



Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Hollyville, Croft Road, Reading, RG7 1DR

22 September 2025

Preliminary Roost Assessment of Hollyville, Croft Road, Reading, RG7 1DR

REPORT DETAILS

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Site Overview	5
1.2 Scope of Assessment	5
2 METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Desk Study	7
2.2 Field Survey	7
2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment	7
2.3 Limitations	8
3 RESULTS	9
3.1 Desk Study	9
3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences	9
3.1.2 Site Designations	9
3.1.3 Priority Habitats	9
3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey	10
3.2.1 On-site and Neighbouring Habitats	12
3.2.2 Tree Assessment	12
3.2.3 Nesting Birds	12
4 EVALUATION	13
4.1 Option One: Avoidance of Disturbance	14
4.2 Option Two: Further Survey Requirements	14
4.3 Nesting Birds	15
5 CONCLUSION	16
6 APPENDICES	17
6.1 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 11 September 2025	17
6.2 Bat Legislation	24
6.3 Industry Guidance and Standards	24
6.4 Table 4.1 from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines	26
6.5 Planning Policy	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- NatureBureau were commissioned by Kyle Seeley to undertake a daytime bat preliminary roost assessment at Hollyville, Croft Road, Reading, RG7 1DR to help inform the proposed development of the site. This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 11 September 2025 by Kristina Wood a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The survey involved a desk study and an external assessment of a residential dwelling which is proposed for an extension to the west, a new front (north window) and a new front porch to accommodate the relocation of the front door.
- The site is ecologically connected to Priority Habitats, including Deciduous Woodland, Ancient Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland. There are also 15 records of bat roosts within a 2 km radius of the site, including a roost just 250 metres southeast.
- Externally, the building presents many gaps between roof tiles across all elevations, which are not due to be directly impacted. Internally, the building has no loft void(s).
- The site offers no internal suitability for roosting bats and moderate external suitability for roosting bats.
- It is highly unlikely bats would use the site for hibernation.
- The proposed works have the potential to disturb summer-roosting bats, and the absence of appropriate mitigation measures could result in adverse impacts on bat populations. Such impacts may constitute offences under the relevant wildlife legislation, as detailed in Section 6.2.
- **Option One:** If the works are to be carried out between November and March (inclusive), no further survey works are required.
- **Option Two:** If works are scheduled between April and October (inclusive), additional emergence surveys are required to confirm the presence or likely absence of bat roosts on site. These surveys should be conducted during the active season, from mid-May to September. If no bat roosts are identified, the works can proceed at any time of year. However, should bat roosts be identified, survey findings will likely indicate that the development must take place during the hibernation period to avoid disturbing roosting bats. Consequently, Option One is recommended as the lower-risk and more cost-effective approach.
- The works must not directly affect the existing roof, as bat roosts are legally protected regardless of whether bats are currently present. The presence of bat roosts cannot be excluded without additional survey work.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hollyville, Croft Road, Reading, RG7 1DR (hereafter referred to as 'the site') is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 72111 66857. It comprises the right (west) side of a semi-detached residential dwelling (B1) with an amenity garden to the rear. Current proposals for the site include a two-storey extension to the west elevation (hereafter referred to as "the proposed works").

NatureBureau was commissioned by Kyle Seeley (hereafter referred to as "the client") to undertake a Preliminary (bat) Roost Assessment (PRA). This report summarises the findings of that survey.

1.1 Site Overview

B1 is located within a plot comprising a driveway to the front and side, and amenity garden to the rear.

The site lies within a moderate-density residential area in Spencer's Wood, approximately 6.5 kilometres (km) south of Reading Town centre. The local area is characterised a mix of residential properties with associated gardens, boundary fencing, hedgerows and tree lines, alongside some recreation grounds and allotments.

The wider landscape is characterised by a mosaic of residential and agricultural land uses, featuring open fields, mature hedgerows and treelines and woodland parcels.

1.2 Scope of Assessment

The aim of the roost assessment is to assess the potential status of roosting bats on the site and to determine the existence and location of any bat-suitable foraging and commuting habitats. With regards to roosting bats, this information will serve to assess the potential ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological and legislative constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required.

Figure 1: B1 at Hollyville



Figure 2: B1 within the wider landscape



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving bats within 2 km of the site, and for records of relevant designated sites within this same radius. Additionally, maps/aerial images were interrogated for features of bat interest.

Table 1: Resources used during the desk study

Resource	Information assessed
Google Earth ¹	Assessment of the local landscape. Latest image date: July 2025
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website ²	Records of licences issued by Natural England for works affecting bat species within 2 km of the site; any relevant site designations within 2 km of the site; Special Areas of Conservation designated for bat interest within 10 km of the site; Priority Habitats in the local area

2.2 Field Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 11 September 2025, between 11:00 and 11:30 hours. The survey was carried out by Kristina Wood.

Kristina Wood is a terrestrial ecologist and Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Kristina holds a Natural England bat Class 1 survey licence registration (licence number available upon request).

The work, analysis and reporting were undertaken in line with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct³, the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines⁴ and other relevant guidelines and legislation as listed in the Appendices of this report.

2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An assessment was carried out on B1 to determine its potential to support roosting bats. The assessment included an external investigation of structures for signs of bat activity such as droppings, rub or scratch marks, staining at potential roosts and exit holes, live or dead bats, and features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats, such as raised or missing tiles. Equipment used during the survey includes binoculars, a high-powered torch and a phone camera.

The suitability of B1 to support bats was rated from no suitability to high suitability in accordance with Section 4.3 of the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines, and recommendations for further survey requirements are also taken from Collins (2023)⁴.

2.3 Limitations

DEFRA's MAGIC mapping system has recently been updated (12 December 2024), and as a result, European Protected Species licences are not always displayed accurately or in full. It is possible that the available data is incomplete.

The survey was conducted in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023) to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats. However, the data collected represents a snapshot in time, based on conditions observed during specific survey dates. As such, it provides an indication of site use by bats at the time of assessment only.

Identifying bat roosts within buildings can be challenging, particularly in larger structures or those with numerous potential roosting features. Roosting sites used by solitary bats or males can be especially difficult to detect due to their discreet nature. Many bat species utilise narrow crevices, such as gaps between roof tiles or beneath tile linings, where any droppings or signs of occupancy may become concealed and inaccessible to surveyors.

Additionally, inspections may not always reveal evidence of bat presence, as droppings and other field signs can degrade quickly due to adverse weather.

The results of this report are valid up to 12 months and/or if the conditions of the site change significantly, as per the Advice Note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys produced by CIEEM in 2019.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences

Within 2 km of the site, 15 licences have been issued by Natural England for activities affecting bat species, according to the MAGIC database. These licences include impacts to known breeding and resting places of brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) between 2009 and 2016.

The closest record relates to a known resting place for brown long-eared bats, located approximately 250 metres (m) southeast of the site in 2015 (licence reference: 2015-15306-EPS-MIT). Viewing of aerial imagery shows connectivity between this location and the site via connected gardens.

3.1.2 Site Designations

Within a 2 km radius of the site, there is one Statutory Designated Site. Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located 1.5 km south of the site, comprises a series of traditionally managed seasonally waterlogged hay meadows, and a 4 km stretch of the River Loddon. Although this SSSI is not specifically designated for bat interest, the habitats found there provide suitable foraging resources and commuting corridors for various bat species. There is ecological connectivity to the site in the form of mature gardens and undeveloped land.

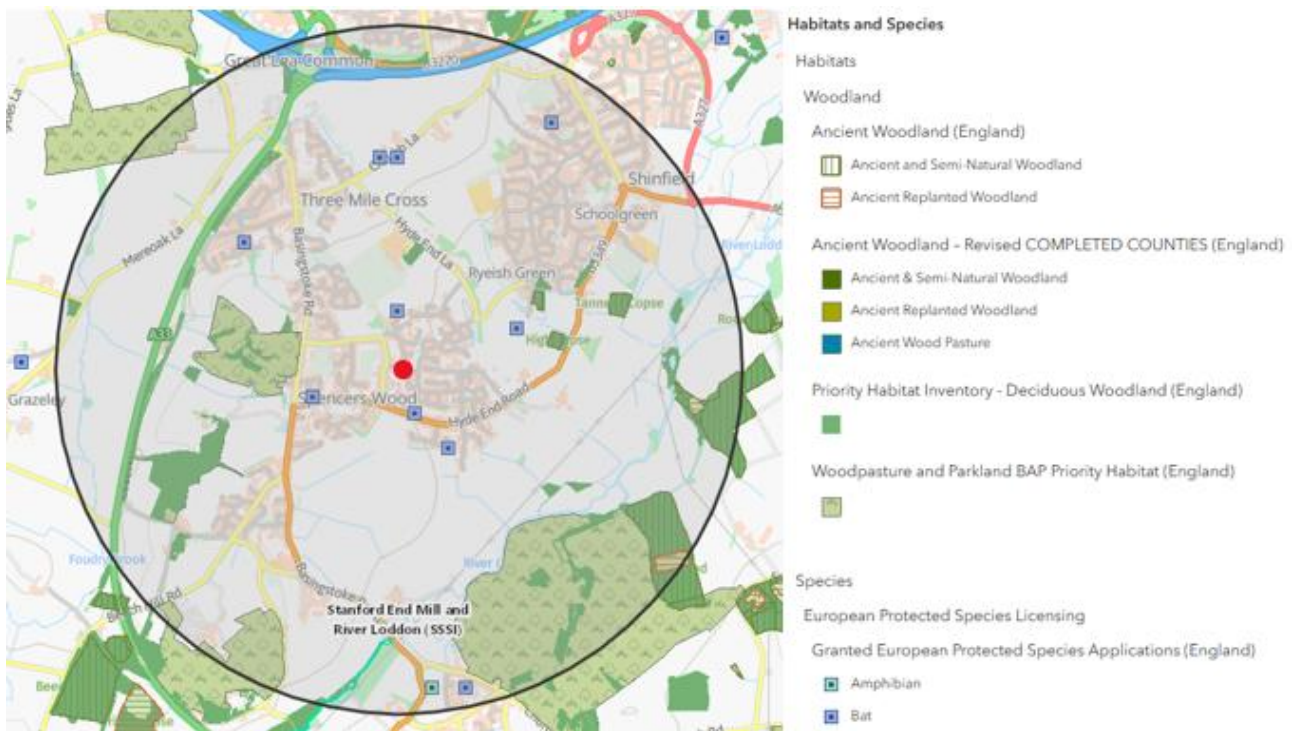
No SACs designated for bat interest are located within a 10 km radius of the site.

3.1.3 Priority Habitats

The nearest parcel of Deciduous Woodland is located 620 m north of the site, whilst the nearest area of Ancient Woodland is located 865 m east. The local and wider landscape also contains some substantial parcels of Woodpasture and Parkland— a Biodiversity Action plan (BAP) habitat.

These habitats are known to support a diverse range of bat species and are ecologically connected to the site via a network of tree lined fields and mature gardens.

Figure 3: B1 (in red) in relation to surrounding ecological features of interest



3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A daytime site visit was undertaken on 11 September 2025 under bright and clear conditions, with a recorded temperature of 20°C at the time of the survey.

B1 occupies the right (western) side of a brick-built, semi-detached residential property of traditional gabled construction. The property features a single-storey porch at the front (north) and a single-storey ground floor extension at the rear (south), with a combination of sloped and flat roofing. A chimney is present at the front elevation.

B1 features a loft conversion and therefore presents no internal loft void.

External Survey

B1 is constructed of facing brick with a concrete tiled roof, including ridge tiles. Across all elevations, the brickwork and mortar are in excellent condition with no visible signs of deterioration. Windows and doors are securely fitted and well-integrated into the structure.

On both the front and rear elevations, the roof tiles are in moderate condition, exhibiting multiple gaps where tiles have lifted, slipped, or are missing. These gaps are identified as potential roosting features (PRFs) and may provide access to larger voids between the roof battens, situated between the roofing membrane and the tiles.

Figure 4: The roof of B1 at Hollyville presents many gaps around roof tiles



On the front elevation, the porch roof exhibits gaps beneath the roof tiles and beneath the lead flashing at the junction with the top of the porch roof. However, these features are located close to windows and are therefore likely to be exposed to artificial lighting. Additionally, they are unlikely to receive sufficient solar exposure to generate the warmth typically required for bat roosts.

The lead flashing surrounding the chimney is in good condition, with no gaps observed.

On the rear elevation, the concrete interlocking roof tiles of the single-storey extension are generally in good condition, with only a few minor gaps observed. The flat-roof section of the extension is constructed from timber boarding. Overall, the extension is in excellent condition, and no potential bat roosting features were identified on either the vertical or horizontal elements.

At both the front and rear elevations, the uPVC soffits of B1 are in good condition and appear to be well fitted to the structure. In contrast, the neighbouring property has timber soffits that are in poor condition and exhibit significant deterioration. Such spaces around soffits are considered significant PRFs as they are known to be commonly used by crevice-roosting bats.

At the west gable end, the verge mortar is in excellent condition, with no signs of deterioration.

Figure 5: The rear (south) of B1



3.2.1 On-site and Neighbouring Habitats

The site is bounded to the south by a well-maintained amenity garden of low ecological value, with a driveway located to the west and north. In contrast, the neighbouring garden to the east comprises a habitat of high ecological value, featuring numerous mature trees that may provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats.

3.2.2 Tree Assessment

No trees are due to be impacted by the proposed development; therefore, no tree assessments were undertaken.

3.2.3 Nesting Birds

No birds were seen nesting on site the at time of the survey, however, the survey was undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season. It is possible that birds could begin nesting on or near B1 at any time during bird nesting season.

4 EVALUATION

The surrounding landscape provides moderate suitability for bats, with neighbouring gardens creating habitat connectivity to a wider landscape of high suitability, offering valuable foraging resources and established commuting corridors. Notably, within a 2 km radius of the site, 15 licences have been issued for works affecting bat roosts since 2009, including a known bat roost located approximately 250 m southeast of B1.

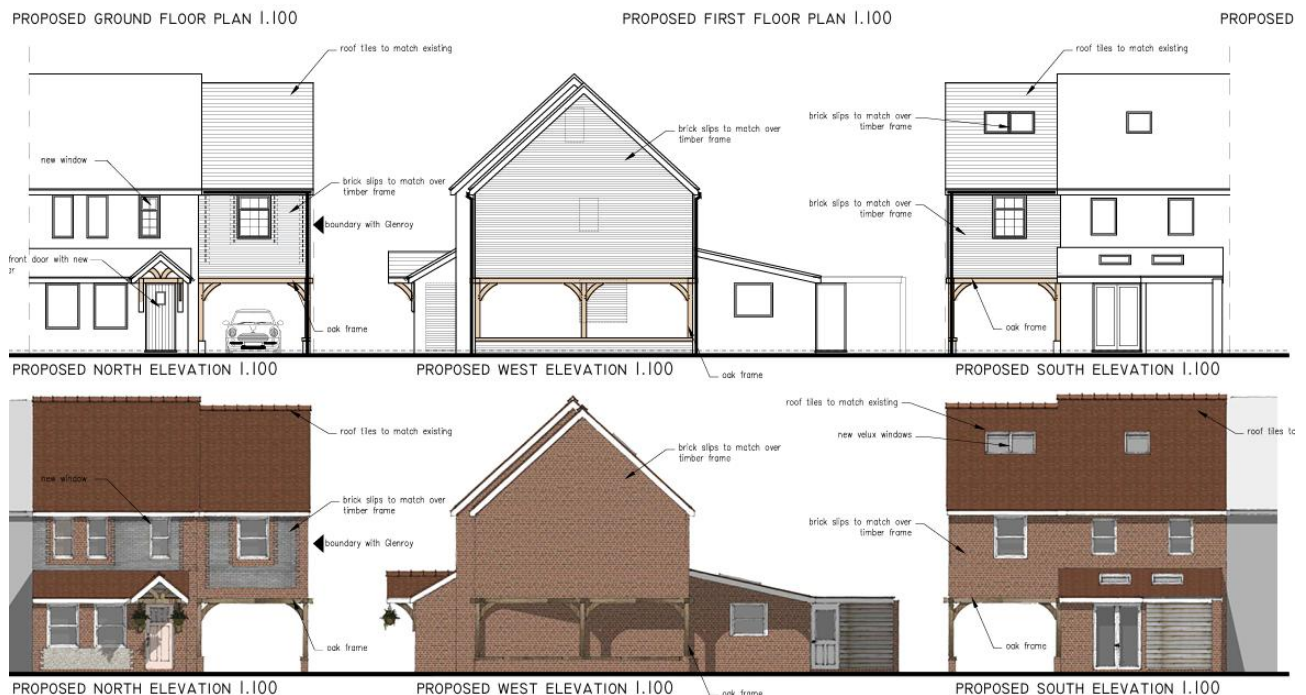
Externally, B1 exhibits multiple features with potential roosting opportunities for bats, such as gaps between roof tiles on both roof slopes. These features may afford access to warm, sheltered crevices suitable for summer roosting.

Given the building's structural characteristics and ecological connectivity to high-quality habitats, alongside the presence of many local bat roosts, the main roof of B1 is assessed as having moderate bat roost suitability in accordance with Collins (2023).

No typical hibernation features (e.g., cellars or deep stone crevices) are present on site. Features observed externally are unlikely to provide the stable microclimatic conditions required for prolonged torpor. As such, B1 is considered to have low potential for hibernating bats.

The proposed works include a two-storey extension to the west elevation, a new window to the front, and alterations to the existing porch to accommodate the relocation of the front door.

Figure 6: Plans for B1 at Hollyville



These works will not directly impact the existing (main) roof structure but will impact the existing porch. Due to the location of PRFs on the porch, the porch is considered to offer negligible bat roosting potential in accordance with Collins (2023).

With consideration to the above, the potential risk to bats in relation to the proposed works are limited to disturbance during the main bat active season (May – September), and possibly during the transitional months of April and October.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides strong legal protection for bats in England, Scotland, and Wales. Under this legislation, it is illegal to (amongst other actions), intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a place of shelter or protection (e.g., roosts). Breaches of this legislation can result in criminal prosecution, with penalties including fines and/or imprisonment.

The proposed works are not expected to impact foraging or commuting habitat either directly or indirectly.

4.1 Option One: Avoidance of Disturbance

It is highly unlikely that bats would utilise the PRFs during winter months. Therefore, if the works are to be carried out between October and March (inclusive), no further survey works are required.

In addition, the works may not directly impact the existing roof at any time, as the features have been identified as PRFs. Bat roosts are legally protected whether bats are currently present or not.

4.2 Option Two: Further Survey Requirements

Due to the building's moderate suitability for summer-roosting bats, if works are to be carried out between April and September further survey effort is required to confirm presence or to increase confidence in likely absence. A minimum of two emergence surveys are required – as determined by suitability classification, taken from the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023).

These surveys must be conducted during the active season (mid-May to September inclusive), with at least one survey conducted before the end of July - and must be conducted under optimal weather conditions (dusk temperatures >10°C, avoiding strong wind or heavy rain). Surveys must begin at least 15 minutes before sunset and continue for a minimum of 1.5 hours post-sunset.

Survey effort will require a minimum of two surveyors and two night-vision devices to ensure full visual coverage of the building.

If no bat roosts are identified, works may proceed at any time of year. However, if bat roosts are present on site, adequate survey data will be required to characterise roost type, species, and population size, typically through a total of three surveys. Furthermore, survey findings will likely

recommend scheduling the works during the hibernation period to avoid disturbing roosting bats. Therefore, Option One is recommended as the lowest-risk and most cost-effective approach.

4.3 Nesting Birds

No evidence of bird nesting was identified on or within B1. However, birds could potentially begin nesting anywhere on site at any time during bird nesting season. The proposed works could therefore cause disturbance, injury or death to nesting birds.

If work is to be carried out during bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive), the homeowner and site contractors must be aware of their obligations towards nesting birds and must check for them prior to commencing the works. If an active bird nest is discovered, an exclusion zone must be put in place (minimum 5 m), and works must be halted in that area. Breeding birds and their nests are protected by law, and all active nests must be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

5 CONCLUSION

B1 at Hollyville has been assessed as having moderate potential for bat roosting, based on the presence of suitable features and the availability of appropriate commuting and foraging habitat within the immediate and surrounding landscape. The proposed works could potentially disturb bats that may be roosting within the roof during the main active season.

It is considered highly unlikely that bats would be present on site during the hibernation period. To avoid committing an offence under relevant legislation (see Section 6.2), and to minimise the need for additional survey work, the works should be carried out between November and March (inclusive). The works must not directly impact the existing roof.

If works are to be undertaken between April and October (inclusive), a minimum of two dusk (emergence) surveys will be required to determine the presence or likely absence of bats.

Furthermore, it is recommended that appropriate working methods are implemented during the bird nesting season (typically March to August) to ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed or harmed by the proposed works.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 11 September 2025















6.2 Bat Legislation

All species of bats receive special protection under UK law, including the strict species protection provisions of the EU Habitats Directive as implemented in England and Wales by Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (the “2017 Regulations, amended by the 2019 Regulations due to Britain leaving the EU”), and Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended by the 2019 Regulations) makes it illegal to:

- i. Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- ii. Deliberately disturb bats in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young; or
- iii. Damage or destroy a roost – regardless of whether the action was deliberate or not.

Furthermore, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to this structure or place.

Eight of the UK bat species are also listed as Priority Species on the UK BAP¹, highlighting them as species of conservation concern.

6.3 Industry Guidance and Standards

This report has been written with consideration to:

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition.
- Bat Conservation Trust (2019). National Bat Monitoring Program Annual Report 2019.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

¹ [UK Biodiversity Framework - Biodiversity policy & advocacy - Bat Conservation Trust \(bats.org.uk\)](https://www.bats.org.uk/biodiversity-policy/)

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
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- Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018). Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series Publication: http://www.bats.org.uk/news.php/406/new_guidance_on_bats_and_lighting
- JNCC (2004) Bat workers manual (3rd edition). JNCC, Peterborough.
- Mathews F, and Harrower C. (2020). IUCN – compliant Red List for Britain’s Terrestrial Mammals. Assessment by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough ISBN 978-1-78354-485-1.

6.4 Table 4.1 from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines

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.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	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	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow 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	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths 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	A structure 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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths 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.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

6.5 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'. Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.