

Flaxlands Solar - Roosting Bats Report Addendum

Project name Flaxlands Solar Farm	Project number 60727989	Client Ampyr Solar Europe	Date January 2025
Prepared by WG Consultant Ecologist	Checked by KM ACIEEM Senior Ecologist	Verified by KW CEcol Technical Director	Approved by LN MCIEEM Associate Director

1. Introduction and Objectives

AECOM were instructed by Ampyr Solar Europe to carry out bat surveys to support the proposed installation of a solar photovoltaic array and 49.9 MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development') within land north of Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire (hereafter referred to as the 'Ecological Assessment Area').

This technical note provides an addendum to the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹. Design changes mean that works are now potentially required within 15 m of three trees previously scoped out of further assessment (T25, T26, and T27, as reported in the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹). Consequently, these trees have been subject to Potential Roost Feature (PRF) Aerial Inspections, the results of which are detailed in this addendum.

The objectives of the PRF Aerial Inspections are as per Section 2.3 of the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹; to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within these trees, and provide recommendations on avoidance, mitigation and compensation of potential impacts on roosting bats.

1.1 Background

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Ecological Assessment Area was completed by AECOM in May 2024². This identified the need for further assessment for the presence of roosting bats due to the presence of buildings and trees within and adjacent to the Ecological Assessment Area with the potential to support roosting bats. Roosting bat surveys were conducted including a Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA), Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA), dusk emergence surveys, and PRF Aerial Tree Inspections. The results of these surveys, as well as associated potential impacts, recommendations for mitigation, and potential ecological enhancements are reported in the main Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹. Following the GLTA, 79 trees were scoped out of further survey due to the implementation of a minimum 15 m buffer around them, in which no works would be required to facilitate the Proposed Development. As the design of the Proposed Development has progressed since the completion of this assessment, works are now potentially required within 15 m of three trees previously scoped out of further assessment (T25, T26, and T27, as reported in the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹). Consequently, these trees have been subject to PRF Aerial Inspections, as reported in this addendum.

2. Methods

The PRF Aerial Tree Inspection of T25, T 26 and T27 was undertaken on 13 December 2024 by an AECOM Natural England Level 2 licensed bat ecologist with an assistant. Both the surveyor and assistant were certified in tree climbing and aerial rescue (NPTC Level 2). The methods followed during the survey are congruent with those from the summer 2024 survey, paying due regard to Bat Conservation Trust survey guidance³, and reported in Section 4.2.3 of the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹.

No additional limitations were encountered during the PRF Aerial Tree Inspection.

¹ AECOM (2024) Flaxlands Solar Farm. Roosting Bats Report.

² AECOM (2024) Flaxlands Solar Farm. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report.

³ Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines

3. Results

The results of the PRF Aerial Tree Inspection are presented in Table 3-1 and are illustrated on Figure 1.

All three trees assessed were classified as PRF-I with no hibernation suitability (updated from PRF, as assessed during the GLTA¹). PRF-I is defined as '*only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats*'³. PRF-I trees require no further survey³.

Table 3-1 PRF Aerial Inspection Survey Results

Tree Reference	PRF Aerial Inspection Survey Notes	GLTA Result	PRF Aerial Inspection Result	Roost Confirmed (Y/N)
T25	There is an east facing branch cavity at 4 m in height assessed as PRF-I. The entrance is approximately 2 cm wide and the cavity extends approximately 3 cm into the branch. The inside of the cavity is smooth and dry, and there are squirrel feeding remains. No bats or bat signs were observed. There is a PRF-I knothole at 8 m that is north-west facing. The entrance is 5 cm wide and the cavity extends 5 cm into the branch. There are cobwebs and birds down feathers within the cavity. No bats or bat signs were observed. Three features were assessed as None for their bat roost suitability: - a branch cavity, 4.5 m high and east facing, that only extends 1 cm into the tree; - a tear-out, 6 m high and east facing, with no cavity that extends into the branch; and, - lifting bark at 6 m high on the west face – the bark has dropped since the GLTA leaving the feature very exposed, wet, and mouldy.	PRF	PRF-I	N
T26	There is a south-facing tear-out at 3 m in height assessed as PRF-I. The entrance is 7 cm long and 2 cm wide; it narrows to 1 cm for the final 2 cm. The cavity is dry and smooth internally with lots of detritus. No bats or bat signs were observed. Two features were assessed as None for their bat roost suitability: - the branch with flaking bark identified during the GLTA has fallen since the original survey; and, - a north-facing tear-out at 8 m in height which extends back only 1 cm and offers no shelter.	PRF	PRF-I	N
T27	There is a stem cavity at 1.3 m in height assessed as PRF-I. The entrance to the cavity is 3 cm wide and the cavity extends 3 cm into the stem. The internal cavity is dry and smooth and there is no detritus. There are external cobwebs over the cavity entrance. No bats or bat signs were observed.	PRF	PRF-I	N

4. Potential Impacts

T25, T26 and T27 are not due to be felled to facilitate the Proposed Development, direct impacts to any individual bats roosting within the PRF-I features are not anticipated. There will be no direct loss of potential roost features.

There is potential for the Proposed Development to cause low-level temporary disturbance to any bats roosting within the PRF-I features during the works however, as the features would only be suitable for small numbers of bats, these impacts would be minimal, limited to individual bats, and would not affect maternity or hibernation roosts.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

As T25, T26 and T27 were recorded as PRF-I, in-line with current guidance³ no further survey of these trees is required to facilitate the Proposed Development.

5.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML)

No bat roosts were confirmed, therefore no direct impacts upon roosting bats are anticipated. An EPSML is not required to facilitate the Proposed Development.

5.3 Mitigation and Enhancement

Recommendations for mitigation and potential ecological enhancements should be followed as detailed in the Flaxlands Roosting Bats Report¹.

Figure

Figure 1. Results of PRF Aerial Inspection Survey on T25, T26 and T27



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AECOM

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LEGEND
Ecological Assessment Area
Tree downgraded to PRF-I

NOTES
1. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright [2024]. All rights reserved. Licence number 0100031673.
2. Maxar, Microsoft

ISSUE PURPOSE
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PROJECT NUMBER
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FIGURE TITLE
PRF Aerial Inspection Results:
December 2024 Survey

FIGURE NUMBER
Figure 1