



Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

**7 Harris Close, Woodley, Reading,
RG5 4XH**

23 October 2025

Preliminary Roost Assessment of 7 Harris Close, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4XH

REPORT DETAILS

Site Name: 7 Harris Close
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communication materials, design and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- NatureBureau Ltd was commissioned by Rich Booth to undertake a daytime bat roost assessment at 7 Harris Close, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4XH to help inform the proposed development of the site. This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 13 October 2025 by Kristina Wood a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The survey involved a desk study and an external assessment of a residential dwelling (proposed for extension).
- The site has some ecologically connectivity to a wider landscape which is of high value for bats, including large parcels of Deciduous Woodland, Ancient Woodland and Wood-pasture and Parkland.
- The on-site habitat offers no bat foraging opportunities, but a copse opposite the north elevation offers bat foraging potential.
- There are nine records of bat roosts within a 2 km radius of the site, with some connectivity to the site.
- Both externally and internally, the building offers negligible potential for bat roosting, with only a single external feature present that is, in context, considered unlikely to provide suitable conditions for bats.
- It is highly unlikely bats would use the site for hibernation.
- The proposed works are unlikely to cause direct or indirect impacts on bats, and **no further survey work is required.**
- In the unlikely event that any bats or evidence of bat activity be discovered during works, all works must cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought before continuing.

1. INTRODUCTION

NatureBureau Ltd was commissioned by Rich Booth (hereafter referred to as “the client”) to undertake a Preliminary (bat) Roost Assessment (PRA) at 7 Harris Close, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4XH (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’) to satisfy planning conditions in relation to bats and their roosts, which are protected by law. This report summarises the findings of that survey.

1.1 Site Overview

The site, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 77758 73823, comprises a detached residential dwelling (B1) and small enclosed amenity garden.

The site lies within a high-density residential area on the northeast side of Woodley, Reading. The local area is characterised a mix of residential properties with associated gardens, boundary fencing, hedgerows and tree lines, alongside significant areas of woodland. The wider landscape is characterised by a mosaic of residential and recreational land uses, large water bodies and arable land.

The River Loddon is located 580 metres (m) southeast at its closest point.

1.2 Site Plans

The current proposals for the site include the demolition of the existing conservatory and the construction of a part-single, part-double storey extension to the rear (south) elevation of B1 (hereafter referred to as "the proposed works").

1.3 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: 7 Harris Close

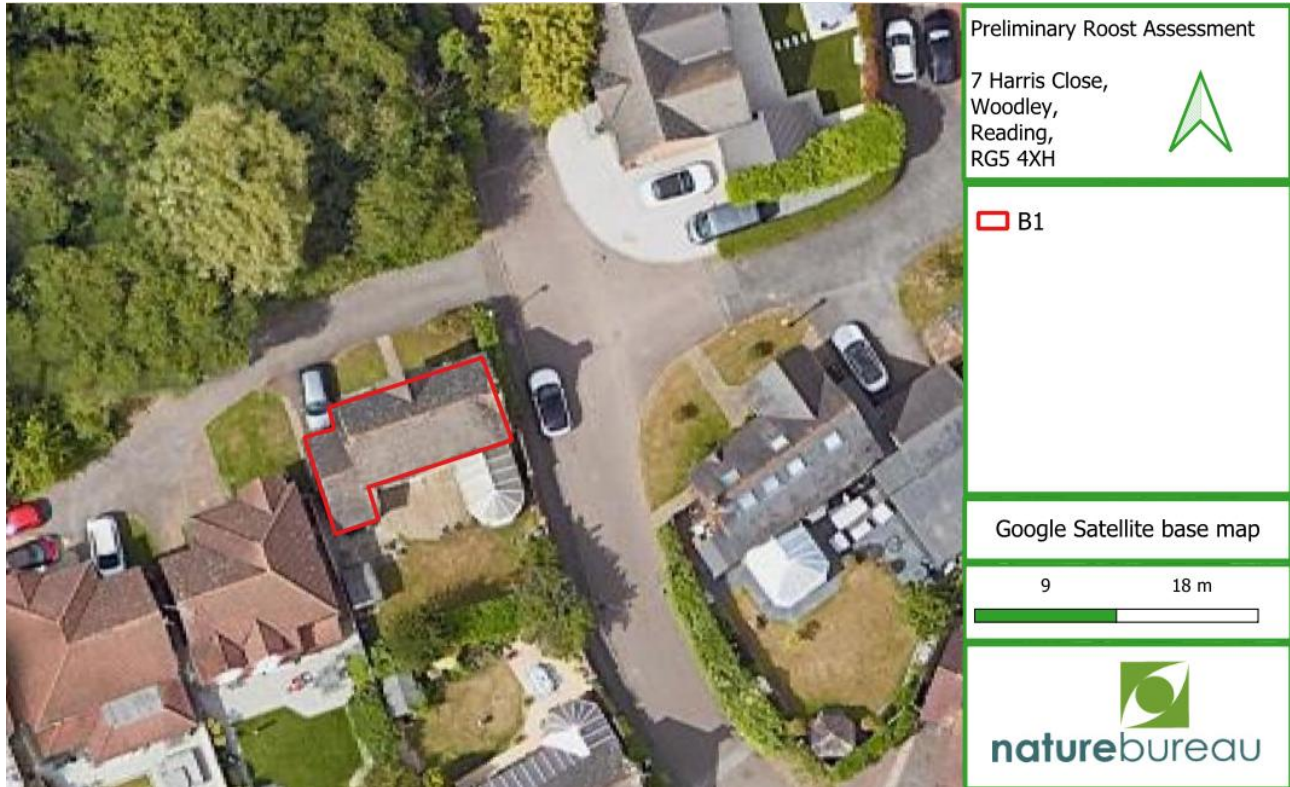
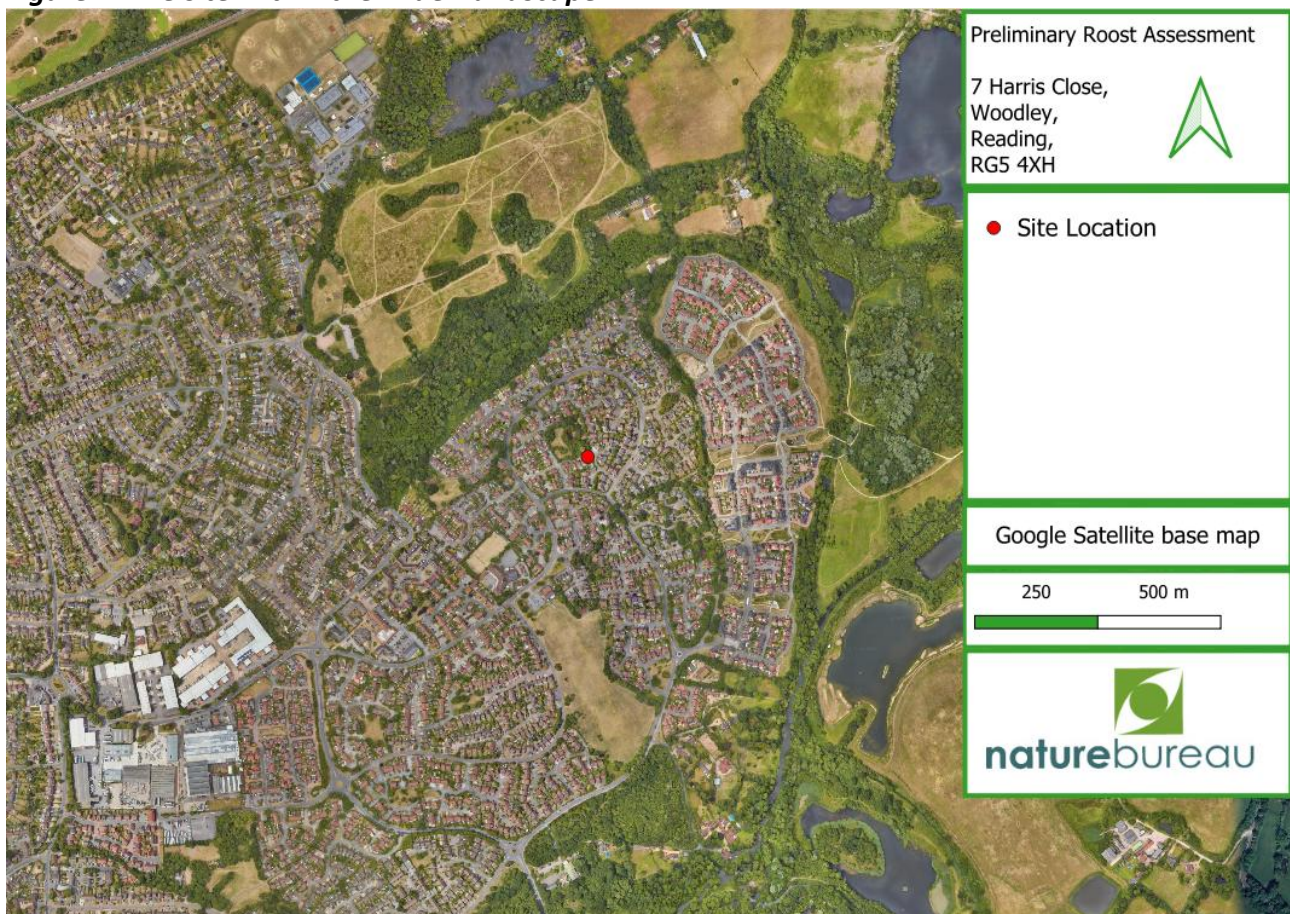


Figure 2: The site within the wider landscape



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving bats within 2 kilometres (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	Assessment of the local landscape. Latest image date: March 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 13 October 2025, between 14:00 and 15:00 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 Conduct, the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines¹ 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.

¹https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Resources/For-professionals/Bat-Survey-Guidelines-4th-edition-AMENDED-27.03.24.pdf?v=1711530492&_gl=1*xhxbvt*_ga*MjUzNzc4OTQuMTc1NDIyMTM3Mw..*_ga_G28378TB9V*czE3NjExNDgwOTQkbzE4JGcwJHQxNzYxMTQ4MDk0JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..

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).

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 18 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

According to Defra's MAGIC database, nine Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licences have been issued within 2 km of the site for activities affecting bats.

These records relate to works impacting the resting sites of brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats and soprano pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) between 2012 and 2020.

The closest record (Licence Ref: 2016-27109-EPS-MIT-1) relates to works impacting all three of these species, located approximately 250 m southeast of the site. A review of aerial imagery indicates some habitat connectivity between this location and the site, via a network of residential gardens.

3.1.2 Site Designations

Within a 2 km radius of the site, there are three Statutory Designated Sites.

Lodge Wood & Sandford Mill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)², located 615 m southeast, comprises two small wet woodlands bordering the River Loddon. Just 350 m south of this SSSI is Lavells Lake Local Nature Reserve (LNR)³ which comprises a large area of river and lakes, wet flower meadows, reed-beds, scrub, wet woodland and mature Oak woods. Alder Moors LNR⁴ is located 200 m northwest of the site comprises Ancient Woodland, dominated by Alder trees.

Although none of these sites cite bats as a feature of interest, the habitats found on the sites provide suitable foraging resources and commuting corridors for various bat species. There is moderate to high ecological connectivity between these habitats and the site, primarily via the River Loddon, mature tree lines and a network of residential gardens.

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

3.1.3 Priority Habitats

Alder Moors represents a substantial area of Deciduous Woodland and Ancient Woodland located near the site, with some ecological connectivity provided through intervening residential gardens. The local and wider landscape also supports additional areas of these Priority Habitats, as well as

² <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1003870.pdf>

³ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009010>

⁴ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1008744>

patches of Wood-Pasture and Parkland, both recognised as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats.

These habitat types are known to support a diverse assemblage of bat species, and as such, the local and wider landscape is of high ecological value for commuting and foraging bats.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A daytime site visit was undertaken on 13 October 2025 under bright and clear conditions, with a recorded temperature of 18°C at the time of the survey.

B1 is a modern, detached, two-storey residential property constructed with brick walls and finished with a concrete tiled roof. The building features uPVC soffits and windows. It has a gable-ended roof structure, with a single-storey garage extension to the west side and a glazed conservatory to the southeast rear elevation. A chimney is located at the ridge of the eastern gable end.

3.2.1 External Survey

Overall, the brickwork and mortar are in excellent condition across all elevations, with no evidence of deterioration. Inspection of the soffits using a high-powered torch confirmed they are in excellent condition and well-secured to the structure, consistent with the condition of the windows. The only minor gap observed was a small space between the soffit and the brickwork at the east gable end, located to the left of the chimney stack.

At the base of the chimney, a small section of lead flashing on the rear (south) side was noted to be slightly lifted. However, the separation is minimal and does not appear to open into any significant void or crevice.

The roof tiles across both roof pitches are in excellent condition, with all tiles present and securely fitted.

The lead flashing where the garage extension roof abuts the main dwelling was also found to be in very good condition, with no significant gaps or defects observed.

A small gap was identified where the conservatory adjoins the main structure of B1; however, torch inspection confirmed the gap to be shallow, with no evidence of bat roosting.

Figure 3: The rear (south) of B1



3.2.2 Internal Survey

The main loft space of B1 comprises a traditional A-framed timber roof structure with exposed breeze block construction at each gable end. A significant presence of cobwebs was noted throughout the loft area.

At the east gable end, inspection of the apex between the terminal rafter and adjacent brickwork identified a small gap extending into the upper wall cavity, which could potentially provide access or a roosting opportunity for bats. However, the gap was heavily cobwebbed, and no external light ingress was observed. Examination of the brickwork and cobwebbed areas at both gable ends revealed no evidence indicative of bat activity or presence.

The roofing membrane was observed to be in excellent condition, with no signs of damage or deterioration. Inspection of the timber beams and loft flooring similarly revealed no evidence of bat presence or associated staining, droppings, or feeding remains.

The garage extension to the west side of B1 also features a small, enclosed loft space, comprising the same construction as the main loft space discussed above. The roofing membrane was found to be in excellent condition, and inspection of the timber beams, floor, gable end brickwork and extensive cobwebbing revealed no evidence of bat roosting.

Figure 4: The loft void of B1



3.2.3 On-site and Neighbouring Habitats

The site is predominantly composed of hardstanding and highly managed amenity grassland. A hedgerow to the rear (south) of the site and hedges and trees within neighbouring properties provide limited local foraging opportunities for bats and offer a small degree of low-level connectivity to the wider landscape. To the front (north) of the site, there is a copse. This likely offers moderate foraging opportunities for bats.

Overall, the site offers no bat-suitable habitat, and its immediate surroundings are considered to offer low-quality commuting and moderate-quality foraging habitat for bats.

3.2.4 Tree Assessment

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

3.2.5 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 high overall suitability for bats, with significant woodland, pasture and open water sources providing a rich mosaic of commuting and foraging habitats. However, neighbouring garden habitats offer limited direct habitat connectivity to these ecological features.

B1 contains a single external feature that may, on occasion, offer limited potential for opportunistic use by a small number of crevice-dwelling bats. This feature comprises a gap between the soffit and brickwork at the east gable end. However, this area is subject to illumination from a neighbouring streetlight, which substantially reduces its suitability, and overall, it is considered unlikely to be utilised by bats. Therefore, B1 is considered to offer negligible external bat roosting potential.

Internally, the main loft void presents conditions which would be suitable for void-roosting bats; however, no bat ingress/egress opportunities could be identified. Moreover, the loft is heavily cobwebbed, indicating no recent heavy use by bats, and there was an absence of characteristic field signs. Similarly, the garage roof void contains no obvious bat access points, and no evidence of bats was identified during the survey. Overall, B1 is considered to offer negligible internal bat roosting potential.

In accordance with Collins (2023), B1 is assessed as offering negligible roosting potential.

No features typically associated with bat hibernation (e.g., cellars, cavities, or deep stone crevices) are present on site. The limited external features observed are unlikely to provide the stable, thermally buffered microclimate required for hibernation. Consequently, B1 is assessed as having negligible potential to support hibernating bats.

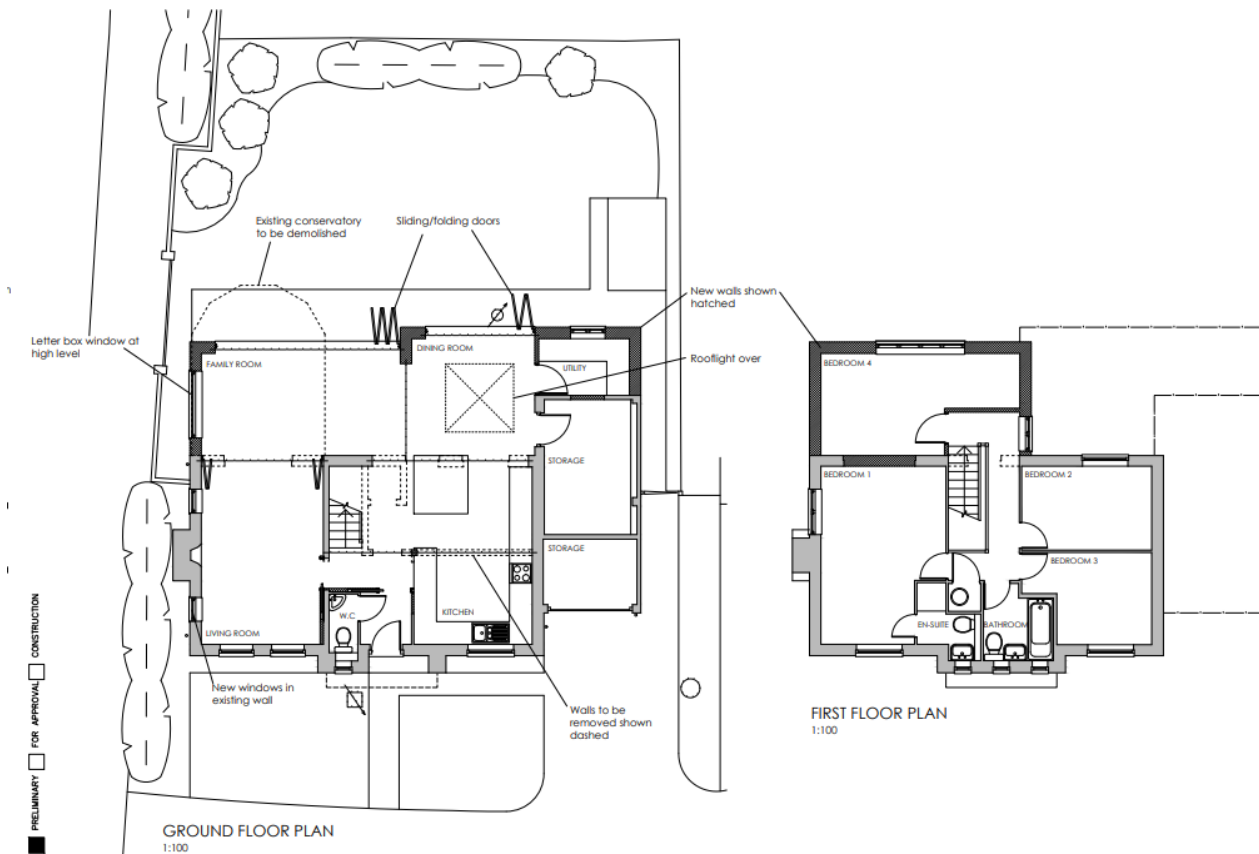
4.1 Impact Assessment

The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing conservatory and the erection of a new part-single part-double storey extension to the rear (south) of B1. Most of the existing roof structure and associated features of B1 will remain unaffected by the proposed works.

Given the negligible bat roosting potential identified within B1 and the low suitability of the on-site habitat for foraging and commuting bats, the proposed works are not anticipated to result in any direct or indirect impacts on bats or bat roosts.

No further bat survey effort is considered necessary for the site. However, site contractors should be aware of their legal obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). **Should any bats, or evidence indicative of their presence, be discovered at any stage during works, all works must cease immediately, and the advice of a qualified ecologist must be sought.**

Figure 5: Plans for the site



4.2 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 site owner 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

7 Harris Close has been assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. This assessment is based on the limited number and size of potential roosting features identified.

The proposed works are not anticipated to result in any direct or indirect impacts on roosting bats, and therefore no further bat survey effort is required at this stage. However, in accordance with best practice and legal requirements, should any bats or evidence of bat activity be discovered during works, all works must cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought before continuing.

In addition, it is recommended that appropriate precautionary working methods are implemented during the bird nesting season (typically March to August inclusive) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds and to ensure compliance with relevant wildlife protection legislation.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 13 October 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 BAP⁵, 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.

⁵ [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.
- Garland, L. & Markham, S. (2008) Is Important Bat Foraging and Commuting Habitat Legally Protected? <http://biodiversitybydesign.co.uk/cmsAdmin/uploads/protection-for-bat-habitat-sep-2007.pdf>
- Harris, S. & Yalden, D. (2008). Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook, 4th Edition. The Mammal Society, Southampton.
- 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.