

THE STABLES, COWFOLD ROAD, BOLNEY

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL AND PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

LOCATION: TQ 25744 22411

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Introduction

Bakerwell Limited were commissioned by Cityzen to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to identify key constraints prior to the conversion of an outbuilding into a residential unit located on Cowfold Road, Bolney (hereafter referred to as 'The Site', see Figure 1.) The Site is located to the southwest of Bolney, West Sussex, accessible from Cowfold road. The Site is approximately 0.12ha in size.

The survey was carried out to assess the on-site habitats and assess the presence, or potential for the presence of bats and to provide recommendation to avoid harm to these species during proposed renovation works. Bats are protected as laid out in Appendix 1.

The Site comprises of 2 out buildings to the rear of a residential property and a large English oak tree *Quercus robur*. The ecological appraisal has been commissioned to assess the feasibility of converting one of the outbuildings into a single residence, maintaining the original footprint of the building.

Methodology

The site was visited on the 4th November 2025 by Georgia Robertson BSc and Michael Potter MSci from Bakerwell Ltd to carry out a survey of habitats present on site. Due to the nature of the site, the surveyors decided to conduct a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats alongside the PEA as accredited agents under Fiona Baker's licence (CL 18 - 2015 - 12847- CLS-CLS, level 2, (previous -20114224)).

An online desk study was carried out using Magic.gov.uk to identify protected sites, habitats and granted European protected species mitigation licences (EPSML) within the vicinity of the site.

Habitats were identified following the standard UK Habitat Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) during the PEA. The site was surveyed on foot and existing habitat and constraints for the works were noted and recorded on a map (Figure 1).

During the PRA survey, evidence and signs of potential for presence of bats were noted, including but not limited to: individuals or dead animals, droppings, tiny scratches, urine staining, flies, smoothing of surfaces around access points, a bat distinctive smell and in warm weather, any audible squeaking. Where droppings were found, they were sent off for DNA analysis to confirm species.

Table 1: Potential Bat Roosting Features and Evidence after (BCT, 2023)

Potential Bat Roosting Features (PRFs)	Signs Indicating Possible Use by Bats
In trees - Natural holes - Woodpecker holes - Cracks/splits in major limbs - Loose bark - Hollows/cavities - Dense epicormic growth - Bird and bat boxes	- Live, dead, or skeletons of, bats - Feeding remains e.g. insect wings - Tiny scratches around entry point - Urine staining around entry point - Bat droppings in or around entry points - Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather - Flies around entry point - Distinctive smell of bats - Smoothing of surfaces around cavity
In buildings - Gaps around windows / doors - Gaps between mortar / brickwork - Gaps under cracked / broken / missing ridge tiles, roof tiles and hanging tiles - Gaps under lead flashing and between roofing felt flaps - Large roof void - Gaps into soffits, barge boards, gable ends and under eaves	- Live, dead, or skeletons of, bats - Bat droppings in the roof void (particularly below ridge beam and apex) - Feeding remains e.g. insect wings - Tiny scratches around entry point - Urine staining around entry point - Bat droppings in or around entry points - Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather - Flies around entry point - Distinctive smell of bats - Smoothing of surfaces around cavity

Roost Potential

The buildings were assigned a category of potential suitability as a bat roost ranging from none (no potential roosting features) to high and confirmed roost (where PRFs are present with evidence of use, observation or previous records of bats confirmed to be roosting).

Table 2: Categories for Bat Roosting Potential in Structures (BCT, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Description
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. Limited connectivity to wider landscape with other bat habitats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. Does 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 and not a classic cool/ stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats). Limited connectivity to wider landscape with other bat habitats.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat 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 this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed). Connected to wider landscape with good foraging habitat.
High Potential	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 of classic cool/ stable hibernation site. Well connected to good foraging habitat and known roosts nearby.
Confirmed Roost category used in association with building potential	PRFs with evidence of use present, observation or previous records of bats confirmed to be roosting.

The trees were assigned a category of potential suitability of either none, further assessment required or PRF and confirmed roost.

Table 3: Categories for Bat Roosting Potential in Trees (BCT, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Description
None	Either no potential roost features (PRF)s in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present
Confirmed Roost category used in association with tree potential	PRFs with evidence of use present, observation or previous records of bats confirmed to be roosting.

The Bat Conservation Trust survey guidelines (2023) states that: “These categories are allocated irrespective of the presence of a roost. If a roost is confirmed to be present then the categorisation still stands (because other roosts may be present but undiscovered) but ‘confirmed roost’ should be added, e.g. Low- confirmed roost, Medium- confirmed roost, High- confirmed roost.”

During the PRA, torches, were used at ground level and internally at all accessible levels to look for features within buildings and trees suitable for roosting bats in compliance with the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Guidelines (2023) by the surveyors.

Results

Site wide Results

The site is located within a semi-rural setting to the southwest of Bolney. The north and west of the site are bound by roads and a residential property. A petrol station and industrial building border the site to the east and another residence to the south.

Designated Sites Results

There are no statutory protected sites located on site. The closest statutory protected site is The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) approximately 850m east of the site. Due to the size of the development and construction remaining within the current buildings footprint, the development is unlikely to influence habitats within the AONB.

There is no ancient woodland located on site. The closest area of ancient woodland is Three Corner Piece located approximately 320m south of the site and is approximately 1.47ha in size. Due to the small scale nature of the works, it is highly unlikely that the change of use proposals will impact on this area of ancient woodland, and therefore is not considered a constraint.

Site Description

The wider ownership boundary consists of a chapel converted into a residence with associated graveyard to the northwest of the Site with a Portuguese laurel *Prunus lusitica* at the southern edge. Adjacent to the chapel on the eastern side is a gravel driveway ending in a turning circle. To the south of the chapel is a patio extending onto a vegetated garden, in which, there is a large English oak *Quercus robur*. The construction footprint boundary lies to the south of the wider ownership boundary and consists of a garage and an outbuilding. Habitat Descriptions are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Habitat Descriptions

Habitat On Site	Description
Buildings	There are 3 buildings on site. B1 is a semi-open garage with a slate tiled roof on top of corrugated tin with wooden walls. B2 is a stone barn with a tiled roof. B3 is a chapel that has been converted into a residence.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	The northwest of the site is has a cemetery with gravestones interspersed on grass.
Developed land; sealed surface	A hardstanding driveway leads into the site from Cowfold road to the north.
Artificial Unvegetated, unsealed surface	The driveway leads to a gravel turning circle to the north of B1.
Vegetated garden	There is an area of vegetated garden south west of B1 consisting primarily of amenity grassland with some ornamental planting.
Unvegetated garden	There are two patios within the ownership boundary. The first is south of B3 and the second north of B2.
Trees	A large English oak tree of approximately 20m is situated adjacent to B2 and a Portuguese laurel is situated to the south of the graveyard.

Protected Species

Bats

The results of the online desk study recorded the closest record of a granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) to be located approximately 500m south from the central O.S grid reference (TQ 25744 22411) of the site on Chapel road. The granted licence 2020-49087-EPS-MIT is for the destruction of a resting place and damage to a breeding place. Species listed on the licence were common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*.

The site offers moderate suitability for commuting bats, supported by the nearby woodlands and ponds that provide suitable foraging resources.

Additionally, potential roosting features were noted to the g within the construction footprint that could support roosting bats. T3 was not seen to have any PRFs, however it was not possible to view all aspects of the tree or into the canopy from ground level. These results are detailed below in *Building Assessments* (Table 5) and *Tree Assessment* (Table 6).

Due to the record of an EPSML licence for a common pipistrelle roost in relatively close proximity to the site and the presence of suitable foraging on site and potential roosting features, further surveys are recommended. Further details can be found below in *Recommendations*.

Table 5: Building Assessments

Building Number	Description	Potential Roosting Features	Bat Roost Potential
B1	A semi-open garage with 3 walls and 2 large open voids. The roofing is slate tile on top of corrugated tin lined with roofing felt	Gaps underneath tiling across whole roof provide roosting space for crevice dwelling bats.	Moderate
B2	A brick walled barn. The timber roof is lined with roofing felt and covered with slate tiles.	- Gaps underneath tiling across whole roof provide roosting space for crevice dwelling bats. - There is a 2m gap in the soffit next to the front door on the northern aspect of the building. - The interior wooden joinery offers spaces for crevice dwelling bats and feeding perches.	Moderate to High

Table 5: Tree Assessment

Tree Number	Description	Potential Roosting Features	Bat Roost Potential
T4	A veteran English oak tree of approximately 20m in size.	There are no visible PRF's from ground level, however, the tree is too tall to see into the canopy.	FAR

Other Protected Species

There was no evidence of other notable or protected species found on site. Due to construction remaining within the original hardstanding footprint of the building and lack of suitable habitat, the development is unlikely to have any significant impact on other protected species.

Recommendations

Further surveys will need to be undertaken to inform mitigation measures required to avoid impacts to bats as a result of proposals to demolish and replace all or sections of B2.

Building 1 was found to have moderate potential for roosting bats and Building 2 was found to have moderate to high potential to support roosting bats.

Following standard guidance (BCT, 2023) in order to understand the bat species using the buildings and how the buildings are being used by bats to inform appropriate mitigation further survey will be undertaken as follows:

- B1 requires 2 emergence surveys, surveys will be carried out between May and August, should emerging bats be observed or bats be found to be very active in the vicinity of B1 a third survey will be required.
- B2 requires 3 emergence surveys to be undertaken between May and August (the third survey can be conducted in September).

All surveys will be carried out in line with guidance (BCT, 2023) which requires that they are spaced a minimum of three weeks apart and carried out in suitable weather conditions, with all potential features viewable throughout the survey period.

If bats are found to be roosting within B1 or B2, Natural England (NE) European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will be required.

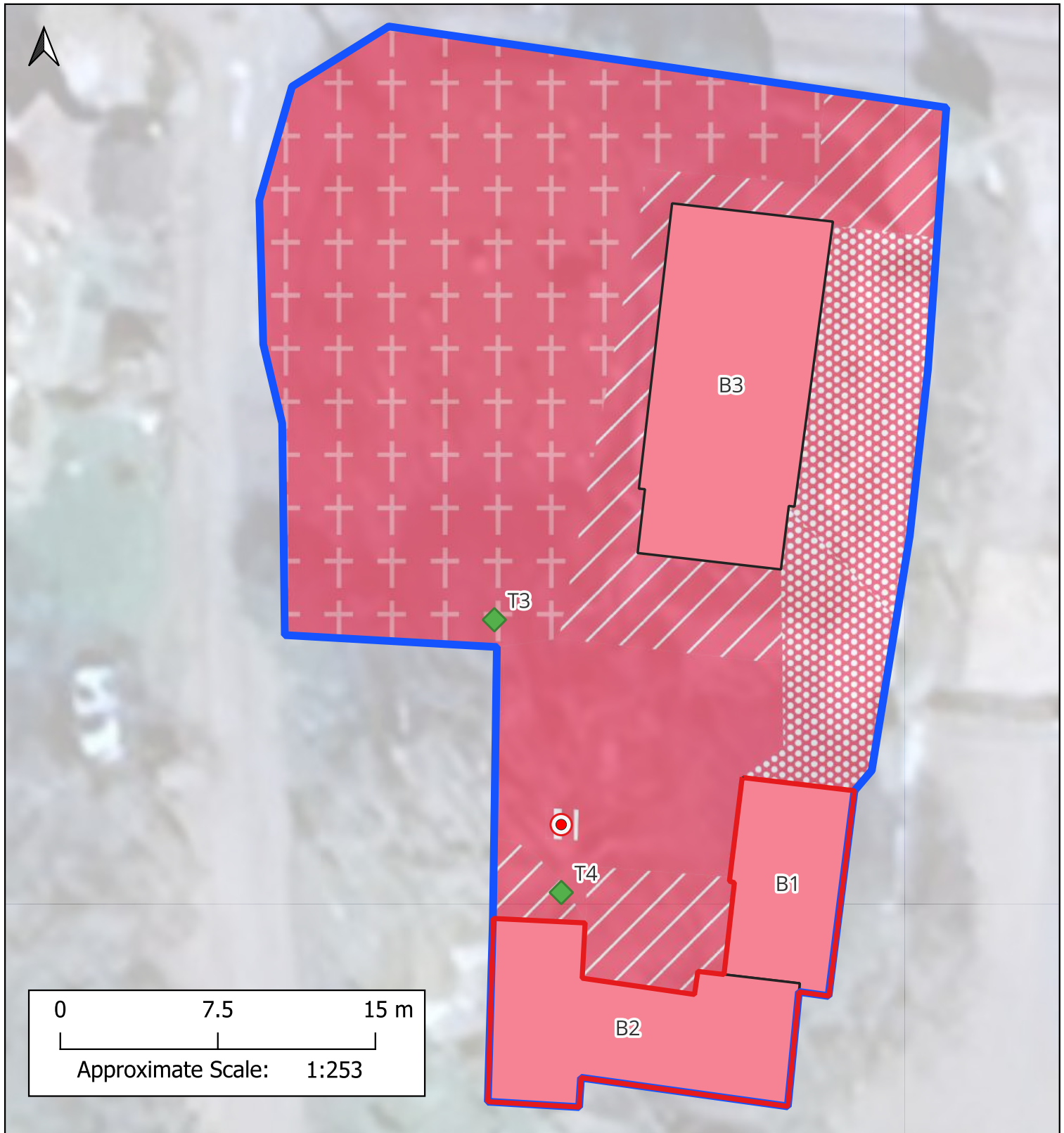
The proposal as understood at the time of writing, will not result in the loss of trees. The following advice is given to inform design with the objective of avoiding or minimising impacts to trees:

- The mitigation hierarchy should be used when considering the design to avoid impacts to bats (and other wildlife) where possible.
- Where the design cannot rule out impacts to trees directly or indirectly, the design should demonstrate how impacts will be minimised. Examples of direct impacts are felling, cutting or obstruction of bat roost features, indirect impact examples are light spill, noise and disturbance.
- If modifications of the construction design result in being unable to retain T3, this represents a direct impact, and further detailed surveys (aerial or emergence) will be necessary to confirm whether the feature supports roosting bats.

All survey results will be used to inform the mitigation approach, where measures can be put in place to avoid impacts to bats these will be laid out in a Non Licenced Method Statement (NLMS) for bats.

The NLMS will set out specific mitigation measures, including a lighting strategy and a programme of works to minimise disturbance to bats. It will also detail site-specific best-practice procedures to ensure that all activities are undertaken in a manner that safeguards bats throughout the construction period.

Where likely impacts to bats cannot be avoided a NE EPSML will be required.



Key

- Ownership Boundary
- Construction Footprint
- Buildings u1b
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface u1c
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Developed land; sealed surface u1b
- Unvegetated garden
- Vegetated garden
- ◆ Tree 200

**Do Not Use for Construction
Detail**

Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification

Site: The Stables, Bolney

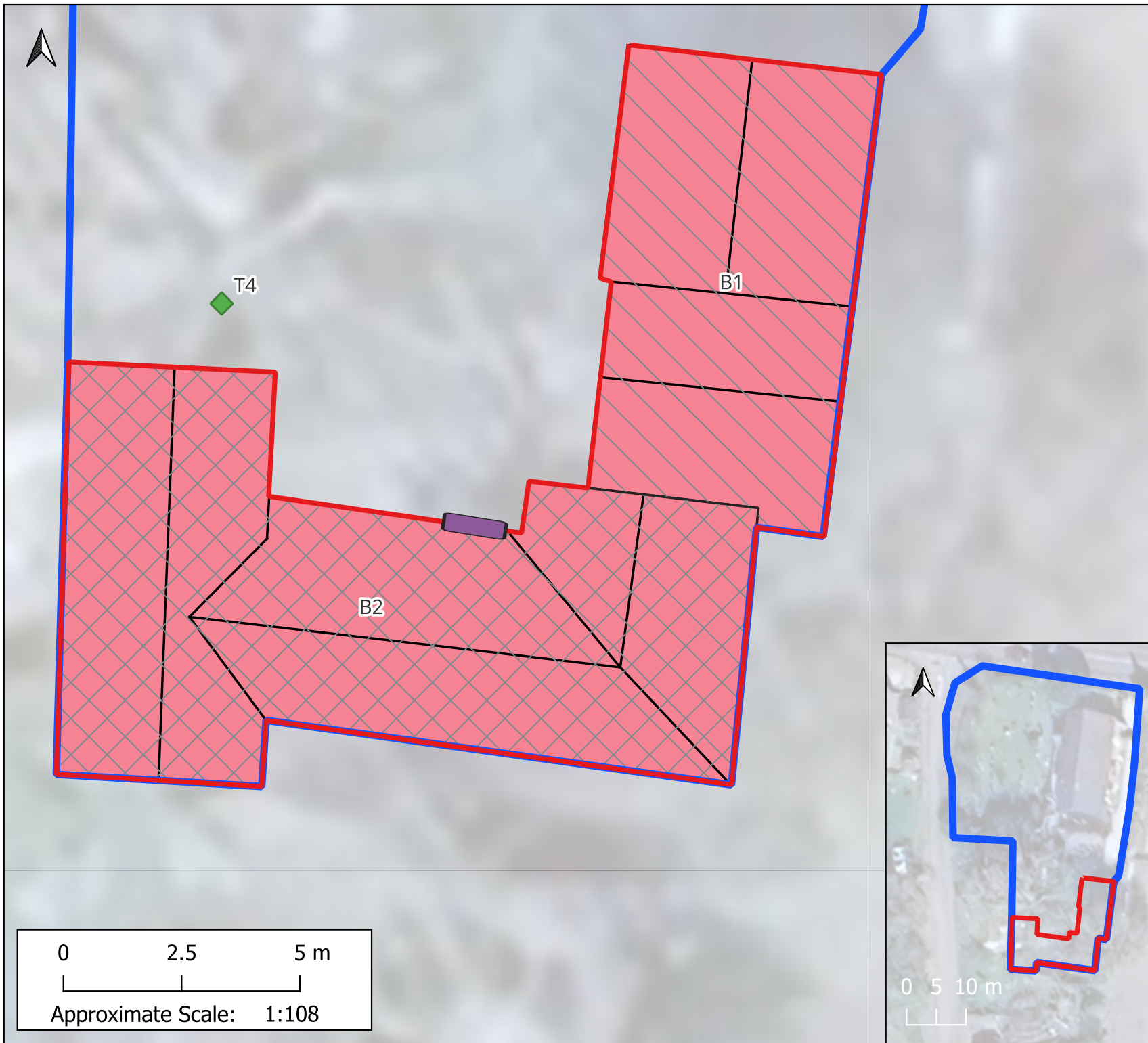
Date: December, 2025

Job: ES 816

Author/Reviewer: JP / GR

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Key

-  Ownership Boundary
-  Construction Footprint
-  Tree - Further Assessment Required

Potential Roost Features

-  Slate Tiling
-  Slate Tiling and Interior Joinery
-  Gap in Soffit
-  Buildings

Figure 2: Preliminary Roost Assessment

Site: The Stables, Bolney
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Author/Reviewer: JP / GR

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References

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

Natural England & Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2025) *MAGIC – Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside*, MAGIC interactive map service. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> (Accessed: 04 December 2025).

Appendix 1. Relevant Protected Species Legislation

Species	Legal Protection
Bats	All British species of bats and their resting and breeding sites have legal protection under UK and European law (Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). It is an offence to: • capture, kill, disturb or injure • damage or destroy a breeding or resting place • obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places • possess, sell, control or transport live or dead individuals, or parts of them

Appendix 2. Site Photographs

Building 1





Building 2







Tree 3



