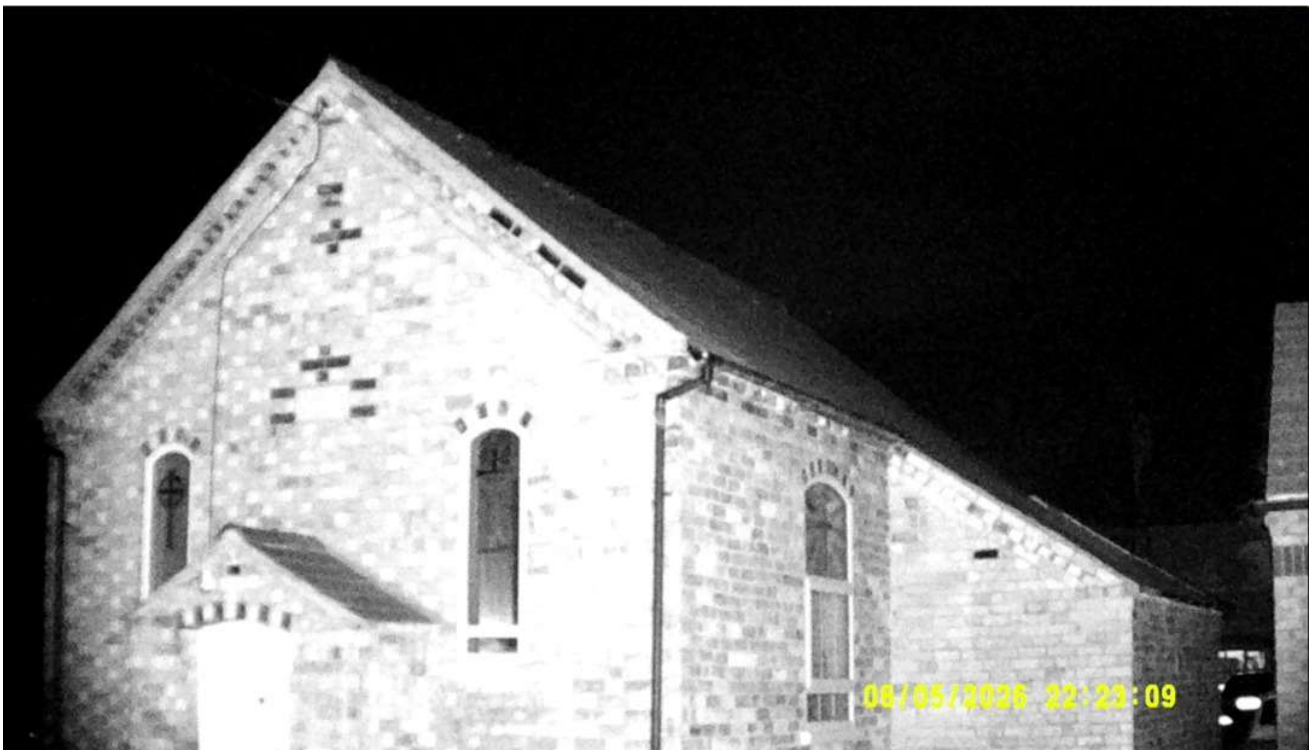




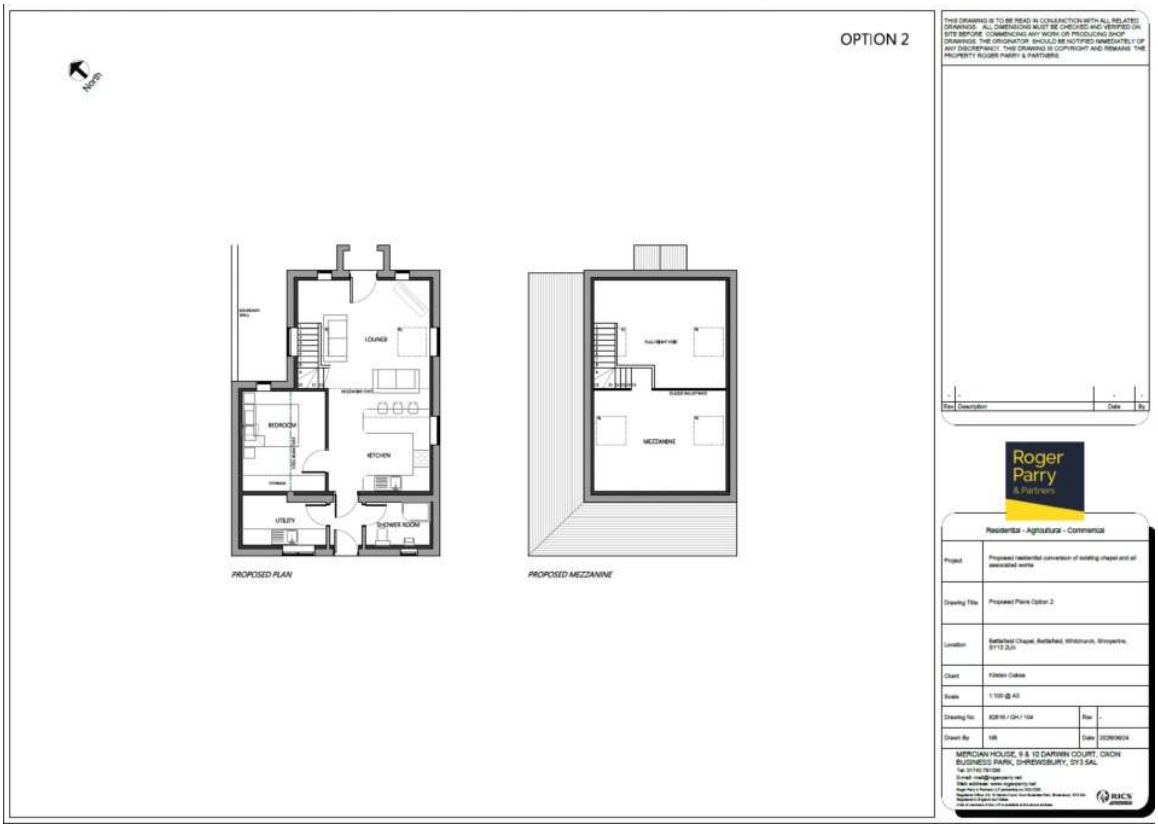


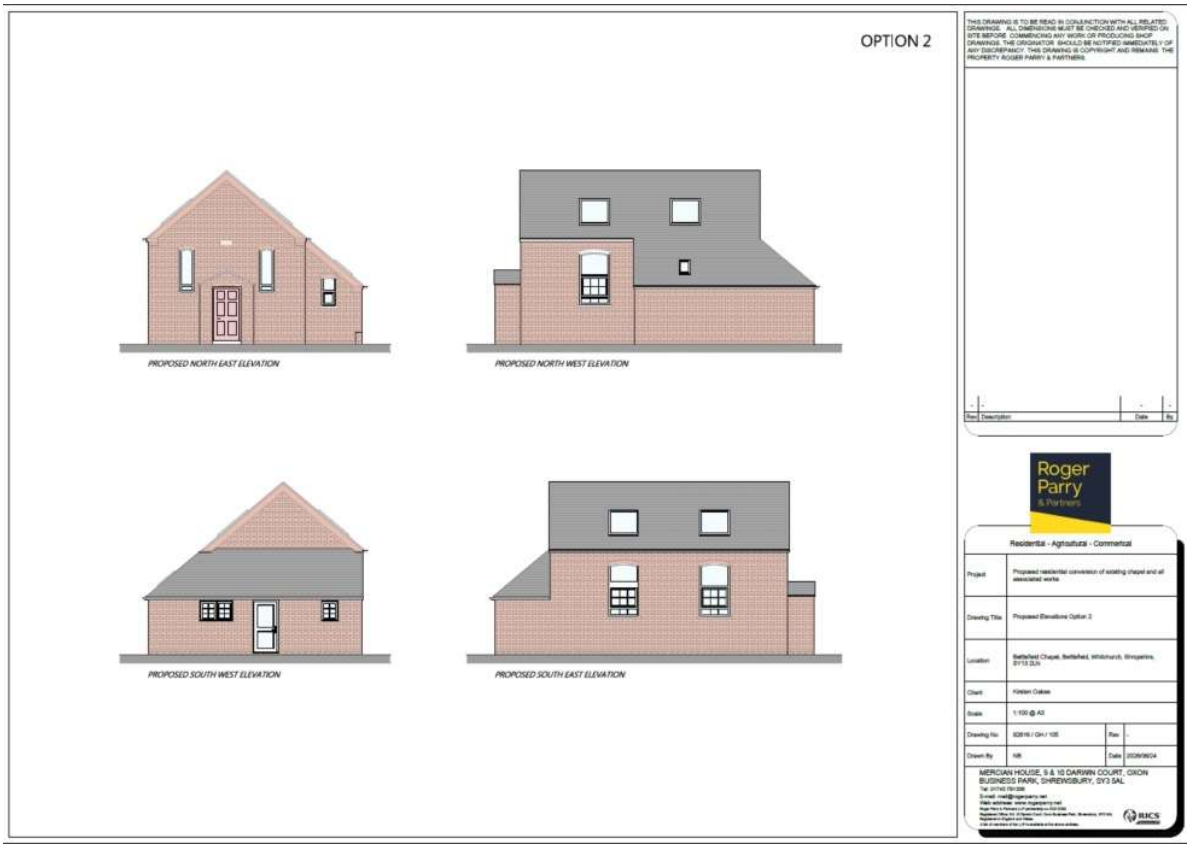
Appendix 13.4: Photographs From NVA





Appendix 13.5: Proposed Plans





Appendix 13.6: Legislation Relating to Bats

All species of bats in the UK are European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy a bat's breeding site or resting place (known as a roost), or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb a bat

Bats are the only mammals which can fly. They are warm blooded, they suckle their babies and are intelligent, social animals. British bats feed only on insects, of which they consume vast numbers to sustain their energetic lifestyles. A pipistrelle bat can eat up to 3000 midges in a single night!

We have 12 species of bat breeding in Wales. Many of these have suffered severe declines, not just in Britain but throughout Europe.

All British bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Bats have a unique relationship with humans, sometimes sharing our homes for part of the year. For this reason, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) deals with many hundreds of bat enquiries each year from householders.

Under the Habitats Regulations, it is an offence if you:

deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS
deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species
damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal
Disturbance includes, but is not limited to, any disturbance which is likely:

1. to impair their ability –
to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

2. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Defra and the Welsh Government will publish a joint guidance document on the interpretation of the offences relating to disturbance, and to damage and destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

There are other offences relating to possession, transport and sale.

NRW issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

If you are a householder and have concerns about bats at your property (other than queries related to planning applications or a development), contact the NRW Enquiry Line for advice, telephone 0300 065 3000

Appendix 13.7: Legislation Relating to Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected. It is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird,
- take, damage or destroy the nest of a Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle or Osprey (even if disused),
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built,
- take, damage or destroy an egg or any wild bird,
- possess any live or dead wild bird or the egg of any wild bird, or any derivative

Many rare birds are listed on Schedule 1, which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb a Schedule 1 bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturb dependent young of such a bird

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) issues licences for specific purposes, so that you can undertake legitimate work without breaking the law. See ‘Bird licensing’ for more information.