



Hill Cottage, 7 Reybridge, Lacock
Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)
For Artel31

30th October 2025

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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
1.1	Commission.....	4
1.2	Site Details	4
1.3	Bat Conservation.....	5
2.	Methodology	8
2.1	Overview.....	8
2.2	Bat Survey Licence.....	9
2.3	Survey Objectives	9
2.4	Survey Methodology.....	10
2.5	Weather Conditions	10
2.6	Constraints.....	10
3.	Results	11
3.1	Data Search.....	11
3.2	Physical Bat Survey	11
4.	Conclusions	18
4.1	Conclusion.....	18
4.2	Main Recommendations.....	19



1. Introduction

1.1 Commission

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Artel31, on behalf of their client, to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Hill House, 7 Reybridge, Lacock, Chippenham, SN15 2PB ('the site'). It is proposed to demolish the rear kitchen extension and develop a single-storey rear extension and small dormer ('the proposed development'). In addition to Hill House, the PRA was extended to include its outhouse and wooden pergola.

1.2 Site Details

The site and target buildings are located in Reybridge, a small village in the county of Wiltshire, situated on the River Kennet at OS Grid Reference ST 91892 69182.

Figure 1: Site location



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1.3 Bat Conservation

British bats

There are 18 species of bats resident in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed. These are from two families, namely the Rhinolophidae (the two horseshoe bat species) and the 15 species of vesper/evening bats (the Vespertilionidae). All British bats are insectivorous and locate their prey using ultrasonic calls through a biological system known as echolocation.

During summer months, female bats form nursery colonies in trees and buildings, where they raise infants. In the winter, males and females hibernate in trees, buildings and underground structures.

Conservation status of British bats

The general consensus in Britain and Europe is that virtually all bat species are declining and are vulnerable. Our understanding of population status is poor, as there is very little historical data for most bat species. Certain species, such as the horseshoe bat, are better understood and have well documented contractions in range and population size.

Given this general picture of decline, the UK Government (within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan) has designated eight species of bats as priority species (these being soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle (Wales only) greater and lesser horseshoe bats, barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule and brown long-eared bat). These plans provide an action pathway whereby the maintenance and restoration of former population levels are envisaged.

Legal status of British bats

All bats and their roosts in England were originally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Subsequent amendments to the legislation for England (and Wales) has removed bats from most of the provisions of the Act; however, it remains an offence to:



- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place that a bat uses for shelter or protection.

All British bat species are listed in Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive and are fully protected through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. All bat species found in England are classed as European protected species. They receive full protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

These regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat;
- Harass a bat or group of bats;
- Disturb a bat in a roost (any structure or place it uses for shelter or protection);
- Disturb a bat while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young
- Obstruct access to a bat roost or otherwise deny an animal use of a roost;
- Disturb a bat in a manner or in circumstances likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and/or
- Disturb a bat while it is migrating or hibernating.

The legislation, although not strictly affording protection to foraging grounds, does protect bat roost sites. Bat roosts are protected at all times of the year, regardless of whether or not bats are present at the time.

It's also an offence to:

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal (whether or not deliberately or recklessly); and/or
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any wild bat (or any part or derivative of one) obtained after 10th June 1994.



Where development is proposed that would result in an offence under the Habitats and Species Regulations, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence needs to be granted by Natural England (NE) to permit an act that would otherwise be unlawful. This provides for a specific derogation from the legislation, to prevent a legal infringement occurring.

To obtain an EPS licence for development it must be demonstrated that the purpose of the act to be licensed is for:

- *“Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment” (Regulation 55(2)(e)).*

In addition, NE will not grant an EPS licence unless they are satisfied that:

- *“There is no satisfactory alternative” (Regulation 55(9)(a)); and*
- *“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” (Regulation 55(9)(b)).*



2. Methodology

2.1 Overview

Survey work undertaken in relation to a proposed development needs to be conducted under a scientific/conservation licence issued by, in this case, NE. The work is normally conducted by an environmental consultant on the behalf of the developer and the consultant will advise on the necessary course of further action with respect to licences, mitigation and compensation measures. A number of recognised survey techniques are available to the consultant, such as:

- Natural England guidelines (A.J. Mitchell-Jones [2004], *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, English Nature. ISBN 1 85716 781 3), which provide generic technical advice on bat mitigation; and
- Hundt L (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13: 978-1-872745-96-1.

The developer must:

- Demonstrate that adequate surveys have been undertaken to establish the presence or absence of bats, to predict the potential impact on them, their resting sites or breeding roosts;
- If bats or their roosts are discovered, bring proposals forward that will integrate provision for bats into any design that will compensate and mitigate for any impact during development; and
- Provide sufficient survey information that will support a licence application under the Habitats Directive should bats be discovered.

Where bat species are using a site, it will be necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development upon the population(s). These would include measures that remove or reduce any damaging effects on the animals or their roosts.



In most cases a package of compensation measures will be required to accommodate any loss of breeding or resting-places, and the timing of works will need to be synchronised with the life-cycles of the effected species.

This collective package of mitigation and compensation measures should allow the conservation status of the animals to be at least maintained by the development. With careful thought, the conservation status may even be enhanced by development. This is usually most easily achieved by early ecological input.

In the case of sites where bats are present, a development licence from NE will be required to conduct works affecting bats.

2.2 Bat Survey Licence

The survey was undertaken by Christopher Parsons, Ecologist at Ellendale Environmental. Christopher holds a bat survey licence (Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number CLS-2019-42561), with respect to the Conservation Regulations 1994. The licence is valid for all counties of England, until October 31st, 2025. Christopher has over 10 years' professional experience of undertaking ecological surveys and working with bat species across the UK.

2.3 Survey Objectives

On the basis of the brief provided by the client, Ellendale Environmental conducted survey work to fulfil the following needs:

- Obtain baseline information on the habitat features suitable for bat species;
- Determine the presence/likely absence of bat species and any activity at or near the target building; and
- Determine the type, extent and pattern of detected usage.

In practice this was achieved by a physical inspection of the target buildings, a search for live animals and/or other signs indicating their current or previous presence.



2.4 Survey Methodology

A physical internal/external site inspection of the target buildings was undertaken on Friday 17th October 2025. The internal and external areas of the buildings were searched for signs of bats and evidence of them roosting.

All suitable features were assessed externally and internally. A telescopic surveyor's ladder was used to gain access to various points and a CLU-10 searchlight was used to search dark areas. A Visual Optics VO36-10ww Endoscope was utilised to assist inspection of internal spaces.

The physical search included a search for live animals and a search for other signs that give an indication of past or present occupancy. In the case of bats, typical indicators include droppings (which are characteristic and can often be speciated), signs of staining, characteristic odours, and accumulations of prey items.

2.5 Weather Conditions

Weather was not a limiting factor for the physical inspection of the target buildings and the conditions are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey weather conditions for physical survey

SURVEY DATE	TEMPERATURE (°C)	WIND SPEED (MPH)	CLOUD COVER/ PRECIPITATION
17/10/25	16.8	0.0 Avg. 0.0 Max.	50% cloud cover, dry and still.

2.6 Constraints

Whilst no biological survey can guarantee that all cues and signs of protected or notable species will be recorded, Ellendale Environmental is confident that all key fauna present during the survey times were noted.

Although the survey timings are applicable for most of the UK, they vary according to the geographic location of the site. Optimal timing may also vary from year to year depending on the onset of each season. Outdoor surveys are weather-dependent and should be undertaken only in suitable weather conditions.



3. Results

3.1 Data Search

The following bat species were identified within 5km of the site boundaries:

Soprano pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* and Brant's bat *Myotis brandtii* have all been recorded within 5km of the site; however, due to licensing restrictions, the locations and dates cannot be disclosed.

3.2 Physical Bat Survey

A daytime physical survey of the target buildings was undertaken on Friday 17th October 2025 and full access was provided for the survey.

Hill House

Hill House is a Grade II listed detached, two-storey property, originally constructed in the 1650's and later extended in the 1750's, 1850's and in 1990. The property is built of natural stone, brick and timber with a mix of styles and ages. It is proposed to demolish and rebuild the rear kitchen which was added in 1990.

Externally the walls of the building were found to be in a good condition with no gaps or crevices in which bats could gain access for roosting. The walls were found to be smooth and no evidence of bat activity, such as droppings or feeding remains, was found.

The windows and doors of the building were found to be in good condition with no gaps where bats could gain access to the internal spaces for roosting. No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings or feeding remains, was found around the doors or windows, and there was no evidence of bat activity within the main living areas of the building.



Photograph 1: showing a view of the target building (front elevation of the house)



Photograph 2: showing a view of the rear of the building





The external roof structure of the building was found to be in a good condition with no loose, lifted or missing tiles that would allow bats to access the internal spaces. It is understood that much of the roof has been previously replaced and repaired, approximately 10 years ago. No evidence of bat activity, such as staining, was found on the external roof of the building.

Internally a loft space does not encompass the whole building, with a small loft space located in the original cottage to the north of the building and a second small loft space in the later addition to the south. No loft access is present above the kitchen which is largely vaulted; however, a small space is likely to be present above it along the ridge.

The accessible loft spaces were inspected and were found to be in a good condition with modern breathable membrane present from previous works to the roof structure. No rips were found where bats could gain access to the internal space of the loft and no evidence of bat activity, such as droppings of feeding remains, was found during the inspection.

Photograph 3: showing a view of loft space above the original cottage to the north of the building



Photograph 4: showing a view of loft space above the south of the building



The 1990's kitchen extension was found to be in a good condition with no loose lifted or missing tiles. Although the small loft space could not be accessed, it is likely to have a breathable membrane similar to the rest of the property with works undertaken around the same time. No evidence of bat activity was found on the external surfaces of the building and no access/egress locations were found.

No evidence of roosting bats was found within Hill House during the survey and bats are not considered to be present. Throughout, the loft spaces were found to be mostly clean and no evidence of roosting bats was found during the survey to indicate that bats are present internally.

Outhouse

A small outhouse is located to the west of the main house and is constructed from red brick with a pitched roof covered with tiles. The building is approximately 1.25m long by 1.25m wide and 2m tall. The building was open on the western side with no door present on the structure making the internal space cold and damp. The building is currently used for storage.



No evidence of bat activity was found within the outbuilding to indicate that it is being used by bats for roosting or as a feeding perch. Bats are therefore not considered to be present.

Photograph 5: showing a view of the outhouse (looking east)





Photograph 6: showing a view inside of the outhouse



Wooden pergola

A wooden pergola is present adjacent to the outhouse. It is approximately 3m long by 3m wide and 2m tall with a pitched roof. The structure is open on all sides and has bitumen tiles on the roof which were found to be in a declining condition. No evidence of bat activity was found within the pergola to indicate that it is being used by bats for roosting or as a feeding perch. Bats are therefore not considered to be present.



Photograph 7: showing a view of the wooden pergola





4. Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

A daytime physical survey of the target buildings was undertaken on Friday 17th October 2025 and full access was provided for the survey. The Preliminary Roost Assessment was not constrained, and full access was gained to the external and internal spaces of the target buildings for the physical survey

Hill House is a Grade II listed detached, two-storey property, originally constructed in the 1650's and later extended. The property is built of natural stone, brick and timber with a mix of styles and ages. It is proposed to demolish and rebuild the rear kitchen which was added in 1990 and which was found to be in a good condition with no loose lifted or missing tiles. Although a small loft space along the ridge of this part of the building could not be accessed, it is likely to have a breathable membrane similar to the rest of the property with works undertaken around the same time. No evidence of bat activity was found on the external surfaces of the building, and no access/egress locations were found.

Two small loft spaces in the building were inspected and were found to be in a good condition with modern breathable membrane present from previous works to the roof structure. No rips were found where bats could gain access to the internal space of the loft and no evidence of bat activity, such as droppings or feeding remains, was found during the inspection.

Externally the building was found to be in a good condition and no evidence of bat activity was found. Given the works to the building from previous extensions and work to the roof the building is unlikely to provide suitable roosting features for bats, and no evidence was found during the survey to indicate bats are using the building. The building is therefore assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential for bats and no further surveys are recommended.



Two structures are present in the rear garden of the property, namely a small outhouse and wooden pergola. An inspection of these structures did not find evidence of bat activity and they are not considered to be used by bats for roosting or as feeding perches.

Given the findings of the survey, it is very unlikely that bats are roosting within Hill House or within the outhouse or pergola structures, and no further surveys for bats are recommended.

4.2 Main Recommendations

General

Site personnel should be made aware of protected species and if any are recorded on site, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted

Bats

Given the findings of the survey, it is very unlikely that bats are roosting in the target building. However, it is advised that precautionary working methods are undertaken during works to the building, including:

- Site personnel will be made aware of the potential presence of bats through a toolbox talk;
- If a bat is found, or the presence of bats is suspected, all work must stop immediately, and a licensed bat worker must be contacted for advice;
- Bats must not be handled under any circumstances; and
- An ecologist will assess a potential roost space (if identified/found) and inform NE of the proposed actions to be undertaken.