

345 Cronton Road, Cronton
Further Bat Activity Surveys

18th June 2022

INTRODUCTION

Following an initial Bat Scoping Survey undertaken on the 18th January 2022, Kingdom Ecology have completed further bat dusk emergence surveys at 345 Cronton Road, Cronton, Knowsley, WA8 5QD (National Grid Reference SJ 4910 8823). The study site's location and site layout are shown on Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

The additional bat dusk surveys were undertaken on the 24th May and the 12th June 2022. Proposals are to extend the building and convert the loft space, these works will affect the existing roof.

Surveys were led by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking bat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience. Richard is also a licensed bat worker (Level 4 Class License and Bat Low Impact Class License).

BAT SCOPING SURVEY FINDINGS

The study site comprises of a detached bungalow located at 345 Cronton Road, Cronton. The bungalow was constructed in 1983 on the site of an original farmhouse.

The house is located on the western edge of the village of Cronton. Further residential properties are located around the site whilst wider habitats are mostly rural character comprising of large arable fields. There is a small woodland located approximately 300 m to the west of the site.

Immediate surrounding habitats are considered to offer 'low-moderate' quality bat foraging habitat.

The building is brick-built with a pitched, gabled roof which is clad in tightly fitted, interlocking concrete tiles. The house has three gables at its East, West and South faces.

The bungalow has terraced gardens to the rear which face on to the adjacent Macclesfield Canal. The garden comprises of managed lawn and flower beds, which are stepped down towards the canal. There is also a small greenhouse and a brick storage shed within the rear garden.

Addendum

The bungalow has a loft space running above the ground floor rooms. The loft space measures approximately 20m in length and is 2.5m in height.

The loft space is lined with fibrous insulation felt and is boarded out. The internal face of the roof is lined with tightly fitted bitumastic hessian felt.

The loft space is open and uncluttered with no trusses spanning the roof void. The loft space has circular glazed windows at its East and West faces and so has high ambient light levels.

The internal inspection identified bat droppings at each gable. Approximately 30 x pipistrelle bat droppings were found scattered on the internal wall and on felt immediately below the gable apex at the buildings West face (Target Note 1 on Figure 2).

Approximately 10 x pipistrelle bat droppings were identified at the internal East facing gable (Target Note 2 on Figure 2). There is an approximate 1.5cm wide gap between the internal breezeblock wall and the first roofing truss.

The field signs indicate that bats have been roosting within the cavity walls at each gable. No other bat droppings were found internally, with no scattered droppings found within the main area of the loft space.

No other obvious potential bat access points to the loft spaces were identified.

Externally, the building was observed to be largely well-sealed and in good condition. The interlocking roof tiles and ridge tiles are intact and well-sealed. The building has a dry verge, sealed with uPVC capping; the wooden soffits were observed to be well fitted at the building's eaves with no significant gaps.

However, there are narrow crevices running between the gable soffits boxes and the masonry walls at the East, West and South faces (Target Notes 1-3).

These crevices could provide access for bats into the cavity wall and soffit box. These locations correspond with the bat droppings found within the loft space. No bat droppings or other bat field signs were observed externally.

No other obvious potential bat roosting locations were identified associated with the building.

An external inspection of the building was repeated in June 2022, no bat droppings or other bat field signs were found in the crevices at the East facing gable were observed to be partially covered over.

Taking account of the bat droppings found internally, the limited potential bat roosting features identified and the building's location, the bungalow was assessed as offering 'moderate' bat roosting suitability albeit the building was confirmed as supporting a bat roost.

Addendum

Given the numbers of droppings found, it was considered unlikely that the building supported a significant bat roost (such as a maternity colony). The droppings were more likely to be attributable to low numbers of non-breeding bats. Such roosts are considered to be of 'low' conservation value.

BAT DUSK ACTIVITY SURVEYS

Methods

In accordance with the recommendation within the initial scoping survey, an additional bat dusk survey was undertaken on the 24th May and the 12th June 2022. This level of survey effort combined with the findings of the daytime survey were considered sufficient to confidently characterise the bat roost type present.

Given the size of the buildings and site layout, it was considered appropriate to use two surveyors, with one surveyor positioned at the north east corner of the house and one at the southwest corner (see Figure 2).

The surveyors were equipped with heterodyne and time expansion bat detectors (Anabat Walkabout, Anabat Express and Elekon Bat Scanner).

The dusk surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunrise and continued up to 90 minutes after sunset. All bat species and bat behaviour were recorded.

Results

The first emergence survey was undertaken under suitable conditions on the 24th May 2022 with weather recorded as dry, clear, with a light wind and with a temperature of 13°C. Sunset was recorded at 21:19.

In summary, three pipistrelle bats were observed to emerge from the building. Two bat emerged from the west facing gable (Target Note 1 on Figure 2) at 21.46 and 21.39; the third, pipistrelle emerged from the south facing gable at 21.48 (Target Note 3).

The bats were observed to emerge from the crevices between the soffit boxes and the masonry walls.

No other roosting bats were recorded.

Moderate levels of bat activity were recorded throughout survey with individual common pipistrelle bats recorded foraging around the gardens and passing over the site from east to west. The first bat was recorded at 21.34. Bat activity levels reduced from approximately 22.10, with just intermittent bursts of activity recorded until the end of survey.

Activity comprised solely of common pipistrelle bats with no other species recorded during survey.

Addendum

The second emergence survey was undertaken on 12th June 2022 with weather recorded as dry and overcast with a temperature of 14°C. Wind at the start of survey was light but increased to moderate approximately 20 minutes after sunset. In spite of the increased wind, bats were recorded as active throughout the survey. Sunset was recorded at 21.40.

No bat emergences were recorded from the building during the second emergence survey.

Moderate levels of bat activity were again recorded, with the first bat recorded at 21.53. This comprised of two common pipistrelle bats commuting east to west over the site.

Further activity again comprised of individual common pipistrelle bats foraging around the gardens, with intermittent bursts of activity recorded throughout the survey.

Again, only common pipistrelle bats were recorded.

No other bat species or other significant bat activity was recorded.

Roost Evaluation

Taking the previous preliminary roost assessment findings and the latest dusk survey results into account, the bungalow is confirmed as supporting common pipistrelle day roosts with bats recorded roosting in both the west and south facing gables and having historically roosted in the East facing gable. Bats are likely roosting within the cavity walls and accessing these features via gaps at the soffit boxes. Such roosts are considered to be of 'low' conservation value.

It is considered to be very unlikely that the building would support a significant bat roost such as a maternity colony.

Works to extend the bungalow will destroy the bat roosts. Therefore works, will need to be undertaken under a European Protected Species License.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bat Mitigation

Survey has identified the bungalow as supporting 2 x day roosts used by low numbers of non-breeding pipistrelle bats.

Works will result in the loss of these roost sites. Bats are protected under the various wildlife statutes described in Section 1.3 and are considered to be a European Protected Species (EPS). Therefore, works to redevelop the site would need to be undertaken under a EPS License. Natural England are the EPS licensing authority.



Addendum

Given the likely low conservation value of the identified roosts, it would be appropriate to complete the works under a Bat Mitigation Class License (BMCL).

As part of any future BMCL application, up-to-date survey information must be provided from the most recent bat survey season (the survey season runs from May-September inclusive). The surveys described in this report would be appropriate for a licence application up until May 2023. For a licence application after this date, the surveys may need to be repeated.

Bat Mitigation Strategy

An outline mitigation strategy has been designed to limit the negative impacts of the development on bats in the locality. The mitigation strategy would provide alternative high-quality bat roosting habitat and would also aim to limit the risk of harm to individual animals during the development process. It is considered that this strategy will ensure that the favourable conservation status of common/soprano pipistrelle bats is maintained both locally and nationally.

Works should follow a strict method statement whereby bats are first excluded from the roosting features and sensitive stages of the construction works (such as removal of tiles, soffit and wall plates at the south, east and west facing gables) would be undertaken by hand and would be overseen by the licensed ecologist.

Outline Bat Method Statement

Prior to the start of works a mitigation area should be prepared which would act as a receptor for bats encountered during works.

The receptor area should comprise of 2 x Schwegler 2F bat boxes which would be fitted to retained mature trees in the rear garden of the site (the oak tree at Target Note 4 and the birch tree at Target Note 5 on Figure 2).

The bat boxes would be located at a minimum height of 3 m and would be positioned to face in a broadly southerly direction.

At least one week prior to the start of works, a suitable bat valve will need to be fitted over each identified roost access point by the licensed bat worker (this would include the east, west and south gables). The bat valve will allow bats to leave the roost but will prevent re-entry. The bat valves will be left in place for at least 5 nights.

Prior to the start of works on site, a 'toolbox talk' should be given to the site construction workers identifying the locations where bats have been encountered, their responsibilities under UK Legislation and the EPSL method statement; plus what they should do if any bats are encountered during works.

Works to strip tiles, soffits and wall plates at the gables and at any other key areas would be undertaken under supervision of the named ecologist on the license. Any bats encountered during works would be moved to the pre-prepared bat boxes by the licensed bat worker.



Addendum

If any bats are encountered at any other time during works, works should immediately stop and the named ecologist on the EPSL should be contacted to attend site and provide further advice.

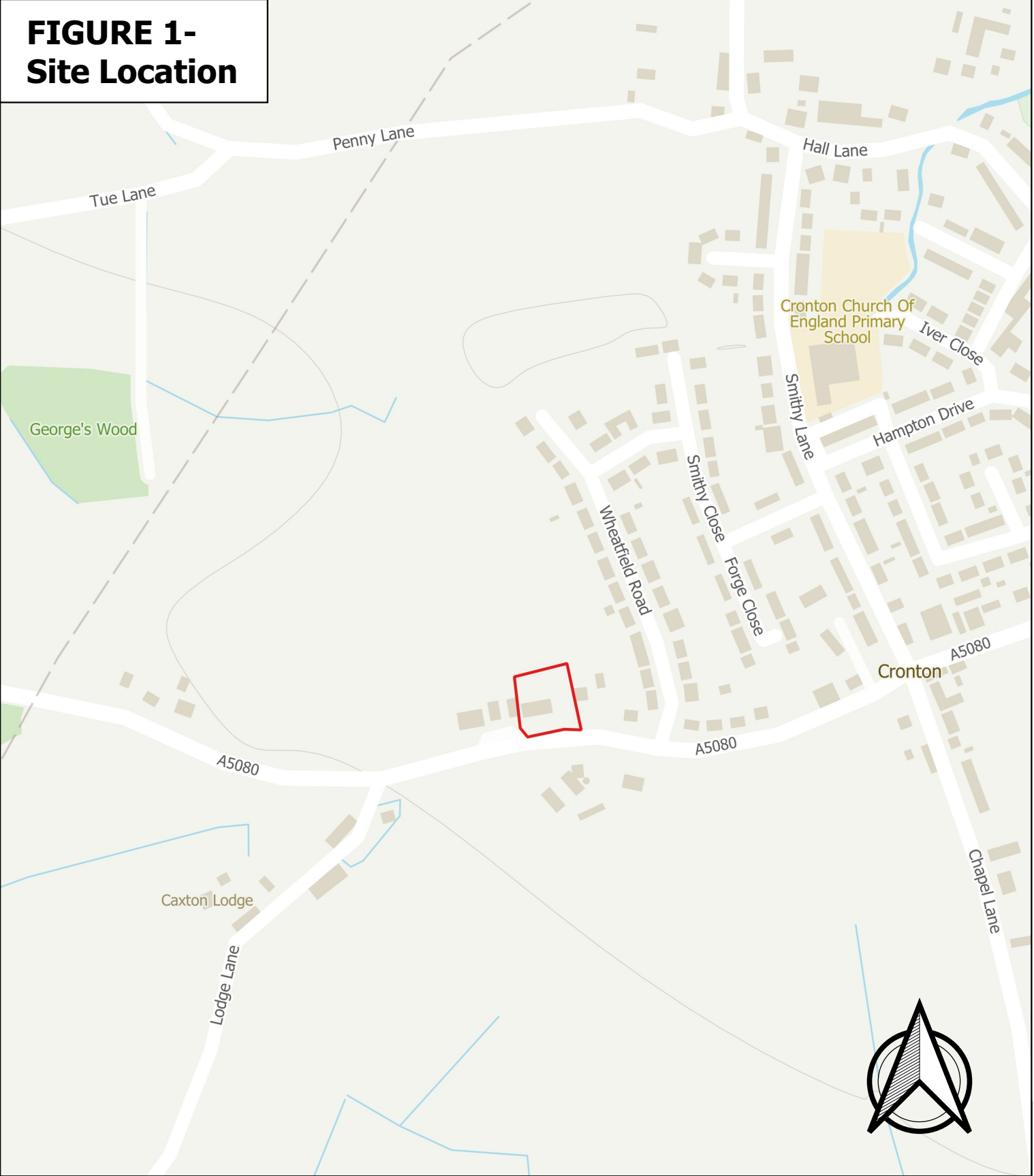
New Bat Roosting Features

In addition to the 2 x tree-mounted Schwegler 2F bat boxes, it is also recommended that further 2 x integral bat boxes are built into the east and west facing gables of the extended bungalow.

The bat boxes should be located at a minimum height of 4m and be positioned as close to each gable apex as possible. A suitable model of integral bat box is the Habibat 003. As these bat boxes would be built into the brickwork, they must be considered during construction as retro-fitting the bat boxes can be difficult.

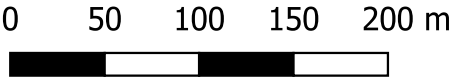
Lighting proposals for the site will need to ensure that the bat box locations are not illuminated by any artificial lighting.

**FIGURE 1-
Site Location**

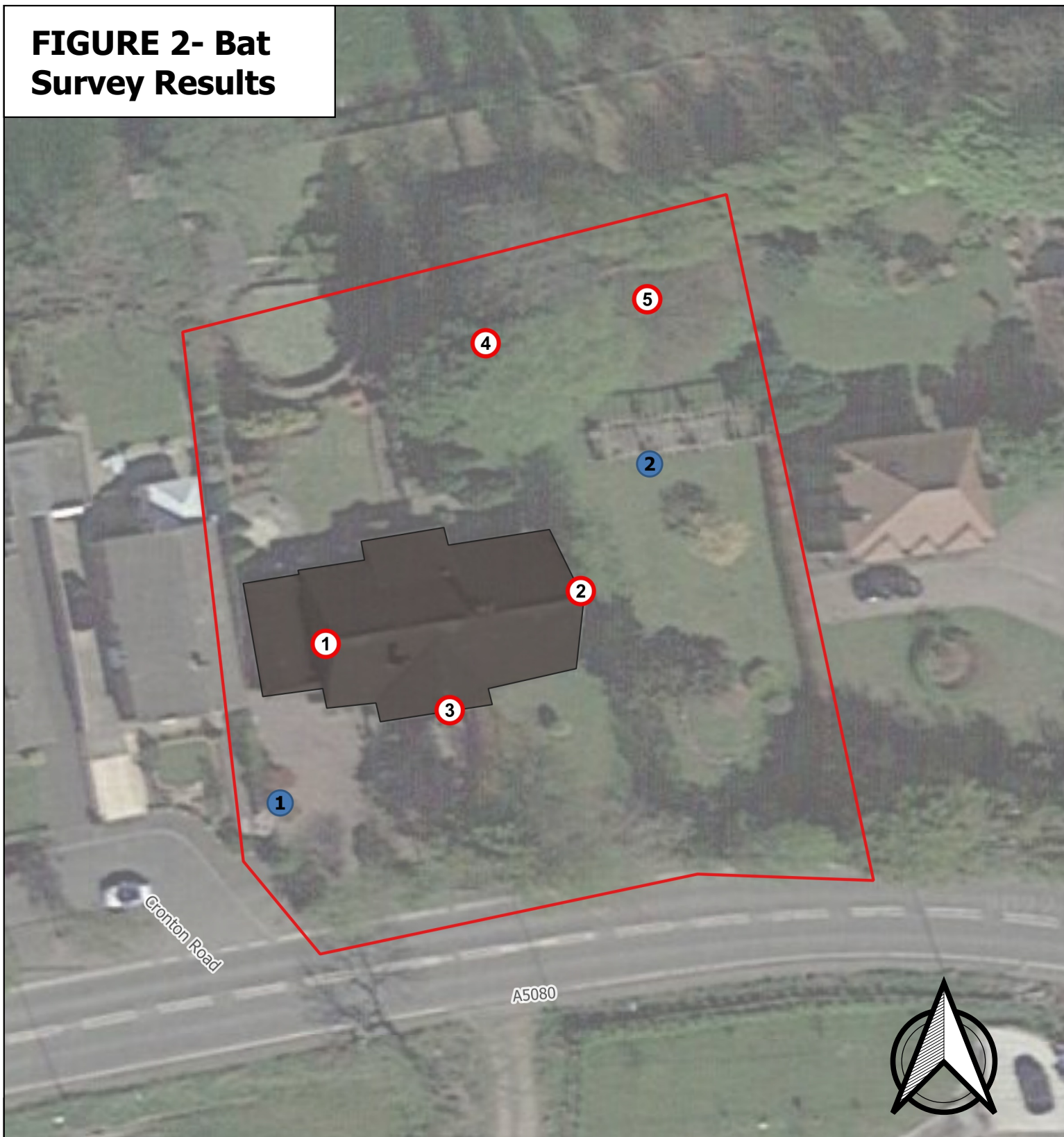


KEY

 Study Site



**FIGURE 2- Bat
Survey Results**



KEY



Study Site



Target Note



Building



Recommended surveyor location

