

Bellevue, Brimstone Lane, Meopham, Kent

Bat Scoping Survey- Preliminary Roost Appraisal

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Client: Mr A Tearle



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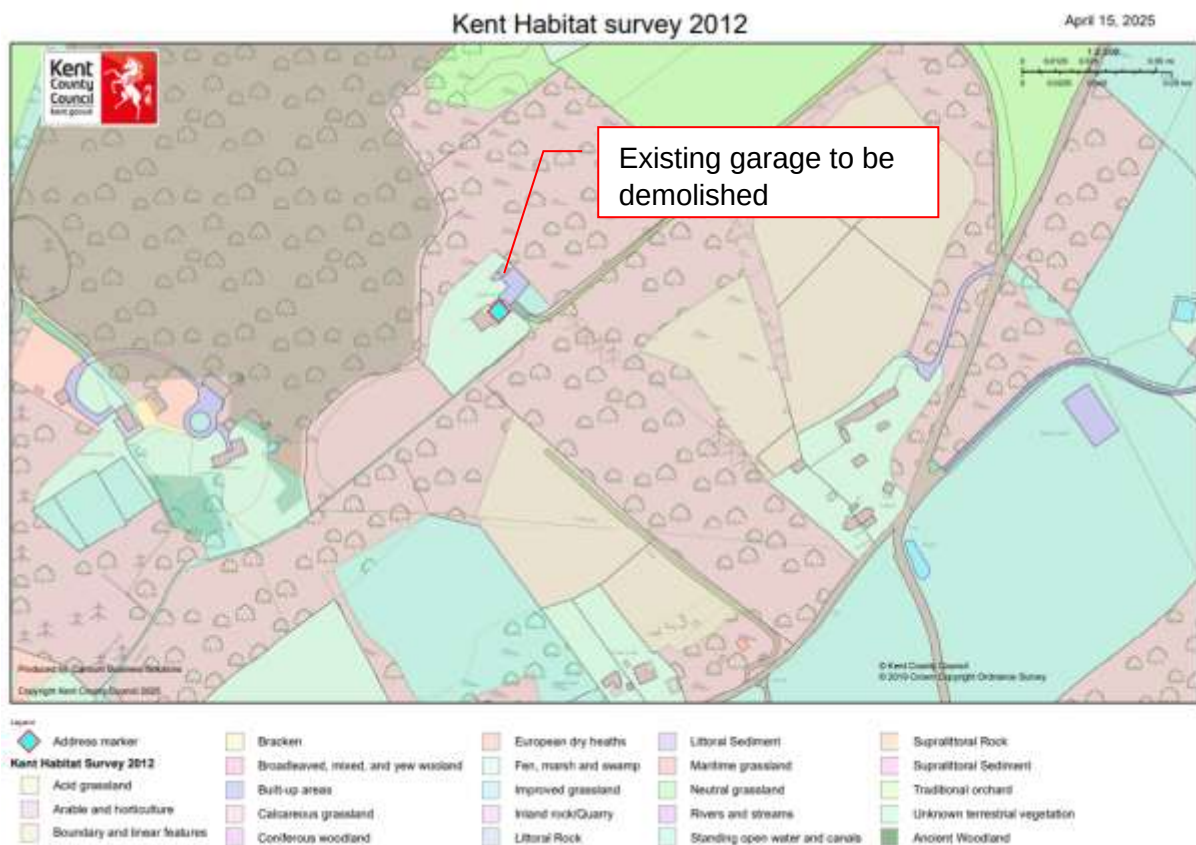
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

KB Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat Scoping Survey (also known as Preliminary Roost Appraisal) in support of a planning application at Bellevue, Brimstone Lane, Meopham DA13 0BW for a replacement garage with workshop.



1.2 Survey Objectives

The purpose of this survey is to provide a scoping assessment and to assist in demonstrating compliance with wildlife legislation and planning policy objectives.

The key objectives are as follows:

- Assess the potential for the presence of bats within the site and its surroundings.
- Provide recommendations for further surveys where assessed as necessary and suggest potential enhancements.
- Present the likely significance of ecological impacts onto bats of the proposed development.
- Provide an early indication of potential ecological mitigation and compensation requirements.

1.3 Limitations

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct and the opinions expressed are true and professional bona fide opinions. It records the potential for flora and fauna evident on the days of the site visits. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year and, as such, were not evident at the time of visit.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of a qualified ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document.

2 Methodology

The site and its immediate surroundings were considered in terms of potential habitat for bats during a day-time walkover survey undertaken on 10th April 2025 by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM, a qualified professional consultant ecologist with over 20 years of experience, licensed bat surveyor (Class Licence CL19, Level 3, Registration Number: 2016-27133-CLS-CLS) and Registered Consultant of the Bat Low Impact Class Licence WML-CL21 with Natural England (Registered Consultant Reference Number RC056, since May 2015).

A visual examination of the external and internal areas of the buildings was undertaken. This consisted of a visual inspection using a bright torch (Cluson CB1 Clubman Standard High Power, 500,000 candle power). Cracks and holes were inspected using an endoscope¹, if needed. The purpose of the survey was to look for signs of bats such as droppings, urine staining, marking around entrance/exit holes, and any animals; and to note any potential roosting locations and access points. The latter is important because signs of bats are frequently not present; for example, they can be washed off external surfaces by wind and rain and are often not visible where bats roost in crevices such as gaps between tiles and boarding or felt, behind weatherboarding, holes in brickwork, timbers and similar.

Bat roosting potential of all impacted structures, buildings and trees was classified according to the following criteria set out in the Table below, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Potential suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, the potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classis cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats)
Moderate	A structure which one or more potential roost sites that could be used

¹ RIDGID CA-350x Inspection Camera System 63888

Potential suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures
	by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, sonconditions and surrounding habitats but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in the table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

All impacted trees were checked for suitability for roosting bats (Ground Level Tree Assessment) and any accessible cavity was checked using an endoscope.

3 Results

The site is rural, the house being surrounded by woodlands, with Brimstone Wood ancient woodland² and 'Strawberry Hill, Pasture & Woodland, Meopham' Local Wildlife Site LWS³ being respectively present 5m and 10m to the north-west of the ownership boundary (and 40m and 35m away from the proposed works area).



² Land that has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. Ancient woodlands are 'irreplaceable habitats' <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/irreplaceable-habitats>

³ In Kent, there are over 460 Local Wildlife Sites, covering a total area of over 27,500 hectares, (roughly 7% of the county). They range from a 0.13 hectares churchyard important for its orchids, to grazing marsh sites of over 1,000 hectares.

No bats or signs of bats were found during the internal/external inspection of the garage. It consists of a small pitched block and brick building with tight slate roof, with no gaps. The roof space has a narrow trussed rafter construction. There is a timber outbuilding attached to the east, with tight felt roof and a timber lean-to with plastic glazing above to the back.

The garage and attached outbuilding and lean-to are judged as offering no suitability for roosting bats, having no suitable cavities for roosting bats.

One sycamore present to the north of the garage a cherry laurel present to the east of the garage will be lost, these trees had no suitability for roosting bats.

But the surrounding area is likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats.

Photos are present in Appendix A.

4 Legislation

All species of bat are afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and are therefore an EPS). Some species of bats (noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, barbastelle) are also listed as species of principal conservation importance⁴.

The legislation makes it a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb⁵ a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

For more information, Natural England have produced a Standing Advice Species Sheet available at <https://www.gov.uk/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences>

5 Recommendations

Although not protected by law, Local Wildlife Sites are recognised across the UK in national planning policies, which set out requirements for protection through local policy and plans. They are defined in local and structure plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

Indeed, they fill an important gap not covered by other designations and are vital in building a Living Landscape. The importance of international, national and locally designated sites is recognised in government policy. The 2012 National Planning Policy Framework says

⁴ Please note that this legal information is a summary and intended for general guidance only. The original legal documents should be consulted for definitive information.

⁵ Disturbance, as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, includes in particular any action which impairs the ability of animals to survive, breed, rear their young, hibernate or migrate (where relevant); or which affects significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.

protection should be “commensurate with their status and give[s] appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.”

The “Making Space for Nature” report to Defra (Lawton et al September 2010) stated that: ‘Local Wildlife Sites are important to future ecological networks, because they not only provide wildlife refuges in their own right but can act as stepping stones and corridors to link and protect nationally and internationally designated sites’.

The proposal will not directly impact the LWS but it is recommended that a Construction Management Plan be implemented to minimise any dust, noise and light during construction.

No impact is expected onto roosting bats⁶.

However, as lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats⁷, the recommendations from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals, titled ‘Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting’⁸, should be considered, when designing any lighting scheme for the proposed development.

⁶ Updated surveys should be carried out every two years, to check that usage/suitability hasn’t changed, prior to works taking place.

⁷ <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/threats-to-bats/lighting>

⁸ <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

References and Bibliography

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

Websites Visited:

- <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KLIS.Web.Sites.Public/ViewMap.aspx>

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Appendix A – Photos



✓ IMG_3906



✓ IMG_3907



✓ IMG_3908



✓ IMG_3909



✓ IMG_3910 LeanTo



✓ IMG_3911 LeanTo



✓ IMG_3913



✓ IMG_3915 Svcamore to be lost



✓ IMG_3916



✓ IMG_3917 Sycamore to be lost



✓ IMG_3918



✓ IMG_3919



✓ IMG_3920



✓ IMG_3921



✓ IMG_3922



✓ IMG_3923



✓ IMG_3924



✓ IMG_3926



✓ IMG_3927



✓ IMG_3928



✓ IMG_3929