

The Croft 4 Main Street Ambaston Derbyshire

Bat Survey Report

Client: Mr & Mrs Mulligan-Freeman

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FIGURE 1: Buildings Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Mulligan-Freeman by Jenny Wheeldon, an Ecologist who is a full member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) with over 15 years experience in the field of Ecological Consultancy and who holds a protected species license for bats as well as being a competent all round Ecological Consultant.
- 1.2 Field surveys and reporting work has been conducted in accordance with the CIEEM: Code of Professional Conduct and Report Writing Guidance. The relevant best practice guidelines for surveys and mitigation have also been adhered to wherever relevant and any deviations from these have been explained and/or justified by the author.
- 1.3 The surveys and report were completed on behalf of the clients, in respect of proposals for demolition of a bungalow and outbuilding at The Croft, 4 Main Street, Ambaston, Derbyshire DE72 3ES (Central OS grid Ref: SK429324) hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.4 The objective of the surveys as detailed in this report was to identify the presence, or the potential for the presence, of bats and also breeding birds whose disturbance may require consent under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This report contains the results of these surveys and recommendations for further surveys and/or mitigation as required.

Site Description and Context

- 1.5 The application site was located along Main Street in the village of Ambaston, Derbyshire (Grid Ref. SK 429324). The site was located within a rural location with neighbouring residential properties within large, mature gardens immediately adjacent to the north, south and west. To the east was a small area of woodland with pastoral farmland including boundary hedgerows and trees dominating the wider landscape.
- 1.6 The site consisted of a bungalow (B1) and an outbuilding (B2) set within a large, mature garden including amenity grassland, flower beds and mature trees and shrubs.

Relevant Legislation

- 1.7 All 18 British bat species and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 as amended and are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017. Combined, this legislation means that it is illegal to:
- Deliberately or intentionally kill, injure, or take a bat.
 - Deliberately, intentionally, or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not)
 - Deliberately, intentionally, or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.
- 1.8 All birds are protected whilst on the nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Potential Roost Assessment

- 2.1 The site included a single storey residential bungalow with attached garage B1 which was unoccupied at the time of the visit. It also included a separate outbuilding in the north west corner of the garden (Figure 1: Building Plan).
- 2.2 The buildings were assessed for their potential to provide suitable roosting for bats in accordance with current survey guidelines (Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust (2016)).

External / Internal Building Assessment

- 2.3 The external features of the building were assessed to determine the potential for roosting bats. Structural features and suitable access points such as small gaps under eaves/soffit boards, raised or missing ridge tiles, gaps through degraded mortar and gaps at gable ends were recorded.
- 2.4 Where potential access points were identified evidence of bat usage was searched for including urine staining and the presence of bat droppings within or beneath the potential access points. The presence of heavy cob-webbing and general detritus around or within potential access points was considered as an indicator that bats had not recently used the area.
- 2.5 An internal inspection of the building consisted of a search for potential roosting features (PRFs), access points and evidence of bats inside the buildings. Evidence of a roost was determined by the presence of a dead or live bat(s), concentrated piles or scattered droppings, food remains such as insect wing fragments as well as scratch marks and/or staining on internal beams etc.
- 2.6 In addition to bats the surveys also considered any presence of nesting birds or evidence of use such as droppings and nesting material.

Nocturnal Surveys

- 2.7 Both buildings were considered to have potential roosting features which could be used by bats and therefore additional nocturnal surveys were recommended in accordance with current survey guidance.
- 2.8 The nocturnal surveys were completed at dusk on 3rd May 2020 and on building B2 at dawn on 17th May 2020 by experienced ecologists including licensed bat worker Jenny Wheeldon (NE Licence CL18 2015-12340-CLS-CLS).

- 2.9 The surveyors were positioned such that all aspects of the buildings which contained potential for use by bats were observed.
- 2.10 The dusk emergence survey started approximately 15 minutes before sunset at 20:15 and finished at least 90 minutes after sunset at 22:00. The dawn survey on B2 started approximately 1.5 hours before sunrise at 04:30 and finished 15 minutes after sunrise at 05:20.
- 2.11 During the nocturnal surveys, the location and species of any bat observed emerging from/entering the buildings was recorded and the level of activity within the vicinity was also noted. To aid species identification ultrasonic bat detectors (Petterson M500-384, Anabat Walkabout and Bat Box Duet) were used.
- 2.12 The surveys were conducted in appropriate conditions, i.e. ambient temperature 10°C with little wind and no rain.
- 2.13 This methodology considers the statutory guidance from English Nature¹ (now Natural England) and further guidelines introduced by the Bat Conservation Trust² (BCT).

Constraints

- 2.14 It was not possible to check the interior of building B2 as the building was secured and the owner did not have keys for it. However, the interior could be viewed through the window and a second nocturnal survey was undertaken in part as a precaution given that the interior could not be fully inspected.

¹ Jones AJ (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature

² Hundt L (2012) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust

3.0 RESULTS

Potential Roost Assessment

- 3.1 Building B1: This single storey residential building was of brick construction with a pitched roof featuring tightly fitted concrete tiles. It was in good condition having been well maintained although now unoccupied. The doors and large windows all featured UPVC frames and the soffits and fascias were also modern, uPVC and well-sealed.
- 3.2 An area featuring wooden hanging boards was present adjacent to the front door but again these were well sealed with no warping or gaps leading underneath or in at the sides. Adjacent to this area was a stone chimney stack with lead flashing around the chimney at roof level. This was well pointed with no gaps in mortar or leading underneath the flashing.
- 3.3 A garage was attached to the southern aspect of the house. Again, this was constructed from brick but featured a flat roof covered with felt. The uPVC soffits on the garage were in good condition and sealed with silicon along the edge of the wall sealing any gaps into the boxes.
- 3.4 No evidence of use by bats were noted externally on walls or windowsills.



Photo: eastern and northern aspect of building B1 featuring attached garage, wooden boards and uPVC soffits

- 3.5 Potential external access points were limited with only two gaps noted under ridge tiles on the main roof to allow ventilation. No other gaps or crevices were noted on the roof or building.
- 3.6 Internally the building contained a roof void. This was well maintained and relatively clean with intact underfelt and a large amount of rockwool insulation. However, the ridge was covered with cobwebs which were particularly thick over the underside of the ridge ventilation tiles suggesting these were unused by bats as access points. Some gaps were noted at the gable ends at the top of the wall plate, but no

evidence of bats was found in this area of elsewhere within the roof void.

- 3.7 Building B2: This building was a small, single-storey brick outbuilding with a pitched roof covered with concrete tiles. The building did not feature barge boards or soffits/fascias, but it did have two skylights in the roof and a single window located on the northern aspect. Two wooden access doors were noted and above each of these doors were wooden lintels. Dense ivy covered most of the southern aspect and part of the eastern and western gables.
- 3.8 Potential access points and roosting features were noted including gaps under raised tiles on the northern aspect and under loose ridge tiles. There were also gaps above the two access doors between the door and lintel above. Some gaps were present in the brick work where mortar had degraded although the majority of these appeared to be superficial, shallow, and therefore not substantial enough to support roosting bats.



Photo: eastern gable and northern aspect of building B2

- 3.9 No internal inspection of B2 was possible at the time of the building assessment. However, it did not contain a roof void and the underside of the roof was observed through the side window. Part of the underside of the roof appeared to be covered by sarking boards fitted between the rafters.

Nocturnal Survey Results

- 3.10 No bats were seen emerging from building B1 or B2 during the nocturnal emergence survey on 3rd May 2020 or from B2 during the dawn roost on 17th May 2020.
- 3.11 On both survey occasions there was some bat activity within the vicinity of the buildings with three species recorded commuting along boundary hedgerows and briefly foraging within the garden.
- 3.12 During the emergence survey common pipistrelle bats were observed occasionally from 21:01 until the end of the survey at 22:00 with 5 passes along the southern boundary adjacent to B1 and 4 passes adjacent to B2. Soprano pipistrelles were recorded commuting between B2 and the northern boundary hedgerow with 3 passes between 21:05 and 21:26. The third recorded species was a Noctule heard at 21:13 and again 21:22 although this bat was not seen within the vicinity of the buildings but was assumed to be passing the site along the eastern boundary adjacent to an area of mature trees.
- 3.13 A second nocturnal survey was completed at dawn on 17th May 2020 with the focus on B2. During this survey, some bat activity was noted within the vicinity of B2 with occasional passes by common pipistrelle and Soprano pipistrelle bats the majority of which occurred along the northern aspect of the building and along the adjacent boundary hedgerow. Occasional bat passes were recorded between 03:53 up until 04:41 but no bats were seen entering building B2 during this dawn survey.

Breeding Birds

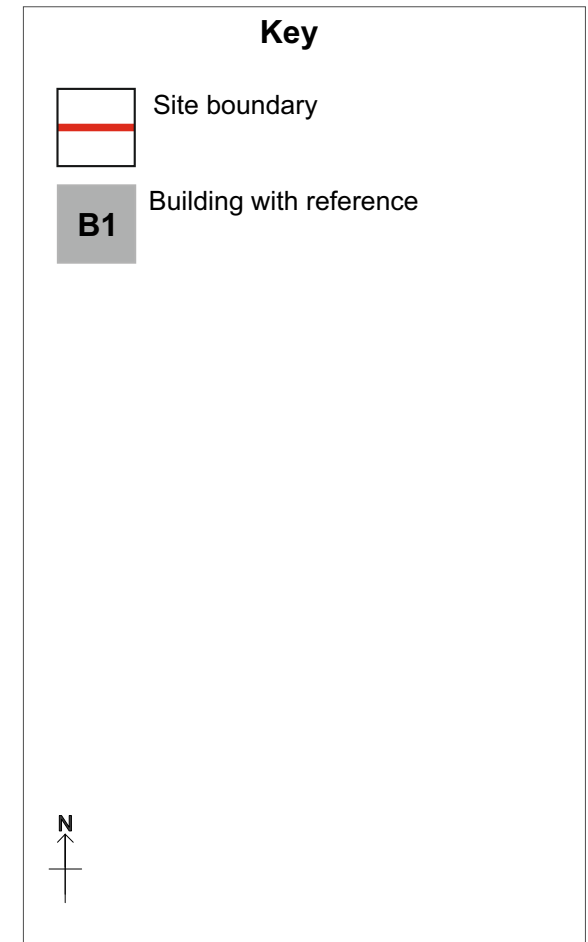
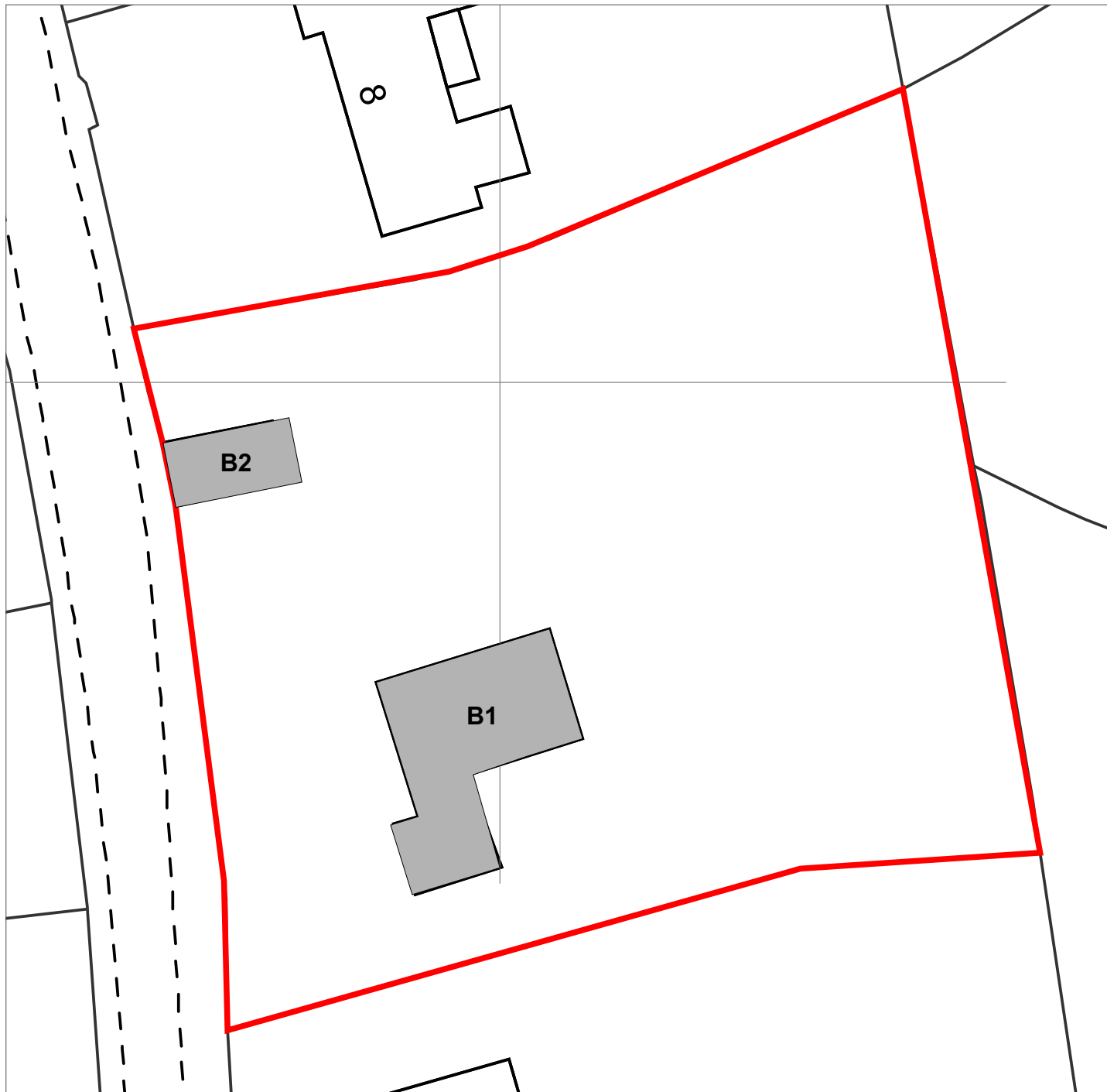
- 3.14 During the nocturnal survey on 3rd May a bird was seen flying into the ivy covering the eastern gable of B2. The species of the bird was not confirmed at the time, but it was assumed that the bird was nesting within this vegetation as it was not observed leaving the ivy during the rest of the survey.

4.0 SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bats was found associated with B1 and B2 during either the building inspection or during the two nocturnal surveys. As such no further surveys are considered necessary and there are currently no statutory constraints to the removal of the buildings.
- 4.2 However, bats are transient in nature and presence can never be completely ruled out. Therefore, if bats or evidence of bats such as droppings are discovered during demolition then all work should stop immediately, and a consultant Ecologist contacted for further advice.
- 4.3 Nesting birds were noted within the vegetation covering parts of B2. All birds are protected whilst on the nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore any works to this section of the building including vegetation removal should take place outside of the bird breeding season (considered to be March – September inclusive) If this is not possible the building/vegetation should be checked by an experienced Ecologist prior to removal.

Habitat Creation, Improvement & Enhancement

- 4.4 Where feasible within the development design, consideration should be given to the provision of bird/bat boxes or bat bricks on the new buildings and/or retained trees once works are completed. This would increase the availability of nesting/roosting opportunities within the local area. The provision of such features would be in accordance with Planning Policy helping to enhance biodiversity within the local area.



**The Croft
4 Main Street
Ambaston
Derbyshire**

FIGURE 1: Building Plan

Date: May 2020