Lakeside View, Silkstone Common

Bat Survey Report

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Prepared by:

Middleton Bell Ecology, School House, Green Moor, Sheffield, S35 7DQ

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1. Summary

1.1.1 Middleton Bell Ecology undertook an updated bat survey of the stables and tack room at Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Common, to inform a planning application for conversion of the building into a dwelling. An internal and external inspection was completed on 28 September 2026, supported by an updated desk study.

1.1.2 The building was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats. The surrounding habitats provide suitable opportunities for bats to forage and commute. No bats or evidence of bat occupation were recorded. The soffit, wall-top and masonry features were accessible and inspected using an endoscope. The ridge was assessed using drone imagery.

1.1.3 On the basis of the inspection findings, no further nocturnal bat survey is recommended at this stage. The proposed conversion should follow a precautionary working method, including a contractor toolbox talk, pre-works checks of potential roost features and ecological supervision. If bats or evidence of a roost are discovered, works must stop pending ecological advice and any necessary licensing.

1.1.4 Two bat boxes are recommended to replace existing potential bat roost features. The boxes should be installed at least three metres above ground and away from artificial light. New external lighting should avoid illuminating potential roost features and nearby vegetation. Any new roofing membrane should be suitable for use where bats may come into contact with it, as specified in this report.

1.1.5 Three swallow nests were recorded in 2023, and continued summer use of the building was confirmed by the client. Active nests must be protected. Three replacement swallow nest cups should be installed in the identified storage barn before the existing nesting accommodation is lost, with continuing access maintained.

1.1.6 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24months from the survey date. If the project is delayed beyond this time or changes significantly Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the need for an update assessment.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 An updated bat survey of Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Common was commissioned by Paul Briggs of Northern Design Partnership on behalf of the client Brenda Davies 16th September 2026. The survey was undertaken to inform a new planning application for the conversion of a stables and tack room into a dwelling.

2.1.2 Previous survey had been conducted by Middleton Bell Ecology Ltd. on 1st November 2023 to inform a previous planning application for the building, with a survey prior to this conducted by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in June 2020. Previous planning permissions were granted.

2.1.3 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 A storage barn/workshop adjoined the eastern elevation of the stables. The surrounding area comprised a house and garden to the north and west, and pasture to the south and east. Woodland, tree lined pasture, and Blacker Dam were present within the wider landscape (Figure 1 and Plate 1).

3.1.2 A small tributary of Lindley Dike passed to the east of the adjacent stables. The habitat was considered to be highly suitable for use by bats. The abundance and variety of bat species was considered likely to be high.

Figure 1. Site location, outlined red



Plate 1. The stables (outlined red) viewed from the southwest



3.1.3 Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to Lakeside View.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone, S75 4NF			
OS Grid Ref. SE 28454 04348		Altitude. 125 m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✔	✔	The stables, storage barns, a dwelling and associated buildings.
Watercourse bordered by trees	✔	✔	Lindley Dike was present to the east of the property and a tributary was located just to the east of the surveyed building.
Standing water		✔	A pond was present within the garden and Blacker Dam was present further north.
Bridges tunnels and culverts	✔	✔	The culvert associated with the drain in the garden (approximately 10 cm high).
Trees		✔	Mature trees were present in the adjacent garden.
Woodland		✔	Small copse to the east.
Grassland	✔	✔	Lawned gardens and pasture.

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats within the building.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the buildings.

- Current or historic use of the building by nesting birds.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group and Barnsley Biological Records Centre were contacted to request updated bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.1.2 An updated search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The survey of the buildings was conducted on 28th September 2026 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4 2025-84759-CL20-BAT).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey:

- An examination of all parts of the stables to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, windows, and windowsills, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
- Any signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- A reassessment of the building'ss' bat roost suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used during the survey:

- a high powered torch;
- binoculars;
- an endoscope;
- ladders;
- a camera; and
- an ultralight drone (DJI Mini 4 Pro).

4.3 Survey Limitations

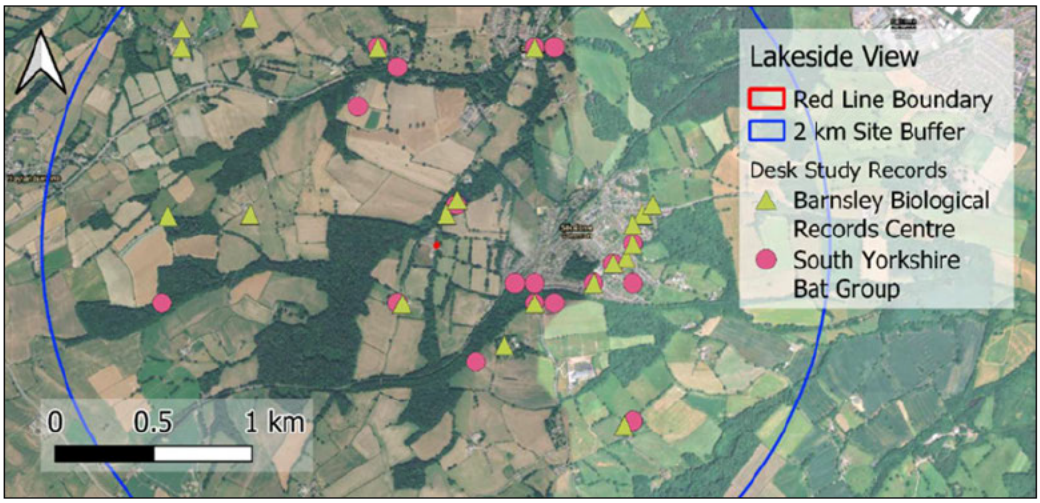
4.3.1 No survey limitations were encountered during the survey.

5. Results

5.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 87 bat records for the surrounding 2 km with Barnsley Biological Records Centre providing 82. The species included in the records comprised: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*; soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*; ~~Brown~~ brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*; Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*; Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii;* noctule *Nyctalus noctula;* and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*. Additional *Pipistrellus*, *Myotis*, and *Nyctalus* records were provided which hadn't been defined to species level.

5.1.2 The nearest records to site related to records of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, and noctule foraging on Blacker Dam approximately 250 m northeast of the site in 2011 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Distribution of bat records in the vicinity of the site



5.1.3 One bat EPS mitigation licence had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licence are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, Natterer's bat	01/09/2016	01/09/2026	Destruction of a breeding site and a resting place	1100	Northeast

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

5.2.1 The building appeared to date from around the 1990s. It was assessed as having low suitability to support roosting bats, and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the inspection.

Building description

5.2.2 The single storey-building was constructed from concrete blocks and stone. An adjoining workshop (constructed from concrete blocks and a steel frame with corrugated metal cladding) was present to the east. The adjacent workshop appeared to have been built more recently (Plate 2).

5.2.3 The windows and doors of the stables were framed with timber. The soffits and fascias were also wooden. The western side of the building and the north and south gables were faced with stone with an inner skin of concrete blocks. The rear (eastern) aspect which joined the storage barn was constructed solely from concrete blocks.

5.2.4 The stables had a two-pitch roof covered with interlocking concrete tiles. A small clock tower with a small two-pitched roof was present in the centre of the building.

5.2.5 Flood lights were present on the gable ends, and below the clock.

Plate 2. The stables and adjacent workshop viewed from the southwest in 2026



5.2.6 The 2026 inspection identified that the building was in very similar condition to that recorded in 2023. A Leyland cypress *Cupressus* × *leylandii* hedgerow had been removed from the area adjacent to the northern end of the stables but no other significant changes were identified (Plate 2 - 5).

Plate 3. The stables and adjacent workshop viewed from the southwest in 2023



Plate 4. The stables (viewed from the north) and adjacent hedgerow in 2023



Plate 5. The stables (viewed from the north) in 2026



External inspection

5.2.7 Gaps with potential to be used by roosting bats comprised gaps between and below ridge tiles, gaps allowing access onto the wall top, and gaps allowing access into the soffit box. Gaps in the masonry were also present but were heavily cobwebbed . The potential roost features are shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

Table 3. Potential Roost Features (PRF) Recorded

PRF	Photo	Description
A		Gaps allowing access into the soffit.
B		Gap between the wall top and the soffit. The photo shows one of the gaps being checked with an endoscope.
C		Gaps between and below ridge tiles.

PRF	Photo	Description
D		Missing mortar in masonry (heavily cobwebbed).

Figure 3. Potential roost feature locations



Internal inspection

5.2.8 The majority of the internal space was allocated to stables with a tack room at the southern end. A flat ceiling had been installed over the stables and tack room on the eastern half of the building, with the western half open to the roof pitch (Plate 6). The roof was supported by modern trusses and was backed with a plastic membrane (Plate 7).

Plate 6. Interior of the stables in 2026

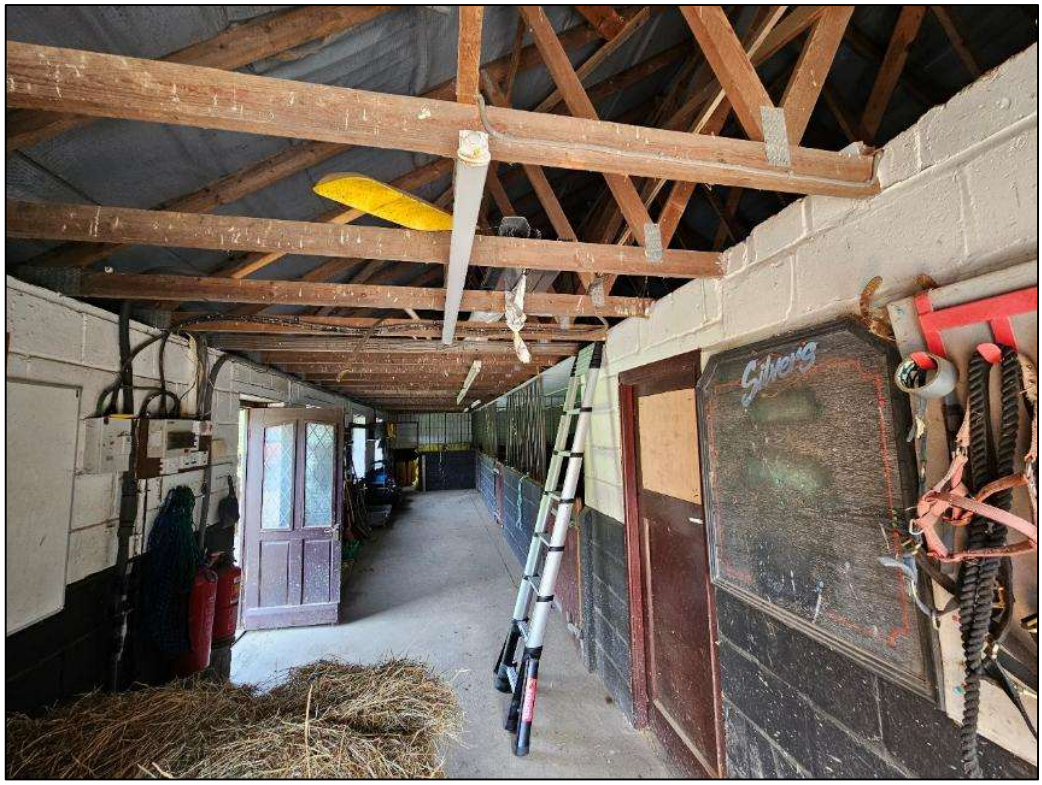


Plate 7. Roof truss construction



5.2.9 Some bird droppings were present on the ceiling of the stables / tack room but no bats or signs of bats were recorded. Features A, B, and D could all be inspected with an endoscope with no bats or bat droppings were recorded. It is considered likely that droppings would have been present within the features and that they would have been recorded during the endoscope inspection, if they had been recently used, or regularly

used in the past summer season. The gaps between the ridge tiles could not be closely inspected, although the view from the drone allowed a reasonably close view and photographs to be taken of the gaps. The gaps were extremely narrow, no droppings were visible around, or within the gaps and areas of mossy growth were present around the base of much of the ridge. On the basis of these observations, the likelihood that the ridge was used by roosting bats was considered to be negligible.

5.2.10 At the northern end of the building three swallow *Hirundo rustica* nests were recorded on the rafters in 2023 (Plate 8). The continued summer presence of the birds was confirmed by the client Brenda.

Plate 8. Swallow nests on rafters inside the building in 2023



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the buildings during the assessment and there were no signs of bat occupation including within the features that could be inspected (all bar the ridge tiles). Although the number of potential roost features was relatively low, they offered access to the ridge, wall top and wall cavity and the habitat in the area around the building was highly suitable. The lighting and the building's height did however reduce the suitability and overall the building was considered to offer low suitability to support roosting bats.

6.1.2 The endoscope inspection was sufficient to rule out the current presence of a roost within the features that could be closely inspected (with a similar assessment made in 2023), and no evidence of bats using the building was present.

6.1.3 As identified by the previous bat survey reports, all of the potential bat roosting opportunities were located within external areas of the building (within the walls and roof). Works affecting the external walls would comprise the cutting out of two windows at the northern gable end, and one on the front (west) elevation, and amendments to change a window into a door at the southern end of the building. The proposals would also require the removal of some roof tiles and the installation of three skylights.

6.2 Recommendations

Further Survey

6.2.1 The standard approach would be to complete a nocturnal survey between May and August. Nocturnal surveys would require two surveyor positions.

6.2.2 However it is considered that the inspection was sufficient to rule out the likely presence of roosting bats.

6.2.3 For low suitability potential bat roost features, good practice survey guidance (Collins, 2023) states "*if all areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden), then further surveys are not appropriate*". The guidance also states: "*the ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available and the balance of probabilities*".

6.2.4 The close inspection of the bat roost features present and inspection of the ridge using the drone was considered sufficient to rule out the *likely* presence of roosting bats at the time of survey.

6.2.5 On this basis no further survey is recommended although as long as a precautionary approach to the proposed works is taken.

Precautionary Working Method Statement – Protecting Bats During the Works

6.2.6 Although unlikely to be present, precautions are required to ensure the potential roost features are not in use at the time the works proceed. These comprise:

- A toolbox talk should be given to all contractors prior to the start of works. The toolbox talk should highlight:
    - the potential bat roost feature locations,
    - identification of signs of bats,
    - how to remove or open up suitable bat roost features where work is required, and
    - what to do in the event a bat is discovered.
- All features should be reinspected by the supervising ecologist prior to the start of the works;
- If potential bat roost features will be lost, they should be subject to a destructive search by or under the supervision of a bat survey licenced ecologist.
- If bats or signs of bats are recorded at any point, the work should cease and the need for a licence reconsidered.

Lighting

6.2.7 The site is located within good bat foraging habitat. Many bat species show a strong aversion to artificial light. Therefore, it is advised that new external uplighting is avoided. Where lighting is necessary, then it is recommended that it is subject to passive infra-red sensor activation only, in order to reduce the duration of operation. New lighting should be designed to avoid any illumination of the roof, eaves and wall tops, and nearby vegetation. It is advised that any new lighting be low height, low output, directional and of a warm colour tone (ILP, 2023).

Roofing Membrane

6.2.8 Many standard modern non-bitumen coated roofing and cladding membranes are not safe for bats if they come into contact with them. Although reroofing is not planned, in order to protect any bats which may be present in the roof at present or in the future, any roofing membrane used (for example for localised repairs or around rooflights) must be one of the products identified as safer for use in areas with roosting bats. Further information on the issue of bats and roofing membranes is included in Appendix 2.

Swallow Nest Protection and Continued Provision

6.2.9 Active birds nests are legally protected (Appendix 1) and must not be destroyed. It is recommended that any renovation work commences outside the bird nesting season (March to September). If active nests are recorded at any point they should be retained with a suitable buffer until the young have fledged. The buffer required will depend on the construction activities planned. If an active nest is recorded a suitably qualified ecologist should advise on the required stand off distance for the various tasks.

6.2.10 In addition to the precautions identified above it is recommended that three new swallow nest cups are installed within a different building within the site. The client identified a storage barn located approximately 70 m south of the stables that would be suitable. The barn was inspected during the site visit and found to be an open fronted concrete block and steel framed building with timber bracing within the steel frame which would be suitable to attach swallow nest cups to (Plate 9). No evidence of existing use of the building by swallows was recorded.

Plate 9. Building proposed as alternative swallow nest site



Bat Bboxes

6.2.11 As an enhancement, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (see Appendix 1), and the previous bat survey report (Whitcher Wildlife, 2020), it is recommended that two Greenwoods Echohabitat single crevice bat boxes (or similar)[1]

[1] Greenwoods Ecohabitat Bat Boxes are available from: https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/

are installed on buildings or trees within the site. The boxes should be located at least three meters high and away from light spill.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 No evidence of bat presence was recorded within the surveyed building. Although the building is considered to have low suitability to support roosting bats, it is considered that the work could proceed without further bat survey under a precautionary working method statement with potential roost features replaced and other suitable precautions.

6.3.2 Measures to mitigate the loss of the three swallow nests have also been provided.

6.3.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24months from the survey date. If the project is delayed beyond this time or changes significantly Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the need for an update assessment.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP (2023) Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust.

Whitcher Wildlife (2020) Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Bat Survey. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of bats.

Where works will have an adverse impact on roosting bats a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2026. This document states that development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment by identifying opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, nature-based solutions and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks, while applying the statutory biodiversity net gain requirements.

Appendix 2. Bats and Roofing Membranes

Standard roof membranes can cause the death of significant numbers of bats. Traditional bitumen coated roofing felt is recommended where roosting bats are expected to be present.

The problem

Non-bitumen coated membranes used below roof slates and tiles present a significant problem for bats. Over time, strands are pulled away from the surface of these materials as bats crawl over them. These fuzzy strands are very strong and can tangle and trap bats, sometimes causing the death of bats over multiple years[2].

One example we have encountered comprised a pipistrelle roost which formed in a building extension constructed in 2009. Over the course of just 13 years the roofing felt degraded to the extent that it trapped and killed more than 10 bats. Fortunately, the problem in this roost was identified and remedial work was undertaken to replace the roofing membrane in 2022.

Plate A2.1. Four dead pipistrelles tangled in breathable roofing felt



Although a new roof might be considered to lack potential bat access points, that is often not the case. Roofs covered with stone slates almost always have gaps large enough to be accessed by bats, this is often also the case where imitation stone slates are used. On older buildings the uneven roof timbers and/or building design also often results in gaps on wall tops and between slates. Even on new builds it is often possible for bats to access potential roosts via features such as dry verge capping. Some bats can access a space no wider than a biro pen, therefore it is not surprising that they can find their way into most buildings.

Safe roofing membranes (and membranes behind cladding)

The best roofing membrane option for areas where bat roosts are expected is traditional Type 1F bitumen coated hessian backed roofing felt. Bitumen coated roofing felts have been widely and safely used as a secondary weather barrier since approximately the 1950s/1960s. Wooden sarking has also been used for many decades and if appropriately treated, is safe for use in bat roosts, or where bats could be, present. Most commercially available products come pretreated but if required, a list of suitable timber treatment products are listed on the

[2] Wearing S. Essah E., Gunnel K. & Bonser R. (2013) Double jeopardy: the potential for problems when bats interact with breathable roofing membranes in the United Kingdom. Architecture and Environment

government website[3]. Wooden sarking also has the benefit of adding additional insulation and is usually breathable.

There are breathable membrane products which have passed a test known as the snagging propensity test. The test attempts to replicate the wear and tear which results from bats crawling over the membrane. At the time of writing (to our knowledge) two products have passed the test and are accepted for use in bat roosts by Natural England: SIGA Majcoat 200 SOB Diffusion and TLX BatSafe[4,5]. Although both have passed this test, it is unclear how they would fare over a long timeframe, and particularly within larger bat roosts. For this reason, we do not recommend that they are used for known bat roosts, and particularly for large (maternity roosts). However, they may provide a much needed option for roofs where future bat use cannot be ruled out, sarking boards are not an option, and a breathable solution is required.

Additional considerations

In recent years a fairly substantial proportion of the lofts we have surveyed which had existing breathable felt, were found to have been damaged by wasps (Plate A2.2). In these situations, the wasps appear to have chewed holes in the felt and formed nests in the holes. This doesn't appear to be a problem associated with the traditional bitumen coated roofing felt. Obviously, any holes within roofing felt would be likely to significantly reduce its functionality as a secondary weather barrier. Where bats or birds do come into contact with breathable roofing membranes, they can damage the membrane causing it to leak and they can also significantly reduce the breathability of the felt in that location.

Plate A2.2. Damage to a breathable roofing membrane adjacent to a wasp nest



Traditional bituminous Type 1F roofing felt is a non-breathable product and therefore ventilation is required. This can be achieved, even in buildings with vaulted ceilings, but requires some consideration during the design stage. Products to increase the ventilation within roofs where bituminous Type 1F felt has already been installed are also available but should not be considered as the primary ventilation option.

[3] Accessible at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bat-roosts-insecticides-and-timber-treatments/timber-treatment-products-suitable-for-use-in-or-near-bat-roosts
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bats-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence#full-publication-update-history:~:text=Use%20of%20safe%20roofing%20membranes
[5]TLX BatSafe requires all joints and cut edges to be taped in order to prevent the fraying of bare edges.