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Wirral

Buckley Developments Ltd
Rochdale
Lancashire

7th April 2026

Hillcrest Garage, Hillcrest Road, Rochdale
Bat Emergence Survey Report

Dear Sir / Madam,

This letter has been produced following your instruction to undertake a bat survey on the garage at Hillcrest House, Rochdale, OL11 2QB. The garage and other outbuildings are proposed for demolition, and the site will be redeveloped with three new residential plots.

Introduction

Russell Grey, an experienced ecologist and licensed bat surveyor (2015-14472-CLS-CLS), conducted a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on July 24th, 2025, following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by Arbtech in July 2024. All land within the application site boundary was accessible, and a full inspection of the building's internal areas was possible.

Site Description

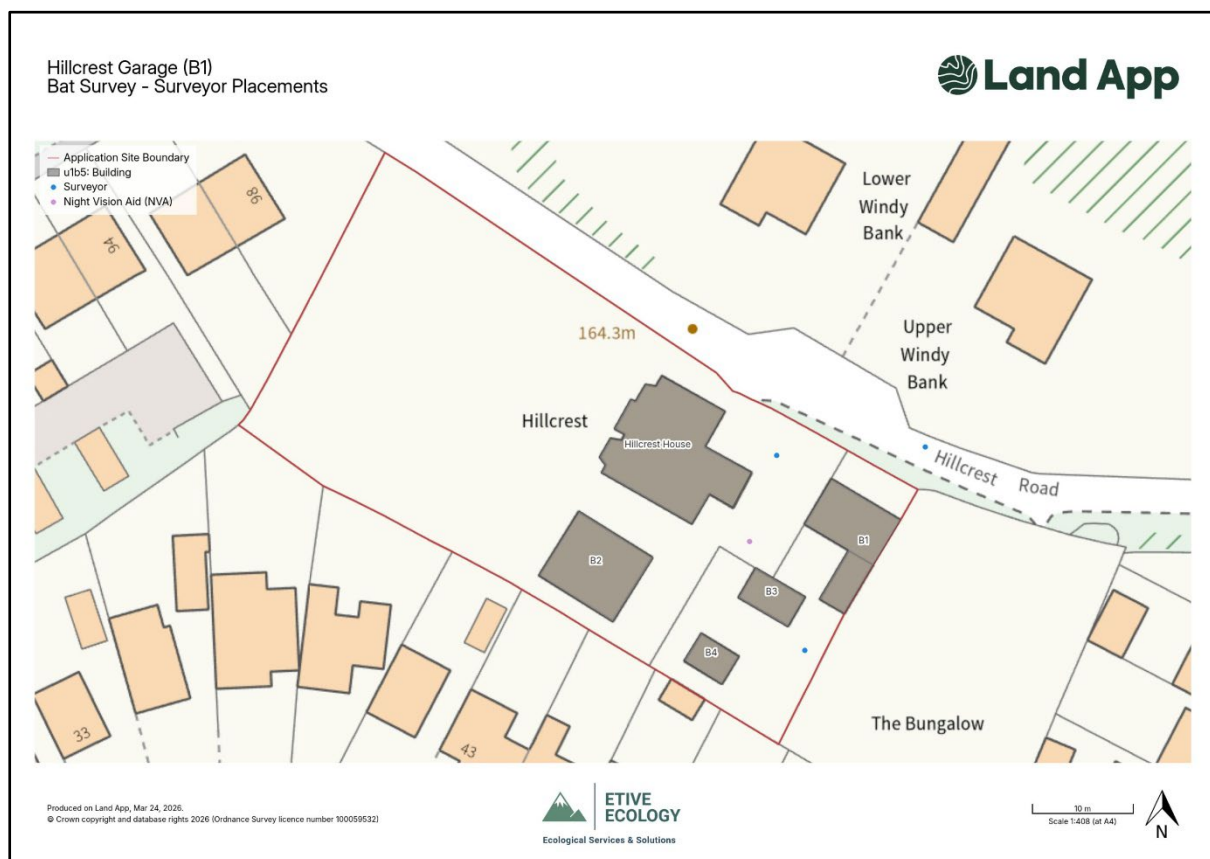
The site comprises a large residential property in the centre of an existing residential plot, with small out-buildings to the southeast, and a vegetated garden to the northwest. The plot is located on a quiet side road on the outskirts of Castleton, a suburban area near Rochdale. There are patches of green space to the north and agricultural land to the southeast.

Building one (B1), the garage, is a single-storey gable-ended building with brick walls, a slate roof, and a rendered extension on the southern elevation. The garage is currently in use and is assumed to be regularly disturbed. Several potential roosting features (PRFs) were identified on the exterior of this building, including damage to brickwork and the roof. These features offered multiple access points and potential roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling species. There was no loft space within B1; the ceilings are vaulted and easily accessible from the ground. The ceiling consists of wooden boards and is well sealed, with no visible gaps or crevices. There was also no evidence of bats or signs of roosting activity. The external features could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year, but they do not provide sufficient space, shelter, or protection for a larger number of bats to use them regularly.

As a result, the building was reassessed as having **Low Bat Roost Potential (BRP)**, necessitating one bat emergence survey during the active bat season (May to August).

The other outbuildings, B2, B3, and B4, were evaluated as having negligible BRP and were not subject to an emergence survey.

There were a number of semi-mature and mature trees present around the northern and western site boundaries. These comprised primarily of ash and sycamore. None of the trees appeared to be in good condition, and the majority offered numerous PRFs in the form of rot holes, cracks, splits and snap-outs. The whole line of trees has the potential to support roosting bats. It is acknowledged that traditional bat detector surveys of these trees would be ineffective in determining presence/absence of a bat roost. It is also acknowledged that safely climbing and inspecting the trees would also be unsafe given their structural condition. A pragmatic approach to any tree removals on site is therefore recommended.



Methodology

The survey effort followed the latest survey guidance (BCT, 2023) and consisted of a single dusk survey conducted by three surveyors. Dusk surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and ended no earlier than 90 minutes after sunset, when conditions were too dark for the surveyor to accurately and definitively identify bat emergence and flight. The surveyors were all using Echo Meter Touch bat detectors. Bat activity was recorded on each occasion and analysed using Kaleidoscope software. An FLIR E54 thermal imaging camera was also deployed during the surveys to identify and monitor any bat activity which surveyors may not be able to detect.

The survey was undertaken on the following date:

1. 24th July 2025; 16°C, 3mph south-easterly wind with a clear sky and no rainfall.

The survey was led by bat-licensed Russell Grey (2015-14472-CLS-CLS), an experienced ecologist with over 20 years spent as an ecological consultant. Survey assistance was provided by Laura Clement-Evans and Rebecca Whalley, all of whom have at least 2 years of bat survey experience. See the surveyor placements in Figure 1 below.

Survey Results (sunset at 21:19)

The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle at 21:41, along the tree-lined northern site boundary, immediately followed by two more. The three bats continuously foraged in loops around the main property until 22:06. At 22:09, a common pipistrelle passed over the garage from the east and flew west towards the garden of the main property, before flying back and off-site to the east at 22:11. At 22:14, a bat (which wasn't echolocating) flew south to north over the site - this was the last recording of the night.

In summary, no bats were observed emerging from the building during the survey. This was confirmed following a review of the thermal camera footage. It is therefore concluded that the building (B1) does not currently support a bat roost. Overall, the site is assessed as having moderate value for foraging and commuting bats, based on the frequency and abundance of pipistrelle passes recorded. No other observations led the surveyor to conclude that there may be a bat roost elsewhere on site.

Recommendations

The absence of roosting bats means the proposed works can proceed without further ecological constraints. However, if the proposed work has not started within 12 months of the date of this report, it is recommended that a pre-demolition emergence survey be undertaken to confirm the continued absence of roosting bats. The ecological value of the site is not expected to change post-intervention, so commuting bats should experience minimal impact from the development.

To ensure that the site is enhanced as part of the development, it is advised to install one integrated bat box for each new dwelling built on site. These boxes should be positioned on southeast or southwest facing elevations, at a minimum height of 4 metres; specific locations can be recommended.

In conclusion, no bat roost has been found in the garage of Hillcrest House. The overall level of bat activity recorded on site was moderate, but no further constraint is placed on the site relating to bats, and it is recommended that work commence as soon as possible to reduce the risk of bats colonising the site in future.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please do get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Russell Grey

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