



Jon Kewell

Ecological Surveyor

Email: jonkewell@arbtech.co.uk

Arbtech Consulting Ltd

arbtech.co.uk

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Oaklands Farm, Slaugham Land, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5TJ

Client:

James Tavernor

Survey date:

22nd May 2025

Project:

Demolition of the existing dwelling.

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

The site survey was undertaken by:			Licence number/Accreditation:		
Jon Kewell, Ecological Surveyor			Accredited on Bat Licence of Natalie Evans (licence number and details on request)		
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rainfall
22nd May 2025	15	66	10	6	None
Executive summary		B1 has low habitat value for void-dwelling bat species due to large rodent presence and heavy cobwebbing of the ridge and trussing, combined with a lack of bat evidence. B1 has moderate habitat value for crevice-dwelling species. The numerous gaps in the timber cladding, soffit boxes and along the eaves of the eastern elevation create excellent roosting habitat for these bat species. The ancient woodland areas surrounding the site provide ideal foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, and connect it to wider landscape resources including significant water resources very nearby. The surrounding habitat and resources, as well as increased insect populations associated with farms containing live animals increases the likelihood of bats exploiting the roosting opportunities on site. Though no evidence was found of bat occupation during the survey, the full extent of the roosting features (i.e. between cladding and lining) could not be surveyed sufficiently to verify likely absence of bats. Two emergence surveys are therefore required to determine likely absence of roosting bats prior to any work that could impact the roof or cladding. As there is the likelihood that this work will not go ahead, and if it ever does it will not be for several years, it would be disproportionate to carry out the below surveys at this stage. Instead, the applicant should discuss with the LPA the possibility of listing the survey requirements as a condition of planning. While this is unconventional, current guidance does allow for this to be permitted in certain situations such as this, where it would be a waste of resources to carry out surveys now, when they will have to be re-done in the future if works ever go ahead. These surveys will be conducted in the optimal bat season (Mid-May to August) with a minimum of three weeks between them, and set out as below:			

	Number of visits	Number of surveyors and night vision aids (NVAs)	Survey months	Any additional survey requirements
	2	3 surveyors with 4 NVAs	Mid-May-August a minimum of 3 weeks apart.	Loft/internal inspection prior to at least one survey – Yes - a loft inspection will be required on one of the dusk emergence surveys
PRA Survey Results	Detailed using desk study and site survey. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.			
See PRA plan in Appendix 1 and location plan in Appendix 2				

Background and Site Location				
Background				
Planning permission was validated in May 2018 and decided in April 2019 for demolition of the buildings on site, conversion of a barn to accommodation and staff facilities, erection of new owner's house (DM/18/2071). Since then the original plans have been altered and the other buildings on site will not be demolished.				
Grid ref (8 figure):	Size of survey area (ha):	Size of overall site (ha):	Number of buildings on site/within site ownership:	Number of buildings surveyed:
TQ 25542 27145	10.65ha	10.65ha	7	7
<i>If there are any other buildings on site that were not surveyed, what is the justification for this?</i>		N/A		
<i>Are there any previous works to any buildings on site in the past 5 years, or planned in the next 5 years?</i>		No		

<i>Details of on-site habitats:</i>	The site is a farm used as an equestrian facility. There are 7 buildings on site including a cottage (B1) and 6 barns of various construction materials. There are open spaces of grass between and around the farm buildings. The site is bordered to the west by a tree-lined road, Slaugham Lane, and to the south by buildings on the adjacent farm. To the north and east are open farming fields with connected hedgerows and tree lines which provide excellent foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Several of the equestrian barns are being used by nesting house martins, house sparrows and swallows.
<i>Details of surrounding habitats:</i>	The site lies 500m south-west of the village of Slaugham. The immediate and wider area surrounding the site is a mosaic of agricultural farmland and patches of ancient and deciduous woodland, including Scotland Farm Shaw (20m west), Holes Wood (120m east), Hampshire Wood (252m west), Hawkins Hill Shaw (255m south) and Canterbury Wood (546m south-west). These are connected by country lanes, hedgerows and lines of trees providing excellent roosting, foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. There are numerous ponds and watercourses in the immediate area of the site including Mill Pond bordering the eastern boundary, which feeds the River Ouse running to the west. These are important water resources for bats.
<i>Have bat records been obtained? If not why?</i>	Bat records have been obtained from SxBRC
<i>EPSL and bat roost records (2km radius)</i>	Bat records:

	The bat records from SxBRC show the following species are present within 2km: - Serotine - Bechstein's Bat - Daubenton's Bat - Natterer's Bat - Noctule - Common Pipistrelle - Soprano Pipistrelle - Brown Long-Eared Bat The records show that there are roosts of the following species within 2km: - Serotine - Brown Long-Eared Bat - Common Pipistrelle - Soprano Pipistrelle There are maternity roosts of the following species within 2km: - Brown Long-Eared Bat - Lyndhurst Estate (1.5km south-west) - Common Pipistrelle - Warninglid (1.6km south-west)
--	---

	The records show that the surrounding habitat is capable of supporting maternity roosts and the habitat is of high quality. There are no records from the site itself. Magic EPSL records 2km radius: There is one record for EPSL licences granted with regard to bats within 2km, listed below: <table><tr><th>Bat Species Effected</th><th>Approx. distance from site</th><th>Impacts allowed by licence</th></tr><tr><td>Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat</td><td>854m east</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>Brown long-eared bat</td><td>1,448m south-east</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat</td><td>1,816m south-west</td><td>Damage and destruction of a resting place</td></tr></table>	Bat Species Effected	Approx. distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence	Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat	854m east	Destruction of a resting place	Brown long-eared bat	1,448m south-east	Destruction of a resting place	Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat	1,816m south-west	Damage and destruction of a resting place
Bat Species Effected	Approx. distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence											
Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat	854m east	Destruction of a resting place											
Brown long-eared bat	1,448m south-east	Destruction of a resting place											
Common Pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat	1,816m south-west	Damage and destruction of a resting place											
Designated sites	On site – The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). 2km radius – There are no Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 2km. 12km radius - None.												

<i>Any known roosts in the local area from the surveyor's local knowledge</i>	No
<i>Were bat droppings collected and retained for DNA analysis?</i>	No
<i>Limitations</i>	The loft floor of B1 was covered with sheets of thin plywood covering the ceiling joists. As a result a full inspection of the loft space was not undertaken due to a safety reasons. However all of the gables could be seen from the area around the loft hatch and the only areas that could not be seen were the far side of the chimney and the floor immediately underneath it. Given the conditions and lack of evidence seen in the rest of the loft these areas were deemed unlikely to provide any new evidence to the survey effort.

Survey Results	
Building Ref: B1	
Building current use	Detached bungalow used as accommodation for staff
Building proposed use (if different to above)	N/A demolition only
Building type	Single-storey detached building
Roof type and shape	Pitched, cross-gabled
Roof covering	Interlocking concrete tiles

Lofts/Internal voids
The loft space is T-shaped, with a gable facing south, west and east. The northern gablet stands approximately 40cm above the ridge of the east-west roof where it connects. The loft is trussed and lined with bitumen felt which is mostly in good condition. There were several tears but these were all covered with heavy cobwebbing and would therefore be unsuitable for access by void-dwelling bats.

The north-south and east-west areas of the loft both measure approximately 10m (L) x 4m (W) with a height throughout of 2m at the apex.

There is a chimney and a water tank in the centre of the loft. The chimney is well sealed.

The floor of the loft space is covered with thin plywood, and this was heavily coated with mouse and rat droppings as well as remains of dead rodents.

There was heavy cobwebbing along the ridge and rafters indicating a lack of void dwelling bats.

No evidence of bat usage was found on the walls, trussing, or on the floor. There was no light ingress into the loft.

Loft photos

Loft access



General structure (looking south)



General structure (eastern gable)



General structure (western gable)



Ridge and lining



Rodent evidence and remains



Floor



Chimney and water tank



Northern gablet with torn lining



External roof and wall features
Roof and eaves features
The roof is covered with interlocking concrete tiles which are in good condition and offer no roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling species. All of the roof elevations except for the eastern elevation were covered in deep moss. The ridges and gable verges, including the northern gablet, are all in excellent condition with no gaps or missing mortar. The chimney is well sealed with no raised flashing or missing mortar. The three gables are clad with wooden fascia boards which are all tightly fitted leaving no gaps. One of the boards on the west-facing gable is missing, however this has not left any gaps into the soffit below anywhere along the length of the gable. At eaves level, the building has a soffit box which is a continuation of the wall-cladding. This is largely in good condition apart from the corners. At the southern corner of the west-facing gable, a portion of the wood has rotted, allowing access for crevice-dwelling species into the soffit and wall tops. At both corners of the south-facing gable there are similar holes allowing soffit access, as well as access to the gap between the tiles and lining and the wall tops. These are also the likely access points for the rats and mice into the loft. There is a gap at the base of the north-facing gablet which could allow bats up under the cladding on the gablet. The eastern elevation and southern elevation of the east-facing gable are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. There is a gap at the top of the sheeting at eaves level which could allow crevice dwelling species to access the space behind or potentially the wall tops.

Wall features

The walls are of brick construction and are entirely clad with timber boards except for the eastern elevation and southern elevation of the east-facing gable which are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. There is a gap at the top of the sheeting at eaves level which could allow crevice dwelling species to access the space behind or potentially the wall tops.

There are numerous boards of the cladding which are broken or raised and could allow access to crevice-dwelling bats into the area between the cladding and the lining. The gaps behind the boards when inspected by torch showed cobwebs and debris. While this does not necessarily indicate an absence of roosting bats, it does indicate that any bat activity has not been recent, and would only be individual bats rather than maternity colony for example.

The windows are well sealed and there are no gaps around the lintels or sills suitable for bat access.

The kitchen window on the western elevation has an open vent in the centre which could allow bats into the house, however it is unlikely that void dwelling species would use this access as the house is occupied.

No evidence of bats (i.e. droppings) was found on the walls or the floors underneath them, however any such evidence can be quickly weathered away.

External photos

Full elevations (south)



Full elevations (east)



Full elevations (west)



Full elevations (north)



Roof tiles and ridge



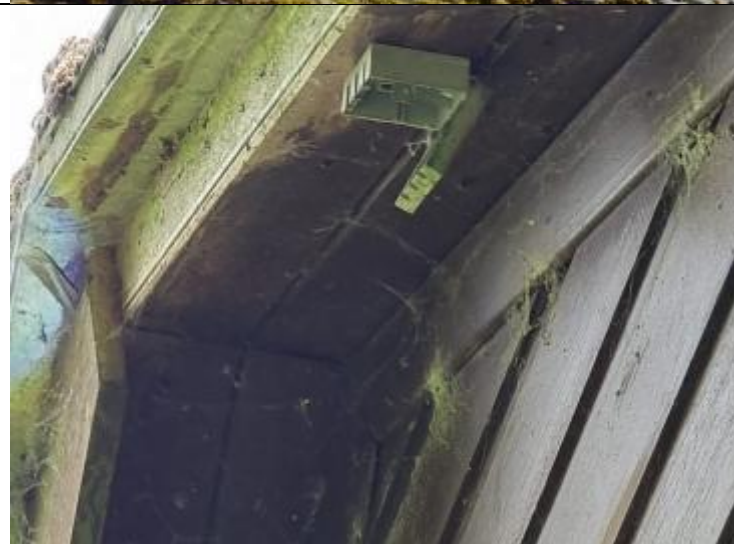
Cladding with raised timbers



Chimney



Western gable with missing fascia board



Hole in soffit (western gable)



Northern gablet



Gap on top of corrugated cladding



Windows, well sealed



Vent in window on western elevation



Damaged corner verge example (south-east corner)



Conclusions and Recommendations

B1 has low habitat value for void-dwelling bat species due to large rodent presence and heavy cobwebbing of the ridge and trussing, combined with a lack of bat evidence of any kind.

B1 has moderate habitat value for crevice-dwelling species. The numerous gaps in the timber cladding, soffit boxes and along the eaves of the eastern elevation create excellent roosting habitat for these bat species.

The ancient woodland areas surrounding the site provide ideal foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, and connect it to wider landscape resources including significant water resources very nearby. The surrounding habitat and resources, as well as increased insect populations associated with farms containing live animals increases the likelihood of bats exploiting the roosting opportunities on site.

Though no evidence was found of bat occupation during the survey, the full extent of the roosting features (i.e. between cladding and lining) could not be surveyed sufficiently to verify likely absence of bats.

Two emergence surveys are therefore required to determine likely absence of roosting bats.

B1 Impacts

The demolition of the building will result in destruction of any bat roosts present in these areas. Any bats roosting in the aforementioned areas could be killed or injured during the work.

Recommendations**B1**

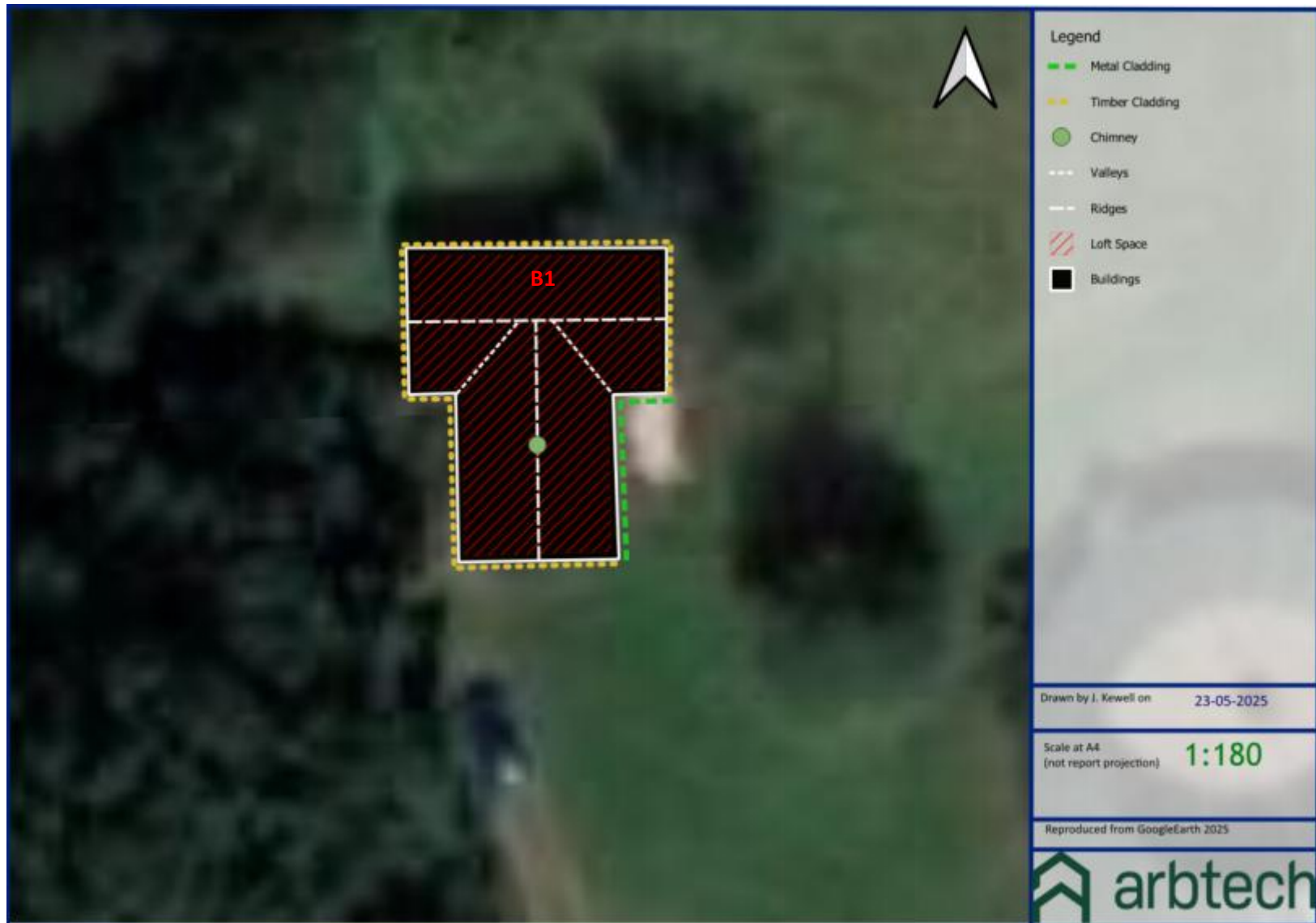
Two dusk emergence surveys will be required to identify and characterise any roosts within this building.

As there is the likelihood that this work will not go ahead, and if it ever does it will not be for several years, it would be disproportionate to carry out the below surveys at this stage. Instead, the applicant should discuss with the LPA the possibility of listing the survey requirements as a condition of planning. While this is unconventional, current guidance does allow for this to be permitted in certain situations such as this, where it would be a waste of resources to carry out surveys now, when they will have to be re-done in the future if works ever go ahead.

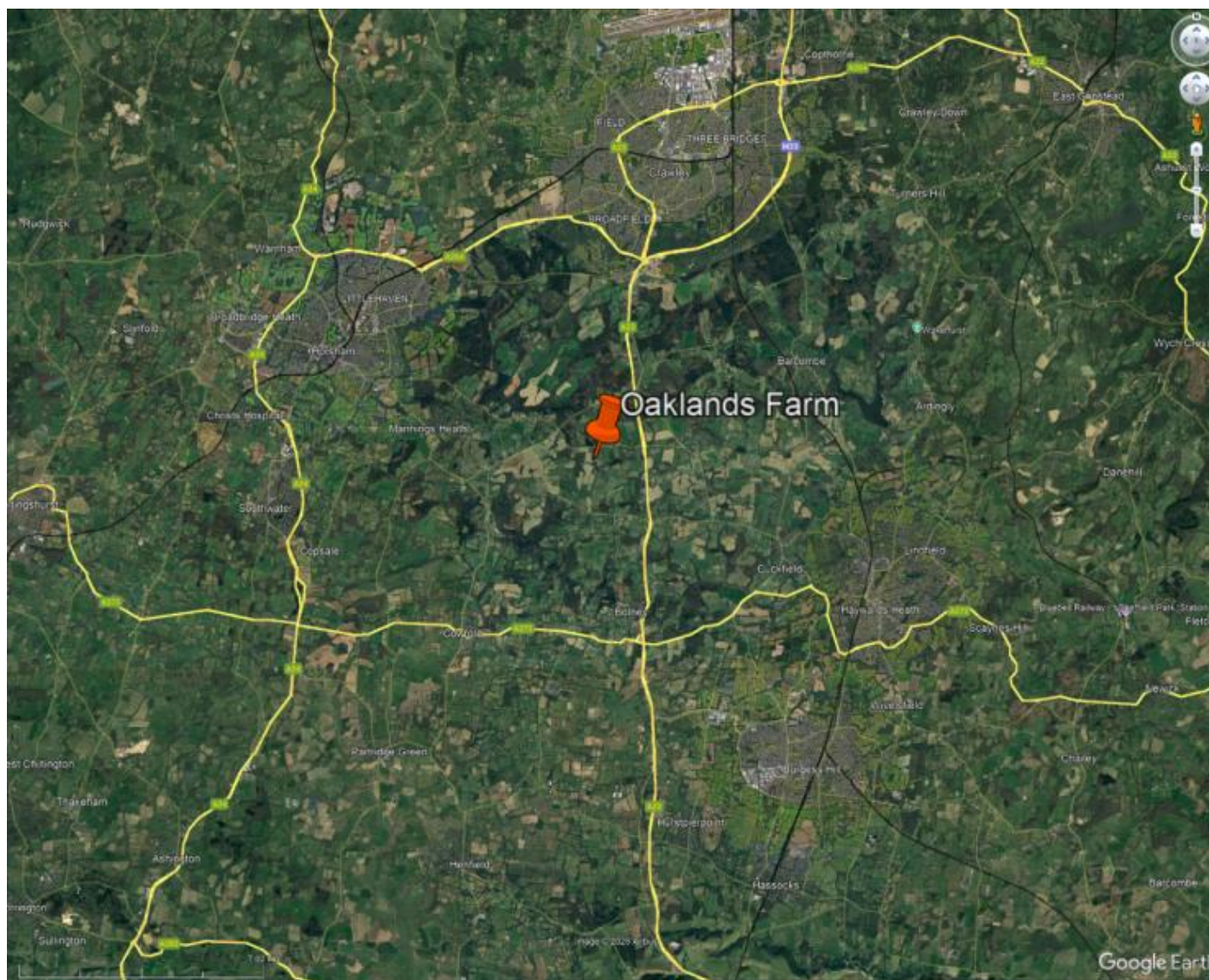
These surveys will be conducted in the optimal bat season (Mid-May to August) with a minimum of three weeks between them, and set out as below:

Number of visits	Number of surveyors and night vision aids (NVAs)	Survey months	Any additional survey requirements
2	3 surveyors with 4 NVAs	Mid-May-August a minimum of 3 weeks apart.	Loft/internal inspection prior to at least one survey – Yes - a loft inspection will be required on one of the dusk emergence surveys
Enhancements	Any new structures on site will incorporate x2 integrated bat boxes.		
Nesting Birds			
Summary of Survey Findings	No nesting birds were observed during the survey on B1, however due to the high number of nesting house martins, sparrows and swallows observed within other buildings on site, nesting birds cannot be ruled out.		
Foreseen Impacts	The proposed works will disturb or destroy the nests of any birds nesting within B1.		
Recommendations	Any works to B1 should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this time period cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately prior to the start of works by a qualified ecologist. All active nests will need to be retained with a 5m buffer until the young have fledged.		
Enhancements	Wall mounted or integrated swift and house sparrow boxes/terraces will be included in any new buildings. These should be placed high up on/in the walls of the building and away from direct sunlight and windows.		

Appendix 1: PRA plans



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed Plans



Limitations and Copyright

Legal

Arbtech Consulting Limited has prepared this report for the sole use of the above-named client or their agents in accordance with our General Terms and Conditions, under which our services are performed. It is expressly stated that no other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of Arbtech Consulting Limited. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based upon information provided by third parties. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Arbtech Consulting Limited.

© This report is the copyright of Arbtech Consulting Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Jon Kewell, Ecological Surveyor	23/05/2025
Proof	0.2	Natalie Evans BA (Hons), MA, MRSB, Principal Consultant, Bat Licence Lead	28/05/2025
Final Draft (awaiting proposals)	1.0	Jon Kewell, Ecological Surveyor	28/05/2025
Updated	2.0	Jon Kewell, Ecological Surveyor	05/06/2025