Bat - Ground Level
Tree Assessment

Land West of Shoreham Road, Small Dole

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LIABILITIES:
Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing, and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snapshot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned Wates Developments Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for land west of Shoreham Road, Small Dole, West Sussex BN5 9YH, hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1). This additional assessment was undertaken in response to the comments provided by Place Services on 16th September 2025 in response to the site's planning application (DC/25/1019).

"Therefore, a Ground Level Tree Assessment for Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats needs to be undertaken. We highlight that if PRFs for Individual Bats (PRF-Is) are identified, then appropriate compensation will be required in advance of works to avoid loss of roost resource (Reason and Wray (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)."

1.2 The site lies to the west of the village of Small Dole, West Sussex, BN5 9YH (TQ 21331 13112). The site covers approximately 5.45ha and consists of a grassland field with scrub and trees on the north, west and east boundaries and deciduous woodland to the south. The aerial photograph below (Figure 1) shows the site and its immediate surroundings.

Figure 1: Site application boundary (red line).
Satellite imagery obtained from Google Earth Pro 24/03/2024

Legislation

1.3 Under the NERC Act (2006) it is now the duty of every Government department in carrying out its functions "*to have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention*".

1.4 Bats are covered by the following relevant legislation: the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017 UK EU Exit). This means it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time;
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat;

- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The trees to be removed as part of the proposed development were assessed for their suitability for roosting bats following Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Arboricultural Implications Rpeort (SJA, April 2025) has been utilised to determine the trees to be removed.

2.2 The survey was undertaken on 14th October 2025 by ecologist Cameron Leonard BSc (Hons) QCIEEM. The survey utilised a ladder, torch and endoscope, if possible, to thoroughly inspect trees and any features present.

2.3 The surveyor assessed the tree visually for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) and searched for evidence such as:

- Staining beneath or around a hole caused by natural oils in bat fur.
- Bat droppings beneath a hole, roost or resting area.
- Bat droppings and/or insect remains beneath a feeding area.
- Audible squeaking from within a hole.
- Insects (especially flies) around a hole.
- Dead bats.

2.4 The suitability of the trees was determined based on the table below.

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement. Table 4.2 within the 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th ed), 2023'.

Suitability	Description
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

3.0 RESULTS

Figure 2: Tree Protection Plan.

Tree No. Tree Survey Schedule (September 2023)	Ground Assessment Results	
Trees to be removed		
Group of Goat Willow (G4)		Sprawling group of goat willow, with dense surrounding vegetation. No PRFs identified
Group of Goat Willow (G20)		Small stand of young, thin, goat willow. All considered too young to support PRFs.
Group of Goat Willow (G6)	Small stand of young, thin, goat willow. All considered too young to support PRFs	

G11		Area of G11 to be cleared contains bramble and young saplings. No PRFs present.
G18		Area of scrub with dense vegetation and no mature trees considered to support PRFs.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 All the vegetation to be removed does not support PRFs. As such, the trees and scrub to be removed are not suitable for roosting bats ('**None**' suitability) and do not require further surveys or assessment.

4.2 The removal of trees should also consider nesting birds. Vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive) or immediately after a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. If active nests are identified, works in the vicinity of the nest must cease until the birds have fledged the nest.

4.3 As the trees to be removed are not suitable for roosting bats, the conclusion detailed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (June 2025) in relation to bats are still considered valid.

5.0 REFERENCES

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Date: 17/10/2025