



Bat Scoping Survey and Nesting Bird Report:

Blacksmiths Cottage, Box, Corsham. SN13 8ED

Client : Jon Blake - BluSkye Property Limited

April 2026

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Summary

KD Consulting Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Bat Scoping and Nesting Birds survey in January 2026 by Jon Blake, BluSkye Property Limited at Blacksmiths Cottage, Box, Corsham, SN13 8ED.

The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of a former blacksmiths into a two-bedroom residential dwelling.

The survey has subsequently been updated following planning refusal in March 2026, and the applicant has had a follow up conversation with the Wiltshire Council Ecology officer.

Following the bat scoping survey, no evidence of the potential presence of a bat roost was identified and the building has been assessed to have 'negligible' potential to support bat roosts due to the limited potential roost features and no evidence of bat usage internally or externally.

In addition, no evidence of historic nesting birds was identified in association with the building.

The site also has a separate garden and will remain undisturbed by the current proposals.

In view of the above, it is considered the appropriate level of assessment has been completed (as per Collin, J (Ed) 2016), the proposed development will not affect the favourable conservation status of bats or disturb nesting birds, and the legislation and policy relating to the protection of bats and nesting birds has been suitably addressed.

1. INTRODUCTION

KD Consulting Limited were commissioned to undertake a bat scoping and nesting birds survey in January 2026 by Jon Blake, BluSkye Property Limited at Blacksmiths Cottage, Box, Corsham, SN13 8ED.

The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for the redevelopment of a former blacksmiths into a two-bedroom residential dwelling.

1.1. Site Description

The site lies on the southern outskirts of the village of Box to the south and west of Devizes Road, south of the A4, north of middle Hill and to the south of Washwell, Approximate NGR ST 82539 68360; refer to Figure 1). The site is located in a residential area just off the A365 Devizes Road. With residential housing to the north, east and south, with open countryside to the west and south-west. The site currently comprises a single outbuilding with an access road.



Figure 1. Site context

1.2. Proposed Works

It is understood the proposals are for the redevelopment of a single former blacksmiths into a two-bedroom residential dwelling. The site also has a separate garden which is not attached to the building and is located across the byway and comprises a small, grassed parcel of land (with a single existing tree). Following the applicant's conversation with the Wiltshire Council Ecology Officer (and comments noted by the Ecologist at refusal), it was established that the garden had in fact been mis-identified as a woodland and orchard, which is not the case. The garden forms part of a larger existing garden which has been previously sub-divided. The garden neighbours the existing garden of 1 Pye Corner and the garden of 'Southfields' to the rear.

It is proposed that a small cycle store be erected in the garden, but this will be a free-standing structure, fully removable. It is understood that no other works to the garden will take place and it will therefore remain undisturbed by the current proposals.

Photographs	Description
	Existing garden for the former blacksmiths which is adjacent to the existing gardens of 1 Pye Corner and Southfields to the rear.

1.3. Personnel & Quality Assurance

The survey was undertaken by Karl Dentith BSc, Principal Ecologist. Karl has over twenty years' experience in environmental management and ecology. Karl has extensive training and experience of protected species surveys and regularly co-ordinates and project manages a full range of habitat and protected species surveys. If bats or evidence of bats are found or a known roost is present, Rob Nicholson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM is a Class 2 Bat licence holder (Natural England), has over 10 years' relevant experience as an ecologist and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Rob has held European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) for bats for a variety of species and roost types in the last 10 years.

All field work and assessment was undertaken in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed) 2023).

The survey and desk-based assessment were conducted on the 12th January 2026 and 2nd April 2026.

2. LEGAL STATUS

Bats

In England, all British bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately or intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a statutory duty on public bodies such as local authorities that “*every public body must, in exercising its functions have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity*”. Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to draw up a list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance which should be used to guide decision-makers (which include local authorities) in implementing their duty under Section 40 (see below for relevant bat species).

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), published in 1994 to fulfil the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which the UK is a signatory (since 1992), produced a national priority species list with all species included having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Regional and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) were also written and adopted to develop plans for species of nature conservation importance at regional and local levels.

The UKBAP, as updated in 2007, listed seven bat species as conservation priorities. These species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006):

- Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Brown Long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)
- Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*)
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
- Greater Horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)
- Lesser Horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)

The above was since succeeded in by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' (July, 2012) the purpose of which is to set a broad enabling structure for action across the UK between now and 2020.

Nesting Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is thus an offence to: Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird. Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Desk Study

To inform the survey, a desk study was conducted using available ecological information relating to bats for the area surrounding the site.

Online resources, including Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC), were consulted in relation to the presence of sites and habitats of importance for bats in the wider context.

A data request to the Local Records Centre (LRC) or the local Bat groups was not made due to the small scale of the development.

3.2. Pre-development Bat Survey

3.2.1. Habitat Survey

A broad habitat survey was conducted of the site to inform the assessment of the suitability of the site for bats. Broad habitat descriptions were assigned and their values with respect to bats at site level and in the wider context assessed.

3.2.2. Building Inspection

The building inspection was limited to the building subject of the planning application. This building was inspected using close-focusing binoculars (Leica 8x38) to determine possible access points such as cavities in eaves, block work and the roof tiles and structure. An internal inspection of all rooms and roof void within the building was also conducted.

Using ladders, all accessible features were closely inspected using *Lenser H14* and *X21* cool light torches and a *Pixtra Arc A613* thermal imaging camera was used. Where possible, any cracks, crevices and likely access points or potential roost features were checked for signs of use by bats e.g. droppings, scratch marks and staining. In addition, field signs indicating historical presence of nesting birds were also searched for.

3.3. Evaluation Methods

The 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (4th edition) (Collins, J. (Ed) 2023) are used as a basis to evaluate the value of features for their potential to support bats.

In addition, the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) was referred to specifically in terms of evaluating the need for an EPS Licence.

The potential impacts on bats, bat habitat or their roosts as a result of the proposals are assessed within this report using the above criteria, together with an ecological judgement by an experienced bat surveyor.

4. CONSTRAINTS

External field signs of bats can be lost over time due to weathering and damp conditions. Droppings and other field signs are not always visible through routine, non-invasive inspection surveys as bat species associated with buildings roost in crevices that may not be fully accessible to survey.

This survey does not cover every month of the active and hibernation seasons for and is limited to a detailed external and internal inspection for evidence of the presence of bats and an assessment of the potential of the building to support bat roosts.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Desk Study

Online Resources

The magic.gov.uk website holds records of EPS licence applications for bats within 1km of the site; The nearest being approximately to the east for Lesser Horseshoe (dated 2013) Ref. EPSM2013-6255.

5.1.1. Broad Habitat Survey

The wider area is characterised by the village of Box with residential dwellings, mixed retail properties and open spaces. The site itself comprises a single structure which is an outbuilding which is currently disused.

5.1.2. Roost Survey

The objective of the roost survey was to identify and assess for the presence of bat roosts at any potential roost locations which may be anticipated to be affected by the proposed re-development of the building.

Building Inspection

The building proposed for re-development has a pitched tiled roof and is constructed from stone block with a small lean-to extension constructed from breeze block which has stone cladding. Under examination the roof has been replaced and the original roof timbers also. The blockwork and roof tiles are in good order with no gaps or perished mortar joints. The building is devoid of soffits, fascia boards and barge boards. The roof is constructed of red clay roof tiles. Overall the building is in good order with no gaps or fissures in the blockwork with no missing or broken roof tiles. There are no gaps in the mortar or the cap stones and no gaps between the eaves in the roof void. No historic or current evidence of bats was identified either internally or externally in relation to the structure and it is not thought the bats are utilising the building now or have at any point in recent years.

No evidence of bats or birds accessing the building to breed or roost was found.

Table.1 Building Inspection Photographs and Descriptions.

Photographs	Description
	This aspect of the building shows the front and one of the gable ends and cap stones. Note that the building has no soffits and the eaves of the roof sit directly onto the stonework. Under inspection there are no sufficient crevices or egresses for breeding birds or roosting bats relating to any of the features.



This picture demonstrates that the building has been repointed in relatively recent years and offers no opportunities for either roosting bats or nesting birds.



This picture is of the alternate gable end and shows the lean-to extension.



The internal roof void of the building.



This photograph shows the rear of the building. And the integrity of the extension which is also devoid of soffits.



The internal roof void of the building.



Gable end view with cladded extension in the foreground.

In view of the results of the detailed inspection, the building was assessed as being of negligible potential for supporting bat roosts (Collin, J. (Ed), 2023) due to the paucity of potential roost features for bats, lack of evidence of the presence of bats; and the urban location of the building.

In addition, no evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey (which was conducted outside of the breeding season). However, there was no sign of recent breeding attempts or roosting birds (swallow and house martin nests, are noticeable, distinctive and long lasting).

6. EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1. Roosts and Habitat

Following the scoping survey, no evidence to suggest the presence of a bat roost has been identified in association with this building. The building assessed as being of negligible potential for supporting bat roosts.

No birds' nests were identified within the building at the time of survey.

6.2. The Value of the Site for Bats

In view of the findings of the survey and report and negligible potential due to the lack of suitable features for the building to support a bat roosts the site is considered to be of no significant value for bats.

7. IMPACTS

The proposed development consists of the redevelopment of a structure, the garden which is separate from the property is to remain undisturbed.

Overall without mitigation and in view of the assessment of the value of the site for bats, the scale of impact is considered likely to be negligible (Mitchell-Jones, 2004).

Due to the absence of birds' nests it is not anticipated that there will be any impacts upon nesting birds.

8. ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is advised that bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is advised that it is illegal to deliberately/intentionally or recklessly: kill, injure or take a bat; damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not); and disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

It is advised that all active bird nests are protected during the breeding season (March – August inclusive) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; or to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

8.1. Further Survey

In view of the above, due to the building being assessed as having ‘negligible potential’ for supporting bat roosts, no further survey with respect to bats is required.

Due to the absence of active birds’ nest or any evidence of historic breeding no further survey for nesting birds is recommended at this stage.

9. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above, it is considered the appropriate level of assessment has been completed (as per Collin, J (Ed) 2023), the proposed development will not affect the favourable conservation status of bats or disturb nesting birds, and the legislation and policy relating to the protection of bats and nesting birds has been suitably addressed.

10 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2000). Distribution atlas of bats in Britain and Ireland 1980-1999. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Collins, J (Ed). (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition. Bat Conservation Trust.

Bat Conservation Trust website: <http://www.bats.org.uk/>

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>