

The Small House, Sibford Ferris Bat Report

Prepared for Will Ikin/Hayward Smart Architects

September 2025

Revision 00

Project Number: TT4359

Project Title: The Small House, Sibford Ferris

Document Reference: R01-Bat Report-Rev00

Document Issued To: Will Ikin, Hayward Smart Architects

Document Issued By: Turnstone Ecology Limited

Revision Number	Author(s)	Reviewer(s)	Issuer	Issue Date
REV00	MM Assistant Ecologist	GB Principal Consultant	AW Ecologist	18/09/25
REV01	MM Assistant Ecologist	GB Principal Consultant	AW Ecologist	20/10/25

This report has been prepared by Turnstone Ecology Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report may contain detailed information about protected species and is confidential to the client. We accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

SURVEY AND REPORT VALIDITY

It is important that planning decisions are based on up-to-date ecological reports and survey data. However, it is difficult to set a specific timeframe over which reports, or survey data should be considered valid, as this will vary in different circumstances. In some cases, there will be specific guidance on this (such as for the age of data which may be used to support a protected species licence application) but in circumstances where such advice does not already exist, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) has provided the general advice set out below.

<i>Age of Data / Survey / Report</i>	<i>Validity</i>
Less than 12 months	Likely to be valid in most cases.
12-18 months	Likely to be valid in most cases with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a site may offer existing or new features which could be utilised by a mobile species within a short timeframe; • Where a mobile species is present on site or in the wider area, and can create new features of relevance to the assessment; and • Where country-specific or species-specific guidance dictates otherwise.
18 months to 3 years	A professional ecologist will need to undertake a site visit and then review the validity of the report. Some or all of the other ecological surveys updated.
Protected Species Licensing	Licence applications usually only possible using data less than 2 years old

The likelihood of surveys needing to be updated increases with time and is greater for mobile species or in circumstances where the habitat or its management has changed significantly since the surveys were undertaken. Factors to be considered include (but are not limited to):

- Whether the site supports, or may support, a mobile species which could have moved on to site, or changed its distribution within a site;
- Whether there have been significant changes to the habitats present (and/or the ecological conditions/functions/ecosystem functioning upon which they are dependent) since the surveys were undertaken, including through changes to site management; and
- Whether the local distribution of a species in the wider area around a site has changed (or knowledge of it increased), increasing the likelihood of its presence.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Purpose of the Report.....	5
1.2	Ecological Context.....	5
2	Methods.....	7
2.1	Desk-based Study.....	7
2.2	Preliminary Roost Assessment.....	7
2.3	Bat Emergence Surveys	8
2.4	Nesting birds.....	9
2.5	Constraints	9
3	Results.....	10
3.1	Desk Study.....	10
3.1.1	Statutory Designated Sites	10
3.1.2	Priority Habitats.....	10
3.1.3	Protected Species Mitigation Licence Sites	10
3.2	Preliminary Roost Assessment.....	11
3.2.1	Building Descriptions	11
3.2.2	External Assessment.....	13
3.2.3	Internal Assessment.....	15
3.2.4	Results of the PRA Survey	17
3.2.5	Results of Emergence Surveys.....	17
3.3	Nesting birds.....	18
4	Evaluation	19
4.1	Summary of Proposals	19
4.1.1	Priority Habitats.....	20
4.2	Bats	21
4.2.1	Summary of survey results.....	21
4.2.2	Evaluation, Impacts and Mitigation	21
4.3	Nesting birds.....	23
5	Legal Protection	24
5.1	Bats	24
5.2	Nesting Birds	25

1 INTRODUCTION

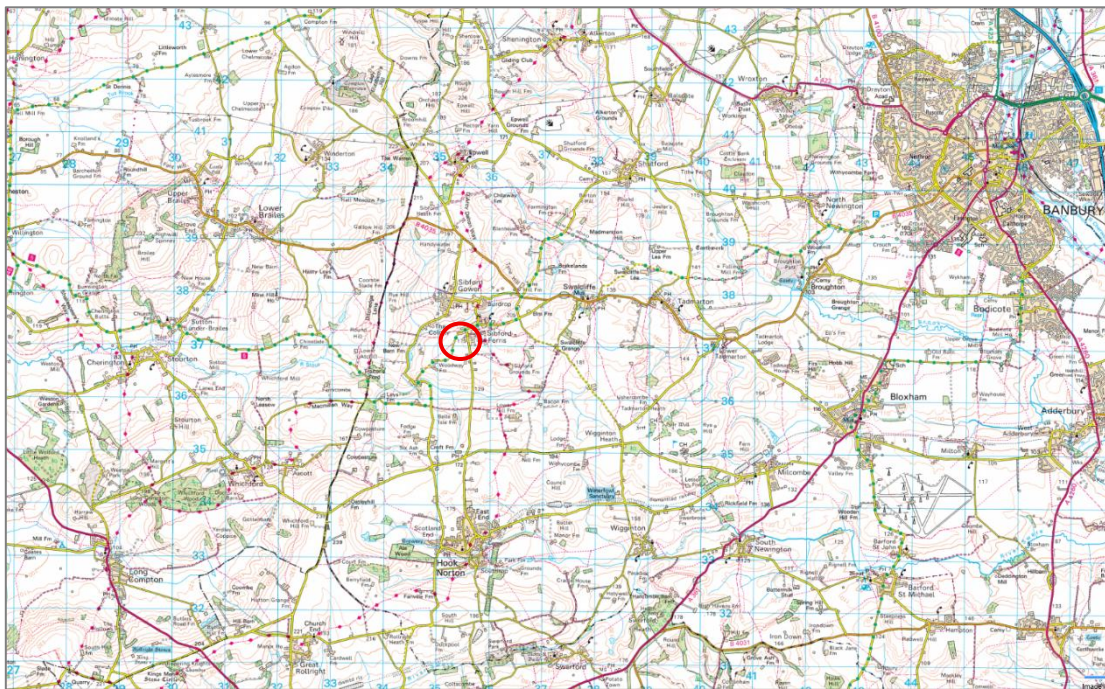
1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report has been completed in connection with the proposed works at The Small House, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire, OX15 5RH (OS Grid Reference SP 35984 37370). The proposed works include removal of the existing single storey extension and garage and replacement with a two-storey extension. The location of the proposed development site is shown in *Figures 1* and *2* and the proposed development plans are fully detailed in *Section 4*.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey was carried out on 22nd August 2025 by Principal Ecologist Gareth Blockley of Turnstone Ecology. This was followed by two dusk emergence surveys on 27th August 2025 and 16th September 2025. All surveys were completed by experienced staff from Turnstone Ecology Ltd.

This report details survey and assessment methodology and the results of a desk-based study and on-site surveys. It also provides an assessment of ecological impacts and appropriate mitigation to offset any ecological impacts associated with the proposal and to satisfy national and local planning policies.

Figure 1. Location of proposed development (© Microsoft Bing 2025)



1.2 Ecological Context

The site comprises a residential dwelling and an adjoined garage (*Figure 2*). The site is situated within the village of Sibford Ferris and lies approximately 10 km south-west of Banbury. The buildings are immediately surrounded by residential dwellings, tree lines and fields.

The wider area comprises mixed farmland interspersed with hedges, tree lines, woodland and the residential dwellings of nearby farms and villages (*Figure 3*).

Figure 2. Overview of the buildings surveyed and wider immediate site (QGIS 2025)



Figure 3. Overview of the site (red marker) and wider surrounding area (Google Earth Pro 2025)



2 METHODS

2.1 Desk-based Study

Information relating to designated sites, sites where Protected Species Licences have been granted, and historic records of protected species within 2 km of the proposed development site were updated for this report and obtained from Magic (www.magic.gov.uk) and other freely available information on the internet, such as planning portals.

A data request through the local environmental records centre has not been undertaken at this time. However, the habitats that will be impacted are limited and it is very unlikely that the records obtained would impact the site assessment and mitigation proposed.

Any species-specific historic records are detailed within the relevant species accounts in the *Results* section.

2.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The initial PRA survey of the House was carried out on the 22nd August 2025 by Principal Consultant Gareth Blockley of Turnstone Ecology. Gareth was acting as an agent of Tristan Evans (also of Turnstone Ecology), who holds a Natural England Class Licence (2015-16545-CLS-CLS) for the disturbance of bats in all counties of England.

A detailed inspection was made of the exterior and interior of the building for any evidence of bat use, such as live or dead bats, droppings, scratch marks, staining and prey remains, and in some cases the absence of cobwebs. Large quantities of cobwebs in roof voids or at access points tend to be suggestive of no bat use, although this evidence is not conclusive.

Buildings are categorised according to their suitability for roosting bats as follows (taken from Bat Survey Guidelines, 4th Edition):

None – No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bat at any time of the year (*i.e.* a complete absence of crevices/suitable at all ground/underground levels).

Negligible – No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

Low – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (*i.e.* unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).

Moderate – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only).

High – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts such as maternity roosts or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.

Coupled with the above categorisations, a roost can also be:

Confirmed – where roosting bats are confirmed as being present, e.g. either by the discovery of live or dead bats, accumulated droppings, prey remains, scratching or fur-staining.

2.3 Bat Emergence Surveys

Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry surveys are the primary methods for locating roosts in trees, buildings or built structures, as bats are not always found by internal and external inspection surveys (e.g. if the bats roost in areas that cannot be searched and/or leave little or no visible trace). Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry surveys can also give a reasonable estimate of the number of bats present and help understand how bats are using a site for foraging and commuting.

Two dusk emergence surveys were carried out on 27th August 2025 and 16th September 2025. The activity surveys were carried out by experienced ecologists from Turnstone Ecology. The surveyors used Wildlife Acoustics EchoMeter Touch Pro 2 bat detectors. Two surveyors were positioned so that all potential exit/re-entry points could be viewed (*Figure 4*). During the surveys, bat activity was recorded onto survey forms including information on time, species recorded and behaviour. Continual recording was undertaken for the duration of each survey to ensure all bat activity was recorded. Audio tracks were downloaded and assessed using the BatSound and Kaleidoscope software packages to confirm the identity of bats recorded during the surveys.

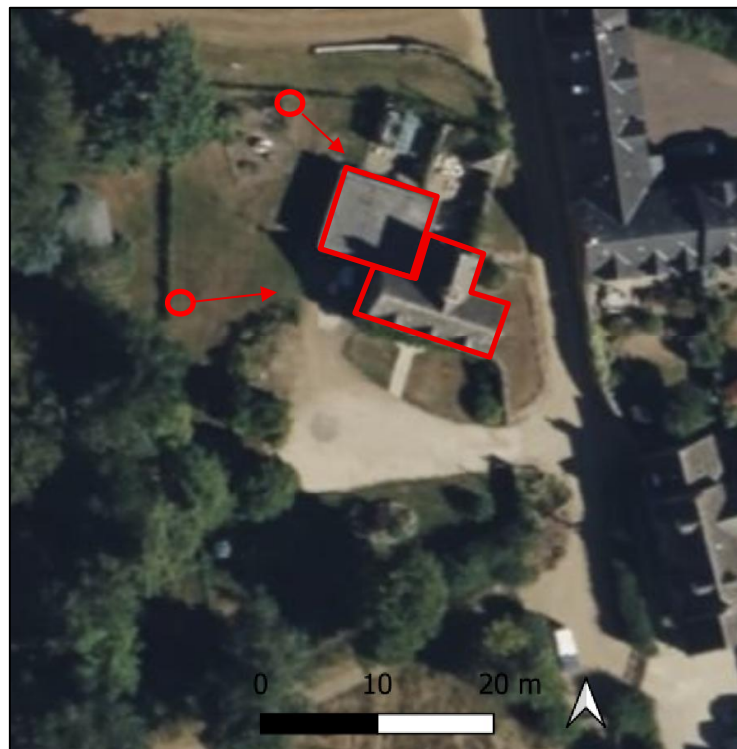
Infra-red video equipment was also used with Canon XA11/XA30 Full HD Camcorders deployed in fixed position along with 12-Led High-Power 850nm IR Illuminators and associated power supplies. All equipment was mounted on tripods and situated next to an experience surveyor who was responsible for monitoring the recording equipment. Infra-red recording equipment was used to supplement to survey, not to replace human observers.

The surveys at the proposed development site have been based on methods outlined in the Bat Survey Guidelines (BCT 2016) and covered the appropriate timings (up to 0.25 hours before sunset until 1.5 hours after sunset and 1.5 hours pre-dawn to just after sunrise). The surveys were carried out during appropriate weather conditions (details presented in *Table 1* and *Figure 4*).

Table 1. Bat survey timings and weather conditions

	27/08/2025		16/09/2025	
	Dusk		Dusk	
	Start	End	Start	End
Time	19:48	21:33	19:03	20:48
Temp (°C)	17	15	15	13
Wind (bf)	1	0	1	1
Cloud	10%	0%	30%	0%
Precipitation	Dry		Dry	
Sunset	20:03		19:18	

Figure 4. Locations and directions of view of surveyors



2.4 Nesting birds

Habitat that might be used by nesting birds was identified, and actively nesting birds or evidence of nesting birds noted where present.

2.5 Constraints

There were no constraints. The PRA survey was carried out at a suitable time of year and during appropriate weather conditions. Access was sufficient to complete the survey.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are no designated sites within 2 km of the site but the site does fall into the impact risk zones of two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Whichford Wood SSSI and Hook Norton Cutting and Banks SSSI.

As the proposals do not involve infrastructure works that involve airports, helipads, or other aviation proposals and will not contribute to air pollution with livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m², or manure stores > 3500 tonnes, we do not consider that it will have an adverse impact on the SSSIs. No consultation with Natural England is required.

3.1.2 Priority Habitats

Four Natural England Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats occur within 2 km of the site at the following closest approximate distances:

- Deciduous Woodland 20m south-west
- Traditional Orchards 150m south-west
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland 1.7 km south-west
- Woodpasture and Parkland 1.4 km west.

3.1.3 Protected Species Mitigation Licence Sites

Three Natural England Protected Species mitigation licences have been granted for sites within 2 km of the proposed site of works as displayed in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Protected species licences granted within 2km of site

Licence Reference	Location	Dates Applicable	Species	Actions
2019-39029-EPS-MIT and MIT-1	1.1km west	09/02/2019 – 31/03/2026	Brown Long-eared Bat, Common Pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
EPSM2010-1903	1.9km east	01/05/2010 – 31/12/2010	Brown Long-eared Bat	Destruction of a resting place
2019-42528-EPS-MIT	1.9km west	27/09/2019 – 31/12/2025	Brown Long-eared Bat, Common Pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2.1 Building Descriptions

The buildings surveyed consist of a residential dwelling and an adjoined garage which, for ease of reference, we will refer to as the **House** and **Garage**.

House

The house is a two-story building constructed of Cotswold stone with a pitched ‘T’ shaped roof with stone tiles and ridge tiles. There are two loft spaces. There is an existing single storey extension to the north constructed of modern brick/artificial stone, which the garage adjoins, used as utility/storage area. At the front of the roof there are three dormer windows with stone tiles and hanging tiles.

Plate 1. The front of the House as seen from the South



Plate 2. The house as seen from the West, with adjoining garage



Plate 3. The house as seen from the north, with adjoining extension and garage



Garage

The garage is a single-story building constructed of timber frame and clad with timber boards. The roof is flat and covered in bitumastic felt. There are no roof voids.

Plate 4. The Garage as seen from the west



Plate 5. The Garage as seen from the north-west



3.2.2 External Assessment

House

No evidence of bats was observed on the exterior of the house. The stone roof tiles are uneven and have numerous gaps allowing access (*Plate 6*). The walls have stone eaves with no gaps and there were no observable gaps in the gable ends and verges.

Plate 6. North-western roof sections, tiles and stone eaves



Garage

No evidence of bats was observed on the exterior of the garage. The timber cladding and roof are well sealed and potential access/roost features are very limited. There is a gap between the garage and the house (*Plate 7*) and between the garage and the single storey extension, the latter being full of cobwebs at the time of survey. There are also gaps above the double doors.

Plate 7. Gap between garage and house



3.2.3 Internal Assessment

House

No evidence of bats was observed during the internal inspection of the house.

There are two loft spaces, a large one and a smaller one, separated by a brick chimney. Both loft spaces are approximately 1.2 m high to the ridge. They are constructed from a simple timber frame with ridge boards, complete with stone tiling and mortar torching. The torching is generally in good condition although there are some gaps. The smaller loft space is very cluttered with insulation and large accumulations of cobwebs. The larger loft space is more open, but again with many cobwebs, particularly at the ridge and other areas of frame joints.

Plate 8. Larger of the 2 loft spaces in the House



Plate 9. Insulation clutter in the Smaller of the 2 loft spaces in the House



Plate 10. Image showing timber frame and torching in loft



Garage

There was no evidence of bats observed in the interior of the garage, and the suitability for roosting bats was very limited in general.

The Garage is a simple single-story room, with timber beam and timber clad ceiling and walls. Due to the windows, the inside is very light which means suitability for use by roosting bats is further limited. There are very few suitable roosting features in the garage, such as crevices where wall materials join.

Plate 11. Garage interior



Plate 12. Gaps above doors

3.2.4 Results of the PRA Survey

The Garage has been categorised as having *Low* suitability for use by roosting bats, due to the lack of features and being very well lit. The House has been categorised as having *Moderate* suitability for use by roosting bats, due to the access under tiles leading to crevice features in the roof. However, it would not be suitable for roost types of high conservation status (e.g. maternity or hibernation roosts) and the lofts are generally too small and cluttered.

3.2.5 Results of Emergence Surveys

During the emergence survey conducted on 27th August 2025, a single Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was recorded emerging from tiles around the central dormer window on the front (southern elevation) of the House. Other bat activity recorded included frequent passes and foraging of Common Pipistrelle through and around the garden, a small number (less than five) of a *Myotis* species and Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) passing through, and a single pass of Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats over the site.

During the second survey, on 16th September 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from either building. Other activity recorded was similar to the first survey, with the addition of a single pass of Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*). *Myotis* species recorded were Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.3 Nesting birds

The buildings have some potential to be used by nesting birds. During the PRA survey, a disused bird nest was located in the gap between the Garage and House. No evidence was found inside the garage or house.

Plate 13. Bird nest in cavity between Garage and House



4 EVALUATION

4.1 Summary of Proposals

The planned work involves the destruction of the existing Garage and extension of the House; it is mainly the garage that will be affected by the works. The north-western sections of the main House roof will be affected by works as the new extension roof will be tied into them. This will impact external features only on the northern side of the main roof and part of the roof and void on the western side of the smaller roof.

Figure 5. Proposed elevation and floor plans (© Hayward Smart Architects 2025: 25-025-100B)

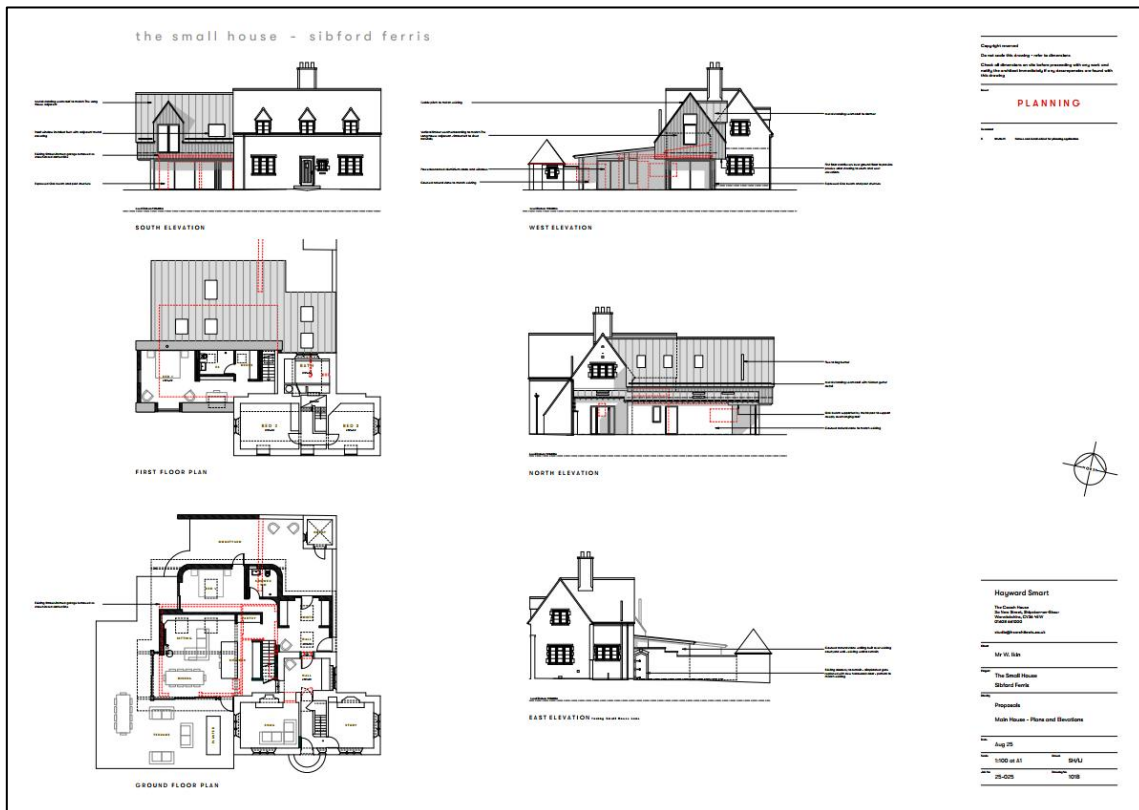
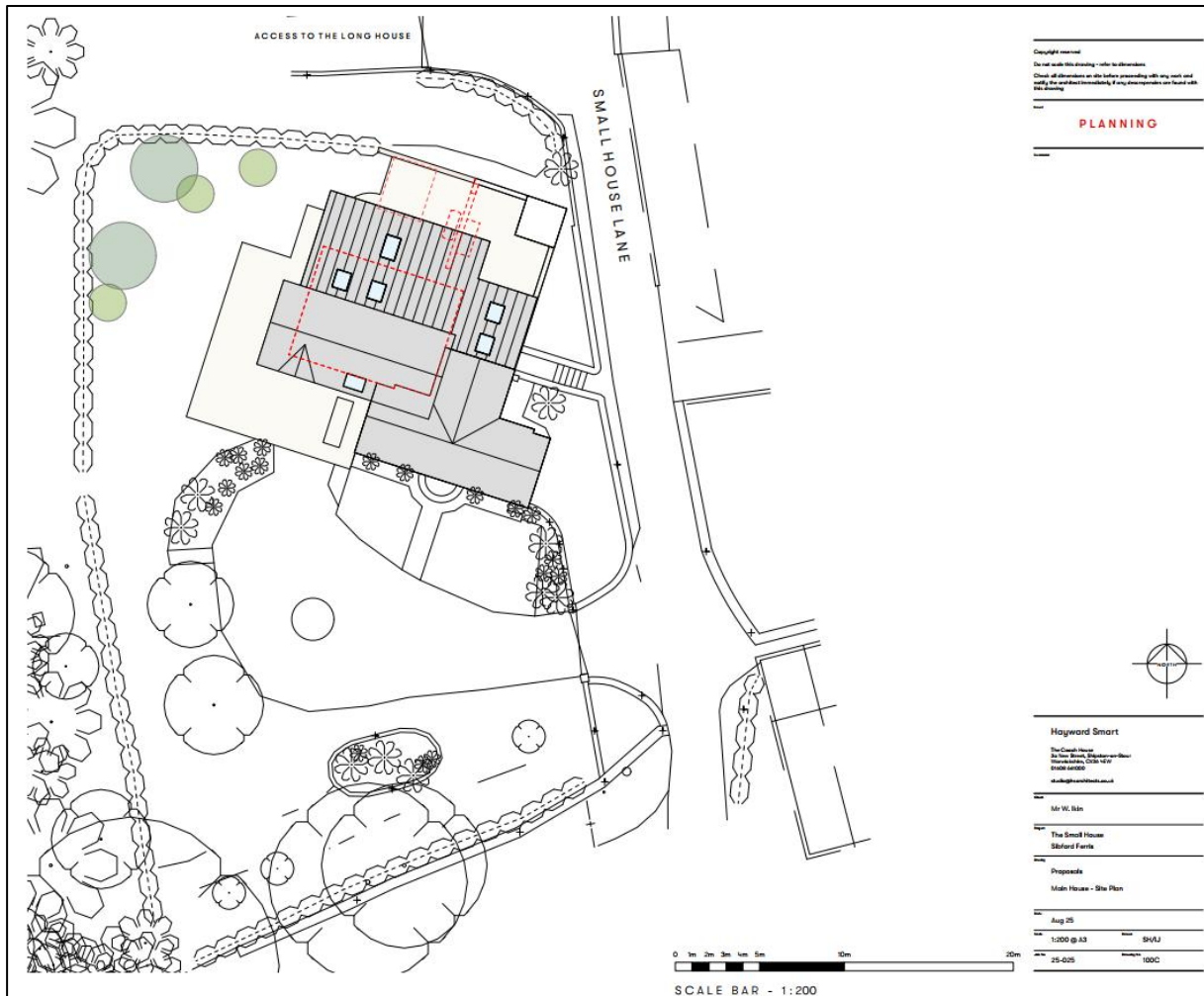


Figure 6. Proposed site plan (© Hayward Smart Architects 2025: 25-025-100C)



4.1.1 Priority Habitats

Deciduous Woodland is situated 20 metres south-west of the development site. Light spill should be kept to a minimum to avoid impacting this habitat.

Three other Natural England Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, as listed below, are unlikely to be affected by the development works:

- Traditional Orchards 150m south-west
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland 1.7 km south-west
- Wood pasture and Parkland 1.4 km west.

4.2 Bats

4.2.1 Summary of survey results

During the Preliminary Roost Assessment no evidence of bats or signs indicating use by bats was found, externally or internally. External features were identified that are suitable for use by bats, comprising gaps under tiles on the north-western sides of the house roof where the proposed work will take place. The internal features suitable for use by roosting bats that will be impacted by the work are limited to the small loft (northern roof section) of the House, which is generally unsuitable for use due to the size and being cluttered with insulation and a large accumulation of cobwebs. There is some limited access into the Garage, but cobwebs were present, and no evidence of bat use was recorded during the surveys.

The external crevice features have been identified as suitable for use by individuals or small numbers of roosting bats. Bat activity surveys have confirmed there is a bat roost of a single Common Pipistrelle under tiles around a dormer window on the front (southern aspect) of the House, but no other roosts were confirmed in the area of the proposed work.

Plate 14. Location of the work (blue dashed line)



4.2.2 Evaluation, Impacts and Mitigation

Surveys have identified a roost of a single Common Pipistrelle bat in an area that will not be impacted by the proposed work. No bat roosts were confirmed in the area of the proposed work. However, as there are suitable features present in the area of proposed work and the species identified on site (Common Pipistrelle) is known to frequently change roost location, it is possible that those features could be used at other times. The presence of maternity colonies and hibernation roosts are extremely unlikely and the features present are unlikely to support anything other than individual/small numbers of bats during the active season (May to September). Work can be undertaken without a Natural England mitigation licence, but a precautionary method of working will be followed and is detailed below.

During suitable weather conditions (dry and above 8°C) work can commence to remove the roof tiles of the area of proposed work. Where there are gaps under tiles that could provide access for bats, the roof tiles must be removed carefully by hand one at a time. During the removal each tile must be checked for presence of live bats or evidence of use by bats, i.e. dead bats or droppings. If no bats or evidence of use by bats are found, the removal of tiles can continue and the work can be undertaken without a mitigation licence.

If evidence of bats is found work must temporarily stop and an ecologist phoned. Photos of the evidence are to be taken and sent to the ecologist as soon as possible. In this scenario work will likely be able to continue without a mitigation licence but an ecologist may have to be present for the rest of the roof strip.

If live bats are found to be present during the roof strip the following steps must take place:

- Work to remove tiles will stop and the tile/s carefully replaced immediately (if safe to do so without causing injury or further disturbance to bat/s).
- The ecologist will be phoned and if required will visit the site to identify the bat/s and take evidence of the roost location.
- The ecologist will register the site on the Low Impact Class Licence, if appropriate.
- Works will recommence following receipt of the Low Impact Class Licence registration notification from Natural England.
- Temporary roosting locations will be provided for the duration of works, with two wooden Kent-style bat boxes erected on an unaffected location within the boundaries of the development site.
- For the duration of the rest of the roof stripping and removal of suitable roosting features a licenced ecologist will be present, with features being removed carefully by hand.
- If more bats are found during work, they will be caught by the ecologist who will be wearing suitable gloves. The bat will be placed into a dark cloth bag and carefully placed into one of the temporary boxes.
- The current features suitable for use by roosting bats will either remain unaffected long-term (e.g. tiles replaced in situ), be replaced like for like (e.g. new lifted tiles to replace lost tiles) or be replaced with alternative features (lifted ridge tiles over the new roof).
- Breathable roofing membranes (BRM) should **not be used** in the construction of the new roofs where roosting features could be created due to issues with bat entanglement and reduced membrane performance if used in areas of bat use. 1F bitumastic felt should be used instead.

No new external lighting is proposed, but any new lighting will reflect the Bat Conservation Trust *Bats and Lighting in the UK* guidance (2023) and will include directing lighting away from all existing or new roost locations on the site and the use of downlighting to ensure that suitable foraging and commuting habitats remain unlit.

To enhance the site for roosting bats, two integrated bat boxes or tubes (such as a Schwegler 1FR bat tube or similar and performing appropriate functions) will be built into the extension.

4.3 Nesting birds

Works affecting any suitable nesting habitats, i.e. the buildings themselves, should ideally be completed outside the breeding bird season (March – August inclusive). If this is not possible then a pre-construction bird survey will need to be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist and depending on the presence and location of nesting birds, breeding effort may have to be allowed to finish before works commence.

Nesting opportunities will be enhanced through the provision of two medium hole nest boxes suitable for use by House Sparrow, on an external wall of the building or integrated into the extensions or erected in a suitable location elsewhere on site.

5 LEGAL PROTECTION

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to the protected species referred to in this report. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

5.1 Bats

All species of British bat are protected by *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- possess or control a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it occupies a bat roost.

Bats are also listed on *Schedule 2* of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* under *Regulation 41*. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- deliberately disturb bats in such a way as to be likely to (a) impair their ability to: (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or b), to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong; and
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; and
- possess, control, transport, sell, exchange a bat, or offer a bat for sale or exchange.

All bat roosting sites receive legal protection even when bats are not present.

Where it is necessary to carry out an action that could result in an offence under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/490)* it is possible to apply for a Protected Species Mitigation licence from Natural England (NE). Three tests must be satisfied before this licence (to permit otherwise prohibited acts) can be issued:

- Regulation 53(2)(e) states that licences may be granted to “preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.”
- Regulation 53(9)(a) states that a licence may not be granted unless “there is no satisfactory alternative”.
- Regulation 53(9) (b) states that a licence cannot be issued unless the action proposed “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

5.2 Nesting Birds

All species of bird are protected under *Section 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). The protection was extended by the CRow Act.

The legislation makes it an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Certain species of bird are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and receive protection under *Sections 1(4)* and *1(5)* of the Act. The protection was extended by the CRow Act. The legislation confers special penalties where the above-mentioned offences are committed for any such bird and also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird, whilst building its nest or it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or
- disturb the dependant young of such a bird.