ASHWOOD NURSING HOME
BURWASH COMMON
EAST SUSSEX
ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

BY

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1st June 2020
(Revised 26th July 2020)

D151. Burwash Common (TQ639233). R1v2

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01233 720229

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document was compiled in order to report upon an ecological scoping survey of the disused Ashwood nursing home, Burwash Common, East Sussex[1].

1.2 The **survey site** consists of a single building which has been enlarged from the original Victorian building by two extensions. One to the north – east is mid – 20th century in origin, whilst a larger one to the western side is more recent[2]. The building occupies a roadside position[3] in a large plot which extends to the north – east. The plot is hedged all round, and is mainly laid to grass, but with a small wooden shed on the western boundary. The site is in the eastern end of Burwash Common and is surrounded by light residential development. The soil is derived from the Ashdown Formation at an altitude of 151 metres OD. The extent of the survey site is shown in Figure 1.

1.3 Each part of the **building** is made of brick with pitched concrete – tiled roofs:

- **Section A** is the original Victorian house, which is slightly set back from the road, from which, like section C, it is separated by a hedge. The building is typically Victorian, made of brick with a pitched roof, although the roof appears to have been altered slightly over the years. There is a veranda at the front, and a metal staircase on the eastern side. There is also a single dormer window on the southern side of the roof, which also has two skylights on the northern side. Internally, there is a side attic and a small ridge attic. Parts of the soffits and bargeboards were in a poor state of repair.
- **Section B** is a mid – 20th century addition to the rear of section C. It was generally single – storey, although in part of it there is a first floor and a large walk – in attic containing boilers and the other usual contents. Made of brick under a pitched concrete – tiled roof, the building joined internally with section A.
- **Section C** was the most modern part of the complex and consisted of a brick building under a pitched, concrete – tiled roof. It was attached to the west of section A, and the building consisted of a first and second floor.

[1] OS / TQ639233. Grid reference taken from http://gridreferencefinder.com/#.
[2] These three parts of the building have respectively been designated sections A, B and C.
[3] Just north of the A265 Heathfield Road. It is separated from the road by a narrow lawn and a hedge.

1.4 There are no **designated sites** within one kilometre of the survey site, although the survey site is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.5 It is proposed to carry out residential development on the site[4].

[4] Roger Howells verb comm.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 The first site **visit** took place on Friday 15th May 2020 and took approximately three hours. The purpose of the visit was to carry out ecological scoping surveys as follows:

2.1.1 The plant and animal **species** of the site were listed by using the variety of inventory methods described by Sutherland (2000) and Beattie and Oliver (1994).

2.1.2 A search was also made for any species or habitat suitable for any species that are specifically **protected** for conservation purposes by wildlife legislation[5] such as badgers, bats and common reptiles, using appropriate established techniques e.g. assessment of potential habitat for reptiles by comparison of the habitat on site with descriptions of potential reptile habitat given by Gent and Gibson (2003) as augmented by previous personal experience.

2.1.3 A search was also made for species that are included within the short list of the national **Biodiversity Action Plans**[6] [7], and, for birds, a search was made for species which are included within the red part of the national bird **'Red List'**[8] whilst the presence of species included within other similar publications, such as Briggs (2001) and Abraham et al (2018) for Sussex plants, and Thomas (2014) for Sussex birds, was also considered. All species were recorded in Appendix 1.

2.2 Subsequently on the morning of Wednesday 24th June 2020, and the evenings of Tuesday 4th July 2020 and Thursday 23rd July 2020, bat **emergence surveys** of the building were carried out, using the methodology described by Collins (2016). The results of these are shown in Appendix 3.

[5] Mostly, this included species listed in http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-3408 as being protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and related legislation.
[6] Biodiversity Steering Group, 1995 as amended. Hereafter known as the 'BAP'. Also, the species subject of Biodiversity 2020 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services).
[7] As amended.
[8] Hayhow et al, 2017.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 A total of 781 **species** of plants and animals were initially recorded at the site and are detailed in Appendix 1.

3.2 Forty – nine flowering **plant species** were found which were typical of the soil, habitats, and situation; obviously – planted species were not recorded. No notable species of wild plant were found anywhere on site. The main grassland vegetation of the site approximated to a modified form of Rodwell's (1998) MG1 *Arrhenatheretum elatioris* grassland but with evidence of past improvements to the same author's MG7 *Lolio – Plantaginion* ley

3.3 A total of seven **bird** species were recorded in the site, and all were in the perimeter hedge or flying over. No nesting bird activity was recorded and there was negligible potential nesting bird habitat in the site, except for the peripheral hedge.

3.4 The following signs of any species, or habitat suitable for any species which are specifically **protected** under wildlife legislation were found on the site:

- Three **bat** droppings were observed on the main roof of section A, close to the dormer window, which had hanging tiles on a south – facing roof which offered potential bat roosting habitat.
- Loose bargeboards and damaged soffits on the east end of section A were potential habitat for bats.
- Part of the flashing just underneath the roof eaves of the southern part of section C had been used by a bird[9] for nesting purposes. A hole led into the space between the bricks, which could also be used by roosting bats.
- The dormer window of section C also had hanging tiles which offered habitat, on a south – facing structure,for roosting bats.
- On the west side of section C there was another hole underneath the roof eaves which may also have been used for bird nesting and could also be used by roosting bats.
- During the three emergence surveys no bats were seen emerging from any part of the building, but **common pipistrelle** was observed foraging around, and commuting over the survey site.
- On 23rd July, a **noctule** bat flew over the survey site.

3.5 No **BAP** species were present on site.

[9] Probably starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The **total number of species** recorded at the site is small by comparison with the potential number of species that might in theory be recorded given more time and additional visits in which to undertake the work. Nevertheless, short surveys such as this one are good at giving a sample of the ecological value of a given site and showing which species, if any, require more detailed survey[10].

4.2 The **methods** of the survey have been used extensively elsewhere with consistent results and accord with good practice guidelines[11]. Signs of protected species and their habitat parameters are reasonably obvious to an experienced surveyor and ecological surveys of this type are valuable in terms of helping to determine whether protected or notable animals or plants are likely to be present, are present, or have been present in or around a site and whether further, more detailed survey is required for certain species. However, the results of a survey are partially determined by the time of year at which the survey takes place, dependent upon the stages in an organism's life cycle, but if access can be obtained to examine the site properly, it is possible to determine the likelihood of other notable species or their habitat being present. In this case, there were no limitations on survey in terms of access, but extensive work inside the buildings had resulted in the removal of parts of attics, glass fibre insulation and other surfaces and places which would normally be expected to host signs of bats.

4.3 The **plant list** was typical of what might be expected in disturbed ground is incompletely vegetated. There were no notable plants; the identified plant communities are common throughout the British Isles[12].

4.4 The **bird** list was average for the type of habitat at the time of year when surveying took place. The roadside hedge is, however, a potential habitat for breeding birds. Additional species might be expected from time to time[13].

[10] Stork and Samways, 1995.
[11] E.g. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2013: British Standards Institute, 2013, Collins, 2016.
[12] Rodwell, 2000.
[13] E.g. Song thrush (Turdus philomelos) and blue tit (Cyanistes caeruleus).

4.5 Apart from the few **bat** droppings that were noted, no other evidence of bat roosting was found during the first survey, and this was confirmed by the emergence surveys; the droppings were presumably left as bats passed by or over the survey site. After the first survey, it was thought that the droppings were associated with a roost in the dormer window, or even between the sarking and the tiles, or even in the lost attic of section A, but this turned out not to be the case, even though the southern and south – eastern sides of a building, in the absence of an intrinsic heat source, are often used as maternity roosts by bats[14]. As no roosting bats were found to be present, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence[15] will not be required, but nevertheless, appropriate mitigation for bats should be incorporated into any new development. Bats and their roosts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

4.6 Consideration was given to a wide range of other protected species that might occur on site. For instance:

- It is considered that there is no risk of **great crested newts**[16] being in the neighbourhood and being affected by any proposed development, since the nearest pond is approximately 400 metres north – east of the survey site. There is a pond closer than that on the south side of the A265 road, but the road is a busy one and effectively blocks the entry of newts into the survey site. Great crested newts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- There were no **badger**[17] field signs or setts. Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- There were no trees that were big enough to hold **bats**, and the wooden – framed shed was also unsuitable.
- Consideration was given to the occurrence of **dormouse**[18] in the hedgerow because they are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; they have been recorded from not far away[19] and there are suitable habitat corridors between the survey site and the greater countryside. However, the hedgerow is thin and relatively monospecific, and no dormouse nests were

[14] Personal observation.
[15] Hereafter 'EPSML'.
[16] Triturus cristatus.
[17] Meles meles.
[18] Muscardinus avellanarius.
[19] Within one kilometre; personal observation.

found. There is an existing entrance to the site, so the likelihood of there being a requirement to provide a new one through the hedge is small, but if it has to happen, then it would be sensible to compile a method statement consisting of reasonable avoidance measures and ensure ecological supervision during any hedge removal.

- The garden grass was too thin and disturbed to serve as a habitat for common **reptiles**. In addition, because of the formerly wooded nature of the site[20] and the greater countryside, there is unlikely to be anywhere from which reptiles could stray into the site and establish a population. Common reptiles are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

4.7 There will be no impact from any proposed development upon the **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** other than a slight increase in the numbers of people inhabiting it.

4.8 **In summary**, there was no evidence of, or habitat suitable for protected or notable species within the survey area including bats, even though the building, especially sections A and C, had features which could have potentially supported roosting bats. It is also strongly recommended that, to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework[21] objective of minimising impacts of development upon biodiversity, a wildlife enhancement plan should be compiled for the proposed development which incorporates some of the wildlife conservation measures suggested by Gunnell, Murphy and Williams (2013) and others, Such a plan could include:

- The provision of bird and bat boxes.
- The provision of log piles for invertebrates.
- The provision of bumble bee nest boxes and pollinator resources.
- Provision for some of the species on the Sussex BAP species list where applicable to the site and conditions.
- A scheme of native species landscaping and similar measures.

[20] Recent aerial photographs show that, until it was cleared, there were abundant shrubs and small trees on site.
[21] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019.

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APPENDIX 1: INITIAL LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED FROM THE SITE (All data approximate) (Notable species in red)				
	SCIENTIFIC NAME	VERNACULAR NAME	NOTES	NO SPP
LICHENS				
	Parmelia saxatilis	A lichen	Provisional identification.	
	Ramalina farinacea	A lichen	Provisional identification.	
	Xanthoria parietina	A lichen	Provisional identification.	**3**
MOSSES				
	Brachythecium rutabulum	A moss		
	Bryum sp.	A moss		
	Dicranum majus	A moss		
	Hypnum cuppresiforme	A moss		
	Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus	A moss		
	Thuidium tamariscinum	A moss		**6**
VASCULAR PLANTS				
	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore		
	Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent - grass		
	Alliaria petiolata	Hedge Garlic		
	Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet Vernal Grass		
	Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley		
	Bellis perennis	Daisy		
	Brachypodium sylvaticum	Wood Tor - grass		
	Cardamine hirsuta	Hairy Bittercress		
	Cardamine pratensis	Cuckoo Flower		
	Carex pendula	Pendulous Sedge		
	Centaurea nigra	Hardhead		
	Cirsium palustre	Marsh Thistle		
	Corylus avellana	Hazel		
	Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn		
	Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot Grass		
	Dryopteris filix - mas	Male Fern		
	Elytrigia repens	Common Couch		
	Euphorbia helioscopa	Sun Spurge		

	Festuca pratensis	Meadow Fescue		
	Festuca rubra	Red Fescue		
	Ficaria verna	Lesser Celandine		
	Fraxinus excelsior	Ash		
	Galium aparine	Goosegrass		
	Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert		
	Geum urbanum	Herb Bennett		
	Glechoma hederacea	Ground Ivy		
	Hedera helix	Ivy		
	Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed		
	Hieracium sp.	Unidentified Hawkweed		
	Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire Fog		
	Hypericum androsaemum	Tutsan	Naturalised?	
	Ilex aquifolium	Holly		
	Juncus effusus	Soft Rush		
	Lolium perenne	Rye Grass		
	Mentha suaveolens	Apple Mint	Garden escape?	
	Petasites fragrans	Winter Heliotrope	Graden escape?	
	Prunus lusitanica	Portuguese Laurel	Naturalising.	
	Pulicaria dysenterica	Fleabane		
	Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup		
	Rubus fruticosus agg.	Blackberry		
	Rumex acetosa	Sorrel		
	Rumex obtusifolius	Broad Dock		
	Senecio jacobaea	Ragwort		
	Taraxacum officinale agg.	Dandelion		
	Thelycrania sanguinea	Dogwood		
	Urtica dioica	Stinging Nettle		
	Veronica chamaedrys	Birdseye Speedwell		
	Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose		
	Viola reichenbachiana	Early Dog-violet		**49**
CRUSTACEA ISOPODA				
	Armadillidium vulgare	Pillbug		
	Oniscus asellus	A woodlouse		**2**

INSECTA DIPTERA				
	Diplolepis iilicis	A gall - fly		
	Phytomyza ranunculi	A leaf - mining fly		
	Syrphus ribesii	A hoverfly		
	Syrphus vitripennis	A hoverfly		**4**
INSECTA LEPIDOPTERA				
	Anthocharis cardamines	Orange - tip		
	Celastrina argiolus	Holly Blue		
	Stigmella aurella	Golden Pygmy		**3**
MOLLUSCA				
	Cepaea nemoralis	Grove Snail		
	Vitraea sp	Glass Snail		**2**
BIRDS				
	Carduelis carduelis	Goldfinch		
	Delichon urbica	House Martin	Evidence of past nesting found.	
	Erithacus rubecula	Robin		
	Parus major	Great Tit		
	Sylvia atricapilla	Blackcap		
	Troglodytes troglodytes	Wren		
	Turdus merula	Blackbird		**7**
MAMMALS				
	Apodemus sp.	Unidentified Mouse		
	Capreolus capreolus	Roe Deer	Slots and signs of browsing.	
	Nyctalis noctula	**Noctule Bat**	**Flying over survey site.**	
	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	**Common Pipistrelle Bat**	**Feeding and commuting in survey site.**	
	Talpa europaea	Mole		**5**
			Total number of species:	**81**

APPENDIX 2: BUILDING ASSESSMENT FOR BATS (nb. All data approximate)

Survey commissioned by:	**Belfrage Estates Ltd.**		
Address of site:	**Ashwood Nursing Home, Burwash Common, East Sussex.**		
OS grid reference:	**TQ639233.**		
Date:	**15th May 2020.**		
Surveyor:	**Martin Newcombe**		
Building section no.:	**A**	**B**	
Building type:	Former residential home		
Current use:	Disused		
Age:	122 years (Built 1898)	Mid-20th century?	
Condition	Undergoing interior remodelling		
Storeys:	Ground floor and first floor.	Ground floor and partial first floor	G
Attic present?	Converted, but with retained small attic over and side attic.	Present	
Cellar present?	Absent		
Walls:	Brick cavity		
Any wooden joints with potential for bats?	Absent		
Any cavities in brick or stonework suitable for bats?	Absent		
Cladding:	Hanging tiles to side and front of dormer window.	Absent	Ha
Roof type:	Pitched		
Roof ridge orientation:	Mainly E - W but minor N - S extension	E - W with N - S extensions.	
Roof covering:	Concrete tiles		
Lined with:	Sarking	Underfelt	
Soffits present?	Present	Absent	
Insulation present?	Glass fibre throughout? Removed at time of survey		
Internal humidity:	2% greater than exterior due to open windows.		
Heating	Insolation only.		
Building Axis	Mainly E - W	E - W with N - S extensions.	
Shade present?	Absent		
Features of potential use to bats:	(1) Loose soffits / failing soffits and bargeboards on eastern elevation : (2) Hanging tiles on south side dormer.	Absent	(dor or (3)
Position of bat access points:	As above	Not applicable	
Roost Aspect	E and S	Not applicable	
Number of bats at time of visit:	None observed		
Droppings:	2 -3 observed on roof adjacent to dormer.	Absent	
Summary bat status:	No direct evidence found but potential habitat exists.	Negligible potential for roost habitat.	
Constraints on survey:	(1) All of soffits / bargeboard not accessible. (2) Dormer window impossible to access. (2) Small attic and side attic recently part - renovated and exposed.	Absent	(1 le am acce
Additional notes	1. First floor with pebble dash rendering.	1. Kitchen extension	

APPENDIX 3: BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY RESULTS

BAT SURVEY RECORDING FORM

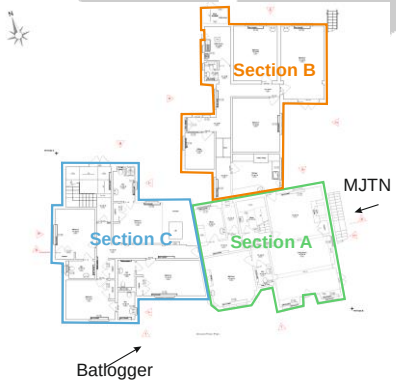
Project name:	Burwash
OS grid ref or location:	
Date:	24/6/20
Sunrise time:	0444h
Structure:	Building
Surveyors (Mark location on sketch map)**:**	Martin Newcombe (East side)
Survey type:	Dawn
Survey start time:	0340h
Survey finish time:	0510h

	Start	**Finish**	**Comments**
Temperature (ºC):	14	16	
Wind speed (Beaufort)**:**	0	0	
Wind direction:	0	0	
Precipitation:	None	None	
Cloud cover %:	20	40	
Other (e.g. light, humidity)**:**			

Bat detector:	Batlogger M x 2 (one on SW side by road)
Other devices:	Flir E60 thermal imager

Factors affecting counts: (Disturbance, access, predators, light, noise)**:**	

SKETCH MAP:



Recording (R) or bat number	Time of event	**Species** (45pip / 55pip / BLE / Ser / Noct Daub / Myot/Unident)	Number of bats	**Activity** (e.g. emergence (E), re-entry (R), foraging (F), commuting(C) flying (Y))	**Notes** (e.g., direction)
	0350	45 pip	1	C	Flew eastwards.
	0406 - 0407	45 pip	1	F	Around house briefly.
	0447	45 pip	1	C	Flew eastwards.

BAT SURVEY RECORDING FORM

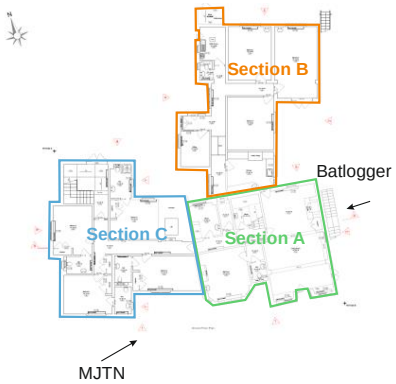
Project name:	Burwash
OS grid ref or location:	
Date:	14/7/20
Sunset time:	2108h.
Structure:	Building
Surveyors (Mark location on sketch map)**:**	M. J. T. Newcombe
Survey type:	Dusk
Survey start time:	2030h
Survey finish time:	2232h

	Start	**Finish**	**Comments**
Temperature (ºC):	17	19	
Wind speed (Beaufort)**:**	0	0	
Wind direction:	0	0	
Precipitation:	Light	None	
Cloud cover %:	100	100	
Other (e.g. light, humidity)**:**	Occasional showers		

Bat detector:	Batlogger M x 2
Other devices:	Flir E60 thermal imager

Factors affecting counts: (Disturbance, access, predators, light, noise)**:**	

SKETCH MAP:



Recording (R) or bat number	Time of event	**Species** (45pip / 55pip / BLE / Ser / Noct Daub / Myot/Unident)	Number of bats	**Activity** (e.g. emergence (E), re-entry (R), foraging (F), commuting(C) flying (Y))	**Notes** (e.g., direction)
	2132	45 pip	1	C	Brief. Flew SW
	2158	45 pip	1	F	Brief.
	2203	45 pip	1	F	Brief pass.
	2206	45 pip	1	F	Brief pass.
	2218	45 pip	1	F	Brief pass.
	2222	45 pip	1	F	Brief pass.
	2223 - 2224	45 pip	1	F	Brief pass round house.
	2227	45 pip	1	F	Brief.
	2228 - 2230	45 pip	1	F	Round house.

BAT SURVEY RECORDING FORM

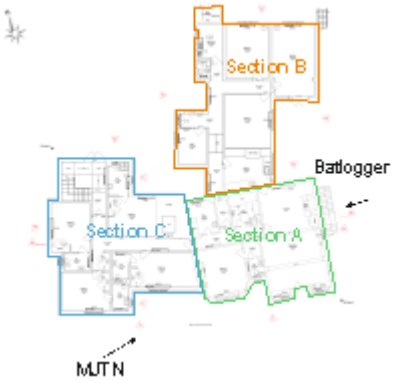
Project name:	Burwash
OS grid ref or location:	
Date:	23/7/20
Sunset time:	2058h.
Structure:	Building
Surveyors (Mark location on sketch map)**:**	As below
Survey type:	Dusk
Survey start time:	2020h
Survey finish time:	2230h

	Start	**Finish**	**Comments**
Temperature (°C):	18	19	
Wind speed (Beaufort)**:**	3	1	
Wind direction:	SW	SW	
Precipitation:	None	None	
Cloud cover %:	45	100	
Other (e.g. light, humidity)**:**			

Bat detector:	Batlogger M x 2.
Other devices:	Flir E60 thermal imager

Factors affecting counts: (Disturbance, access, predators, light, noise)**:**	

SKETCH MAP:



Recording (R) or bat number	Time of event	**Species** (45pip / 55pip / BLE / Ser / Noct Daub / Myot/Unident)	Number of bats	**Activity** (e.g. emergence (E), re-entry (R), foraging (F), commuting(C) flying (Y))	**Notes** (e.g., direction)
	2128	45 pip	1	C	Over roof from E.
	2131	45 pip	1	C	Over roof from E
	2205	Noct	1	C	High over building; to NW?

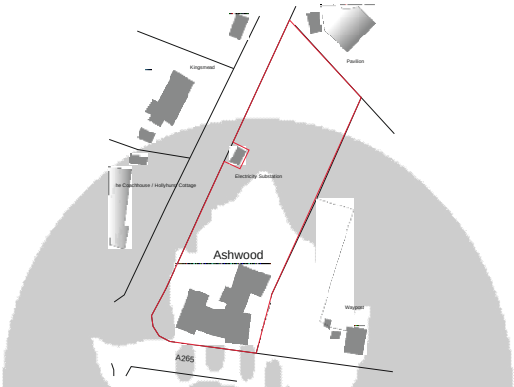


Figure 1: THE SURVEY AREA BOUNDARY.

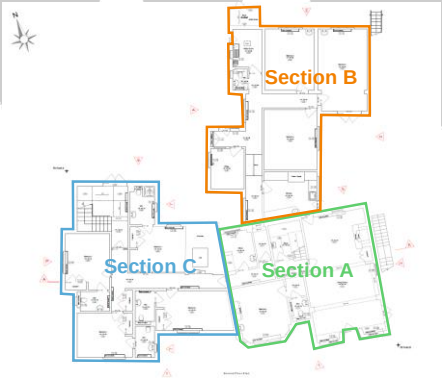


Figure 2: THE DIVISION OF THE BUILDING INTO SECTIONS FOR EASE OF REFERENCE.

Figure 3: THE FRONT (SOUTH) SIDE OF SECTION A, THE ORIGINAL HOUSE.

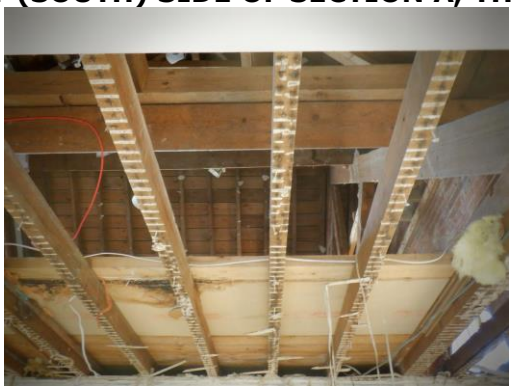


Figure 4: THE REMAINS OF ONE OF THE ATTICS OF THE ORIGINAL HOUSE.

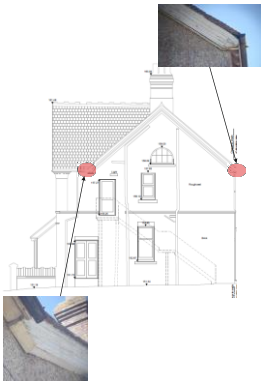


Figure 5: POTENTIAL ROOST LOCATIONS ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF SECTION A.

Figure 6: THE DORMER OF SECTION A, WHICH IS POTENTIAL BAT HABITAT.

Figure 7: A POTENTIAL ROOST SITE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF SECTION C.

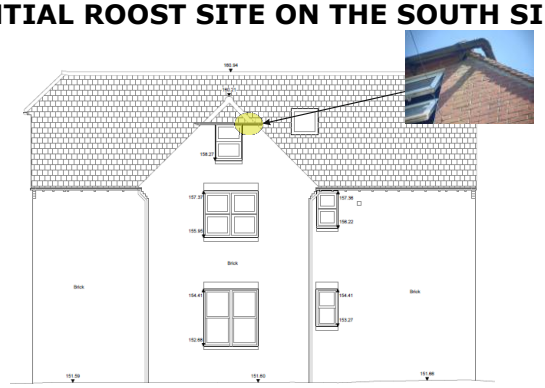


Figure 8: THE POSITION OF A POTENTIAL ROOST SITE ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF SECTION C.

Figure 9: THE REAR OF THE BUILDING, WITH SECTION B ON THE LEFT, A IN THE MIDDLE AND C ON THE RIGHT.

Figure 10: INSIDE THE WOODEN SHED; NOT SUITABLE AS BAT HABITAT.

Figure 11: THE REAR GARDEN.

[i] Martin Newcombe is principal of MN Wildlife, a small ecological practice in Kent, which has now been operating for over 30 years. Martin studied botany and zoology at college before qualifying as a further education lecturer. His interests and that of his practice are in mammals and woodland matters, with extensive experience in badgers, bats, dormice, deer, woodland management and conservation and general ecology. He holds a Natural England (NE) bat class licence level 2, and a NE dormouse licence, and has also held many NE badger licenses.