

**FINCHES, RHODODENDRON AVENUE, CULVERSTONE,
MEOPHAM, KENT, DA13 0TU**

**PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT and
BAT ACTIVITY SURVEYS**

Report: BWE_Combined_FINCHESDA13 (Final)



Commissioned by: Tony Fletcher

Date: July 2025 (Final)

Bee.Wise.Eco Limited



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2025, Bee.Wise.Eco Limited was commissioned by Tony Fletcher to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Finches, Rhododendron Avenue, Culverstone, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0TU. The assessment was required to inform a planning application involving the demolition of three outbuildings (a greenhouse, study, and garage/workshop) and partial demolition of the main dwelling.

The site comprises four buildings:

B1 – Main residential dwelling (low bat roosting potential)

B2 – Greenhouse (negligible bat roosting potential)

B3 – Timber study (negligible potential)

B4 – Garage/workshop (low potential)

No evidence of bats or bat roosts was observed during the initial survey. However, several features of potential suitability for crevice-dwelling bats were noted on B1, and B4. In line with Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023), a single dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the evenings of 7th and 8th July 2025. Low levels of bat activity were recorded, and no emergence or roosting behaviour was observed. As such, no further surveys or mitigation are recommended in relation to roosting bats.

To prevent ecological harm, any new external lighting should be avoided or sensitively designed in accordance with BCT & ILP Guidance Note 08/23 (2023) to minimise impacts on foraging and commuting bats.

This report remains valid for 12 months from the date of the site visit, after which an updated assessment may be required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In July 2025, Tony Fletcher commissioned Bee.Wise.Eco Limited to undertake a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) at Finches, Rhododendron Avenue, Culverstone, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0TU. The survey was commissioned to inform a planning application and specifically relates to proposed works involving the demolition of three outbuildings (a greenhouse, study, and garage) and partial demolition of the main dwelling. The assessment focused solely on these structures, as identified and discussed with the client during the scoping of the survey.

The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the potential of the existing structure to support roosting bats and to determine whether further survey effort and mitigation would be required, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition, 2023).

A preliminary bat roost assessment was carried out on 28 June 2025 by a suitably qualified ecologist. This report presents the findings of the assessment, along with conclusions and recommendations for any necessary follow-up actions.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site at *Finches*, Rhododendron Avenue, Culverstone, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0TU, covers approximately 0.12 hectares and lies within a semi-rural residential area on the outskirts of the village of Culverstone Green in the parish of Meopham, Kent. The property comprises a detached residential dwelling, with three associated outbuildings: a greenhouse, a detached garage, and a freestanding timber study, all situated within a spacious private garden. The front of the property is characterised by a driveway and informal planting, with the rear garden supporting mature ornamental planting and amenity grassland.

The site is located within a landscape of ecological interest, with nearby ancient woodland blocks and hedgerow networks contributing to local habitat connectivity. While not designated itself, the site lies within proximity to several ecologically designated areas, including Trosley Country Park and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which encompasses extensive areas of broadleaved woodland, calcareous grassland, and traditional farmland.



Figure 1. Buildings within the site boundary (Source: The LandApp, 2025)



Figure 2. Aerial imagery showing the surrounding landscapes.
(Source: Google Earth, 2025)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

In line with the specifications detailed in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition (Collins, 2023), a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the building on site was conducted. The Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was conducted on 28th June 2025 by Rita Smoldareva, Senior Ecologist, MSc, Natural England Level 1 bat class licence holder. A visual assessment was undertaken to determine the presence of any Potential Roost Features (PRFs), together with a general appraisal of the suitability of the site for foraging and commuting. Examples of PRFs include behind-hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes, lead flashing and between tiles and the roof lining.

Any accessible PRFs were inspected using binoculars, a torch and an endoscope for evidence of possible bat presence. Buildings were surveyed externally and internally.

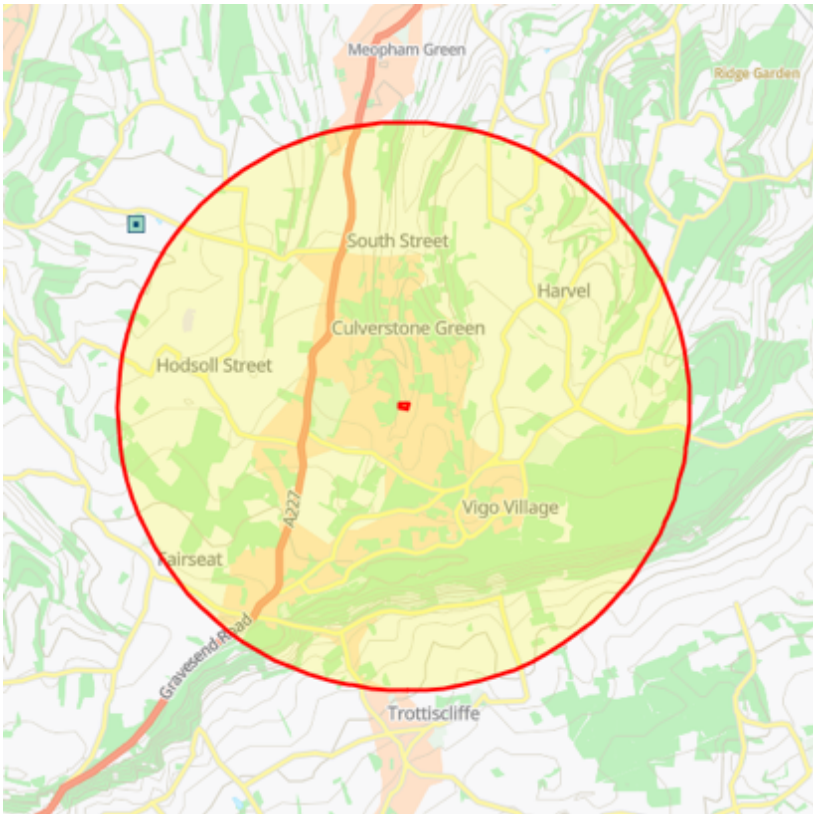
Based on the PRF's present, the building on site was assessed using the suitability classes detailed within the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023), as detailed in the table below:

Suitability	Description
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.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these 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 numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on-site are likely to be used by roosting bats.

2.2 DATA SEARCH

Defra's MAGiC¹ interactive map was searched for all granted European Protected Species Application within a 2km radius, with the findings summarised in the Table below:

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)	Description
None Recorded	-



¹ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html> (access on 14th July 2025)

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 EXTERNAL INSPECTION

A total of four buildings were present within the site boundary at *Finches*, as identified during the Preliminary Roost Assessment. These structures are labelled on the accompanying site plan (Figure 1) and described as follows:

B1 – Main Residential Dwelling: The main building was one storey building with multi-hipped clay tiled roof. No loft void was present within the building.

Externally, several potential bat roosting features (PRFs) were noted, including:

- Gaps beneath lifted or displaced ridge and verge tiles;
- Crevices between soffits and external wall junctions;
- A small number of lifted tiles near the eaves;
- Timber cladding and boxed dormers which may include lifted edges or weathered joints.

No obvious signs of bat activity (e.g. droppings, staining, or feeding remains) were recorded at the time of the inspection. However, due to the structure, age, and location of the building, as well as the number of potential access points, B1 is assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats.







B2 – Greenhouse:

B2 is a small, single-storey greenhouse structure located adjacent to the main driveway within the front garden of the property. The structure comprises a lightweight metal or timber frame supporting transparent glazed panels, including a sloped roof. The building is free-standing and situated in an open, well-lit part of the garden, away from dense vegetation.

Construction and Condition:

- The greenhouse is of typical modular design with no enclosed roof void or insulation.
- All glazed panels appear intact and well-sealed, with no significant cracks or gaps that would provide access for roosting bats.
- The structure is unheated and unoccupied, with minimal shelter or cover that could provide thermal stability or roosting potential.

Due to its open design, lack of enclosed spaces, and the absence of features suitable for bat access or shelter, B2 is assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. No further survey or mitigation is considered necessary in relation to this structure.



B3 – Timber Study:

B3 is a small, detached single-storey timber outbuilding located within the rear garden of the property. The structure appears to be used as a garden study or hobby room and is positioned beneath partial tree cover, adjacent to ornamental planting and informal lawn.

Construction and Condition:

- No visible access to an internal roof void is present, and the internal structure is limited to a single open room with a finished ceiling.

While the structure is modest in size, no potential roosting features (PRFs) were identified during the survey; therefore, B3 is assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential.



B4 – Garage/Workshop:

B4 is a detached single-storey structure located toward the rear of the site, positioned near the rear garden boundary. It is of timber construction with a shallow pitched corrugated roof and timber cladding. The building appears to be used as a storage area and workshop.

Construction and Condition:

- The external walls are clad with overlapping horizontal timber panels, some of which appear weathered and slightly warped, creating potential crevices.

The building exhibits features that could support crevice-dwelling bats, including lifted timber cladding and gaps under roof sheeting. The presence of nearby vegetation and the semi-natural rear garden setting adds to its ecological value. B4 is assessed as having low bat roosting potential.





4. BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition, 2023), a single dusk emergence survey was undertaken for all two buildings with low roosting potential (B1, and B4).

Survey Dates: 7th and 8th July 2025

Survey Times: Surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 1.5 hours after sunset

7th July: Sunset 21:13 BST

8th July: Sunset 21:12 BST

Surveyors: Two experienced ecologists equipped with full-spectrum bat detectors (Pettersson D500X and Echo Meter Touch Pro).

Conditions: Warm, dry evenings with light winds (Beaufort Scale 1–2) and temperatures ranging from 17°C to 19°C at sunset.

Positions: Each building was monitored from vantage points covering all identified PRFs and potential access points.

4.2 SURVEY RESULTS

Emergence Activity:

No bats emerged from B1, or B4 during either survey.

Commuting/Foraging Activity:

Low overall bat activity was recorded. On both nights, Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) passes were logged intermittently along tree lines adjacent to the garden, suggesting general foraging use of the wider area.

No evidence of roosting behaviour was recorded.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the combined findings of the PRA and dusk emergence surveys:

- No roosts were identified in any of the assessed buildings (B1, B2, B3, B4).
- Low levels of commuting and foraging activity were observed, primarily associated with surrounding vegetation.
- No further bat surveys are required to inform the proposed demolition and alteration works.

To minimise any potential residual impacts:

- External lighting associated with the development should be designed in accordance with BCT & ILP Guidance Note 08/23 to avoid light spill onto retained trees, hedgerows, and boundary vegetation.
- **Should any bats be unexpectedly encountered during works, all activity must stop immediately, and an ecologist consulted for further advice.**

Lighting

General advice: To minimise potential impacts on bats that may use the rear garden and surrounding vegetation for foraging and commuting, it is recommended that no additional external lighting is installed, or that any required lighting is sensitively designed to avoid illuminating potential commuting corridors, trees, or shrub features.

Where lighting is necessary, it should be designed in accordance with best practice guidance from both the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP), specifically:

- Use warm white (low UV) lighting below 2700K to minimise attraction to insects and disturbance to bats.
- Avoid upward light spill and direct all lighting downward using hoods, cowls, or shields.
- Use motion sensors or timers to ensure lights are only on when necessary.
- Keep lighting levels as low as possible, especially near boundary features, treelines, or water bodies that could be used by bats.
- Avoid lighting linear features such as hedgerows, fences, or canal corridors, which may act as bat commuting routes.

The most current technical guidance is set out in: BCT & ILP (2023): *“Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK.”*

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

Following this guidance will help to ensure compliance with bat conservation legislation and reduce the risk of adversely affecting bat behaviour.

REFERENCES

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