Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

WEMBLEY WORKS, HEMINGFIELD ROAD, WOMBWELL.

OS REF: SE 38974 02207.

BAT SURVEY REPORT.

Ref No: **240520.**

Date: **16th July 2024.**

Unit 34, The Business Village, Cudworth, Barnsley, S72 8RP.
info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk www.whitcher-wildlife.co.uk
Company No. 4401613.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. The owners of the old Wembley Works factory, located on Hemingfield Road, Wombwell, have plans to demolish the factory and erect a number of residential dwellings.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were therefore commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site to establish whether the building hosts roosting bats, or has features with potential to host roosting bats. This survey was carried out on 9th May 2024.

1.3. Following the PRA, a single dusk emergence survey was recommended. This survey was carried out on the 20th June 2024.

1.4. This report outlines the findings of both the PRA and dusk emergence survey, and makes appropriate recommendations going forward.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provides additional information on bats, nesting birds and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

****

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The buildings were thoroughly checked internally and externally for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.
* Staining on external walls.

2.2. Unless otherwise stated, all lofts were accessed and inspected using a high-powered torch and where necessary an endoscope.

2.3. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings in the roof and ridge tiles, behind soffits and fascia's and in the walls of the structure for suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.4. All windowsills, walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety.
Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.5. The PRA was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition),* with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. The subsequent dusk emergence and dawn return surveys were also conducted in accordance with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition).*

2.7. All surveys were undertaken and led by Mitchel Greenhalgh, an ecological consultant with an array of experience in conducting surveys on a variety of flora and fauna in a professional capacity. Mitchel holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2022-10386-CL18-BAT) and great crested newts, and a NatureScot licence in respect of bats. He has attended courses run by CIEEM and the FSC. Mitchel also holds a BSc in Environmental Science attained from the University of Leeds and he is an associate member of CIEEM.

****

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search has been requested from the South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) for all records of bats and their roosts within a 2km radius of the survey area.

3.1.2. SYBG returned a number of records, but only one of these was within a 500m radius. This was of an injured bat located on Wood Walk, approximately 450m southwest of the site.

3.1.3. A search using the MAGIC Map website shows no European Protected Species (EPS) licences in relation to bats have been granted within a 2km radius. The closest is located approximately 2.6km west within the outskirts of Worsbrough Dale.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The survey area comprises the Old Wembley Works Factory, located just off Hemingfield Road in Wombwell. This is shown on the aerial imagery below.

3.2.2. The further surrounding area comprises the western outskirts of Wombwell with the ancient woodland of Wombwell Woods located to the further west and Hillies Golf Course with its associated woodlands to the northeast. The Sheffield to Barnsley railway line runs adjacent to the east of the site.

3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment.

3.3.1. The building is split into two main sections. The first of these is the larger northern section which houses the factory part of the building. This section comprises an 85m long, single storeyed building, extending to two storeys at the rear, with brick walls and a gabled roof with asbestos sheeting.

3.3.2. Externally, the walls of this section are in very good condition with the exception of a small number of minor defects.

3.3.2.1. One of these is a gap in the brickwork around the guttering, although this is not a roost feature as it leads only to the opposite side of the parapet wall.

3.3.2.2. The second is a gap beneath the guttering over the entrance door, this does act as a potential roost feature although from inspection with a bright torch, is only shallow.

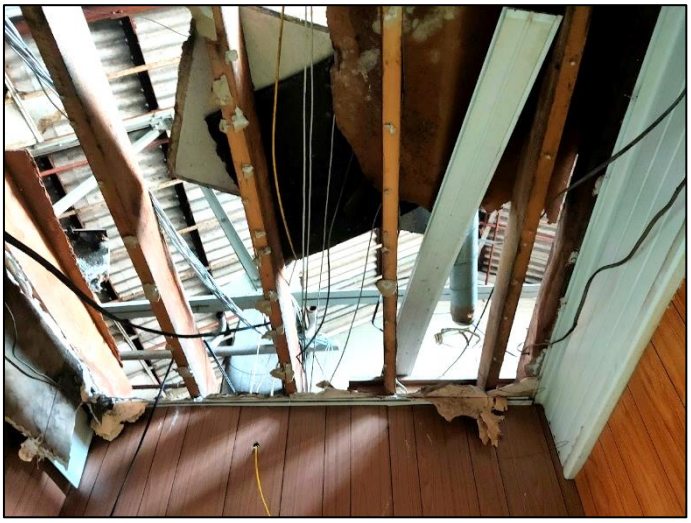
3.3.2.3. The third is a defect within the brickwork on the northern gable, which again, when inspected by torch, only runs to the depth of a brick, but could be suitable for individual opportunistic bats.

3.3.2.4. The final defect is on the southern wall, between the brickwork and concrete blocks which support the window frame, where a vertical crevice is present. This again is very shallow, only extending to approximately two inches deep, easily inspected by torchlight. It was found to have no roosting bats present during the PRA.

3.3.3. The roof structure itself offers no suitable roosting opportunities due to its composition.

3.3.4. Internally, the loft space was inspected as well as reasonably possible, but due to having only a false floor it cannot be walked on. The loft space is very light and offers no suitability for roosting bats. Furthermore, no field signs were found where it could be inspected.

3.3.5. Some of the roof has collapsed through into the ground floor.



3.3.6. No bat field signs, such as droppings or insect remains, were identified throughout this section of the building.

3.3.7. Overall, the northern section of the building was assessed as having low potential for roosting bats due to the two features which could provide opportunities for individual bats.

3.3.8. The southern section is a taller two storey building, with some areas extending to three storeys, although the old loading bay area is only single storey. The building comprises brick walls with a complex, but always flat, roof structure.

3.3.9. The walls of this section are again in very good condition, with no defects visible.

3.3.10. Internally, this section of the building has no loft space, with all top floor rooms used for machinery and office space.

3.3.11. Again, no bat field signs, such as droppings or insect remains, were identified throughout this section of the building.

3.3.12. Overall, the southern section of the building was assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats due to the complete absence of potential roost features and lack of field signs.

3.3.13. Both sections of the building are assessed as having negligible potential for hibernating bats due to a lack of suitable features which would offer the necessary stability and protection throughout winter.

3.3.14. The immediate surrounding habitat offers only moderate quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats due to the built-up location, but the further surrounding area provides very high quality habitat with the ancient woodland of Wombwell Woods and woodlands of Hillies Golf Club located close by. Connectivity to Wombwell Woods from the site is poor, with access only via crossing the road, but connectivity to the land around the golf course is better, via the scrub corridor along the railway line.

3.3.15. The building provides minimal opportunities for nesting birds and there is no access to it internally. However, the flat roofed sections could provide some potential for species such as gulls, although this is considered unlikely given the location.

3.4. Dusk Emergence Survey – 20th June 2024.

3.4.1. As the northern section of the building was assessed as having low potential for roosting bats, a dusk emergence survey was recommended and subsequently carried out. Due to the size of the building, only the potential roost features were covered.

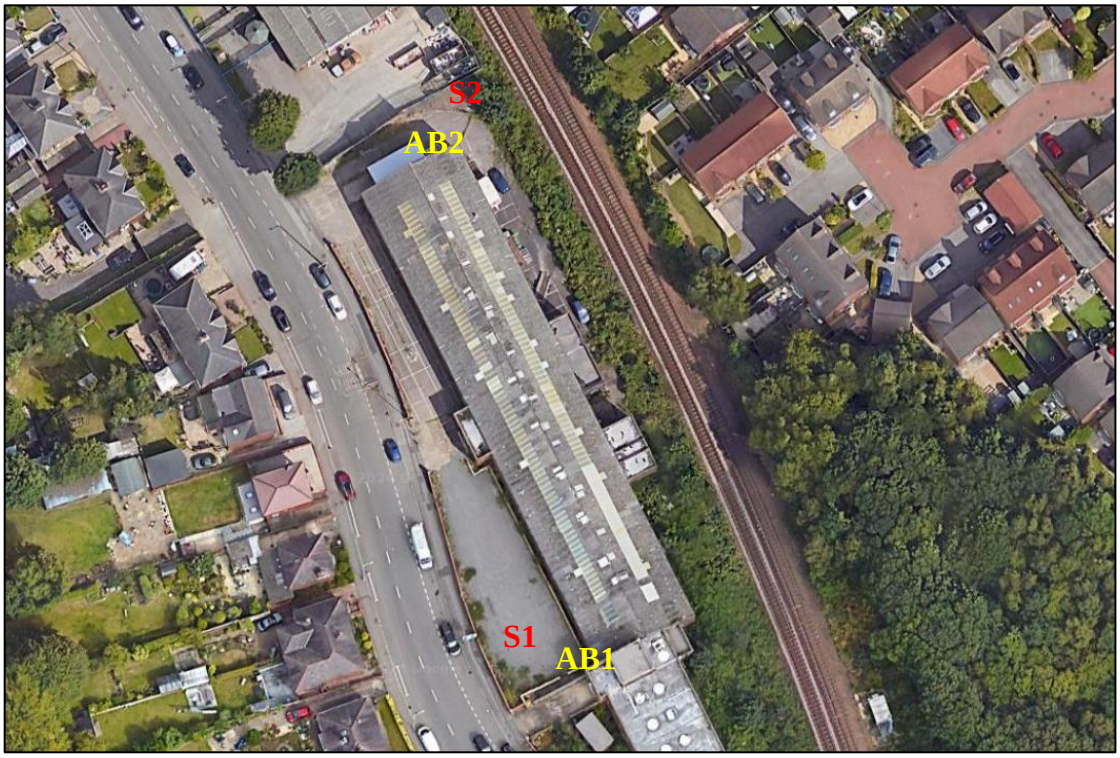
3.4.2. The survey was led by Mitchel Greenhalgh, who holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2022-10386-CL18-BAT). He was accompanied by one other surveyor.

3.4.3. Both surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet detectors and two-way radios. Two Anabat Ranger static recorders were deployed around the site to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Anabat Insight Software.

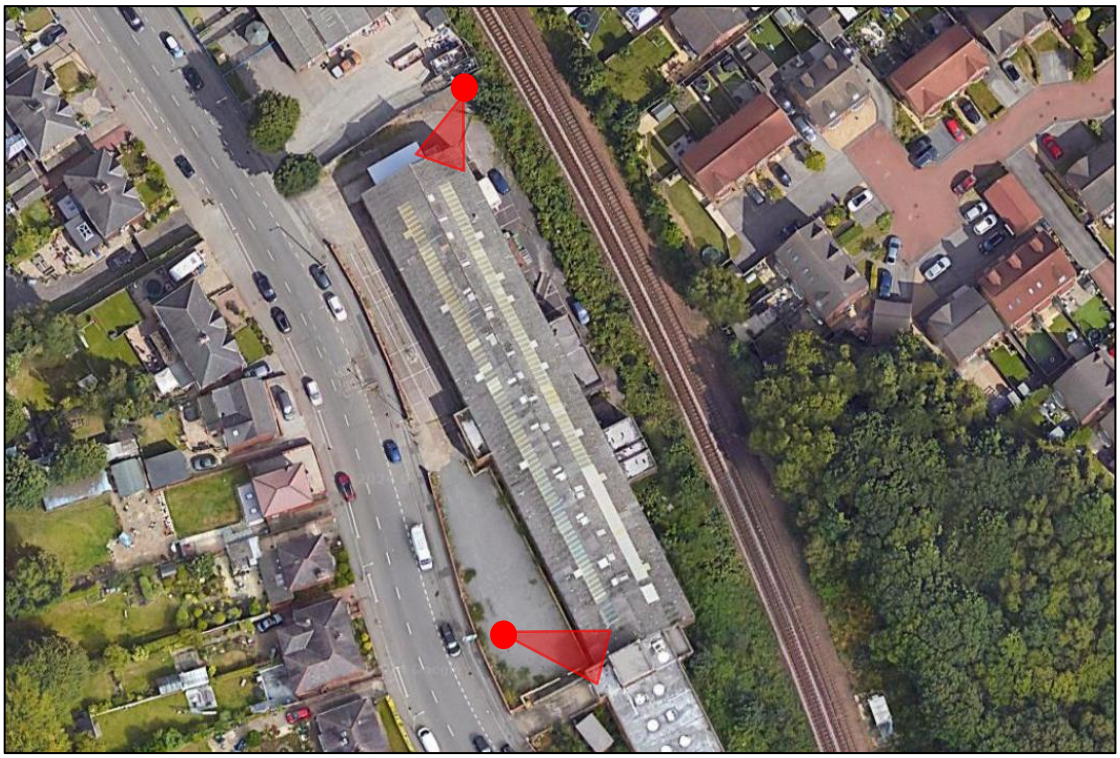
3.4.4. Two infra-red cameras and infra-red torches were also set up around the building, ensuring all suitable features were covered. The gap alongside the window was

surveyed again by torchlight and no bats were seen. Therefore, it was not covered with the cameras. Shown below are photographs which show the view of each camera at both the start and end of the survey.

3.4.5. The aerial photograph below shows where the Surveyors (S), Anabats (AB) were located throughout the survey.



3.4.6. The aerial photograph below shows where the cameras were positioned along with their approximate field of view.



3.4.7. The survey was carried out on the 20h June 2024. The evening was warm, with a temperature of 18°C at the start of the survey with a very slight breeze measuring 1 on the Beaufort scale. Sunset was at 21:39 and the survey lasted from 21:23 until 23:09.

3.4.8. Activity during the survey was very low throughout the entirety of the survey. With surveyors one and two observing two and four pipistrelle passes respectively. One noctule was also heard by surveyor two at 21:56, which was the first bat of the night.

3.4.9. All bats recorded on the Anabat detectors were common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle or noctule, which corresponds to the findings of the surveyors. The total number of calls per species are shown below.

Species	Count
Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	4
Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	2
Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*	1

3.4.10. No bats were seen to enter or emerge from the building, either during the survey, or during subsequent camera analysis.

****

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The PRA found the northern section of the building to have low potential for roosting bats and the southern section to have negligible potential for roosting bats, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines,

4.2. The PRA found the entire building to have negligible potential for hibernating bats and therefore, the works are highly unlikely to impact upon hibernating bats.

4.3. Due to the potential of the northern section of the building to host roosting bats, a dusk emergence survey was carried out. Throughout this survey, activity was very low, and no bats were seen to emerge from, or enter the building. Therefore, the works are highly unlikely to impact upon roosting bats.

4.4. The immediate habitat around the site was assessed as providing moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats, but the further surroundings provide very high suitability. Regardless, the works will not impact upon the surrounding vegetation, other than the removal of some scrub to the east of the building, and therefore, there will be no impact on the suitability of the surrounding habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

4.5. No active bird nests were identified during the survey, and there is no access inside the building for pigeons or other species. The flat roofed section of the building could provide suitable habitat for species such as gulls, although this would not be expected in this location. Regardless, works to the building during the nesting season, which extends from March to August, have a small chance of impacting upon nesting birds.

****

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. As the northern section of the building was assessed as having low potential for roosting bats, it was recommended that, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, a dusk emergence survey be carried out within the active bat season, which extends between May and August.

5.2. This has now been carried out, and no roosts were identified. Therefore, no further recommendations are necessary in respect of bat surveys. However, opportunistic bats can roost almost anywhere and therefore, it is still recommended that due care be taken throughout the works, especially around the areas with the defects. In the unlikely event that a bat is found, it should be kept safe and in a dark location. Whitcher Wildlife should be contacted for further advice and works should cease immediately.

5.3. It is recommended that any works necessary take place outside of the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August each year. Should works be carried out within this time, then they should be immediately preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a suitably competent person.

****

Prepared by:	
Mitchel Greenhalgh. BSc, ACIEEM.	Date: 16th July 2024.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 16th July 2024.

6. REFERENCES.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Natural England (2014) *Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities.* (updated 2021) Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications (Accessed: 05/03/2024).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk /ukpga/1981/69 (Accessed: 15/05/2024).

Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018) Bat Roosts in Trees: a guide for identification and assessment for tree-care and ecology professionals. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

****

Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed

under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.