

Jackson Fold Farm Bury

Bat Scoping Assessment

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

EnviroSolution Limited have carried out an Ecological Walkover Survey and initial Bat Scoping Assessment of a set of outbuildings located at Jackson Fold Farm, Pilsworth Road, Bury, BL9 8QZ (National Grid Reference SD 8209 5723).

The assessment has been carried out to identify any ecological constraints which should be considered during proposed works to redevelop the site. The development proposals are to convert the current farm buildings to provide dwellings.

Surveys were led by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking habitat and protected species surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience. Richard is also a licensed bat worker.

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 buildings' suitability to support roosting bats. Survey also examined the suitability of the site to support any other protected species including breeding birds. Survey comprised of a daytime assessment examining the interior and exterior of the buildings and the surrounding grounds.

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

Field survey comprised of a site visit and an initial inspection of the buildings and surrounding grounds. 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 or notable 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 buildings were assessed as to their 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 each building, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 1st February 2023.

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.

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.

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

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

watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, each building was assigned a level of roost suitability. This assessment considered roost suitability criteria as summarised in Table 1 below and taken from the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition.

Table 1- Bat Roost Suitability Criteria

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Potential Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Structure has Negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
<i>Low</i>	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 number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground of features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
<i>High</i>	A structure or tree 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.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description and Habitats

The study site comprises of a set of outbuildings located at Pilsworth Farm, Pilsworth Road, Bury.

The study site is located within a semi-rural setting to the south east of Bury. Immediate surrounding land uses comprise of agricultural land and also land used for land fill which have been restored to grassland and woodland habitats. A further active landfill site is located immediately to the south of the site and the M66 motorway is located approximately 200m to the west of the site. The nearby grasslands and woodland habitats are considered to offer areas of moderate-quality bat foraging habitat.

Habitats located immediately around the farm buildings principally comprise of areas of hardstanding plus typical ruderal vegetation around the edges of the outbuildings. There is a midden located to the rear of Buildings 4-6 along with a single dead tree.

None of the habitats present are considered to be of any significant biodiversity value in their own right.

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 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bat Scoping Assessment

The field survey focused on the suitability of two blocks of outbuildings to support bats and nesting birds. Building Sections 1-3 form the main outbuilding which is a two-storey brick and stone barn which is mainly used as a stables. The building has a pitched roof which is clad in slate. The main outbuilding is of pre-19th century origin.

Building Sections 4-6 form a row of smaller, single storey outbuildings used as a kitchen, store and further horse stalls. These comprise of a mix of pre-19th century converted cottages and 20th century buildings. These buildings have a mix of slate, concrete and asbestos panel roofs.

Building sections are numbered and shown on Figure 2 in the Appendix. Descriptions of each building section are provided below. Identified potential bat roosting features are Target Noted and described in Table 2 and shown on Figure 2 in the Appendix.

Building Section 1

This section of the main outbuilding is a large, two-storey, stone-built structure with glazed windows and a pitched roof clad in slate. The building is currently in active use as a horse stable.

The ground floor of Building 1 comprises of four horse stables. There are glazed windows on the west face of the building so the interior of the outbuilding is bright. The internal walls are lime washed with no obvious potential bat roosting crevices. The ground floor of the outbuilding was found to be of negligible suitability for bats.

Internally, the upper floor measures approximately 14m in length and 3.5m in height. The upper floor haylofts are largely disused with some old hay bales present. The hayloft entrances are closed with wooden boarding propped on scaffold poles.

The internal face of the slate roof is not lined. The roof is supported on the original stout wooden trusses. There are small, glazed skylights on both roof pitches so the interior of the hayloft is relatively bright.

Potential bat access to the loft is offered via gaps around the hayloft windows at the building's South and West faces. There are also occasional gaps leading into the hayloft where there are intermittent missing roof slates. The roof of the building is cobwebbed including cobwebbing running along the ridge beam. The interior of the hayloft has been used by nesting feral pigeon in the past.

Internal masonry and stonework is generally well pointed throughout with only occasional crevices in walls. Potential bats roosting habitat is offered behind roof trusses and at the ridge.

Externally, the building offers some areas of potential bat roosting habitat where there are occasional gaps under roof slates at the south facing gable and some occasional gaps between the stone block work where mortar has decayed.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this section of the outbuilding.

The building section was assessed as offering a 'moderate' bat roosting potential.

Additionally, there is a lean-to building which has been constructed on the north face of the main outbuilding. The lean-to is constructed of breezeblock with a flat roof of corrugated mineral felt. The lean-to operates as a separate retail unit. No obvious potential bat roosting features were identified associated with the lean-to.

The building appears completely sealed with roller shutter doors and windows. The building is currently rented out with no internal access possible during the site visit.

However, given that the building is completely sealed, it was considered the to be of very limited suitability for bats.

Building Section 2

This section of the main outbuilding is a large, two-storey, stone-built structure with glazed windows and a pitched roof clad in slate. The building is currently in active use as a horse stable.

The ground floor of Building 2 comprises of two horse stalls. There is an open doorway providing access through to Building 3.

The upper floor loft could not be fully accessed as part of the floor is rotten and unsafe. However, the majority of the loft space could be viewed through an open hatch.

The upper floor room measures approximately 7m in length and 4.3m in height. The room has glazed windows at its west face so the interior of the outbuilding is bright. The upper floor has been used by nesting feral pigeons with droppings and old nests present throughout .

The internal face of the roof is unlined. The roof is clad in slate with skylights. Potential bat roosting habitat is offered behind the roof trusses and ridge. There is potential access to the interior of the building via occasional missing slates near the ridge.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this building.

The building was assessed as offering a 'moderate' bat roosting potential.

Building Section 3

This section of the main outbuilding comprises of a two-storey building constructed partly of stone and of brick. The building has a pitched roof clad in slate with ceramic ridge tiles. The building has sealed hayloft windows.

The ground floor of the building comprises of five horse stables in active use. As elsewhere the internal walls are well pointed, and sealed with lime mortar and painted white. Potential access to the interior of the outbuilding is offered via holes in the walls and open windows.

Internally, the upper floor of Building 3 is divided into two sections. The first section at the east end of the building is approximately 10m in length and 4.5m in height. The roof is supported on stout wooden beams and the internal face of the roof is unlined with small skylights. Consequently, the interior of this section of Building 3 is relatively bright. The hayloft windows have been boarded over and sealed shut with boards and wooden pallets. There is an old grain chute at the centre of the loft however the interior of the hayloft is relatively open.

The western section of the upper floor is approximately 5m in length and 6m in height. Old hay has been stored in this section. There are several holes in the roof so the interior of the building is relatively bright and draughty. The north facing pitches of both sections of Building 3 are lined internally with bitumen felt. The interior of the hayloft has been used by nesting feral pigeon in the past. The full extent of the loft space could not be investigated in detail as the floor had rotted away parts and was unsafe, however the majority of the loft space was accessible. The internal walls are generally well pointed with only occasional intermittent crevices. Further potential roosting habitat is offered behind the bitumen roofing felt and behind the roofing trusses and ridge.

Externally, the building offers some limited areas of potential bat roosting habitat including occasional gaps beneath roof slates at the north gable, areas of missing slate, gaps under the ridge tiles and some occasional wall crevices.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this building.

The building was assessed as offering a 'moderate' bat roosting potential.

Building 4

This building comprises of a single storey building constructed of brick. The roof is constructed of interlocking concrete tiles.

The interior of the building is used as a kitchen area for the stables. The building comprises of a single room open to the internal face of the roof. The building is approximately 3.5 m in length and 3.2 m in height. The internal face of the roof is clad in tightly fitted wooden boarding and the interior of the walls are plastered. The building interior is accessible via open doorway and window but offers no obvious potential bat roosting habitat in the interior.

Externally, the building offers some limited areas of potential bat roosting habitat including gaps under the gable end slates.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this building.

The building was assessed as offering a 'low' bat roosting potential.

Building 5

The building is constructed of cinderblock and brick with a pitched roof clad in corrugated asbestos panels. The interior of the building comprises of two horse stalls which are in active use. The asbestos roof is not lined internally and is supported on metal trusses. The walls are constructed with breezeblock and brick and are painted.

The interior is accessible via the open stable doors. However, the building does not support any obvious suitable bat roosting habitat internally.

Externally, the building offers some limited areas of potential bat roosting habitat where there are gaps under a length of chipboard fascia at the building's west face.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this building

The building was assessed as offering a 'low' bat roosting potential.

Building 6

This building is a single storey former cottage. The building is constructed of brick with a pitched roof clad in slate with stone ridge tiles. There is a dead tree to the rear of the building offers low value potential roosting for bats under areas of lifting bark.

Internally, the building is divided into three sections each approximately 3 m in length. The eastern section is currently used as a stable whilst the two west facing sections are used for storage. The internal face of the roof of the easterly section is unlined whilst the internal faces of the two westerly sections are lined in tightly fitted wooden boarding. There is some potential bat roosting habitat offered behind roof trusses in the east section. The building has been used by nesting swallows in the past.

Externally, the building offers some limited areas of potential bat roosting habitat where there are occasional missing slates and gaps under the ridge tiles.

No bat droppings were found either internally or externally associated with this building.

The building was assessed as offering a 'low' bat roosting potential.

Table 2 – Potential Bat Roosting Features

<i>PBRF Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Gaps under slates at gable providing potential bat roosting habitat between the slates and the verge mortar.
2	Areas of missing mortar between brickwork providing potential bat roosting habitat in wall crevices.
3	Intermittent gaps under ridge tiles providing potential bat roosting habitat at the ridge and access into the small roof void above the nave.
4	Gaps under slates at north facing gable providing potential bat roosting habitat between the slates and the mortar.
5	Gaps under slates at south facing gable providing potential bat roosting habitat between the slates and the mortar.
6	Gaps under chipboard fascia provide potential bat roosting habitat between the fascia and the wall.
7	Intermittent gaps under ridge tiles providing potential bat roosting habitat at the ridge and access into the small roof void above the nave.
8	Areas of missing slates and raised roof slates providing potential bat roosting habitat beneath the slates themselves.
9	Dead tree to the rear of the building which could offer potential roosting for bats under areas of lifting bark

4 Summary & Recommendations

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 Habitats

An Ecological Walkover Survey and Bat Scoping Assessment has been completed of a set of outbuildings located at Jackson Fold Farm, Pilsworth Road, Bury, BL9 8QZ. Proposals are to convert the outbuildings to provide new dwellings.

The proposed development site is considered to support habitats which are of relatively low ecological value, comprising principally of buildings and hardstanding with some limited ruderal vegetation at the fringes of the site.

None of the habitats present are considered to be of any significant biodiversity value.

4.1.2 Bats

The daytime bat scoping inspection examined the buildings with regards to its suitability to support roosting bats.

The study site is located within a semi-rural setting to the south east of Bury. Immediate surrounding land comprise of agricultural grassland and also land used for land fill which has been restored to grassland and woodland habitats. The nearby habitats are considered to offer areas of 'moderate' quality bat foraging habitat.

The bat scoping survey found the two-storey row of outbuildings (Building 1, 2 and 3 on Figure 2) to be of '**moderate**' suitability for roosting bats and found the row of single storey row of outbuildings (Buildings 4, 5 and 6) to be of '**low**' suitability for bats.

The buildings are considered to offer suitable roosting habitat for individual or low numbers of non-breeding, bat species. It is considered to be very unlikely that a significant bat roost such as a maternity colony would be present within the outbuildings.

The upper floor hayloft of buildings 1-3 provide large open void spaces, with suitable roosting habitat offered within the structure of the roof and within occasional crevices in the internal walls.

The exteriors of the outbuildings support several potential bat roosting features. These include areas of missing slate, occasional gaps under ridge tiles and slates and occasional wall crevices. These features all offer suitable roosting habitat for individual or low numbers of non-breeding bats.

The proposed works to convert the buildings would result in the loss of the potential bat roosting features.

4.1.3 Further Bat Survey

In order to further assess the identified potential bat roosting features associated with Buildings 1-3, it is recommended that at least two dusk/dawn bat activity surveys are carried out during the active bat survey season (May-September inclusive with at least one survey completed between early June and the end of August).

The surveys should use four bat surveyors so that identified potential bat roosting features can be fully assessed.

As the single storey buildings (Buildings 4-6) are only considered to be of low suitability for roosting bats who, these buildings can be assessed via a single dusk/dawn bat survey.

Survey of this building should use should use three bat surveyors so that identified potential bat roosting features can be fully assessed.

The surveys would aim to confirm the presence or otherwise of any bat roosts associated with the building. Recommended surveyor locations are shown on Figure 2.

If any roosting bats are encountered, further nocturnal surveys may be required and any future development of the site may need to be carried out following a European Protected Species License.

Pending the findings of the further nocturnal bat surveys, further recommendations regarding bat roost mitigation measures and compensation habitat should be provided by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

Even if no evidence of roosting bats is found during further surveys, it is recommended that additional bat roosting habitat is provided at the site. This could comprise of bat slates, bat boxes and bat bricks which can be built into the converted outbuilding. The model and location of bat boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.1.4 Breeding Birds

The interiors of the outbuildings could be used by nesting birds during the breeding season.

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.

Works to the building which could affect breeding birds should be timed to avoid the breeding season (March-August inclusive).

Where this is not possible, a check for breeding birds should be carried out by an appropriately qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to the start of construction works. If any nesting birds are found to be

present at any time, destruction of the nesting site will need to wait until the ecologist can confirm that all young birds have fledged.

4.1.5 Other Protected Species

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

4.2 Ecological Enhancements

It is recommended that opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the development area are taken.

4.2.1 Bat and Bird Boxes

The proposed development should include provision for roosting bats and breeding birds. This can be achieved through the installation of bat boxes (recommended model Habibat 003) and sparrow nest boxes (model Schwegler 1SP) into the proposed new buildings at the site.

The bat and bird boxes can be built into the walls of the proposed buildings so as to remain visually unobtrusive.

The precise location, model and number of bat and bird boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.2.2 Plants for Pollinators and Birds

The development proposals should also aim to maximise the biodiversity of landscaping proposals at the site.

It is recommended that new planting includes species which can provide nectar sources for insects and berries/fruits for invertebrates and birds.

The following small/medium sized tree species are recommended as they offer suitable foraging opportunities to various native wildlife (including birds and invertebrates): rowan, wild cherry, crab apple, silver birch, holly, and willow.

Areas of new shrubbery should include suitable nectar sources for insects. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a list of suitable plants for invertebrates (see [rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators](https://www.rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators)).

It is recommended that this list is consulted when producing detailed landscaping designs for the site.

5 Appendix

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1- Building 3



Photograph 2- Building 1 and 2



Photograph 3- Interior of Building 1



Photograph 4- Interior of Building 2



Photograph 5- Interior of Building 3



Photograph 6- Buildings 2 and 3



Photograph 7- South facing gable of Building 1



Photograph 8- View of site looking south



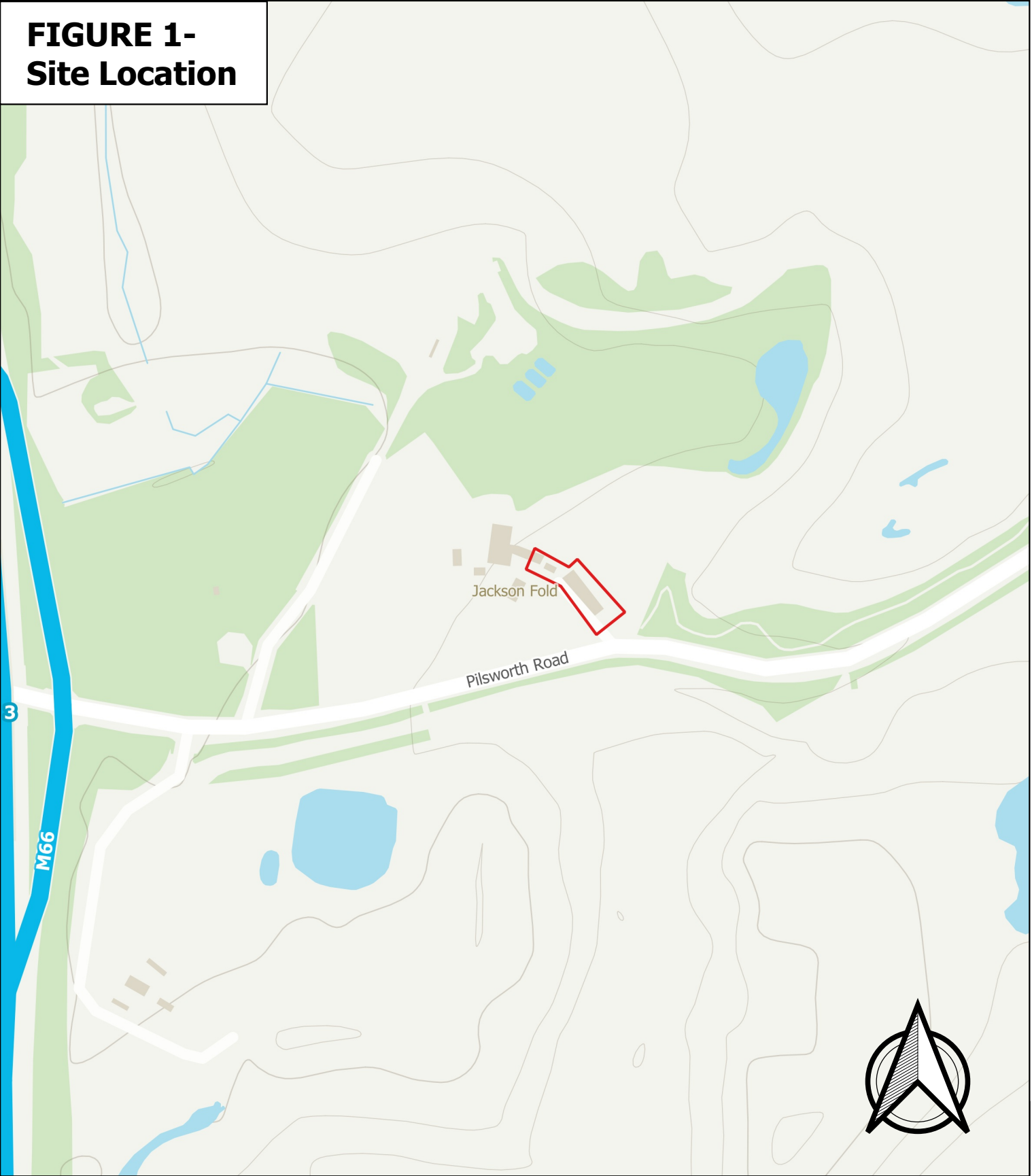
Photograph 9- Building 4 and 5



Photograph 10- Building 6



**FIGURE 1-
Site Location**



KEY

 Study Site

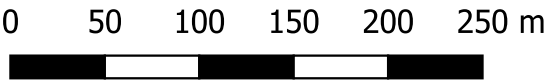


Figure 2- Survey Results

- Key**
- Study Site
 - Building
 - Bat Target Note
 - Bat Surveyor Locattion



