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Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:
Keeper's Cottage, Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road, Sonning on Thames, Berkshire, RG4 6GJ

Client:
Sonning Golf Club Ltd

Survey date:
18/08/2026

Project:
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Wokingham Borough Council. The proposal is described as:
Repair works to the Grade II listed cottage to prevent further deterioration and damage.

On the assumption that site conditions and habitats remain unchanged, the results of this assessment will remain valid for 18 months from the date of this survey i.e. until February 2028, in accordance with CIEEM guidance in the lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys. This survey and report should be updated if a planning application has not been submitted within this timeframe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, is outlined in the proceeding sections of this report.

Table 1: Summary of key recommendations arising from this survey.

Key Recommendations
• Due to the close proximity of priority habitat (deciduous woodland), a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. • Three Bat Emergence and Re-Entry surveys will be required for building B1. No works to the property that may block or remove potential roosting features should be carried out until the required surveys have been completed. Undertaking such work beforehand could unlawfully affect bats if present and may compromise the validity of the surveys and hinder the planning application process. • Various precautionary working methods have been recommended which have been fully detailed within the fauna section of this report. • Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) was identified on the site (TN1), which is listed as an invasive, non-native species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Repair works could result in the spread of Virginia creeper. As such, it is recommended that Virginia creeper be dug up, including roots, and disposed of in line with appropriate controlled waste measures, or controlled during works to prevent the spread off-site.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2025.

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken on 18/08/2026 by Jade Patience BSc (Hons) DipHE MRSB, Consultant Ecologist (Natural England Protected Species Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt (2025-82550-SCI-CL08) and Bat Class 1 (2025-84745-CL17-BAT).

Table 2: Weather conditions during the survey.

Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
21.3	74.0	100	6.4	None

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood.

The loft space could not be fully assessed because boarding blocked the entrance above the hatch. This has been taken into account when considering the value of this building to roosting bats.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of

the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

2. SITE LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Site Location & Context

The site is centred at National Grid reference SU 76549 74570 and has an area of approximately 0.09ha. The site is located in a suburban setting, surrounded by a mix of residential housing and green spaces. The wider landscape is a mixture of agricultural and residential areas, with pockets of woodland, recreational grounds (including a golf course), and Dinton Pastures Country Park. The site is well-connected to nearby habitats, e.g. via field margins, hedgerows and tree lines. A review of historic maps indicates the landscape has remained largely unchanged since the late 1800s.

Priority Habitats

There are seven priority habitats within 2km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland, ancient & semi-natural woodland, traditional orchard, wood pasture and parkland, open mosaic habitats on previously developed land, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fens. The closest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland, located ~5m south-west from the site.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations within 2km

There are two statutory designations within 2km of the site, as detailed below:

Table 3: Statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.

Designation	Reason	Distance from Site
Alder Moors Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Named for its mature alder trees, the reserve also features ash, oak, elm, and willow, alongside marshy areas and a small stream.	~925m south-east

Ali's Pond Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Designated for wildflower meadow, pond and trees. Species include Great-crested Newt, Stag Beetle, Song Thrush and Pipistrelle Bat.	~985m north-west

SSSI Risk Zone

The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Lodge Wood & Sandford Mill SSSI. However, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation.

Non-Designated Sites

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environment of the site does not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

2.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to deciduous woodland, and the possible presence of non-statutory designations in the vicinity, indirect effects such as pollution during construction, or increased recreational pressure, could occur.

2.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution, damage to adjacent habitats must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. This should include the following measures:

- Retained trees adjacent to the site will be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations' (BS 5837) (2012).
- Appropriate buffering between the development zone and retained habitats.
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto adjacent habitats.

3. FAUNA: BATS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consents. All clients are expected to read and understand this section or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

3.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

The site is not within the zone of influence of a bat-designated SAC. A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roost sites in close proximity to the licensed site. There are fourteen EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site, as detailed below:

Table 4: EPSL survey returns for bats within a 2km radius.

EPSL Reference	Bat Species Affected	Distance from Site *(EPSL records are accurate to 100m)*	Impacts Allowed by Licence
2018-36568-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)	~200m east	Damage to a resting place
2019-44293-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~500m north-west	Damage to a resting place
2020-48093-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~650m west	Destruction of a resting place
2018-37707-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~700m north-west	Damage to a resting place
2018-38132-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~750m south-west	Destruction of a resting place

EPSM2012-4144	Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)	~850m south-west	Destruction of a resting place
2020-48353-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.15km south-west	Destruction of a resting place
2018-34839-EPS-MIT-1	Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	1.15km west	Destruction of a resting place
2020-48694-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.2km west	Damage to a resting place
2015-17476-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.2km south-west	Destruction of a resting place
2019-43241-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.65km north-east	Destruction of a resting place
2016-27109-EPS-MIT-1	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.65km south-east	Destruction of a resting place
2014-2526-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.85km north-east	Destruction of a resting place
2014-649-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	~1.95km south-east	Destruction of a resting place

Foraging and commuting habitat

The grassland and hedgerow recorded on site are assessed as providing foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Whilst the habitats will attract invertebrate prey species to the site and contribute to the continuity of vegetated habitats within the immediate landscape, the habitats are small in extent. The site is not assessed as a significant resource for foraging and commuting bats in the wider landscape.

Roosting habitat

Buildings to be impacted by the proposed development were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats, as detailed below. There is one building on site: a cottage (B1). No evidence of roosting bats was identified.

B1: Cottage

Building B1 is a Grade II listed cottage with a hipped roof on the western elevation and a gabled roof on the eastern elevation. The building features clay tiles, two chimneys and wooden soffit boxes. Due to the building's wear, these features presented exterior crevices and access points. In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed.), 2023), B1 is assessed as having high habitat value for roosting bats due to the suitable crevices/access points and the lack of artificial lighting in the immediate surrounding area.



Building B1 - Southern elevation



Building B1 - Western elevation



Building B1 - Eastern elevation



Building B1 – Northern elevation



Building B1 – Interior of lean-to on northern elevation



Building B1 – Interior of lean-to on northern elevation

Table 5a: The roosting features associated with building B1.

Feature	Materials/Details	Condition/description/suitability	Photograph
Walls	Timber clad	**Condition/description** The timber cladding on the eastern elevation was in poor condition, with multiple gaps. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats** There are some missing and slipped timber cladding boards on the northern and eastern elevations, creating an accessible crevice between the wooden cladding and wall (highlighted in white).	 *B1 walls - Slipped/missing timber cladding*  *B1 walls - Slipped/missing timber cladding*

			 *B1 walls - Lifted timber cladding*
Roof	Clay tiles	**Condition/description** The roof exhibited signs of wear, with multiple gaps on all elevations. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats** Areas of lifted, missing, and slipped tiles were noted on the southern, western, and northern elevations, allowing access between the tiles and the lining (highlighted in red). Additionally, dense ivy cladding was present on the northern elevation (highlighted in blue). This could obscure further access features. Areas of missing mortar were present on the southern, western, and northern elevations, allowing access between the tiles and the lining (highlighted in yellow).	 *B1 roof - Lifted/slipped tiles, missing mortar and dense ivy cladding*

			 *B1 roof - Lifted/slipped tiles and missing mortar*  *B1 roof - slipped tile and missing mortar*

Soffit boxes	Timber	**Condition/description** The soffit boxes showed some age-related wear. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats** A gap in the soffit box was also present on the southern elevation (highlighted in green).	 *B1 fascia boards*
Internal void	Bitumen felt lining	**Condition/description** Due to boarding blocking access from the loft hatch, the loft void could not be fully observed. Therefore, the loft void was viewed from the loft hatch, and evidence of bats may have been missed. The loft was lined with bitumen, which was in good condition with no gaps or tears. Dimensions (approx): ~14m long, ~2m wide and ~1.5m high at the peak Temp: 24°C // Humidity: 70% **Suitability/access/evidence of bats** No evidence of bats was recorded from around the loft hatch.	 *B1 internal void*

3.2 Foreseen Impacts

Roosting habitat

The proposed development will result in the repair of B1, including re-roofing and internal works. This could result in the destruction of any bat roosts present within the building. Additionally, this could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.

Foraging and commuting habitat

The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.

Artificial lighting

No new lighting will be installed as a result of the proposed development.

3.3 Recommendations

Roosting habitat

Three bat emergence/re-entry surveys are required on building B1 during the active bat season (May – September) to confirm presence/likely-absence of bats roosting in or on the building.

These survey visits should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive. The survey visits should be at least three weeks apart. Sub-optimal: early May and September. Would require greater justification of timing, e.g., weather conditions, known local bat activity.

One of the surveys could be a dawn re-entry survey, or all three can be at dusk if supported by night vision aids (NVA).

Three survey positions are required to provide full coverage of the building's elevations to look for emerging/re-entering bats. An infrared camera should also be employed as part of the survey to identify specific roost locations.

If further surveys confirm bat roosting and this/these are to be impacted by the proposals through destruction or modification, a bat licence would be required. The further surveys will also characterise the roost(s) to support this. If a roost is identified, a licence application to Natural England will be required. The licence application requires that all surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted, and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission.

No works to the property that may block or remove potential roosting features should be carried out until the required surveys have been completed.

Undertaking such work beforehand could unlawfully affect bats if present and may compromise the validity of the surveys and hinder the planning application process.

Foraging and commuting habitat

No further surveys are required.

Artificial lighting

None required.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

Enhancements are dependent on the outcome of further surveys.

4. FAUNA: BIRDS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consents. All clients are expected to read and understand this section or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

4.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No evidence of nesting birds was identified on or within B1. However, the building is considered suitable for nesting for species such as house sparrows (Passer domesticus) and tit species (Paridae sp.). The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls.

4.2 Foreseen Impacts

The proposed development will result in the repair of B1, including re-roofing and internal works. The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

4.3 Recommendations

Any building works should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have

fledged or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded.
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. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged, or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements
The installation of at least one bird box on the building will provide additional nesting habitat for birds, e.g., Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace or a similar alternative brand. Sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the building's fabric during construction.

5. INVASIVE SPECIES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consents. All clients are expected to read and understand this section or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

5.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) was identified on the site (TN1), which is listed as an invasive, non-native species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (highlighted in red).



Building B1 – Virginia Creeper TN1



Building B1 – Virginia Creeper TN1

5.2 Foreseen Impacts

The repair works could result in the spread of Virginia creeper.

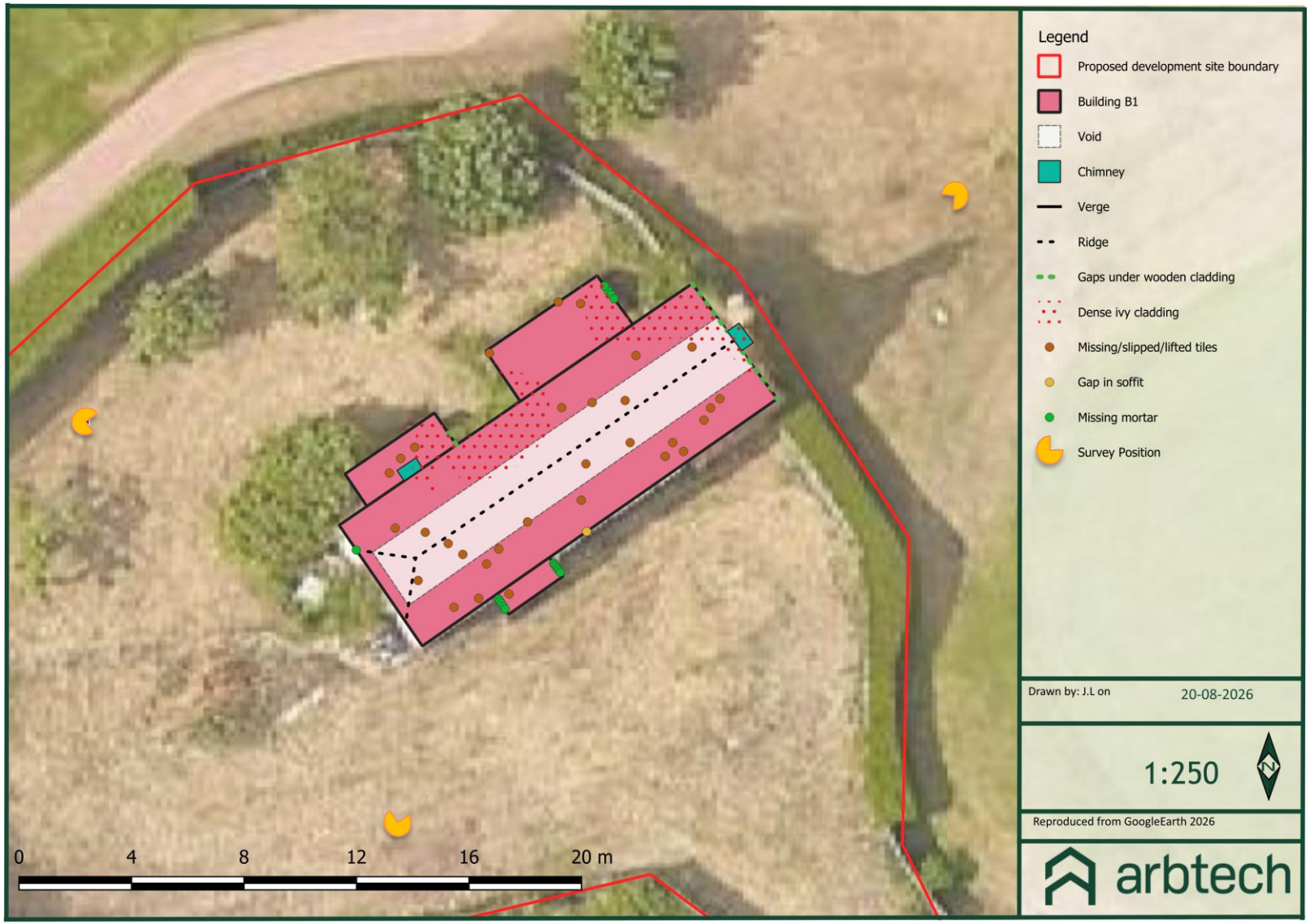
5.3 Recommendations

Any plants present on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are prohibited from release into the wild due to their capacity to cause ecological, environmental or socio-economic harm. Where Schedule 9 species are grown in private gardens, larger-scale gardens, estates, and amenity areas, reasonable measures will be taken to confine them to the cultivated area, preventing their spread to the wider environment and beyond the landowner's control. As such, not preventing the spread of Virginia creeper currently present on site into the wild (i.e. surrounding areas) could constitute an offence. As such, it is recommended that Virginia creeper be dug up, including roots, and disposed of in line with appropriate controlled waste measures, or controlled during works to prevent the spread off-site.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY MAP



APPENDIX 2: BERS PLAN



APPENDIX 3: LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX 4: PROPOSED PLAN

Due to the nature of the works, no proposed plans are available.

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VERSION CONTROL

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