39 Main Road, Ratcliffe Culey, Atherstone

Prepared for: Mr & Mrs Vann

Bat Surveys - Presence/Likely-Absence

August 2025

Limitations

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Executive Summary

Background

The survey follows Collins (2023) Good Practice Guidelines. It provides recommendations for mitigation/compensation, if considered necessary. If a deviation from the guidelines has been made, this will be detailed in the Method Section.

The following report (which has been prepared with due consideration for various best-practice guidance and methodologies, including those of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM 2024) and BS 42020, details the findings and recommendations for the site at 39 Main Road, Ratcliffe Culey, Atherstone.

The client commissioned Birmingham Bat Surveys Ltd to undertake surveys to confirm bat presence/likely-absence[1], and roost characterisation if bats are present, as the proposals include for demolition of the existing buildings.

Results and Findings

No bat activity was observed associated with the buildings on either survey visit; although commuting and foraging bats were observed both on and adjacent to site.

The findings suggest the likely-absence[2] of roosting bats within the building.

Bat activity levels on site were found to be moderate, with no heavy use of any specific features identified.

Impact Assessment and Recommendations

As the likely-absence[3] of roosting bats within the building has been established, and no significant commuting or foraging routes observed, no impacts on bats are anticipated from the proposed works.

This survey result is valid for a period of 24 months from the final survey date. Should works not take place within that time period, then an update survey may be required.

[1] It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence, so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a "likely-absence".

[2] It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence, so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a "likely-absence".

[3] It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence, so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a "likely-absence".

1.0 Introduction

The clients, Mr & Mrs Vann, commissioned Birmingham Bat Surveys Ltd to undertake Bat Presence/Likely-absence Surveys for the site at 39 Main Road, Ratcliffe Culey, Atherstone. Planning permission is being sought for redevelopment of the site.

A previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, conducted by LWM Traded Services Ltd on 18/07/2025 found potential for roosting bats within the buildings referred to as B1, B3 & B5. That appraisal recommended two further surveys to confirm the presence/likely-absence of roosting bats and associated entrance/egress points into the building, and to identify species and levels of use.

It was specified that these should consist of two dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry surveys undertaken within the peak activity period (May to September), to be spaced a minimum of three weeks apart.

Biological records were previously requested (as part of the Preliminary Roost Assessment) to give the report context and allow a study of the surrounds. The information is often sensitive and therefore a synopsis is provided and the full data released separately for verification.

The survey can be conducted between May and September with the optimal season for surveying maternity colonies limited to mid-May to August inclusive, however it can also be limited due to bad weather, when bats are less active.

The aims of the survey were:

- To find or record the emergence of bats from a building or built structure.
- To find roosts by tracking back bat flight paths or observing dawn flight activity at roosts.
- To determine presence/likely-absence of species i.e. the species present in a given area.
- To determine the intensity of bat activity both spatially and temporally i.e. to help estimate bat populations.
- To determine the type of activity, most usually foraging (e.g. by feeding buzzes), commuting (e.g. by high directional pass rates) and mating (e.g. by mating social calls).

If bats, evidence of their recent activity or the emergence of bats from a roost are found during our survey, this report will make recommendations for further survey work and/or design mitigation, where this is consistent with national guidelines, and assessed appropriate by the surveyor in the context of the proposal. These recommendations will be based on an evaluation of which of the following roost categories may be present onsite (if any):

Table 1: Bat roost status definitions

Status	Description
Hibernation Site	Where bats may be found during the winter. (This is assessed within the context of this report).
Daytime Summer Roost	Used by males and/or non-breeding females (Seasonal limitations prevent robust analysis of this).
Night Roost	Where bats rest between feeding bouts during the night but are rarely present during the day.
Feeding Roost	Where bats temporarily utilize feeding perches and stations to eat an item of prey.
Transitional (or Swarming) Site	Where bats may be present during the spring or autumn (This cannot be assessed within the context of this report).

Summary of legislation and National Planning Policy that protects bats in England:

- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.
- Countrywide and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF").
- Circular 06/05.

This legislation makes it illegal 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 a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats, or any part of a bat.

A bat roost is well-defined by the legislation as the 'resting place' of a bat. However, the word roost is used to describe this resting place and is generally accepted as the word describing where a bat (or bats) rest, feed or sleep.

2.0 Method

The survey follows Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

Surveyors are positioned around the building(s), tree or structure in order to cover all elevations. The survey then observes for emerging or re-entering bats from suitable features such as holes, cracks and crevices. Notes on commuting and foraging bats are also made in the surrounds. Activity is recorded using IR cameras and full-spectrum audio equipment. This is then analysed post-survey; first through manual viewing of the survey footage at 1.5x speed, and then quality controlled by reviewing 'motion events' identified by the DVRscan AI motion analysis program.

If a deviation from the guidelines has been made the reason and justification will be explained below: -

No deviation from the standard guidelines has been made for this survey.

Table 2: Habitat value (likelihood) of bat presence assessed against Collins (2023) guidelines Source: Adapted from Collins (2023) pp 35, Table 4.1.

Likelihood of bat presence (Habitat Value)	Features that bats can and will use, regardless of evidence being present.
Confirmed Bat Presence	Bats are found to be present during the survey. Evidence of bats is found to be present during the survey.
Higher likelihood of bat presence.	Pre-20th century or early 20th century construction. Agricultural buildings of traditional brick, stone or timber construction. Large and complicated roof void with unobstructed flying spaces. Large (>20 cm) roof timbers with mortice joints, cracks and holes. Entrances for bats to fly through. Poorly maintained fabric providing ready access points for bats into roofs, walls, bridges, but at the same time not too draughty and cool. Roof warmed by the sun, in particular south facing roofs. Weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles with gaps. Low level of disturbance by humans. Bridge structures, follies, aqueducts and viaducts over water and/or wet ground.
Lower likelihood of bat presence.	Modern, well-maintained buildings or built structures that provide few opportunities for access by bats.

	Small, cluttered roof space. Buildings and built structures comprised primarily of prefabricated steel and sheet materials. Cool, shaded, light or draughty roof voids. Roof voids with a dense cover of cobwebs and no sections of clean ridge board. High level of regular disturbance. Highly urbanised location with few or no mature trees, parkland, woodland or wetland. High levels of external lighting.
Negligible likelihood of bat presence.	No features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

Notes on using this table

1 The features listed here may not be indicative of use of the site by bats during winter or spring.

2 Pre-1914 buildings may present the greatest likelihood of providing roost space for bats due to their design, materials used and age. Pre-1990 buildings, especially when close to good foraging habitat, and with favoured features such as cavity walls and soffits, also have a high likelihood of providing roost sites for some bat species.

3 Post-1990 buildings are generally less likely than older buildings to house roosts; however, some modern designs provide access to suitable roosting spaces for bats. Pipistrelles in particular occupy modern buildings and built structures providing that there are suitable access gaps (> 8mm) and provided the structure has appropriate characteristics for roosting.

3.0 Results

The following section details the results of the desk study, inspection and survey. The desk-study includes information from the magic.degfra.gov.uk database, other online information sources, and map/aerial photo information. The field surveys section details the building, structure or tree (numbered for reference), description of any evidence found and habitat value if no evidence has been located.

3.1 Desk Study

The desk study is centred on Grid Reference SP 3264 9962.

3.1.1 Designated sites

The survey area is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations, and there are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. There are however Local Wildlife Sites;

- Manor Farm Meadow (LWS) lies approx. 1.6km Northeast, and is an area Mesotrophic grassland, with stream.
- Sheepy Magna Churchyard (LWS) lies approx. 1.6km North, and is an area Mesotrophic grassland.

The site does also fall within the Impact Risk Zones of SSSI further afield.

The site does not share similar habitats or strong connectivity with any of these LWS or SSSI however.

3.1.2 Landscape

A search of the Magic.defra.gov.uk database identified a small fragments of deciduous woodland present within 2km of the site (the closest lying approx.. 1km East of site). There were also areas of floodplain grazing marsh and good quality semi-improved grassland; the closest of which lies approx. 500m to the West of site. These habitats are likely to be classified as habitats of principle importance, and of particular value to bats. None are adjacent to site however, nor do they show strong connections to site.

A review of aerial photographs (Figure 1) and OS maps shows the site has only limited potential for importance in the context of the surrounding landscape; lacking boundary features connecting blocks of habitat through the wider hedgerow network or otherwise providing suitable habitat corridors for bats.

Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, showing landscape structure © Google 2025

3.1.3 Historical records

A search of the magic.defra.gov.uk database found no European Protected Species Licences (EPSML) that had been granted within 2km of the site.

3.2 Field Surveys

The following section details the structures reference, bats located, evidence located and observed emergence/re-entry.

Table 3: Survey conditions

Date	Timings Start/end sunset/ sunrise	Structure reference/ location	Equipment Used	Weather: Start	Weather: Finish
30/07/2025	20:30 - 23:00 Sunset: 21:04	B1, B3, B5	EMT2 Pro Peersonic Nightfox Swift 2 Pro	Temp: 15˚C Dry/Humid Cloudy: 80% Wind: f1 Rain: None	Temp: 13˚C Dry/Humid Cloudy: 50% Wind: f1 Rain: None
Comments (to include # of surveyors used for each visit): Four surveyors were positioned around the buildings (see Appendix 1), with recording equipment (audio & IR visual) deployed at six locations.					
28/08/2025	19:30 - 22:10 Sunset: 20:06	B1, B3, B5	EMT2 Pro Peersonic Nightfox Swift 2 Pro	Temp: 19˚C Dry/Humid Cloudy: 10% Wind: f1 Rain: None	Temp: 15˚C Dry/Humid Cloudy: 30% Wind: f1 Rain: None
Comments (to include # of surveyors used for each visit): Four surveyors were positioned around the buildings (see Appendix 1), with recording equipment (audio & IR visual) deployed at six locations.					

Table 4: Results and observations of the surveyors located around B1. Surveyor locations, bat activity and emergence/re-entry points are shown on maps in appendix 1 of this report.

Surveyor Location	Dates and Times	Bat Activity Observed
A	30/07/2025 20:30 - 23:00 Sunset: 21:04	A single common pipistrelle (CP) *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* was observed commuting across site at 21:21. CP observed flying into B4 through the open doorway at 21:25, and foraging briefly before emerging again at 21:26. Occasional CP foraging activity across site from 21:33 until 21:47 and from 22:09 until 22:52, by a minimum of two bats. Noctule (Noc) *Nyctalus noctula* heard (not seen) at 21:46.
B	As above	Occasional CP foraging activity over the field to the East of site from 21:37 until 22:24, by a minimum of two bats. A single brown long-eared bat (BLE) *Plecotus auritus* was observed commuting across the field at 22:31. No observations associated with the buildings on site.
C	As above	Occasional CP foraging activity heard (not seen) from 21:26 until 21:34 and from 22:20 until 22:31. N heard (not seen) at 21:46 No observations associated with the buildings on site.
D	As above	Occasional CP foraging activity in the courtyard in the centre of site from 21:14 until 21:34, by a minimum of one bat. Each time, the bat arrived from the Southeast, and departed in the same direction. Individual CP seen commuting across site at 21:21. Occasional CP foraging activity over the field to the East of site from 21:37 until 22:24, by a minimum of two bats. No observations associated with the buildings on site.
A	28/08/2025 19:30 - 22:10 Sunset: 20:06	Occasional individual CP commuting across site from 20:36 until 21:09. Occasional CP foraging over hardstanding areas on site from 20:36 until 20:58. Noctule (Noc) *Nyctalus noctula* heard (not seen) at 20:15 and 21:04. No observations associated with the buildings on site.

B	As above	Occasional CP commuting and foraging activity heard (not seen) from 20:32 until 21:53. No observations associated with the buildings on site.
C	As above	Occasional CP commuting and foraging activity heard (not seen) from 20:41 until 21:05. N heard (not seen) at 21:04. No observations associated with the buildings on site.
D	As above	Occasional individual CP commuting across site from 20:36 until 21:09. Noctule (Noc) *Nyctalus noctula* heard (not seen) at 21:04. No observations associated with the buildings on site.
B	As above	Occasional CP foraging activity within woodland and to east of B1 from 19:22 until 19:38 and from 19:56 until 21:01. No observations associated with the building.

4.0 Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

The following section details the conclusions, discussion and recommendations in the context of the proposed works.

Conclusion and Discussion

No bat activity was observed associated with the buildings on either survey visit; although commuting and foraging bats were observed both on and adjacent to site.

The findings suggest the likely-absence of roosting bats within the building.

Bat activity levels on site were found to be moderate, with no heavy use of any specific features identified.

Potential Impact

As the likely-absence of roosting bats within the building has been established, and no significant commuting or foraging routes observed; no impacts on bats are anticipated from the proposed works.

Recommendations

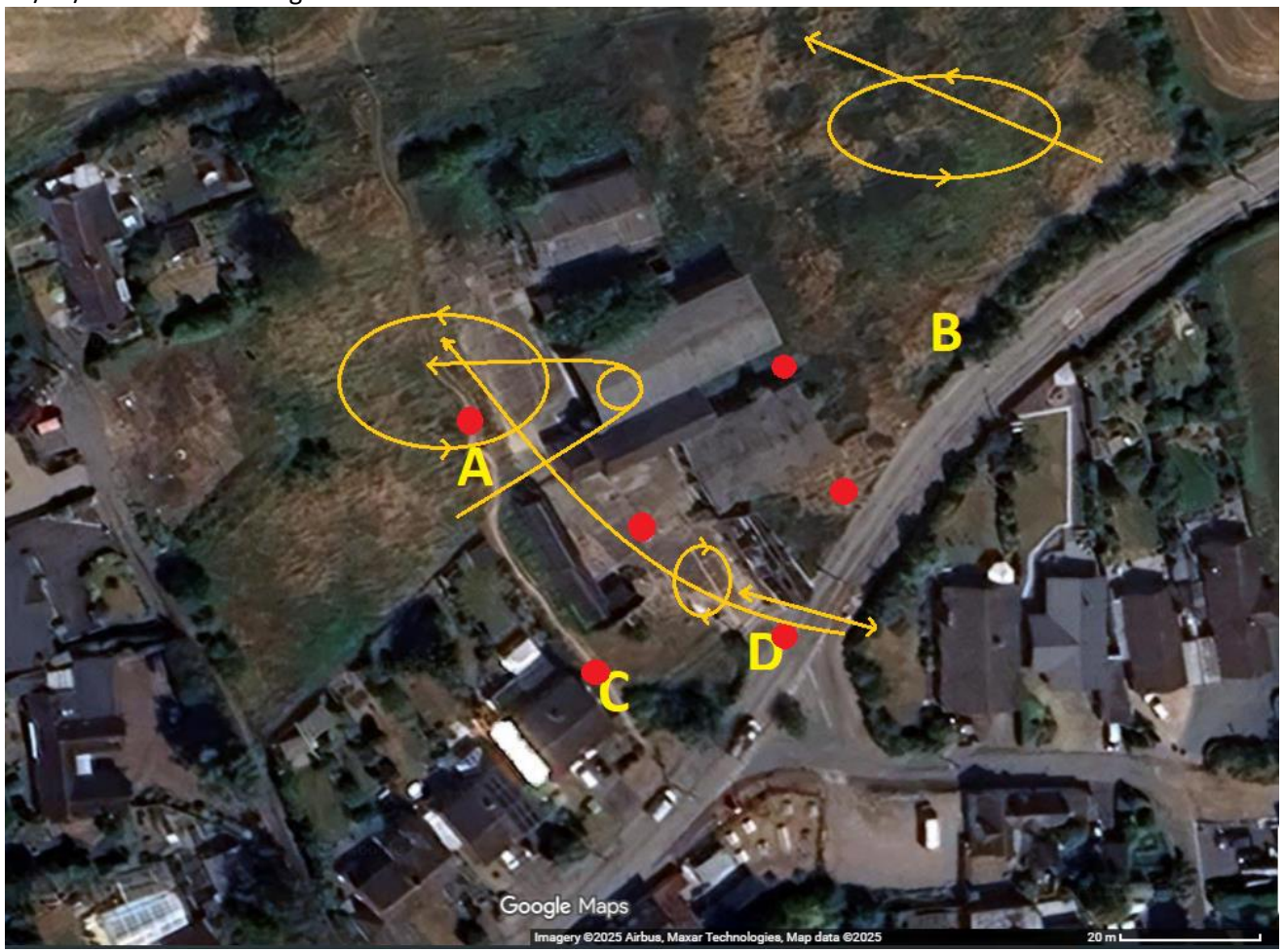
This survey result is valid for a period of 24 months from the final survey date. Should works not take place within that time period, then an update survey may be required.

5.0 References

- Collins, J. (ed), (2023), Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition, BCT.
- Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition – Amendments and Q & A. - BCT, March 2024
- Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys Bat Conservation Trust, May 2022
- Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99 http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147570.pdf

Appendix 1: Activity Maps

30/07/2025 - Dusk emergence



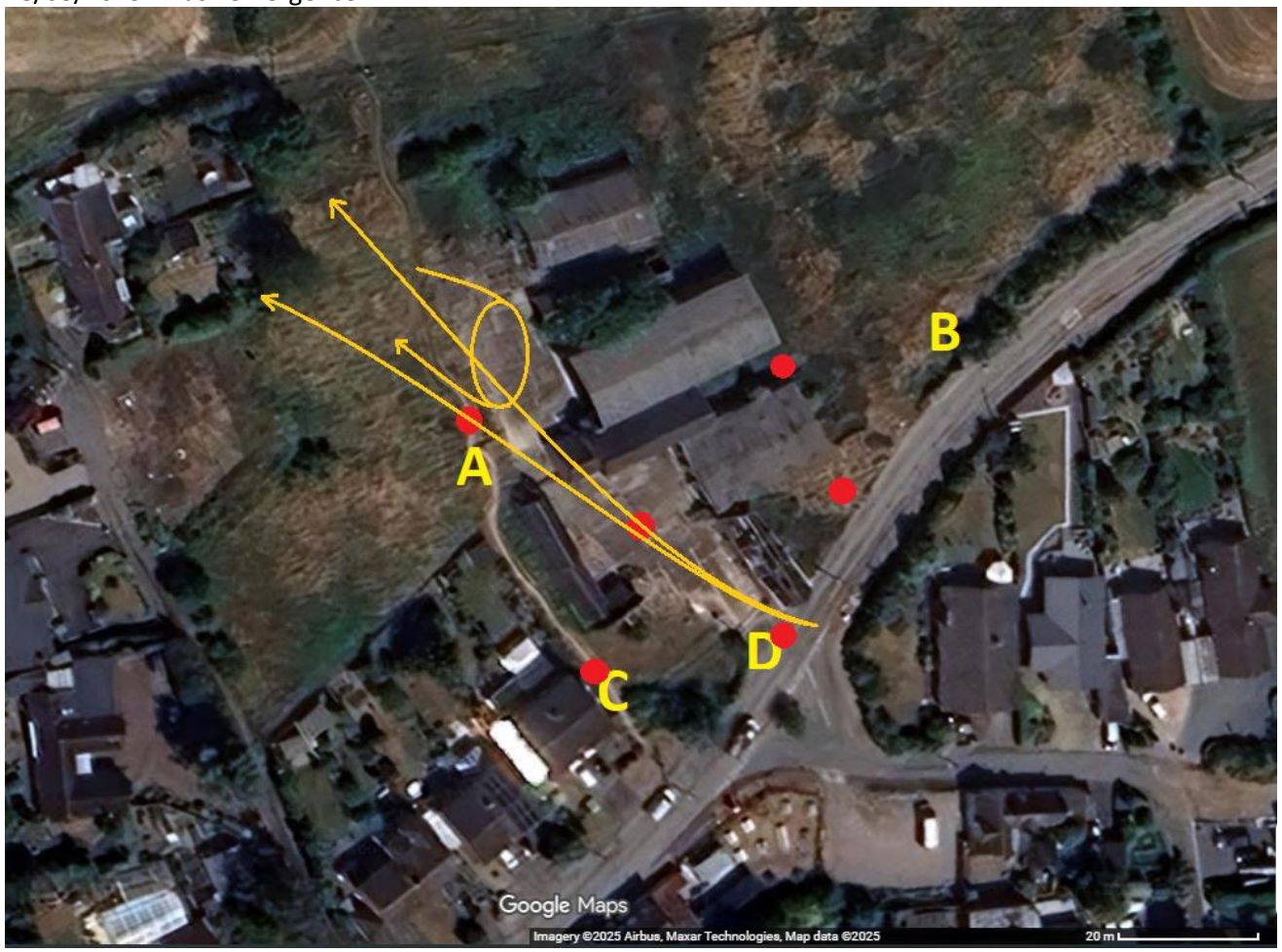
Recording equipment

A Surveyor

Bat activity

Direction of emergence

28/08/2025 - Dusk emergence



Recording equipment

A Surveyor

Bat activity

Direction of emergence