



**Endoscopic Inspection of 'bricked up arch' - Distington Walled Garden,
Distington, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 4QY**

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Introduction and Background

This report outlines the findings of an Preliminary Ecological Appraisal / Endoscopic Inspection of identified Potential Roost Features within a 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' at Distington Walled Garden, Distington, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 4QY (Nat Grid Ref. NY 01524 23847 - See Figure 1).

Our Ref. No.: CC26BAT027
Date: 14 October 2026
Your Ref. No.: CU00066684

A proposal exists for the provision of a car park on existing grassland south of Distington Walled Garden. This proposal is subject to a full planning application (Ref. No. 4/26/2152/0F1) for 'CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO FORM THE CREATION OF A CAR PARK TO SERVICE DISTINGTON WALLED GARDEN AND CAFE AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS'. This planning application was accompanied by a report entitled '*Distington Walled Garden -Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment*' (Ref. No. 784-B069016) by Tetra Tech Limited.

The PEA / BNG Assessment report identified a 'Stone walled garden entrance' which is described as 'Wall 5m tall (sic.) with ivy. Central section has been bricked up with mortar. Mortar is intact. Only feature appears to be gaps at top of arch. Mortar in main wall is also largely intact and crevasses are not deep. Some deeper cracks further up, including one I can fit my hand in.' (See Target Note 17, Appendix D. Pg. 66). Whilst the report does not attempt to quantify the relative potential suitability of the features within this wall for roosting bats, it does recommend '*Further surveys are required, including [...] endoscopic the wall on the western boundary for bats*' (Section 5.0, Pg. 36).

Following submission of the planning application, Cumberland Council's Ecology Team provided the following Consultation Response;

'If the wall is to be demolished or have works which could disturb a roost occur within 20m, then the wall must be endoscoped by a Level 2 bat licence holder. Mature trees which are to be removed or have works occur within 20m then these must also be surveyed.'

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All bat species and their roosts are protected in the UK under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. There is a suggestion that the gaps in the 'Stone

Walled Garden Entrance' may offer some level of potential for roosting bats; were these features to be used by bats there is a risk that bat roosts may be destroyed and bats harmed or disturbed. Further investigative works are also required as per the Ecology Team Consultation Response.

For this reason Hesketh Ecology were commissioned in October 2026 to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal / Endoscopic Inspection of the identified features within the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' (only). It is understood that this survey and report will be used to inform proposals for the works, and accompany the full planning application for the car parking area.

Survey Objective and Timing

The site inspection was conducted on the 8th October 2026 with reference to good practice guidance ('Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)*' - The Bat Conservation Trust. London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6).

Any evidence of bats is recorded as encountered but the primary objective of this PEA / Endoscopic Inspection was to identify the level of bat roost potential so as to inform recommendations for any further survey effort and / or appropriate mitigation.

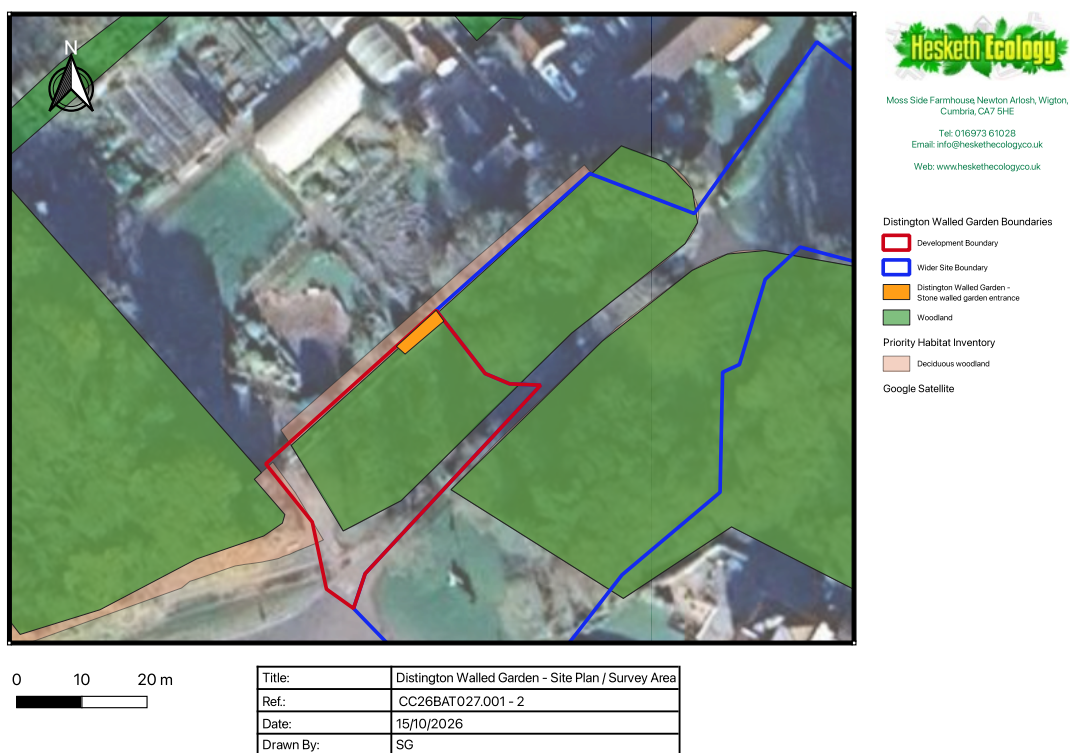
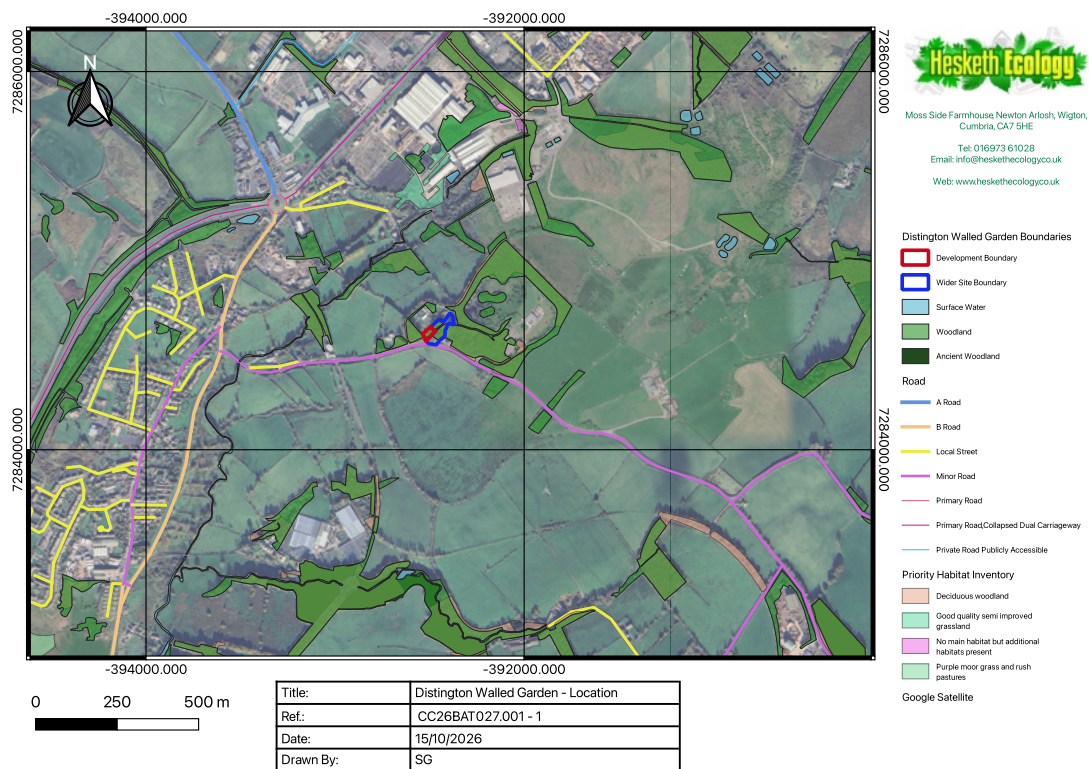


Figure 1: - 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' at Distington Walled Garden, Distington, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 4QY, Nat Grid Ref. NY 01524 23847; Location Plan 1:20000 (Top) and Site Plan 1:1000 (Bottom).

Site & Surrounding Habitat

Distington Walled Garden is located in a rural area, within Landscape Character Type 5: Lowland, Sub Type 5d: Urban Fringe as defined in the 'Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit PART ONE Landscape Character Guidance' (Cumbria County Council, March 2011).

'Urban Fringe' is characterised as;

- Long term urban influences on agricultural land
- Recreation, large scale buildings and industrial estates are common
- Mining and opencast coal workings are found around Keekle and Moor Row
- Wooded valleys, restored woodland and some semi- urbanised woodland provide interest.

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The ecological interest of this landscape type is presented as follows;

'Largely an urban influenced landscape with mainly species-poor hedgerows and occasional small areas of woodland. There are isolated areas of coastal grazing marsh around Carlisle and hay meadows in West Cumbria. In addition to this, derelict former industrial or other previously developed sites have the potential to support a range of habitats and species which may have colonised the site since the previous uses ended.'

Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance
Pg. 79.

The Living England Habitat Map (a satellite-derived national map created by Natural England showing the location and spread of 16 broad habitat types across England, using machine learning, field surveys, and earth observation data), neatly illustrates the 'Urban Fringe' character of the area with mixed 'Built up areas and gardens' and 'Unclassified' land to the north and 'Improved grassland' and 'Fen, Marsh and Swamp' to the south and east. The Site itself is indicated to lie within an area of 'Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland'.

Further to the implied habitats - identified areas of Priority Habitat do exist in the area, indeed much of the 'Development Site Boundary' and the 'Wider Site Boundary' (See Figure 1) are mapped as Deciduous woodland.

The Tetra Tech PEA / BNG report identifies a range of 'Grassland', 'Urban' and 'Woodland' habitat types but concludes the site has '*limited potential for foraging and commuting bats*' (Pg. 29.).

The 'Stone walled garden entrance' lies within an area of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland and, as a boundary wall, represents a distinct linear habitat feature between the carefully curated and managed garden to the north and semi-natural woodland / scrub to the south. The proposed development boundary is small and the development will not functionally alter the value of the area for foraging or commuting bats (subject to the 'bat-specific lighting scheme' design dictated in the Ecology Team Response) but based on 'Table 4.1; Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement', Chapter 4, Pg. 44 - 'Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)', the surrounding habitat must be considered to represent at least 'moderate' suitability potential flight-path and foraging habitat (See Table 1 - below).

Suitability	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitat
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available for foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as gaps hedgerows or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Table 1: Adapted from 'Table 4.1; Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement', Chapter 4, Pg. 44 - 'Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)'.

Desktop Search

A review of the 'Cumbria Mammal Atlas', Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and Cumbria Mammal Group (November 2017), shows that 29 mammal species have been previously recorded in hectad NY02 (pre- and post- 2000), including the following bat species;

Hectad NY02 (Total No. of all terrestrial mammal sp. = 29)		
Species	Pre- 2000	Post- 2000
Whiskered bat (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>)		
Brandt's bat (<i>Myotis brandtii</i>)		
Natterer's bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)		
Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)		
Noctule bat (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)		
Pipistrelle species (<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp)		
Brown Long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)		
Western Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)		
Leisler's bat (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)		

Table 2: Bat species records for hectad NY02, pre- and post- 2000. Green = record of presence exists; red = no records exist. Taken from 'Cumbria Mammal Atlas', Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and Cumbria Mammal Group (November 2017).

A search was conducted using the MAGIC website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>) for records of Statutory Designated Sites (SACs or SSSIs) for which bat species are listed as a qualifying feature or notified interest feature and for Granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSML) on 15/10/2026 using central Grid Ref. NY NY 01524 23847. This did not reveal any relevant statutory designated sites within 10km of the Site nor did it identify any Granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (Bats) within 2km of the Site.

A search of historic planning applications for the area was attempted on the Copeland section of the Cumberland Council planning application search facility (<https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/planning/application-search>) on 15/10/2026. The Copeland area of the Cumberland Council planning application search tool does not allow searches by site name / address, nor by post code area. A search conducted for the 'Distington' parish (highest spatial resolution available) returns 97 historic planning applications - these are listed under 'Application Reference'

numbers making it extremely difficult to identify any previous planning application for the site itself or the wider post code area. The 97 historic planning applications identified for the Distington Parish were not reviewed in detail and no historic bat survey data for the site itself nor other properties within the immediate area were identified via this route.

This desk based investigation has confirmed that at least 4 species of bat have been previously recorded in the surrounding area but no Protected Species Mitigation Licences have been previously issued within 2km of the site.

Field Survey Methodology

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

An assessment of the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' was conducted so as to quantify its suitability for bats - using professional judgement. This assessment considered the surrounding commuting and foraging habitat, the presence of known roosts in the surrounding area and the presence of Potential Roost Features (PRF) in the structure. Furthermore, all Potential Roost Features were inspected in detail, using a high powered torch to identify any evidence of bats including droppings, urine, staining, odour, audible squeaking etc.

Endoscopic Inspection

Following an inspection of the crevices within the structure, a methodical and detailed endoscopic inspection of all crevices which could not be fully inspected using a torch only was completed. The inspection was conducted during daylight and in good light conditions.

Personnel

The survey and assessment were undertaken by Sam Griffin.

Sam Griffin (BSc, ACIEEM, NE Bat Licence CL 18 Survey Level 2) is an experienced and competent ecologist, with over 22 years experience of study, training and work in the field of wildlife conservation and ecology, working with protected and native species, exotics and rare breed animals. He has 18 years experience in bat survey and mitigation, has held a bat survey licence and roost visitors licence since 2006 and previously worked as an Advisor at Natural England providing consultation responses to planning applications.

PEA - Results

The 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' is located in an area of 'moderate' suitability potential flight-paths and foraging habitat.

A number of gaps were identified within the structure, but the majority of these were superficial only. Gaps present were predominantly associated with pointing in mortar joints having fallen away exposing arisses between the stones. Most of these measured <15mm and were therefore inaccessible to bats. Of those with dimensions sufficient to permit bat ingress / egress some were too large to represent potentially suitable roosting features due to the degree of exposure and lack of insulation. A number of gaps beneath wall top coping stones on the northern and southern side of the wall were obstructed by dense ivy growth which effectively negates any potential which might otherwise have been offered by these crevices. A small number of crevices beneath wall top coping stones on the southern side were of a size, location (i.e. height above ground level), aspect, insolation (i.e. sun exposure) which suggest they may offer some level of potential for roosting bats.

Whilst the arched gate opening within the wall has been bricked up, a gap exists above the bricked up section on the northern side which measures between 30 - 60mm and extends the full width of the opening. This appears to lead to loosely mortared / rubble infill within the wall, is not obstructed by dense ivy (nor any other obstruction). Whilst the gap itself is too open and exposed to offer any roosting potential, gaps within the interior of the wall could theoretically be used by bats.

Superficially, only a small number of crevices within the wall offer any level of roosting potential. Most could be adequately inspected using a torch only (being broadly superficial and not leading to any deeper cavity or crevice within). Gaps beneath wall top coping stones on the southern side of the arch and within gaps within the interior of the wall, accessed via a wide gap above the bricked up section on the northern side, could not be comprehensively inspected using a torch only and an endoscopic inspection was required (see below).

Endoscopic Inspection - Results

The identified gaps on the southern side - beneath wall top coping stones - were inspected in detail, with the entirety of the crevice which is of a size adequate to permit bat access being visible using an endoscope. These crevices were broadly very simple spaces, with friable mortar debris present and invertebrates were abundant. Garden snails (*Cornu aspersum*), common shiny woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*) and common rough woodlouse (*Porcellio scaber*) were all found to be abundant as were slugs (species unknown). These species all favour damp and humid conditions. No evidence to suggest bats have been present within these

gaps was identified. No droppings, staining or disturbance of natural debris (loose mortar and frass) indicative of bat access was identified. Gaps beneath wall top coping stones on the southern side of the wall are deemed to offer no more than 'negligible' suitability roosting habitat for bats.

The gaps within the interior of the wall, accessed via a wide gap above the bricked up section on the northern side were similar in nature, but being open at the bottom no significant accumulation of debris was present within. The crevices within were more complex than those beneath coping stones at the wall top, and were mainly vertical as opposed to horizontal. Notwithstanding the increased complexity, a comprehensive endoscopic inspection of all crevices of a size adequate to permit bat access was possible using a video endoscope. Being open at the bottom, it is likely that any droppings deposited within this feature would spill out to the ground beneath which was also inspected in detail, not only for the *presence* of droppings, but also for evidence of elevated nutrient inputs within the bryophyte community which may suggest previous or historic deposition of droppings / urine. No evidence to suggest bats have been present within this feature was identified and again this feature was considered to offer 'negligible' suitability roosting habitat for bats.

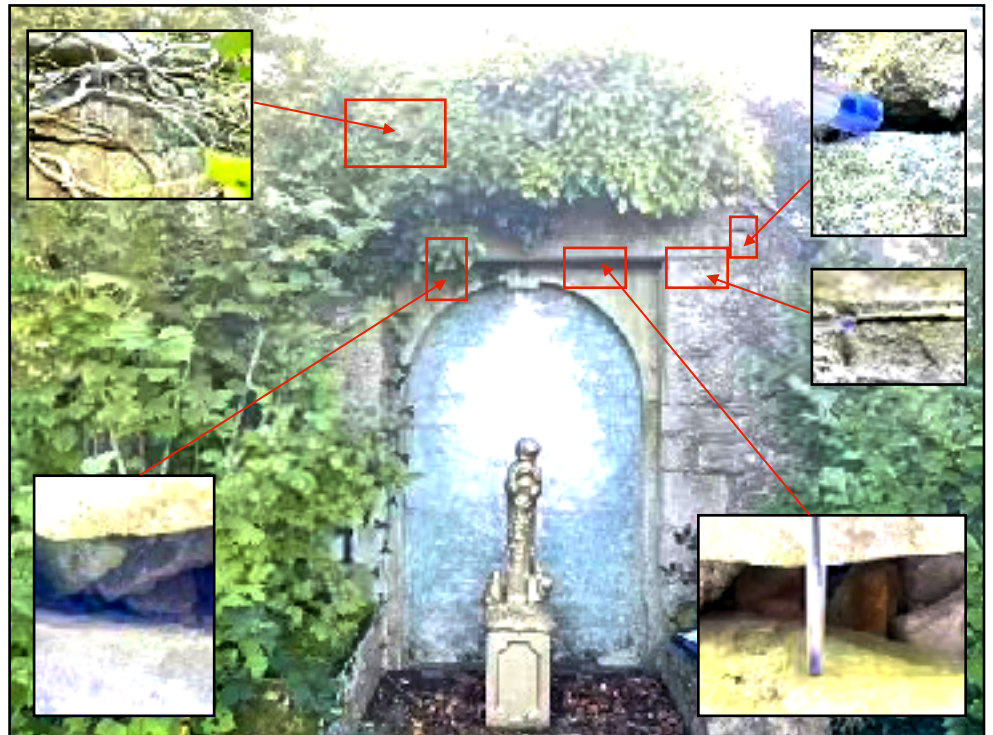


Figure 2: Showing the northern side of the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' with details of 'negligible' suitability potential roost features inset.



Figure 3: Showing the southern side of the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' with details of 'negligible' suitability potential roost features inset.

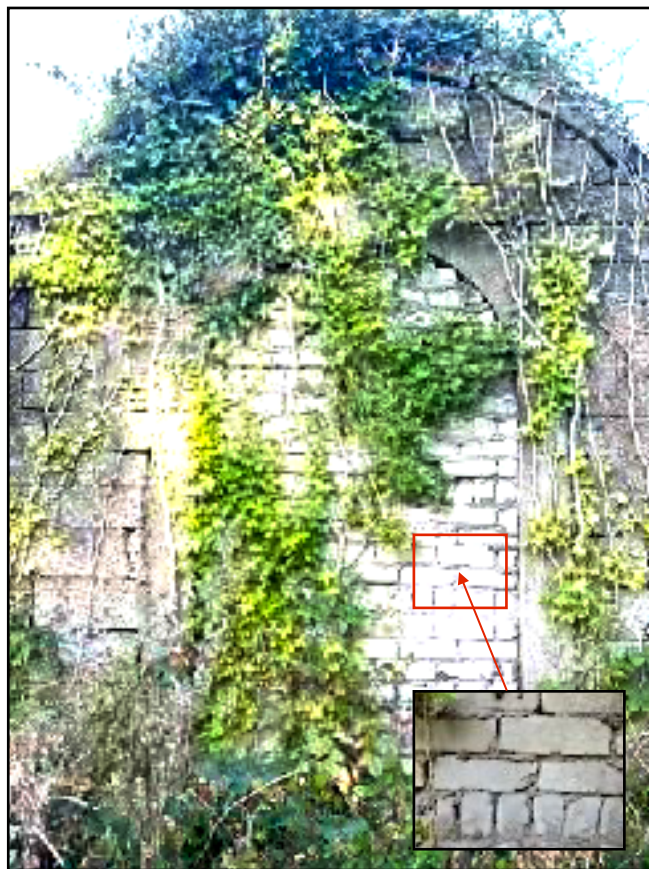


Figure 4: Showing the southern side of the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' with details of 'negligible' suitability potential roost features inset.

Conclusion

Based on the Endoscopic Inspection - considered alongside the PEA - it is concluded that the Potential Roost Features identified are of 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats. No evidence of bats having used the 'Stone Walled Garden Entrance' was identified. A small level of uncertainty does remain, in that *'bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion'*.

No further survey effort is deemed appropriate in this instance, but would be prudent to employ an appropriately experienced Ecological Watching Brief when the works are completed so as a re-checking inspection can be conducted and appropriate action taken should signs of bats be encountered.

Recommendations

The recommended precautionary measures to reduce the risk of harm to bats are as follows;

- The works should be conducted under a precautionary Ecological Watching Brief so as a re-checking inspection can be conducted and appropriate action taken should signs of bats be encountered.
- During the remediation of the existing stone arched garden entrance the coping stones will be lifted vertically, the crevice beneath inspected and cleaned out and then the stones re-sited on a bed of mortar - rather than just being re-pointed.
- Gaps within the intrados of the arched entrance should be retained / reinstated once the brick infill has been removed. Whilst no evidence of bats was identified, and the potential of this feature is currently considered to be 'negligible', the potential offered could be enhanced by creating a more enclosed and less exposed ingress / egress.

It must be noted that no assessment of any tree on site was commissioned as part of this survey.

Measures relating to the lighting of the area identified in the Tetra Tech PEA / BNG report and the Ecology Team Response must be implemented so as to avoid any lighting impacts to the surrounding habitat.

If bats or bat roosts - or any feature representing a higher level of bat roost potential (i.e. PRF-M) - are identified at any time prior to or during felling works, work must pause and the acting ecological consultant contacted immediately.