02/09/2025

Ashfield District Council

Clayton Ecology

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment & Bat Emergence and Activity Survey

2 The Hill

Kirkby in Ashfield

May 2025

Client name:	Jack Townsend.
Report reference:	200_46
Report issue date:	May 2025
Version:	2
Survey date:	18th March 2025, 29th May 2025
Surveyed by:	Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM Kayleigh Woodhouse BSc (Hons) MSc Clare Ward
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Reviewed:	Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM

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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd on behalf of the client, Jack Townsend. The report provides the results of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and an Emergence and Activity Survey for bats at 2 The Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, NG17 8JR.

The proposal is for a two-storey rear extension and change of use of a care home to 13 bed HMO.

Two buildings are present on-site – the disused care home ("the main building") and an external summer house ("Building 2"). No evidence of roosting bats was found during the visual inspection of either building.

The PBRA survey determined that the main building had two features with potential for roosting bats. This included slipped tiles on the roof at the rear of the property, which could provide direct access into the roof void, and a gap in the corner of the bay window at the front of the property. No evidence of past usage by bats was found during the internal inspection of the roof void and the gap at the front of the property was heavily cobwebbed and indicated no historical use by bats. The building was therefore assessed as having "negligible bat roosting potential", per the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023). Building 2 was not found to have any potential features suitable for roosting bats and was therefore assessed as having "none bat roosting potential", per the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023).

In response to the letter dated 6th May 2025 by Beverley Rhodes BSc MCIEEM (Ashfield District Council Ecologist), were there was disagreement with the licenced bat ecologist's assessment of the main building being of negligible potential for bats and instead necessitated that: "Overall the building should be classed as having low suitability for bats due to the presence of potential access and roosting features.". Despite the licenced bat worker opposing with the above a single emergence and activity survey was undertaken at the owners instruction.

An emergence and activity survey was conducted on the main building on the 29th May 2025 to determine presence/likely absence of bats, in line with guidelines for "low bat roosting potential" buildings (Collins 2023).

The survey recorded very low bat activity within the local area, and no bats were recorded emerging or interacting with the building, such as to suggest potential for bats to roost in the future.

No further surveys are recommended for the structures though some precautionary procedures are required. **Works must only be commenced using the method statement provided in Appendix 1** and with regular consultation with a licenced bat ecologist if bats are encountered at any time. The development proposal will not require the submission for European Protected Species derogation licence.

There was no evidence of birds having previously utilised the structures for nesting. There are therefore no seasonal constraints for the work, though if works are required within the bird breeding season of March to September, the area to be impacted should be checked prior to works commencing to ensure there are no nesting birds present. No evidence of other protected species or invasive species was found during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd on behalf of the client, Jack Townsend. The report provides the results of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and an Emergence and Activity Survey for bats at 2 The Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, NG17 8JR. The survey building is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SK 49564 56206.

The proposal is for a two-storey rear extension and change of use of a care home to 13 bed HMO.

In response to the letter dated 6th May 2025 by Beverley Rhodes BSc MCIEEM:

"In our previous response dated 4 March 2025 I advised that a bat assessment of the main building was required prior to the determination of the application. I have now had the opportunity to review a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment prepared by Clayton Ecology dated March 2025 which provides the results of a bat roost assessment of the building carried out on the 18 March 2025.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the internal and external inspection of the building and the building was classed as having 'negligible' potential for roosting bats. No further survey work was recommended. However in accordance with current best practice guidance structures with negligible suitability for roosting bats have no suitable access points or potential roost features and in this particular case there are slipped, raised tiles and gaps allowing access into the rook void. Although there was no evidence recorded in the roof void bats do not always leave evidence of occupation.

Overall the building should be classed as having low suitability for bats due to the presence of potential access and roosting features. In-line with current bast practice guidance, structures with low suitability need to be subject to a minimum of one dusk emergence survey between May to August, to confirm presence/absence with the results and any required mitigation provided prior to determination of the application.".

The legislation with regard to bats (Chiroptera) is listed below.

1.1 Legislation applicable to bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations'). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat. It is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, to reproduce, to nurture their young, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate. Under this legislation development work that could affect a bat or bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural England.

Licences in respect of European Protected Species affected by development can be granted under Section 55(2) (e) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species

Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019), for the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Under section 55(9) of the Regulations licences can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative to the work specification
- and the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural England aim to process EPS licence applications within 35 working days of receipt and Low Impact Class licenses are typically registered within 14 working days of receipt.

1.2 Legislation applicable to breeding birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all native birds and their nests, whilst in use, are protected from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season. To avoid conflict, development work that could affect breeding birds should be timed to take place outside of the breeding season, variable between March and September. Note that a nest is protected from the beginning of its construction until the young have fledged and left the nest.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location of the building

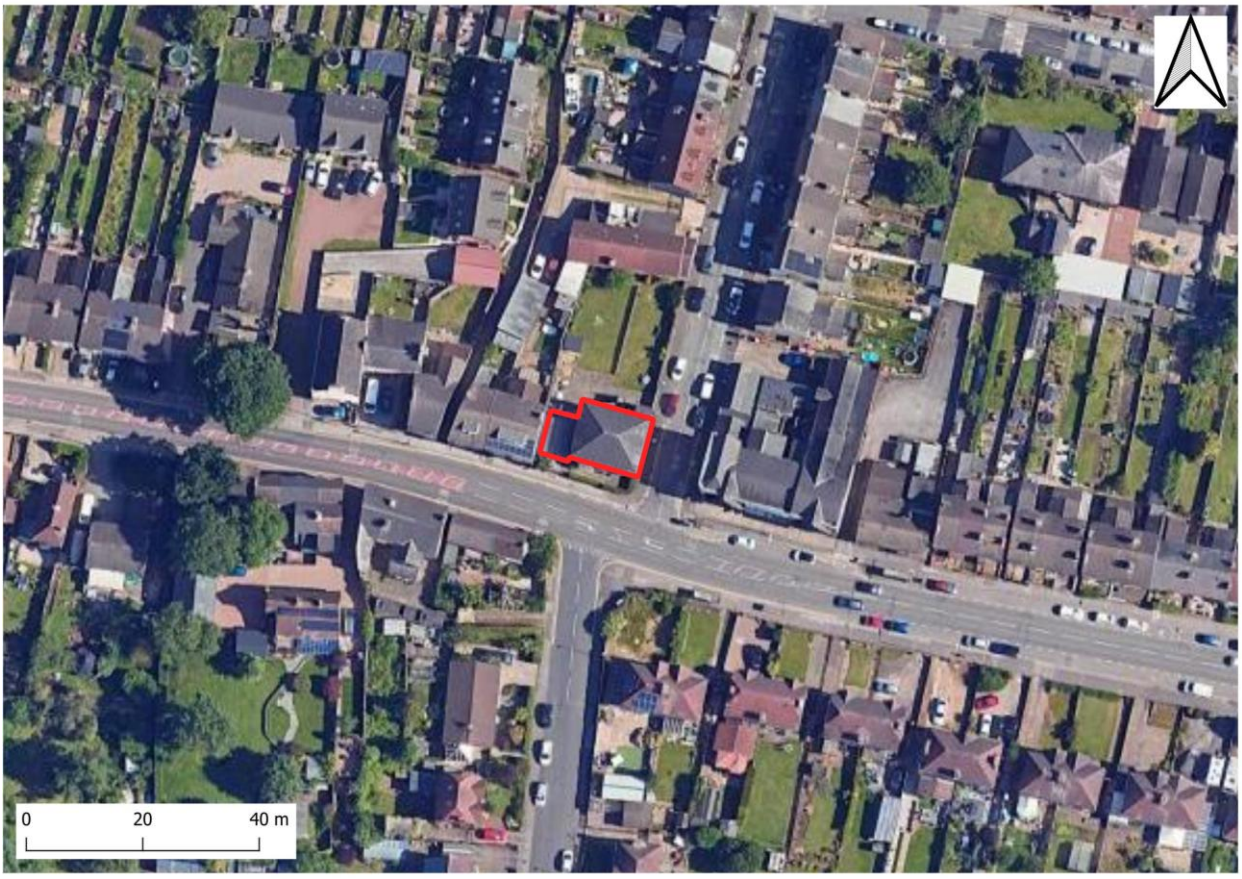


Figure 1: The buildings, encircled in red, and surrounding landscape, courtesy of Google (2025).

The buildings are located in a residential area in Kirkby in Ashfield. Other residential dwellings border the Site in all directions.

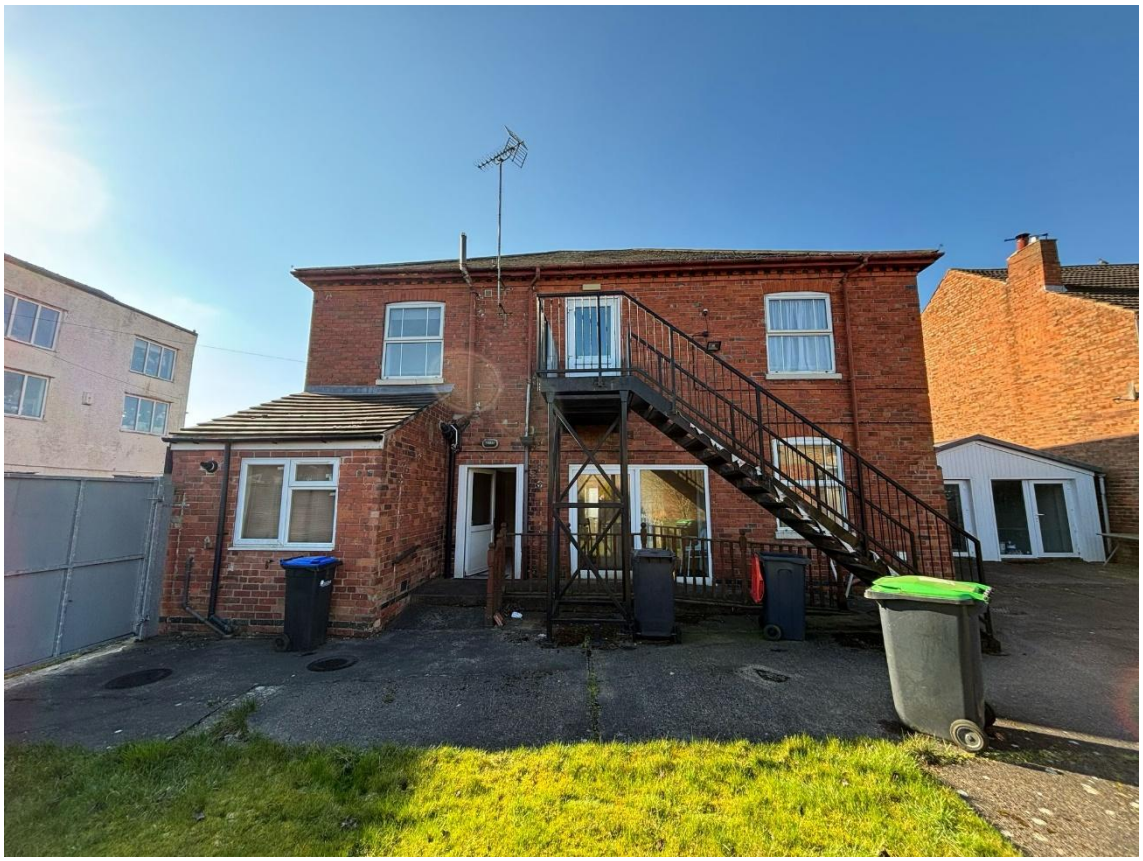
The wider landscape to the north and east is dominated by residential and commercial infrastructure whilst agricultural/pastural land dominates the wider landscape to the west and south.

2.2 Description of the building

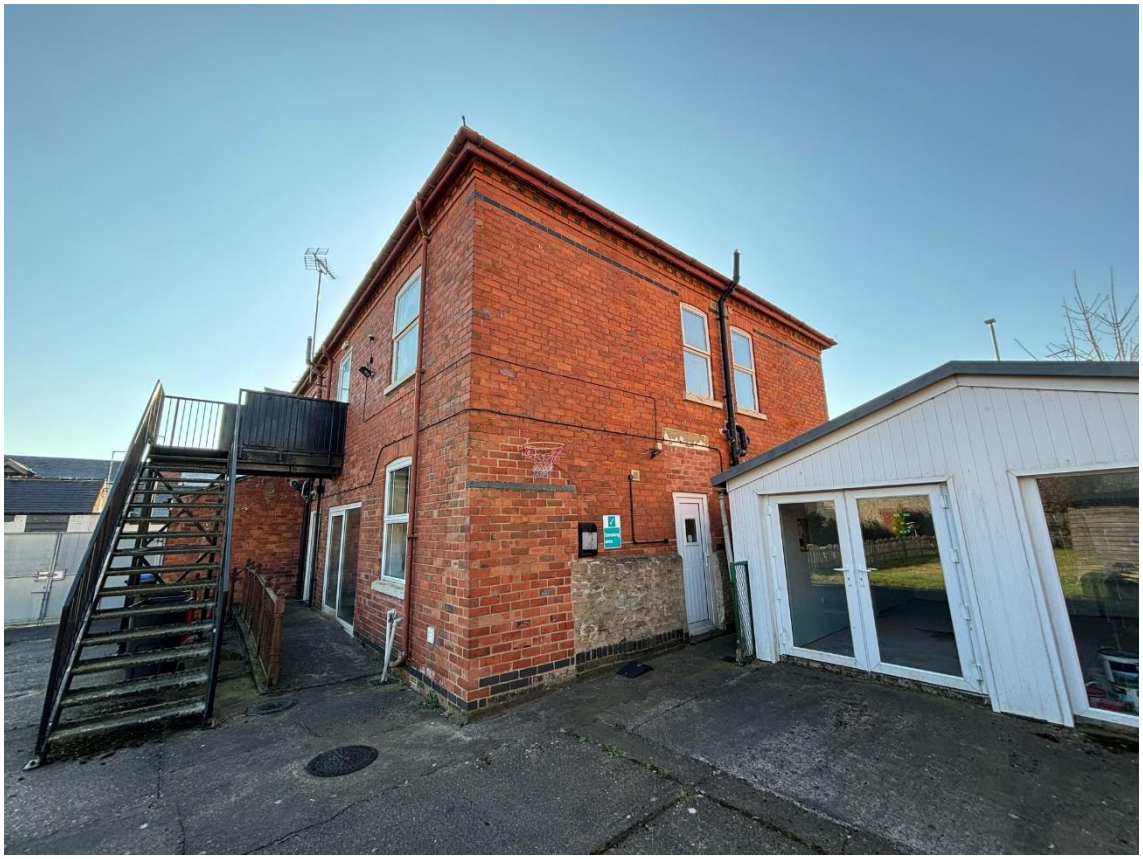
Two buildings are present on-site. The main building is a red brick disused care home, with a bay window to the front and a lean-to extension to the rear. The roof void comprises a dual hipped structure, supporting slate roof tiles which are not underlined. The bay window at the front of the property has a felt roof and the lean-to roof consisted of concrete Marley tiles. The windows, doors, soffits and fascias are well sealed and tightly fitted to the building. See photographs 1-6 inclusive.

Building 2 is a UPVC clad interlocking concrete building with a solid fibreglass roof. See photographs 7 & 8.

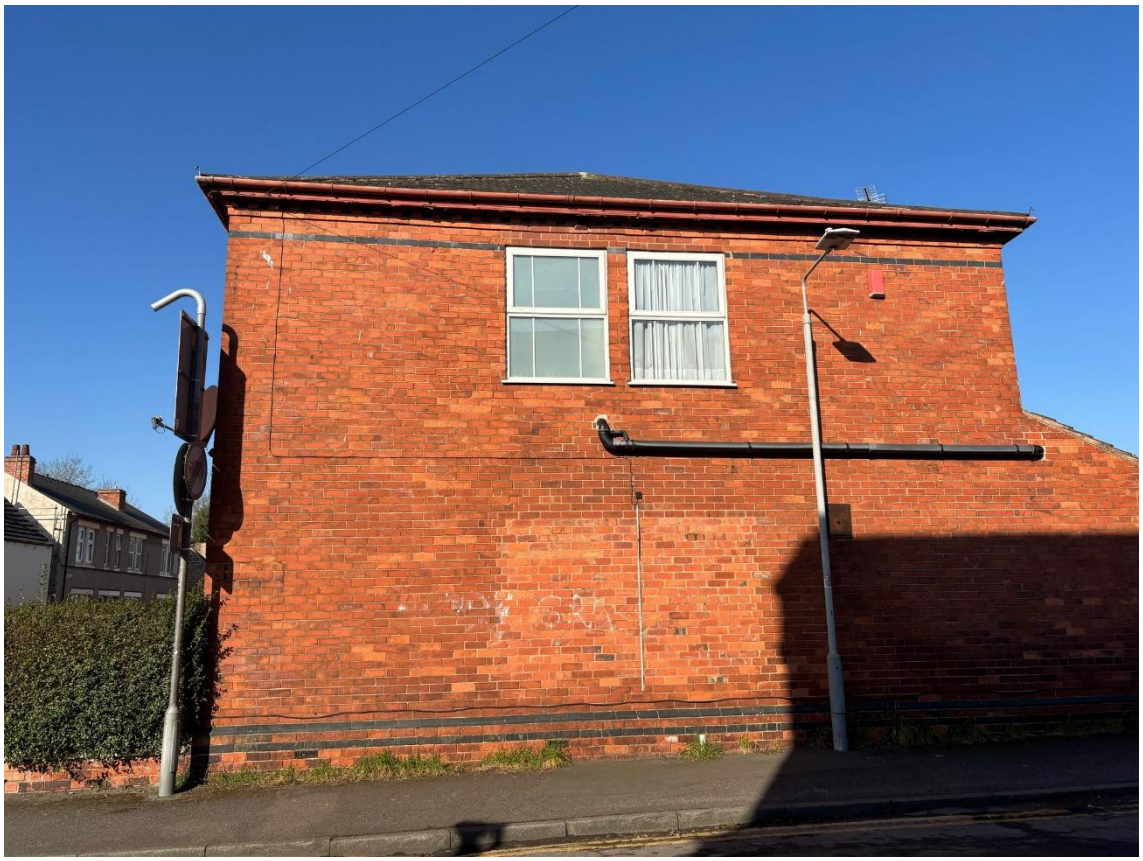
Photograph 1: The southern elevation of the main building.



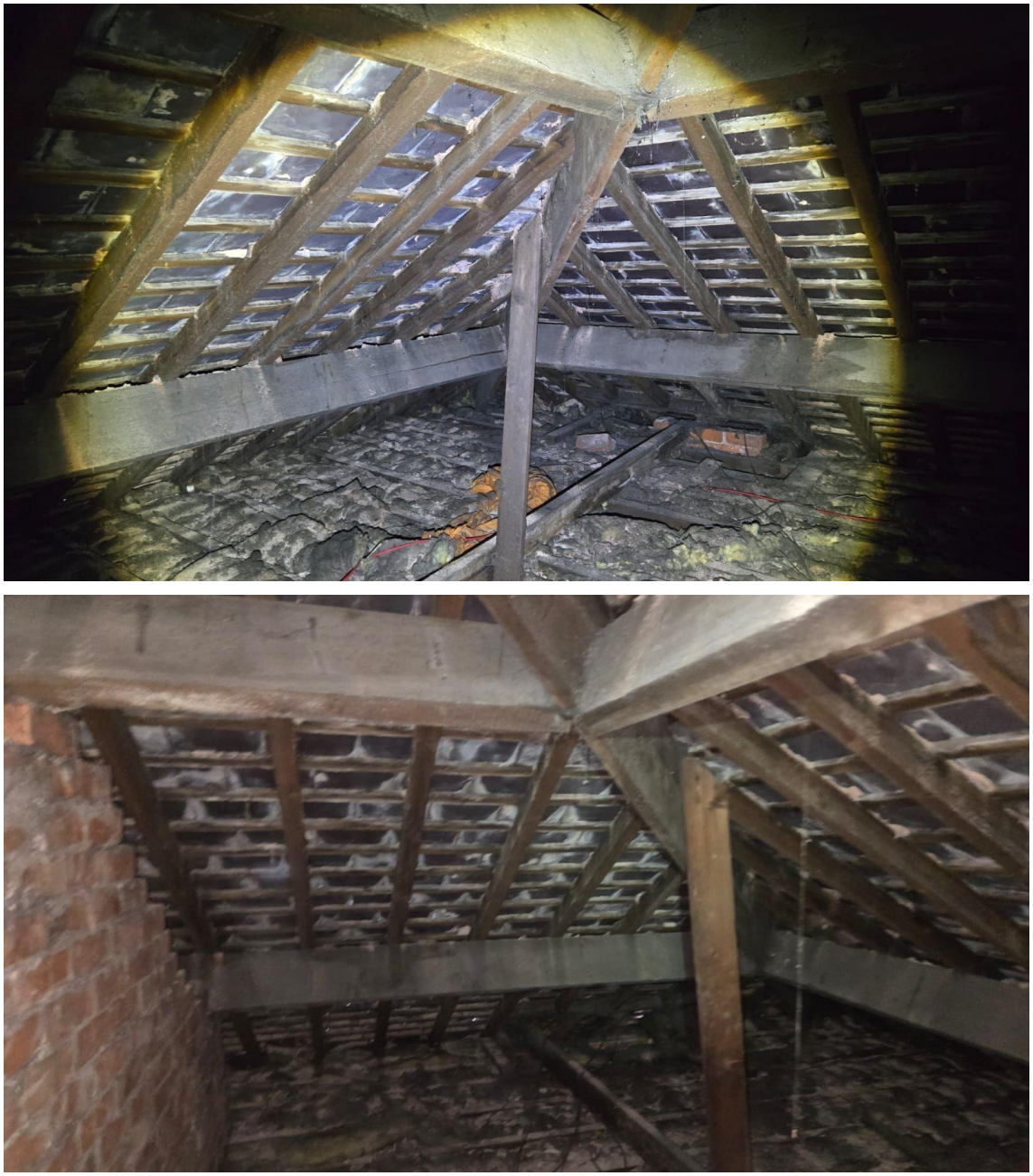
Photograph 2: The northern elevation of the main building.



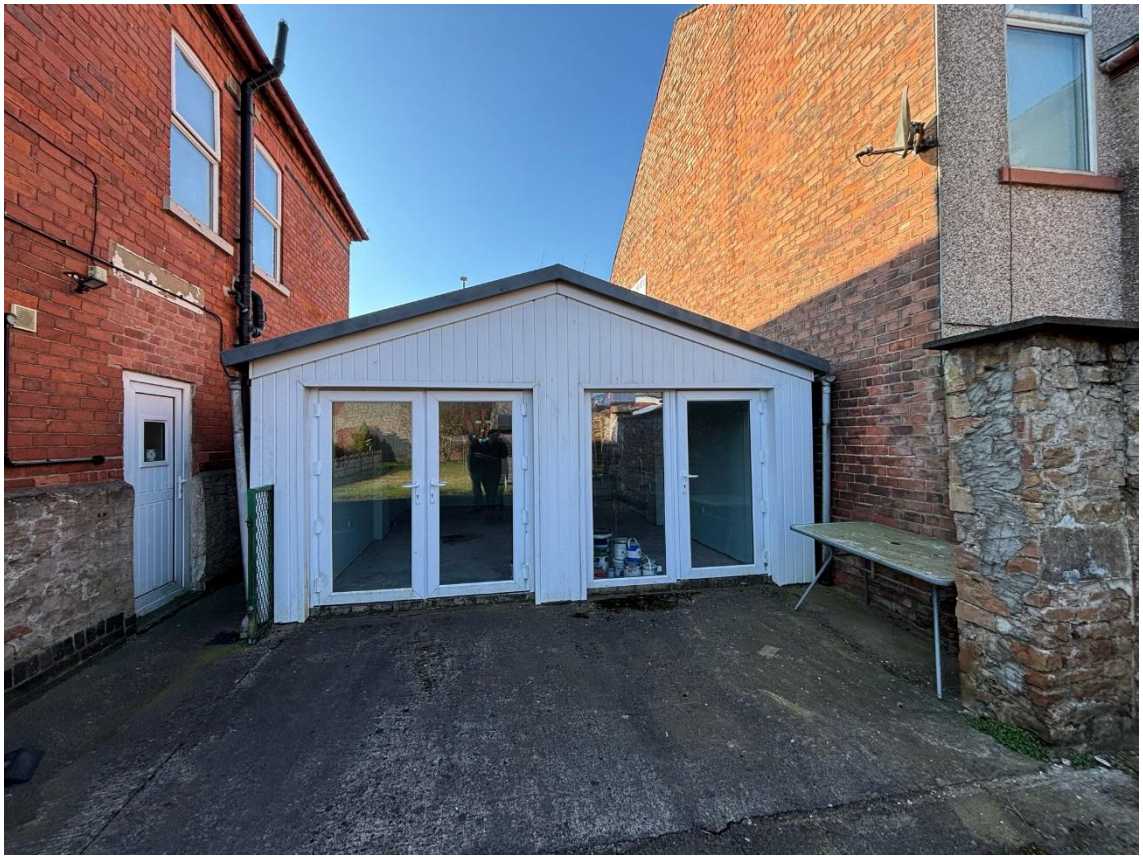
Photograph 3: The western and southern elevations of the main building.



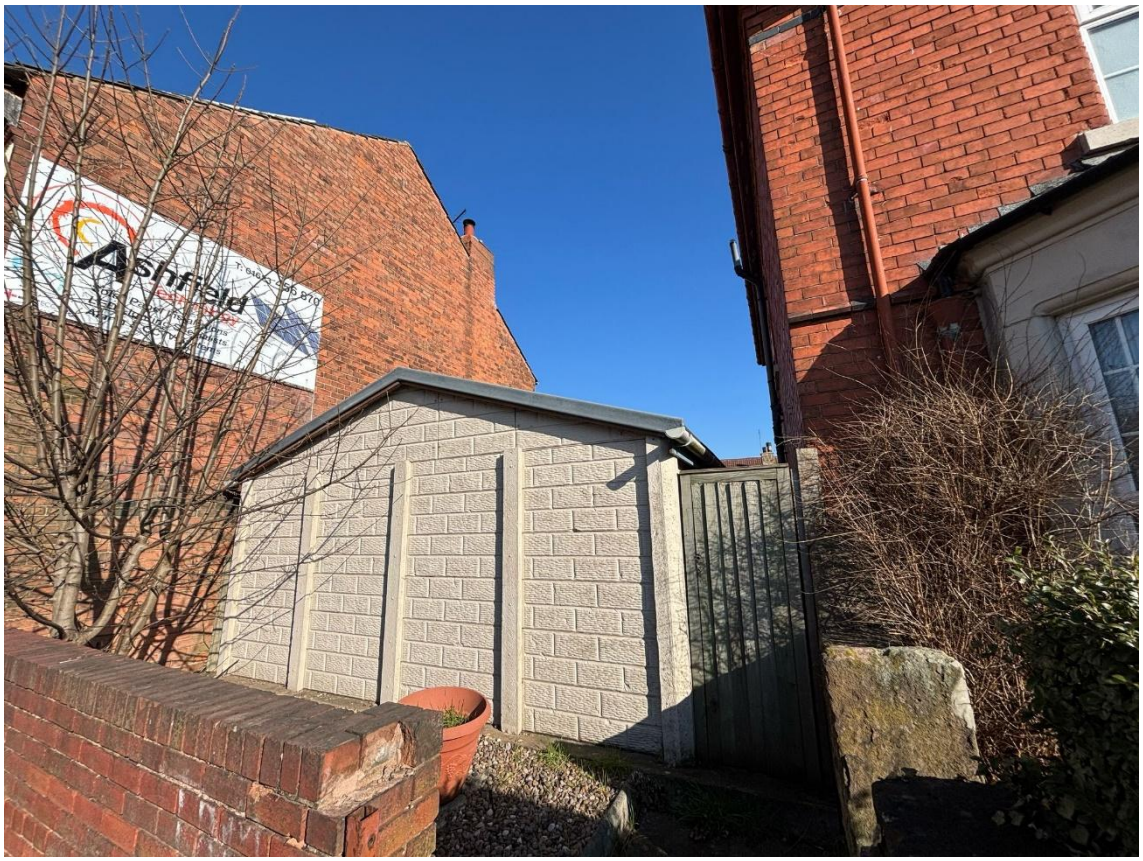
Photograph 4: The eastern elevation of the main building.



Photograph 5 & 6: The view of the internal roof structure of the main building.



Photograph 7: The northern elevation of Building 2.



Photograph 8: The southern elevation of Building 2.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop Study

The desktop study involved examining web-based resources. The following resources were examined:

- MAGIC - Multi-Agency Geographic Information website for maps of statutory designated nature conservation sites within 1km of the survey area and previously Granted European Protected Species Applications for Bats.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken on the buildings. This survey was completed in accordance with the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023), comprising a visual inspection of the buildings (formerly referred to as a bat scoping survey) as part of the ecological assessment of the potential development footprint.

The methodology included examining the buildings for potential roost features and assessing the likelihood of these features being used by bats. This included searching for evidence of bat roosting in the form of feeding remains, droppings, staining, worn surfaces and the bats themselves (alive or dead).

Equipment used included a powerful torch, collapsible ladders, camera, and binoculars.

3.3 Emergence and Activity Survey

In order to determine the presence/likely absence of bats within the main building, a bat emergence and activity survey was undertaken.

The survey was completed by deploying 2 bat ecologists (one licenced and one experienced). The surveyors used Echometer Touch 2 and Pro detectors coupled to iPad Mini 5 and Samsung tablets.

Two Canon XA20 cameras (with a high-powered infrared torch on each set up) were used as night vision aids (NVA).

The survey commenced prior to sunset and lasted for 105 minutes.

All bat activity detected by the surveyors was documented.

3.4 Survey constraints

The PBRA survey was undertaken outside of the main bat survey season of May to September inclusive. Any evidence of bats on the external elevations may be removed by the actions of water and wind, evidence within sealed and undisturbed areas such as attic spaces would remain unaffected however.

There were no constraints for the emergence and activity survey.

3.5 Personnel

The PBRA was undertaken by Clayton Ecology Ltd on the 18th March 2025. The survey was carried out by Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (Bat Licence: 2020-49905-CLS-CLS), assisted by Kayleigh Woodhouse BSc (Hons) MSc.

The emergence survey on the 29th May 2025 was led by C Ward (Bat Licence: 2023-11740-CL17-BAT) at position 1, supported by K Woodhouse at position 2.

3.6 Weather Conditions

The weather conditions for the PBRA survey were dry with sufficient daylight enabling the surveyors to view the external fabrics of the building.

The weather conditions during the emergence and activity survey are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Weather data for the emergence survey.

Date	Sunset	Temperature (°C)		Cloud Cover (%)		Wind (Beaufort)		Precipitation	
		Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
29th May 2025	21.18	18.8	16.2	80	90	B2	B2	None	None

3.7 Breeding birds scoping survey

Features that had potential to support nesting birds were recorded.

3.8 Other protected species

An ecological walkover of the area immediately surrounding the building was carried out to assess the habitat for other protected species.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Desktop study

The search of the MAGIC Map application identified no previously granted European Protected Species Derogation Licences (bat) within a 1km radius of the Site.

The following designated nature conservation sites were identified within the search radius:

- Kirkby Grives SSSI – designated as "one of the finest remaining limestone plant communities in Nottinghamshire and is of Regional importance" (Natural England 1982), located approximately 570m south of the Site.
- Portland Park LNR – designated as "high quality limestone grassland (of national importance), ant hills frequented by ant-eating green woodpeckers, silver birch, ash, elm, hornbeam, maple" (Natural England 1997), located approximately 900m south of the Site.

No Special Areas of Conservation or National Nature Reserves were identified within 1km of the Site.

4.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results

No evidence of use by bats was found during the visual inspection of either building.

Access points into the buildings i.e doors and windows were well sealed and well fitted. Fascia boards and soffits were also tightly fitted to the buildings.

The roof void of the main building was heavily cobwebbed with several gaps that allowed light ingress.

Externally, the PBRA survey determined that the main building had two features with potential for roosting bats:

- Feature 1 – a gap on the northern elevation under slipped tiles that could provide direct access for bats into the roof void (see Photograph 9).
- Feature 2 – a gap in the corner of the bay window on the southern elevation of the main building (see Photograph 10).

No evidence of past usage by bats was found during the internal inspection of the roof void and the gap at the front of the property was heavily cobwebbed and indicated no historical use by bats.

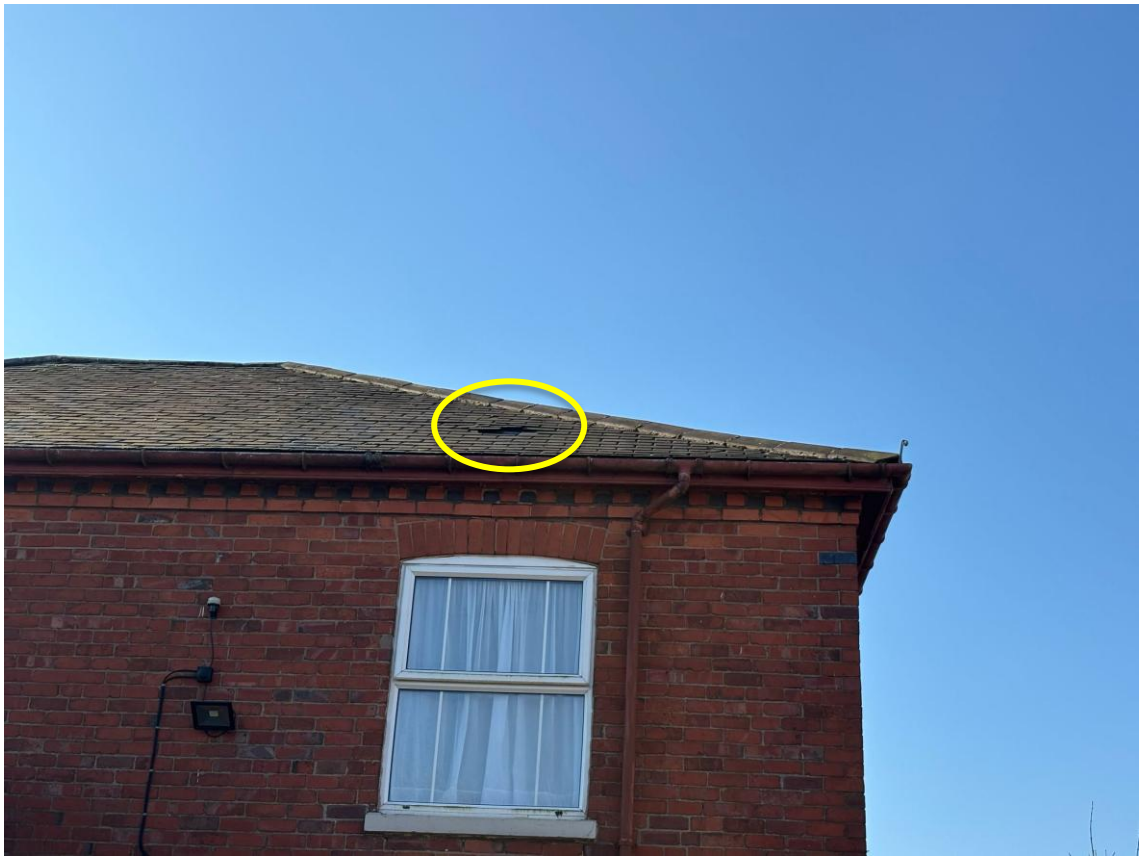
No features suitable for roosting bats were found externally on Building 2.

Nearby habitats of value to bats in terms of providing commuting, foraging and roosting opportunities include:

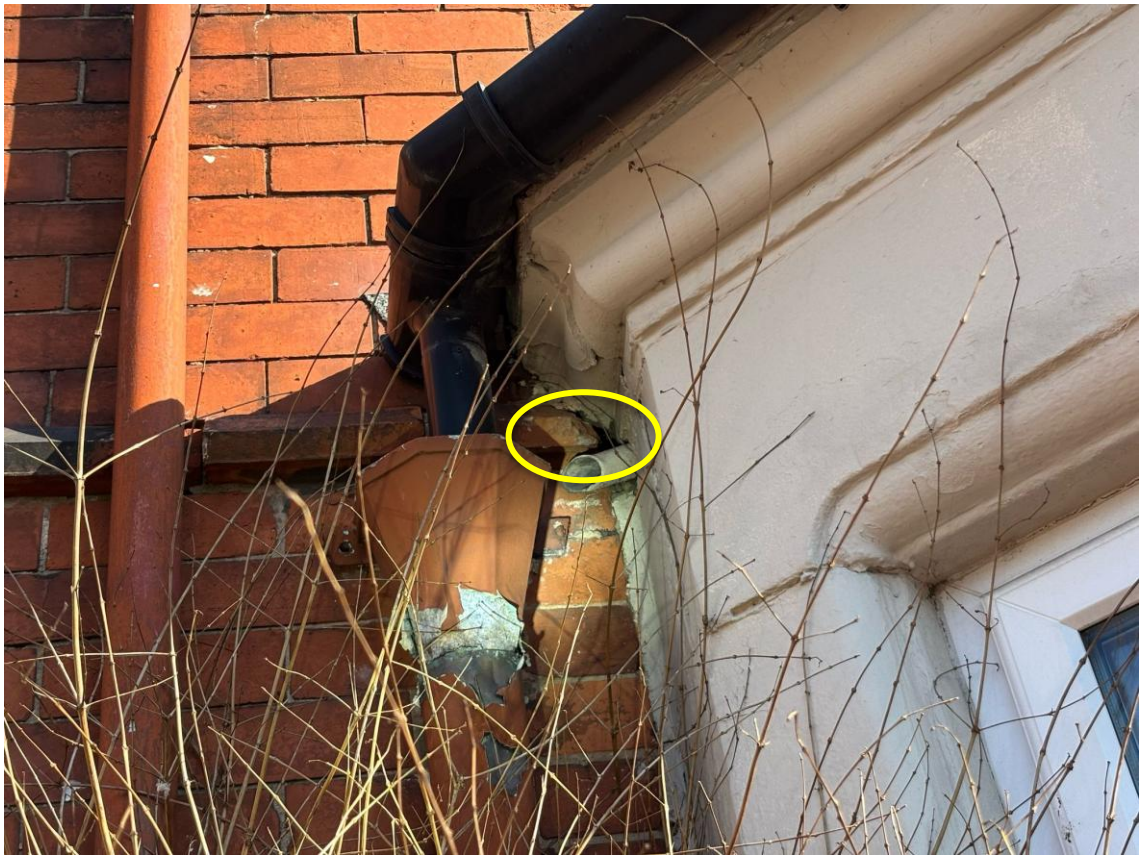
- A small number of mature trees and garden hedgerows within the residential area surrounding the Site.

- Mature trees and grassland around St. Wilfrid's Church, approximately 550m south-west of the Site, within West Park, approximately 660m north-east of the Site, and within Portland Park, approximately 670m to the south-east of the Site.
- Mature trees and hedgerows within the agricultural land outside of Kirkby in Ashfield, approximately 600m to the south and 660m to the west of the Site.

The main building was assessed as having **low potential** for roosting bats and Building 2 was assessed as having **none potential** for roosting bats, based upon the geographical location and possible bat roost features present.



Photograph 9: slipped tiles on the northern elevation of the main building.



Photograph 10: Possible feature on the southern elevation of the main building.

4.3 Emergence and Activity Survey: 29th May 2025

For the emergence and activity survey, two bat ecologists (one licenced and one experienced) were deployed, alongside NVAs.

The NVAs covered all aspects of the building. Still images of the NVA outputs at the end of the survey are included in Appendix 2.

The surveyor at position 1 recorded 1 bat observation during the survey period, this was a Common Pipistrelle that was heard but not seen at 21.52.

The surveyor at position 2 recorded a total of 4 bat observations during the survey period. This included a Common Pipistrelle that was heard but not seen at 21:54 and 3x Common Pipistrelles that were observed flying past the building from north to south at 21:40, 21:47 and 21:52.

At the close of this survey no bats were seen to emerge or associate with any parts of the building by either of the surveyors.

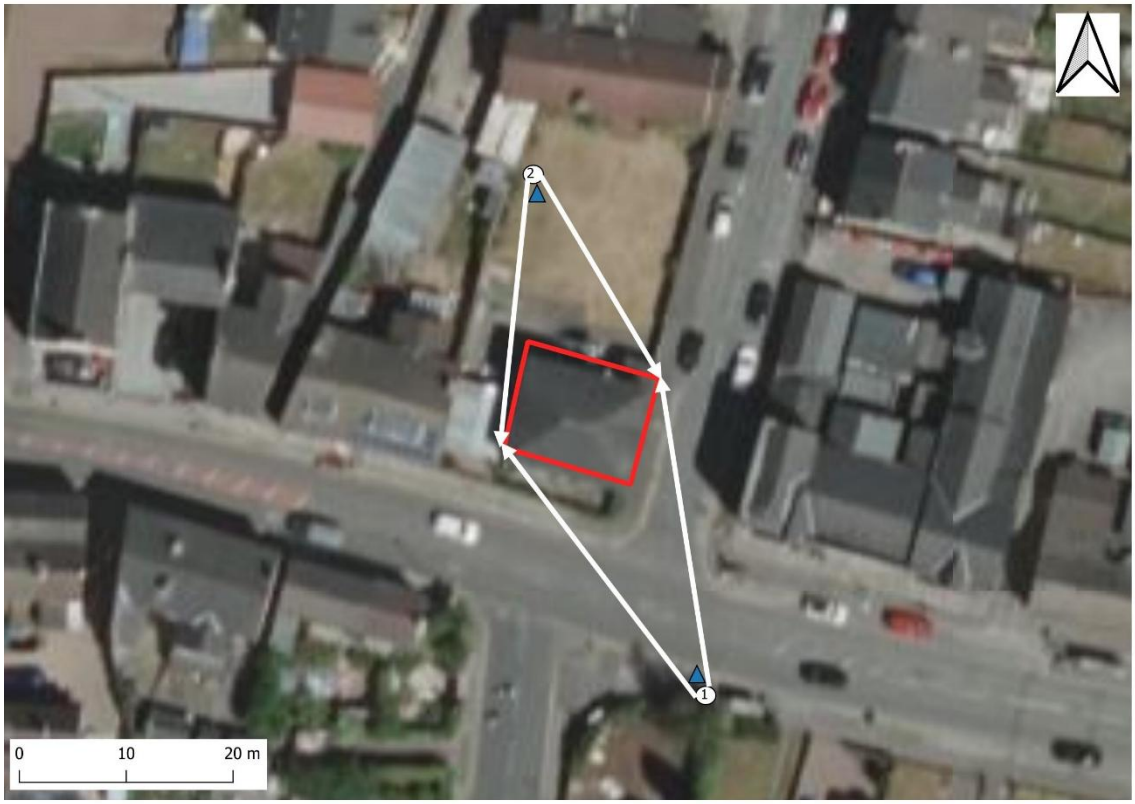


Figure 2: Surveyor and equipment positions during the emergence and activity survey. Aerial imagery courtesy of Google (2025).

4.4 Scoping survey results: breeding birds

There was no evidence of birds having previously utilised either structure for nesting.

4.5 Scoping survey results: other protected species

No evidence of other protected or invasive species was found during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape.

5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation

No evidence of roosting bats was found during either the PBRA or emergence and activity survey.

The main building had a single bat emergence and activity survey, which did not indicate current use by bats or the high likelihood of future use. Given the results of the survey, the building is not considered to support a bat roost.

The determination of this report is that there is no requirement for further follow-up surveys or mitigation. The work will not require a European protected species derogation licence.

Please note that although no bats were found during these surveys, due to the presence of Pipistrelle species within the area and the transient roosting behaviour of the species, there is still a (however unlikely) risk of bats being present during the building activity.

Therefore, a copy of section 6, Appendix 1 must be kept in the Site Office and be part of the induction for all workers on site.

5.2 Recommendations

No further surveys are recommended for the structures though some precautionary procedures are required. Works must be commenced using the method statement provided in Appendix 1 and with regular consultation with a licenced bat ecologist if bats are encountered.

The proposal will not require a European Protected Species derogation licence.

5.3 Breeding birds

There was no evidence of bird species having previously utilised the structures for nesting.

All breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) that protects nests, whilst in use, from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season.

As no breeding bird evidence was present, there are no seasonal constraints for the work. However, if works are required within the bird breeding season of March to September, the area to be impacted should be checked prior to works commencing to ensure there are no nesting birds present.

In the event that an active bird nest is found, it must be retained in-situ and left undisturbed until no longer in active use. A nest is classed as active when it contains eggs or chicks and when it is being built.

5.4 Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunity

Wherever possible, negative ecological impacts should be avoided. If this is unavoidable, then mitigation and compensation measures will be proposed for adverse ecological effects. In addition, it is best practice to seek positive biodiversity

benefits through enhancement measures, in particular with regard to Priority Habitats and Species listed on the national and local Biodiversity Action Plans and the NERC Act 2006.

IEEM (2006) endorses the following principle, recommended by the Royal Town Planning Institute (2000) for optimising the biodiversity outcomes of planning decisions:

New Benefits: seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for mitigation and compensation.

Planning authorities are required to actively seek in development proposals, measures that aim to promote appropriate Priority Habitats and Species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and treat these as 'material considerations'.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 states in paragraph 109:

"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures....". Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2012).

Suitable enhancements for the Site are as follows:

- Installation of a south-facing integrated bat box. Per Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, this should be placed at least 4m above the ground and away from artificial light sources (BCT 2025).
- Installation of a north-facing swift box. Per Swift Conservation guidelines, this should be placed at least 4.5m above the ground and in a sheltered area (Swift Conservation 2025).

REFERENCES

BCT, 2025. Bat Boxes. Available at: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes/putting-up-your-box

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APPENDIX 1: BAT IS DISCOVERED WITHOUT AN ECOLOGIST PRESENT

If at any point in the building works bats are discovered then contractors must stop work immediately and telephone **Clayton Ecology Ltd** on **07473657591**.

Clayton Ecology will either provide an appropriately licensed bat worker to the site or provide a member of staff who will liaise directly with the contractor. Actions will then be taken following advice given. This may include removal of bats, but only where the bat ecologist considers this to be a viable and safe option.

Bats are a protected species and there should be no attempt to handle a bat if discovered. The bat should be covered with a light material (cloth) and the bat worker called out to carry out the rescue.

Only when the bat ecologist is satisfied that the risk to bats is ceased will works recommence.

Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then works will be stopped until they can be supervised by an appropriately licensed bat worker.

If a bat is found under a tile or within any other niche to the building fabric, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be a fibreglass-based material.

APPENDIX 2: STILL IMAGES OF NVA OUTPUTS AT END OF SURVEY