FIRS FARM, CRAWLEY

Nocturnal Bat Survey Report

October 2024

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Report Control Sheet

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by ET Planning Ltd to undertake a Nocturnal Bat Survey at the site at Firs Farm, Copthorne Common, Crawley, RH10 3LF. This report has been produced to inform an outline planning application at the site.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Andrew Taylor, Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. This project is overseen by Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MIEnvSc, CEnv, Director and Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Olivia is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.1.3. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the 8th August 2024 by Collington Winter Environmental which found Building 1 (B1) and Building 5 (B5) to provide low bat roosting potential. All other buildings on site were found to provide negligible bat roost potential. It was therefore recommended that a minimum of one additional nocturnal survey was required to determine usage by bats.

1.1.4. A nocturnal emergence survey was completed on the 22nd August 2024 to validate the preliminary roost appraisal findings, the results of which are detailed below.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located east of the village of Copthorne and approximately 6km northeast of Crawley (Grid reference: TQ 33456 39108)

Figure 1.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Nocturnal Bat Survey are as follows:

- Identify any bats roosting within the buildings.
- Assess the value of the buildings for roosting bats.
- Identify the species assemblage of bats using the site.
- Provide recommendations on any further surveys licensing and mitigation required for bats on site.

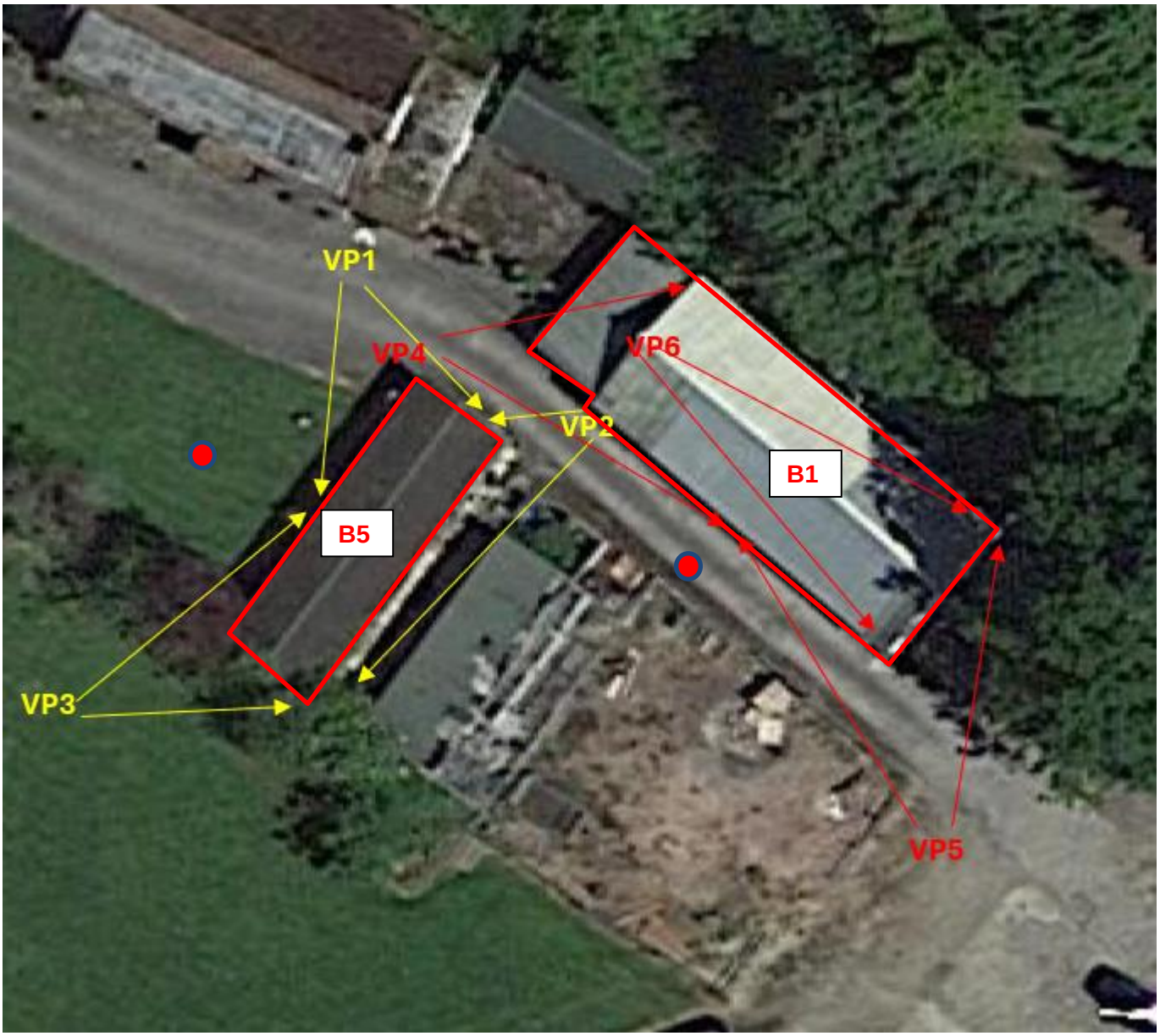
2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY

2.1.1. One nocturnal bat survey was undertaken as dusk survey on 14th August 2024 by two suitably experienced surveyors. Three infrared cameras (Nightfox whisker, Digital Night Vision Goggles) were used during the survey to cover additional viewpoints throughout the buildings.

2.1.2. Please refer to Figure 2.1 for locations of vantage points used during the survey. Red dots indicate the two surveyors and yellow arrows the direction and field of view of the NVA cameras.

Figure 2.1 VP locations of NVA cameras and Surveyor Locations



2.1.3. The surveys were undertaken in line with guidance as set out in Collins (2023, as amended). Surveyors used Echo Meter Touch Bat detectors along with two Anabat chorus static detectors. All surveyors were suitably experienced undertaking bat emergence surveys. Please refer to Table 2.1 below for details of surveyors. The camera footage was reviewed by competent ecologists using relevant media players.

Table 2.1 – Survey Details

Date	Sunset/ Sunrise Time	Start	Finish	Surveyors	Weather Conditions
14/08/2024	20:06	19:15	12:36	Emma Anderson Rhiannon Hobbs	Temp at start/end: 17'C Cloud cover: 8 Wind: 2-3 (Beaufort scale) Precipitation: light

2.2. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

2.2.1. Due to the proximity of the neighbouring property and presence of foliage, NVA cameras could not be placed facing the northeast aspect of Building 1. To mitigate for this, a NVA camera was placed inside the building for additional data.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. DUSK SURVEY (22/08/2024)

3.1.1. Minimal bat activity was recorded throughout the survey with only common species identified. Only one bat was identified during the survey. The bat was recorded at 20:09 (approximately three minutes after sunset) and was a noctule (*Nyctallus noctula*) identified as heard but not seen at VP5.

3.1.2. A review of the IRC camera footage did not identify any bats emerging and/or re-entering the buildings at the points of view, IRC camera footage from inside B1 also did not identify any bats within the building. This confirms that there are no bat roosts on site.

Table 3.1 – Images of Camera Footage at the Darkest Point

IRC 1	IRC 2
	
IRC 3	**IRC 4**
	
IRC 5	**IRC 6**
	

3.2. ASSESSMENT

3.2.1. Limited bat activity was recorded during the survey with locally common and regionally widespread species identified within the site. Commuting was recorded on the north eastern aspect of the site towards the beginning of the survey. Bat activity was recorded as heard not but seen commuting, indicating that the surrounding habitats are used for foraging and commuting purposes.

3.2.2. No bat roosts were recorded on site during the survey.

3.2.3. As no evidence of bat roosts were observed on site, no further licences or surveys are required to proceed with the proposed development.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

4.1. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1.1. As the survey completed at the site did not identify roosting bats it is not considered the development has the risk of injuring and/or killing bats or disturbing/destroying any known bat roosts and therefore there is no requirement for a Natural England European Protected Species License (EPSL) to be in place prior to works starting on site

4.2. MITIGATION

4.2.1. All bats have some degree of sensitivity to artificial night-time lighting. Introducing artificial lighting to areas that are not currently illuminated may sever important bat flight lines and discourage bats from using roost provisions. It is recommended that where external lighting is to be provided on the new buildings that this is designed and installed to comply with current legislation and to minimalize the impact on any bats in the locale.

4.2.2. It is advised that a light mitigation plan is produced to assess the pre- and post-development changes in lighting and to advise on an appropriately sensitive lighting scheme as part of the development.

4.2.3. Due to the nature of the species recorded locally and the potential utilisation of the new building and wider habitat for foraging and commuting purposes it would be deemed beneficial as an enhancement of the site to include a number of crevice dwelling bat boxes at the design stage of the project.

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