



WE KNOW SERVICES

Bat Survey Report

Site

Aspinall Street, Prescott

Client

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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Version

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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Aspinall Street, Prescott

Quality Assurance

The information which the author has prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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Summary

An updated bat survey was commissioned to take place in June 2024 by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, of the disused Stephenson's Print Building situated on the same site.

The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for demolition of the Stephenson's Print building in its entirety.

Previous bat survey had been undertaken in 2021 (We Know Services, 2021) but the bat emergence surveys required updating due to the surveys being over two years old at the time of the application for the current proposed demolition.

Following the completion of the updated bat emergence surveys of the buildings, very limited bat activity was recorded and no evidence to suggest the presence of bat roosts was identified in association with the buildings proposed for demolition.

In view of the results of the survey, the site is not considered to be of any notable value for bats currently. As such there is unlikely to be any significant affect upon the conservation status of bats as a result of re-development or refurbishment.

However, any development of the site provides an opportunity to enhance the site for bats by comparison to the current state.

In order to enhance the site for bats in the long-term, it is recommended that consideration is given to the use of bat bricks or bat boxes upon existing retained buildings or trees. In addition, where possible, any lighting scheme associated with the site should be designed to ensure that it is sensitive to wildlife, including bats foraging and commuting through the site.

In view of the results of assessment, no further survey is considered necessary where works affecting the buildings are commenced prior to April 2026 (before the active season for bats begins). Where works take place beyond this date the results of this assessment should be reviewed. However, should at any stage of works a bat roost be found or suspected, then works should cease and an ecologist should be consulted.

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1 Introduction

An updated bat survey was commissioned to take place in June 2024 by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, of the disused Stephenson's Print Building situated on the same site.

The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for demolition of the Stephenson's Print building in its entirety.

Previous bat survey had been undertaken in 2021 (We Know Services, 2021) but the bat emergence surveys required updating due to the surveys being over two years old at the time of the application for the current proposed demolition.

1.1 Site Description

The site is located in Prescott town centre, Knowsley, Merseyside (Grid Reference: SJ466927) and currently consists of large carparking and loading areas, associated disused building (Stephenson's Print) and associated soft landscaping which is limited to ornamental shrubs and amenity street trees. The site is situated in an urban area comprised of a mix of residential and commercial properties with the nearest open green space being the grounds and cemetery associated with St Mary's/Prescot Parish Church to the west.

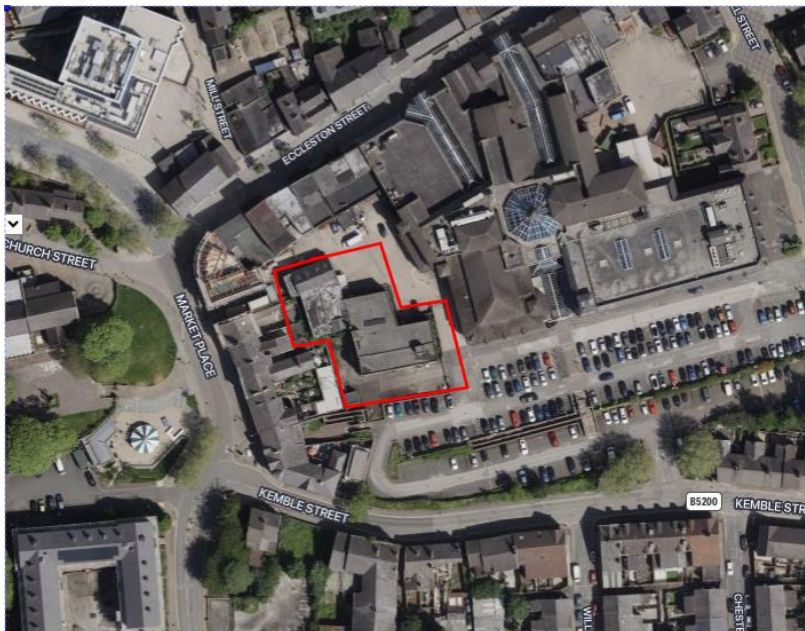


Figure 1. Site and surrounding landscape character.

1.2 Proposed Development

It is understood that the proposals are for demolition of the Stephenson's print building which is situated immediately to the west of Prescott shopping centre (as indicated in red on Figure 1 and the bat survey plan at Appendix 1).

1.3 Personnel & Quality Assurance

Rob Nicholson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM is a Class 2 Bat licence holder (Natural England), has over 15 years' relevant experience as an ecologist and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Rob has been 'named ecologist' on numerous European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats for a range of species and roost types in both England and Wales.

The survey was led by Rob Nicholson with assistance from Sharon Blackhurst and Karl Dentith BSc, both experienced bat surveyors.

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

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.

3 Methodology

The update emergence surveys were informed by the previous assessment undertaken in 2021 (We Know Services, 2021).

3.1 Bat Emergence Surveys

One dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 11th June 2024 of the Stephenson's print building (in line with current Bat Survey Guidelines for buildings assessed to be of 'Low potential' for supporting bat roosts).

The dusk surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 1.5hrs after sunset.

During the survey, three surveyors were strategically positioned, focusing on features identified during previous surveys (We Know Services, 2021) to ensure observations could be made of any bats leaving or entering potential roost locations.

All observed bat passes were recorded; noting the time, the location and, where possible, the direction of flight, species and behaviour of the bat (i.e.; commuting, foraging, social calling).

After completion of each survey session, digital recordings of bat echolocation taken during the survey were analysed using Bat Sound sonogram analysis software for recordings taken using Anabat Scout full spectrum detectors. Infra-red night vision aides (Nightfox Whisker) and supplementary infra-red lighting (Nightfox XC5) were also used to aid surveyors in visual observation of bats.

During the surveys, the following details were noted as appropriate:

- Weather and temperature;
- Time bat detected/observed;
- Frequency at which the bat was detected;
- Location within the survey area;
- Whether bats emerged from/re-entered a potential roost location;
- Direction of flight;
- Number of bats observed; and
- Whether the bats appeared to be foraging or commuting.

Temperature, wind speed and cloud cover were recorded at the beginning and end of the survey, along with any significant weather changes during the survey.

3.2 Evaluation Methods

The 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (4th edition) (Collins, 2023) are used as a basis to evaluate the value of features for their potential to support bats. In addition, the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray, 2023) was referred to. 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

The survey does not cover every month of the active and hibernation seasons. No other constraints to the emergence survey were experienced.

5 Results

5.1 Field Survey

Emergence Survey Results

The emergence surveys were conducted with the aim of recording any bat activity associated with features identified upon the building, in order to identify any bat roosts if present.

The survey was undertaken under suitable weather conditions with temperatures greater than 10°C.

A plan indicating the locations of the surveyors in relation to the building is provided in Appendix 1 and full results of the survey are provided in Appendix 3.

Stephenson's Print - Dusk Emergence Survey – 11th June 2022

The emergence survey commenced at 21.24hrs, sun set was at 21.39hrs and the survey ended at 23.09hrs. The survey lasted 1 hours 45 minutes in total and was uninterrupted.

No bats were recorded emerging from the building throughout the survey.

During the survey only very limited bat activity was recorded, with a single Common Pipistrelle pass at 22.02hrs, but this was not associated with the buildings on site.

5.2 Roosts and Habitat

Following completion of the updated surveys, no evidence to suggest the presence of bat roosts was identified in association with the buildings. Taking into account the results of this assessment and the assessment in 2021, it is considered unlikely that bats currently use the buildings.

5.3 The Value of the Site for Bats

In view of the results of the assessment the buildings it is considered likely that no bat roosts are present in association with the buildings currently. The site is in an urban location and does not contain / is not in close proximity to, particularly high-quality foraging habitat. Over the course of surveys to date, only very limited bat activity has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. As such the site is considered to be of 'low value' for bats in the local context (Mitchell-Jones, 2004).

Overall, there is an abundance of suitable buildings for roosting in the vicinity of the site, though artificial light sources (street/car park lighting) were observed to be significant in most areas of the site, and paucity of foraging habitat may further reduce the potential suitability for bats locally.

6 Impacts

The proposed development consists of the demolition of the building.

In view of the assessment of “low potential” to support bat roosts in relation the building, and absence of any evidence of the presence of bat roosts identified via surveys in 2021 and 2024, the scale of impact upon the conservation status of the species in relation to the proposed works is ‘negligible’.

7 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.

7.1 Further Survey & Mitigation Measures

No further survey or mitigation is recommended at this stage, however, should at any stage of works a bat roost be found or suspected, then works should cease and an ecologist should be consulted.

In order to enhance the site for bats in the long-term, it is recommended that consideration is given to the use of bat bricks or bat boxes upon existing retained buildings or trees. In addition, where possible, any the lighting scheme associated with the site should be designed to ensure that it is sensitive to wildlife, including bats foraging and commuting through the site. Boxes such as Schwegler 1FQ, Schwegler 1FF or similar should be considered.

Any proposed artificial lighting should be sensitive to wildlife (including bats) and should therefore avoid illumination of trees and shrubs. Directional, motion sensor or timer-based lighting should be incorporated, avoiding upward light-spill that may deter bats from the area and could include low-level lighting or similar solutions to prevent artificial light levels from deterring bats from the site and surrounding area.

When considering lighting, reference should be made to 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' ILP Guidance Note GN08/23 (ILP, 2023).

8 Conclusions

In view of the above, where the above recommendations are followed, it is considered the appropriate level of assessment will have been completed (as per Collins, 2023), and the conservation status of the bats will not be adversely affected by the proposed works.

9 References

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

Collins (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' ILP Guidance Note GN08/23

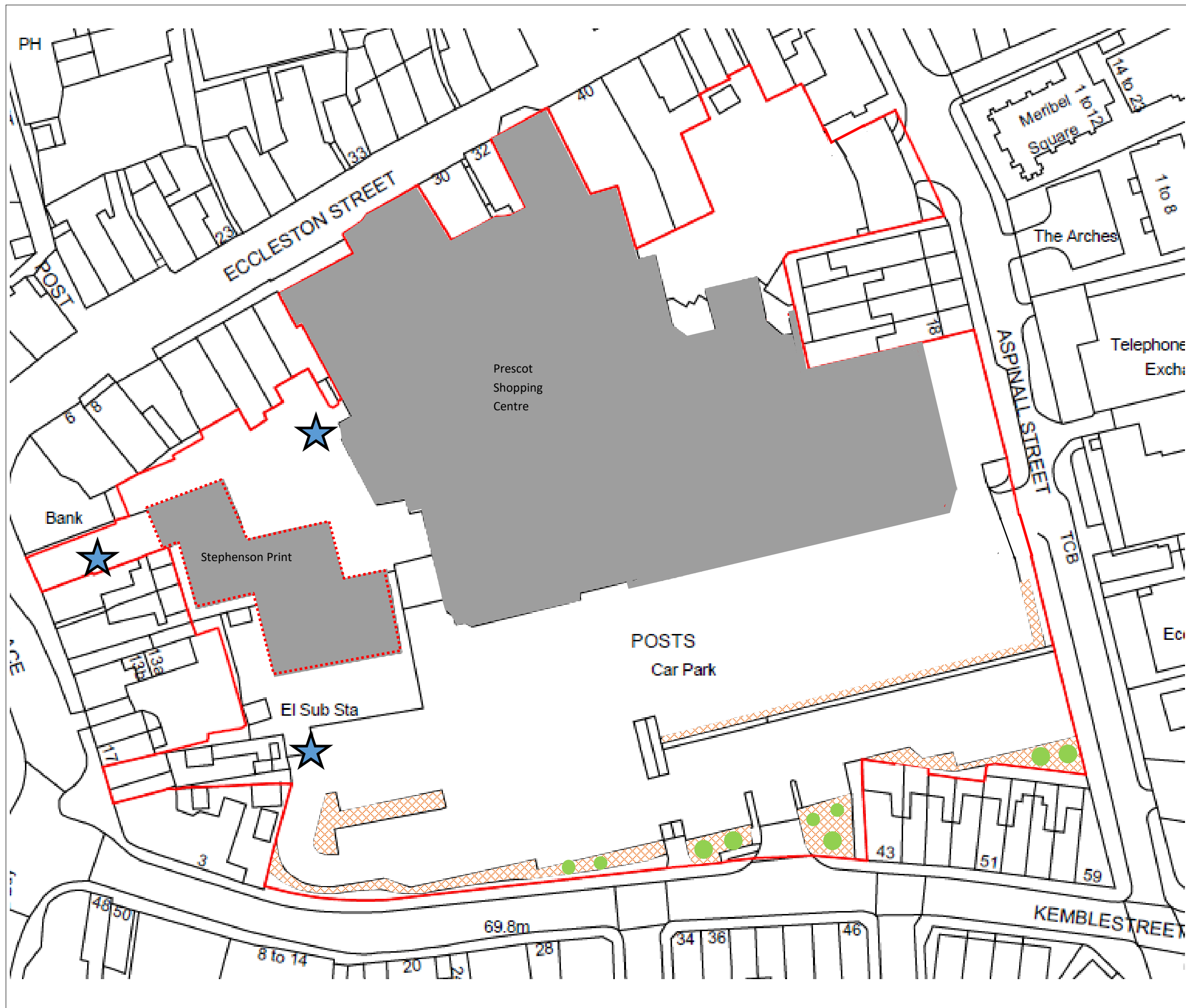
Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

We Know Services (2021) Full Bat Survey. Prescott Shopping Centre, Aspinall St, Prescott

APPENDIX I – Surveyor Locations

See next page



Bat Survey Plan

Stephenson's Print
Building

Prescot, Knowsley

June 2024

Client: Knowsley MBC

Key:

-  Hardstanding
-  Ornamental Planting
-  Scattered Trees
-  Building
-  Survey Boundary
-  Site Boundary
-  Surveyor Location

APPENDIX 2 – Additional Site Photos/

Infra-red Camrea Images



APPENDIX 3 – Bat Survey Data

<i>Date</i>	<i>Start /End</i>	<i>Structure Reference / Location</i>	<i>Equipment Used</i>	<i>Weather Conditions (Start /End temps, precipitation, Beaufort wind-scale.</i>
11/06/2024	21.24hrs – 23.09hrs Sunset 21.39hrs	Stephenson's Print building	Anabat Scout, Nightfox Whisker. Thermal Scope.	13C – 10C. Precipitation nil, Wind 1 Cloud cover: <10%
Comments (to include # of surveyors used for each visit): 3 Surveyors				

<i>Date</i>	<i>Species/Activity</i>	<i>Roost Type</i>	<i>Structure Reference</i>	<i>Roost Location</i>	<i>Access Points</i>	<i>Dimension of existing roosts/ Explanation of where the roost is</i>
11/06/2024	None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Notes/observations: Very limited bat activity recorded. Single C.pip pass.						