Garage at Herons Creek
Station Road
Wargrave
Berkshire
RG10 8EU

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report ref.: R3332a_PRA_a

Report Quality Control Information	
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November 2026

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Richard Emerton to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the garage of Herons Creek on Station Road in Wargrave, Berkshire, seeking consent for conversion of the existing garage to ancillary habitable accommodation along with changes to fenestration (Planning application ref: 262459).

1.1.2 No evidence of roosting bats was found externally or internally during the building inspection. The absence of bat droppings inside the garage which was opened up to the roof indicates that primarily void-dwelling species, such as long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.), are unlikely to be present. The garage had several features suitable for use by bats, comprising gaps under lifted roof tiles and ridge tiles, and missing mortar under the ridge and hip tiles, all of which will not be impacted by the proposals. Internally there were gaps around the corners of the roof which were open into the soffit boxes and the roof tiles were exposed in places. These gaps were investigated fully with an endoscope, torch and binoculars and showed no evidence of historic or current use by bats when closely inspected.

1.1.3 In consideration of the number and type of potential crevice-roost features identified as well as the proximity to the River Thames to the west and parcels of woodland to the northwest and east, the property is assessed to be of moderate potential suitability for bats (see **Appendix 1** for potential suitability categories).

1.1.4 The survey findings demonstrate that these proposals are highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the development proposals to proceed lawfully.

1.1.5 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the works, works must stop immediately and a suitably licensed ecologist should be called to site attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed.

1.1.6 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Richard Emerton to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the garage of Herons Creek on Station Road in Wargrave, Berkshire.

2.1.2 The survey was commissioned to accompany a householder planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council, seeking consent for conversion of the existing garage to ancillary habitable accommodation along with changes to fenestration, see **Appendix 3** (Planning application ref: 262459).

2.2 Site Location and Context

2.2.1 The property is a detached garage to the south of the residential house at Herons Creek located off a track on the northern side of Station Road in Wargrave, Berkshire (Grid Reference: SU 78290 78567). The site is located along the eastern side of a tributary off the River Thames which is situated in the garden of the property and 40 m to the west. The main branch of the River Thames flows approximately 160 m to the west.

2.2.2 The property is bordered by similar properties with associated private gardens to the north and south, and beyond the river to the west, and a churchyard is situated to the southeast. A few parcels of woodland are situated 115 m to the north, 115 m to the southeast, 230 m to the southwest and 270 m to the southeast.

2.2.3 The woodland and river in the local vicinity to the property offer highly suitable habitats for bats to forage and commute.

2.3 Report Objectives

2.3.1 The aim of the PRA is to ascertain if there is evidence of the presence of bats and/or potential for roosting bats to be present, and therefore whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for the proposed development activities.

3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

3.1 Relevant Legislation

3.1.1 In England and Wales, all bat species found in the wild are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the regulations are commonly referred to as the Habitat Regulations and hereafter referred to as such. The Habitat Regulations refer to European Protected Species (EPS) and all species of bats in the United Kingdom (UK) are EPS. Although the UK left the European Union on the 31st January 2020 and is therefore no longer tied to European legislation, the Habitat Regulations have been retained in their current format.

3.1.2 The legal framework underpinned by the WCA and Habitat Regulations makes these specific actions an offence as follows:

- Deliberately kill, injure, capture or take a wild bat;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting; and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection.

3.2 Planning Policy

3.2.1 The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Government planning policy, such as the ODPM Circular 06/2005, requires LPAs to account for the conservation of protected species when considering and determining planning applications.

3.2.2 The ODPM Circular 06/2005 states that 'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.' This policy means that in instances where there is a reasonable likelihood of bats being present and affected by a development, surveys must be undertaken to inform a mitigation strategy to be agreed prior to granting planning permission.

3.3 Mitigation Licensing

3.3.1 The government's statutory nature conservation body, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (2) (e) – the derogation is for the purposes of '*preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.*'
- (9)(a) – there is '*no satisfactory alternative*' to the derogation; and
- (9)(b) – '*the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range*.'

3.3.2 LPAs have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the Habitat Regulations to consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting EPS before granting planning permission. If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

3.3.3 The Bat Earned Recognition Class Licence WML-CL47 (BERL) scheme allows ecologists to apply to become Registered Consultants to use this licence under Accreditation Level 1 for sites with up to seven low conservation status roosts, i.e. roosts comprising small numbers of commonly occurring species. A site registration form must be completed as a condition of the licence and submitted to Natural England at least three weeks before the licensable activities are due to start; Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks of submission.

3.3.4 Baseline survey information supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or BERL site registrations must be up-to-date and have been completed within the current or most recent optimal season. A suitably experienced ecologist will be required to undertake a site walkover/check within three months prior to application/registration submission to confirm that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey.

4 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 A desk-based study for bats was undertaken to collate and review existing information about the site and the surrounding land. The study utilised the following open access resources:

- OS maps and Google Earth – maps and satellite imagery were used to identify potential flight-paths and foraging habitats for bats;
- MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species licences; and
- Pre-existing bat survey reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal.

4.2 Building Inspection

Survey Details

4.2.1 A detailed inspection of the exterior of the property was undertaken on the 28th October 2026 by Vicky Potts MCIEEM - registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (Registration no. 2025-85632-CL18-BAT) and assisted by Alice Trchalik qualifying member of CIEEM in accordance with good practice guidance (Collins 2023). The equipment used during the inspection comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a Pancellent 1920P HD Borescope, a headtorch, ladder and PPE (facemask, gloves etc.). The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior of the structure during daylight hours to compile information on potential and actual bat access points; and any evidence of bat presence. There was no inspection of the interior of the property as there was no loft void present.

External Survey

4.2.2 Frequently used bat access points and/or roost sites include (but are not limited to) spaces:

- behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, soffit boxes and barge boards;
- under lead flashing (particularly around chimneys) and roof tiles/slates; and
- in existing bat boxes.

4.2.3 It is important to note that the two most abundant and widespread bat species, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*),

typically only require gaps measuring 15mm by 20mm to gain access to a roost inside a building.

4.2.4 The external survey involved a systematic search for evidence of bats including:

- live or dead specimens;
- droppings;
- urine marks;
- fur-oil staining; and
- squeaking noises.

4.2.5 It should be noted that bats can be present in a building while leaving no visible signs externally and wet weather has the potential to wash any evidence away. The search for evidence was focused on (but was not limited to) the ground, windowsills, windowpanes and walls (including cladding and hanging tiles); particularly in places near to potential bat access points and/or roost sites.

Survey Limitations and Validity

4.2.6 There were no significant survey limitations because PRAs can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the building was fully accessible.

4.2.7 It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey, particularly for bat species which typically roost in hidden crevices. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence found during a survey does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence in a building.

4.2.8 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 The linked private gardens in the immediate setting resemble continuous habitat that could be used as feeding habitat and flight paths connecting to higher quality foraging habitats in the nearby countryside, such as the nearby river and woodland.

5.1.2 Bat mitigation licences that have been granted inside a 2 kilometre radius of the property, within the last 10 years, are detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Bat mitigation licences granted within a 2km radius of the property (Source: MAGIC).

Case Reference of Granted Licence	Species on the Licence	Licensable Period	Licensable Works	Approximate Distance (m)
2017-29718-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared & soprano pipistrelle	12/06/2017 - 08/06/2022	Destruction of a resting place	1283 NW
2015-7768-EPS-MIT-1	Soprano pipistrelle	19/02/2016 30/04/2020	Destruction of a resting place	1468 NW
2019-43232-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	01/11/2019 - 30/06/2025	Destruction of a resting place	1499 NW
2020-44644-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared & common pipistrelle	05/02/2020 - 31/08/2020	Destruction of a resting place	1874 SE

5.1.3 There were no previous bat records available from the client or via the Wokingham Borough Council Planning Portal.

5.2 Building Inspection

5.2.1 The findings from the external inspection carried out for the property are described with photographs and annotated in a plan, as follows:

External Survey

5.2.2 The property comprised of a brickwork single-skin wall construction with a part-hipped and part-pitched roof (**Photographs 1 & 2**). The rear of the building had a canopy roof attached to the roof which was part of the neighbouring property.



Photograph 1. Front of the building viewed from the west.



Photograph 2. Northern end of the building.

5.2.3 The pitched and hipped roofs were covered by handmade clay tiles that had numerous

gaps under uneven and lifted tiles, providing potential access opportunities for crevice dwelling bats (**Photographs 3 & 4; Target note 1**). There were gaps under the ridge and hip tiles where the mortar was missing occasionally (**Photograph 5; Target note 2**). Sections of the rear hipped roof and ridge had been repaired with some newer mortar visible (**Photograph 5**).



Photograph 3. Uneven and lifted roof tiles (front elevation).



Photograph 4. Uneven and lifted roof tiles (front elevation).



Photograph 5. Missing mortar under the hip tiles in places and some repaired sections of the mortar under hip and ridge tiles (northern and rear elevation).

5.2.4 The paint and mortar had some gaps at the southern gable end of the building, where the mortar was crumbling away, which on close inspection were confirmed to be superficial (**Photograph 6; Target note 3**).



Photograph 6. Crumbling mortar at the gable end (southern elevation).

5.2.5 Gaps were present behind the timbers at the eaves, leading to the roof tiles internally. On close inspection, the gaps were minimal and considered too small to be used for bats to access the building (**Photograph 7**).



Photograph 7. Small gaps behind the timbers at the eaves (front elevation).

Internal Survey

5.2.6 The building was open to the roof internally and was plaster boarded up to the ridge with no void present (**Photographs 8 & 9**). The roof was heavily cobwebbed. Gaps were present in the plasterboards along the front northwestern corner of the building exposing the undersides of the roof tiles which were heavily cobwebbed (**Photograph 10; Target note 4**). Gaps were present at the junctions between the support timbers and the roof in three of the corners of the roof exposing the undersides of the roof tiles (**Photographs 11, 12 & 13; Target notes 5 & 6**). All of the gaps were able to be closely inspected with a torch and endoscope, which showed no evidence of current or historic use by bats. The fourth corner was tight and sealed off with plasterboard.



Photograph 8. Roof lined with plasterboard.



Photograph 9. Roof lined with plasterboard



Photograph 10. Gap in plasterboard along eaves to the front of the building exposing the roof tiles in the north-western corner of the roof.



Photograph 11. Gap in north-eastern corner.



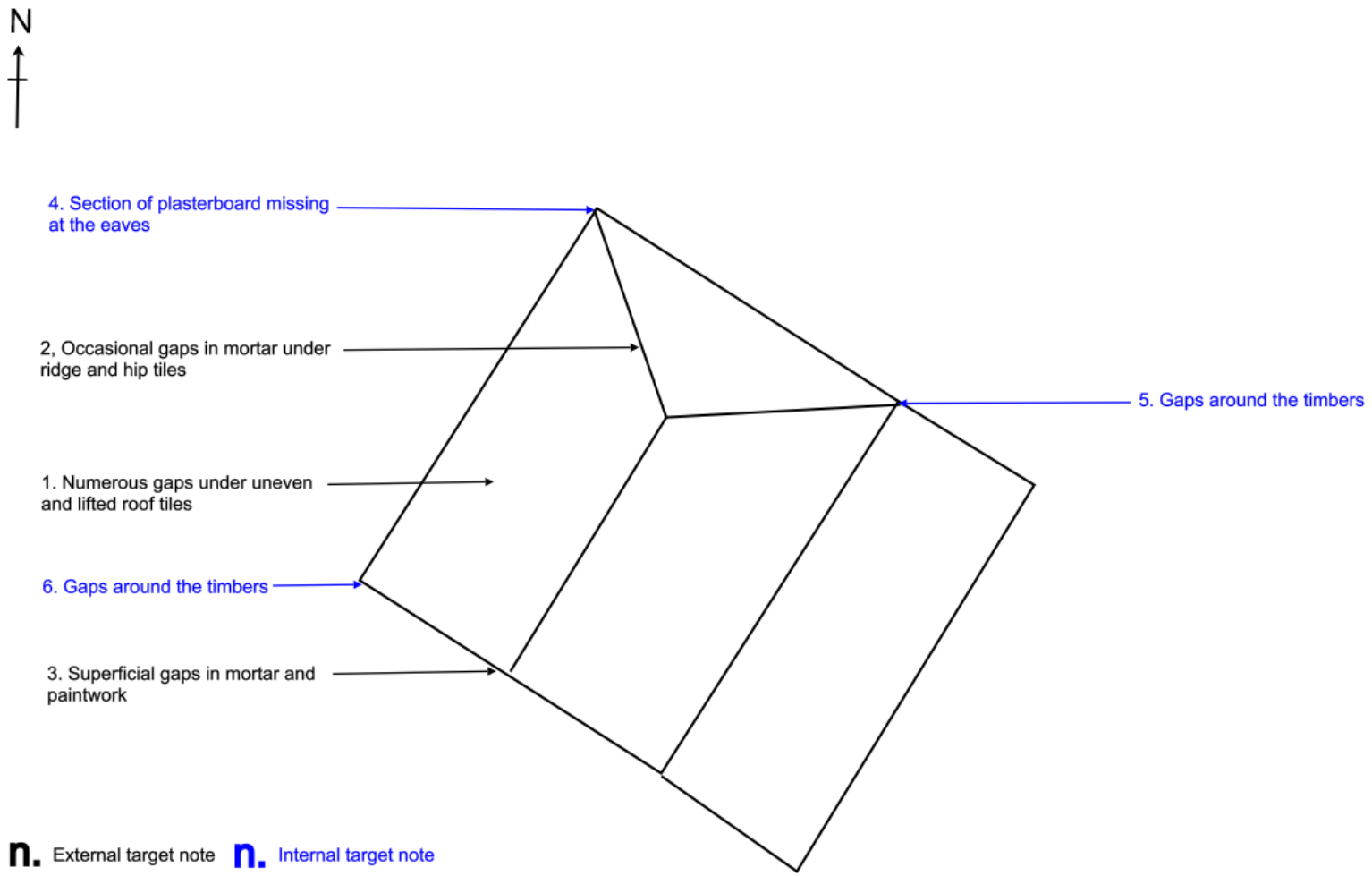
Photograph 12. Gap in south-western corner.



Photograph 13. Cobwebbed gaps under the roof tiles investigated with an endoscope.

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5.2.7 No evidence of bats or activity by bats was visible in the garage.



Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	Herons Creek Wargrav	JOHNWENMAN ecological consultancy
VP	Nov 2026	Not to scale	Figure 1 - Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Findings	

Figure 1. Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey Findings

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Assessment of Potential Roost Suitability

6.1.1 The linked private gardens in the immediate setting resemble continuous habitat that could be used as feeding habitat and flight paths connecting to higher quality foraging habitats in the nearby countryside, such as the river along the garden boundary to the west and parcels of woodland. The search of granted bat mitigation licences identified three species known to be roosting within a 2km radius of the property: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

6.1.2 The lack of roof void suggests the presence of void dwelling bats, such as the locally recorded brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) bat, is considered to be highly unlikely.

6.1.3 Potential external crevice roost features for crevice-dwelling bats, such as the locally recorded common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), included gaps under uneven and lifted roof tiles, and gaps in mortar under the ridge and hip tiles (**Photographs 3, 4 & 5; Target notes 1, 2, & 3**). Evidence of crevice-roosting species is typically hidden from view in areas such as gaps between tiles and internal linings/insulation. Internally there were gaps around the timbers in three of the corners of which could be closely inspected with an endoscope and showed no historic or current use by bats (**Photographs 10, 11, 12 & 13; Target notes 4, 5 & 6**).

6.1.4 In consideration of the number and type of potential crevice-roost features identified as well as the proximity of the river and parcels of woodland, the building is assessed to be of moderate potential suitability for bats (see **Appendix 1** for potential suitability categories).

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Potential Impacts of Development Proposals

7.1.1 The development proposals seek consent for the conversion of the existing garage to ancillary habitable accommodation along with changes to fenestration; work which will require no removal of the existing roof coverings.

7.1.1 There were potential roost features below the uneven tiles, roof, ridge and hip tiles, and internally where the timbers joined the corners of the roof. The majority of these gaps were able to be inspected via an endoscope camera, and the roof tiles were checked with a torch, which showed no evidence of current or historic use by crevice-dwelling bat species such as the pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus sp.*) and/or smaller *Myotis* species. No droppings were observed within the garage.

7.1.2 The gaps under the uneven and lifted roof, ridge and hip tiles of the garage will not be impacted by the proposals and will be left undisturbed during construction and post-development. The works to the interior will not involve the removal of the existing timbers in the corners and plasterboards, and will therefore not impact any potential crevices under the roof, ridge and hip tiles. The survey findings demonstrate that these proposals are highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. Therefore, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required to allow the development proposals to proceed lawfully.

7.1.3 In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the course of the construction when an ecologist is not present, the work will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once further written advice has been received. At this point, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

7.1.4 If the commencement of the works is delayed more than 12 months from the survey date an updated inspection of the building should be undertaken to confirm that the assessment of the bat roost status in this report remains accurate.

8 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. CIEEM, Winchester.

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

Mathews F., Kubasiewicz L.M., Gurnell J., Harrower C.A., McDonald R.A., Shore R.F. (2018). *A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals*. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2* CIEEM, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS

The categories detailed in **Table 2** below are derived from the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)'* (Collins 2023) and provide guidance for assessing the potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats. These categories are applied using professional judgement and irrespective of whether the presence of a bat roost has been confirmed during a survey, as additional bat roosts could be present which have not yet been discovered.

Table 2. Categories for potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats.

Potential Suitability	Category Justification
None	A building (or structure) that has no features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of cracks, crevices or voids that could provide suitable shelter).
Negligible	A building (or structure) that has no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats, but in this case a small element of uncertainty remains as bats will occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features. This category may also be used where a bat could potentially roost due to one attribute, but it is considered unlikely due to another attribute (e.g. a feature that is subject to constant illumination from artificial lighting).
Low	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites for bats do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and/or surrounding suitable habitat to be used regularly or by large numbers (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for a maternity colony and not a classic hibernation site).
Moderate	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for regular use by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. However, these potential roost sites for bats are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status with regards to the type of roost only (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).
High	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for use by large numbers of bats more regularly and for longer periods of time due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These potential roost sites for bats are capable of supporting high conservation status roosts (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).

APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITION OF BAT ROOST TYPES

The potential suitability of a building in conjunction with any evidence of bat presence is used to provide an initial assessment of likely roost type and importance. The types of roost considered are based on the following Natural England definitions:

- Day roost – a summer resting place used by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, during the day;
- Night roost – a resting place used by individual bats on occasion, or by a whole colony regularly, during the night;
- Feeding perch – a resting place used by individual bats, or a few individuals, primarily for short periods of feeding during the night;
- Transitional roost – a place used by a few individual bats, or occasionally small groups, for a short period of time upon waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation;
- Maternity roost – a place used by small to large groups of female bats to give birth and raise their young to independence;
- Hibernation roost – a place used by individual bats, or in groups, during winter where there is a constant cool temperature and high humidity; and
- Satellite roost – a place used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding female bats found in close proximity to the main nursery colony throughout the breeding season.

The importance of a bat roost is underpinned by the conservation status of the suspected species (i.e. the distribution/rarity of a species in a specific geographic location) and the type of roost (i.e. not all roosts have the same level of importance in supporting the local bat population). Further roost characterisation surveys may be required to fully determine the importance of a confirmed roost to allow for a robust impact assessment.

APPENDIX 3 - EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS

