



345 Cronton Road,
Cronton

Bat Scoping Report

14th February 2022

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Background.....	2
1.2	Purpose of Report	2
1.3	Protected Species Legislation	2
1.3.1	Bats.....	2
1.3.2	Birds.....	3
2	Field Survey Methods.....	4
2.1	Survey Aims and Objectives	4
2.2	Survey Methods.....	4
2.2.1	Daytime Bat Inspection	4
3	Survey Results.....	6
3.1	Site Description and Habitats.....	6
3.2	Bat Survey	6
3.2.1	Scoping Assessment.....	6
3.2.2	Breeding Birds	7
3.2.3	Other Protected Species	8
4	Summary & Recommendations.....	9
4.1	Summary	9
4.2	Bat Mitigation	10
4.2.1	Overview	10
4.2.2	Bat Mitigation Strategy	10
4.2.3	Outline Bat Method Statement.....	11
4.2.4	New Bat Roosting Features	11
4.3	Other Protected Species	12
5	Appendix	13

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out a Bat Assessment of a detached bungalow located at 345 Cronton Road, Cronton, Knowsley, WA8 5QD (National Grid Reference SJ 4910 8823). Proposals are to extend the building and convert the loft space, these works will affect the existing roof.

Field surveys comprising of a daytime bat inspection were undertaken on the 18th January 2022. Surveys were carried out 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).

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides and outlines the findings of field surveys undertaken at the site.

The field surveys examined habitats present with a focus on the bungalow's suitability to support roosting bats. Survey also examined the suitability of the site to support breeding birds. Survey comprised of a daytime assessment examining the interior and exterior of the building.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as “any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection.” (Bat Conservation Trust 2016¹). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

1.3.2 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

¹ Bat Conservation Trust (2016) ‘Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition’

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

Survey comprised of a site visit and inspection of the affected building. The survey aim was to assess the site as to its suitability to support roosting bats and to identify suitable habitats for any other protected species including breeding birds.

Survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures if required to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Daytime Bat Inspection

The building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)² and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition (BCT 2016)³.

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the interior and exterior of the building, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 18th January 2022.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

² Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

³ Bat Conservation Trust (2016) '*Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition'

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description and Habitats

The study site comprises of a detached bungalow located at 345 Cronton Road, Cronton. The bungalow has established gardens to the front, side and rear comprising of mown lawn with ornamental shrubbery and mature trees including oak, poplar, cypress and birch.

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 study site's location and site layout are shown on Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix. Photographs of the site are also provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Bat Survey

3.2.1 Scoping Assessment

The site comprises of a detached bungalow which was constructed in 1983 on the site of an original farmhouse.

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 house has a single-story garage at its West face.

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.

Taking account of the bat droppings found, 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 is confirmed as supporting a bat roost.

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

3.2.2 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was associated with the bungalow and the house does not support any suitable accessible cavity features which could be used by nesting birds.

The garden shrubbery is considered to offer some potential nesting habitat for breeding birds.

3.2.3 Other Protected Species

No other protected species are considered likely to be present at the site.

4 Summary & Recommendations

4.1 Summary

Kingdom Ecology have carried out a Bat Assessment of a detached bungalow located at 345 Cronton Road, Cronton. The bungalow is constructed of brick and has a pitched gable ended roof clad in interlocking tiles. The roof has East, West and South facing gables.

The site is considered to support habitats which are of limited ecological value (the proposed development site comprises of the main bungalow plus adjacent areas of hardstanding and garden). No mature trees would be affected by proposals.

The daytime inspection examined the building with regards to its suitability to support roosting bats. The building was observed to mostly be in a good condition with potential bat roosting habitat limited to the gables of the bungalow where there are crevices between the soffits and the gable walls (Target Notes 1-3 on Figure 2).

The bungalow was assessed as supporting features of 'moderate' suitability for roosting bats. Nevertheless, bat field signs were found and a pipistrelle bat roost was identified at the East and West gables (Targets Notes 1 and 2).

Small numbers of pipistrelle bat droppings were recorded internally associated with these gables comprising of old and moderately fresh droppings. No bat field signs were found to the building's exterior.

The roosts are considered likely to represent day roosts used by low numbers of non-breeding bats of a common species. Such roosts are considered to be of 'low' conservation value.

Given the limited numbers of bat droppings found, 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.

4.2 Bat Mitigation

4.2.1 Overview

Survey has identified the bungalow as supporting likely 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.

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). The BMCL provides a streamlined service for developers where effects on bats can be easily mitigated (but which nonetheless require a licence to derogate the law).

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). This survey should comprise of at least 2 x bat activity surveys to update survey findings. It is recommended that two surveyors are used, with suggested surveyor locations shown on Figure 2.

In the unlikely event that a bat breeding roost is identified, the works would be undertaken under a full EPS Licence. The roost compensation measures proposed below would also be appropriate for a breeding site, however works would need to be timed to avoid the bat breeding season (May-September inclusive).

4.2.2 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.

4.2.3 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. 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.

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.

4.2.4 New Bat Roosting Features

In addition to the 2 x tree-mounted Schwegler 2F bat boxes, it is also recommended that further 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.

4.3 Other Protected Species

The garden shrubbery is considered to offer some low value, potential nesting habitat for breeding birds.

It is therefore recommended that any works to remove shrubbery takes place outside of the breeding bird season (March-August inclusive). Where this is not possible, a check for nesting birds should be completed prior to the start of works.

In the unlikely event that any evidence of roosting bats or breeding birds is found, works should immediately stop and further advice be sought from a licensed bat ecologist.

5 Appendix

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1- North face of bungalow



Photograph 2- South face of bungalow



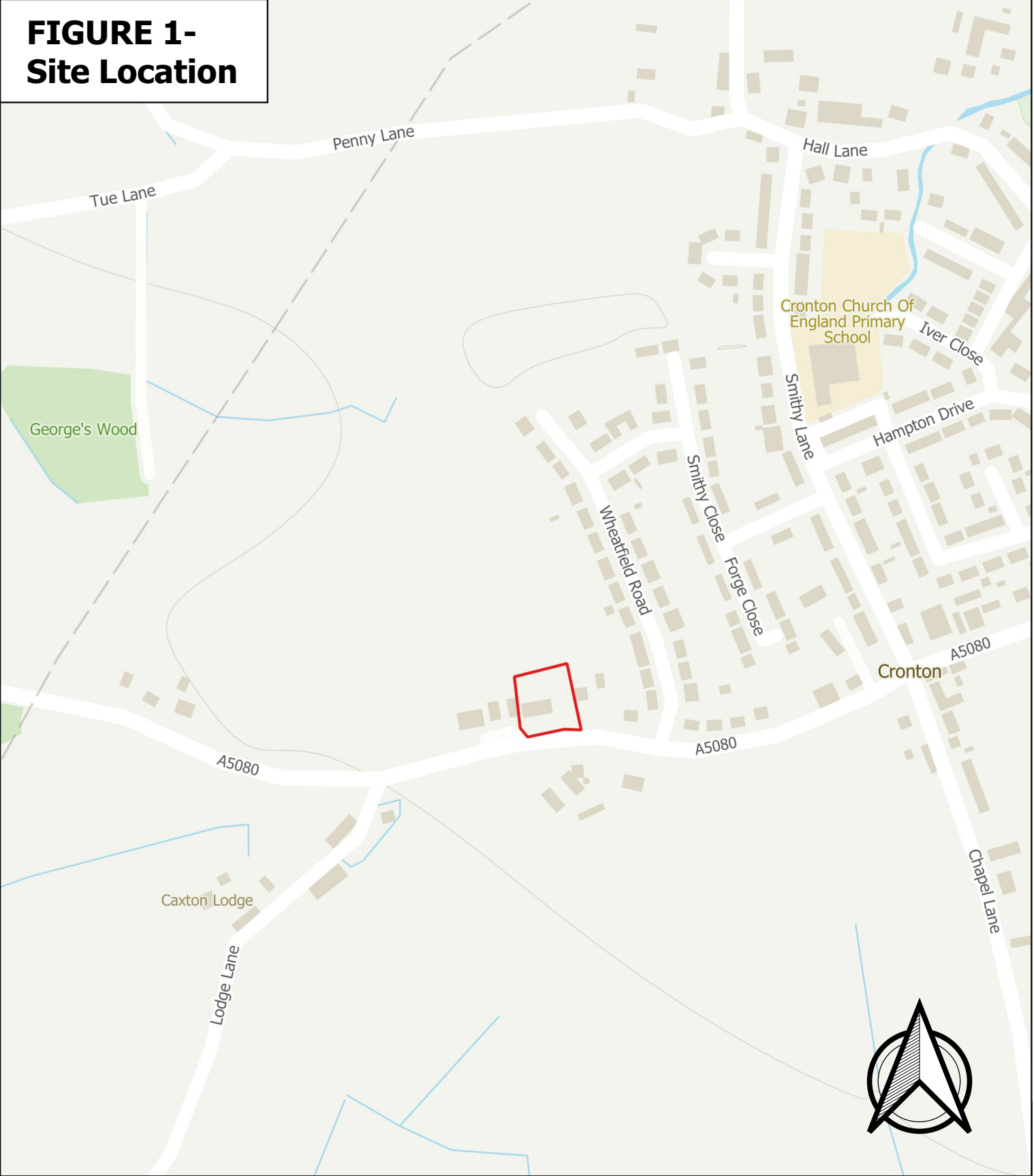
Photograph 3- East face of bungalow showing soffit box



Photograph 4- Loft Space looking towards west gable



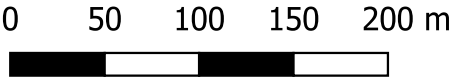
**FIGURE 1-
Site Location**



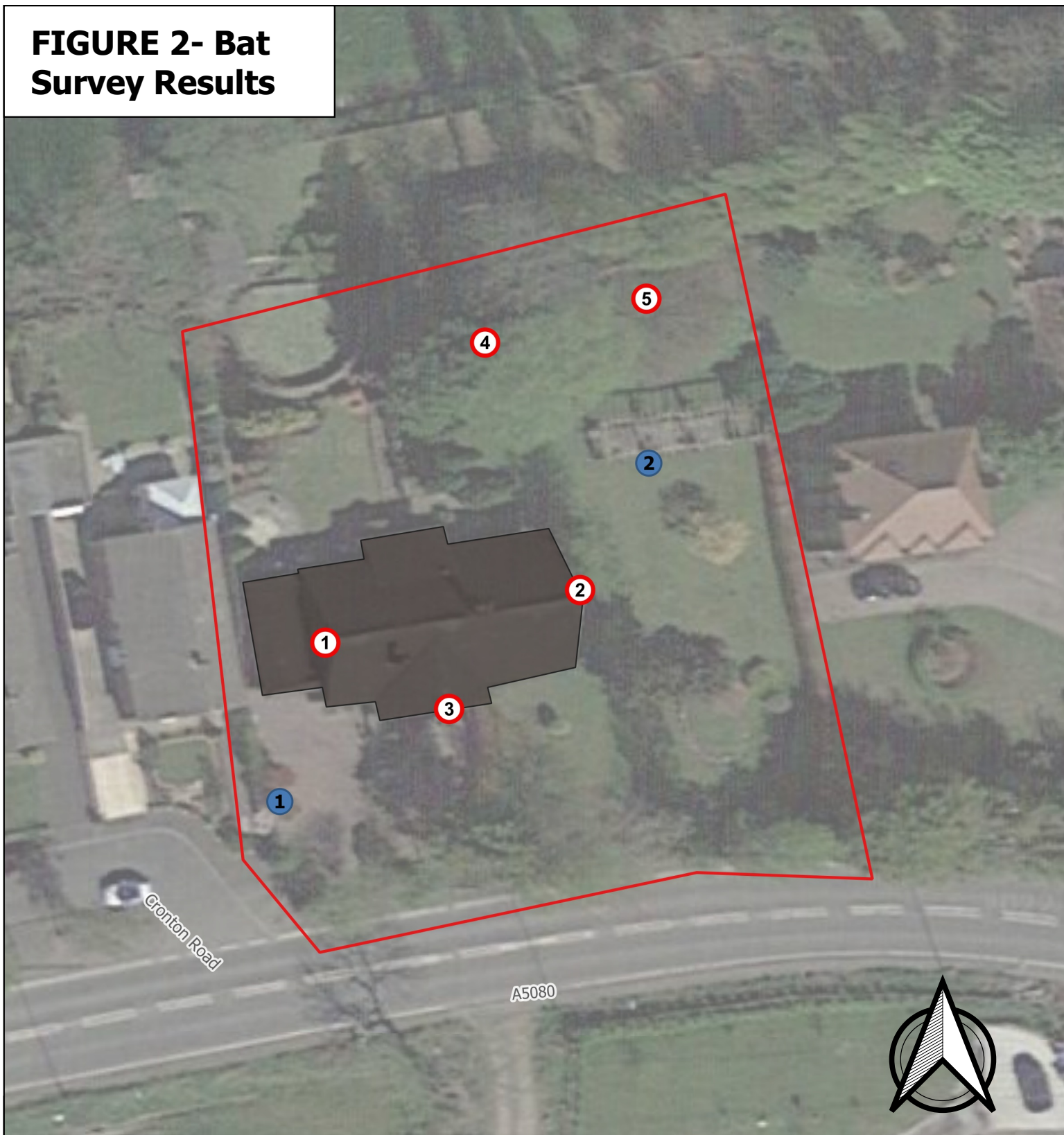
KEY



Study Site



**FIGURE 2- Bat
Survey Results**



KEY



Study Site



Target Note



Building



Recommended surveyor location

