02/09/2025

Ashfield District Council

Clayton Ecology

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

2 The Hill

Kirkby in Ashfield

March 2025

Client name:	Jack Townsend
Report reference:	200_46b
Report issue date:	March 2025
Version:	1
Survey date:	18th March 2025
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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 at 2 The Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, NG17 8JR.

The proposal is for a two-storey rear extension, two-storey side extension to form two flats and change of use of a care home to 10 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, reducing the likelihood of bat presence in these features during the works to nominal. 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. The building was therefore assessed as having "none bat roosting potential", per the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023).

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.

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 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, two-storey side extension to form two flats and change of use of a care home to 10 bed HMO.

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 at the rear of the building 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 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 Breeding birds scoping survey

Features that had potential to support nesting birds were recorded.

3.6 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, reducing the likelihood of bat presence in these features during the works to nominal.

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 **negligible potential** for roosting bats and Building 2 was assessed as having **none potential** for roosting bats, based upon the geographical location and lack of 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 Scoping survey results: breeding birds

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

4.4 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 the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.

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, reducing the likelihood of bat presence in these features during the works to nominal.

Building 2 was not found to have any potential features suitable for roosting bats.

The immediate landscape was considered to be of low potential for foraging bats with limited connectivity to the wider area, that may provide moderate foraging and commuting habitat for light tolerant bat species within the local range.

Based on the geographic location and lack of potential bat roost features present, the main building was categorised as having "negligible bat roost potential" and Building 2 as "none bat roost potential" per the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023).

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.

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

No further surveys are required if precautionary measures in Appendix 1 are adhered to when works are undertaken.

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).

It is recommended that an integrated bat box (Ibstock Type B or similar) be integrated into the new extension as a biodiversity enhancement.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed), 2023. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2012. National Planning Policy Framework.

Natural England, 1982. Kirkby Grives SSSI. Available at: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1000896

Natural England, 1997. Portland Park LNR. Available at: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009077

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S., 2023. UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

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.