

Ridgefield Farm

Preliminary Roost Assessment Ross Tunbridge



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The views and opinions contained within the document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

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Executive Summary

- **The PRA determined that building 1 – Ridgefield Farm was CONFIRMED to house a bat roost, this is based on c200 bat droppings being recorded in the roof void. A sample of the droppings have been sent for eDNA analysis to confirm species.**
- **Building 1 requires three bat emergence surveys which should take place between 1st May and 30th August. It also requires a hibernation survey between December and late February.**
- In November 2025 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Ross Tunbridge to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey of a house, Ridgefield Farm, located near Corsham in Wiltshire.
- It is proposed that building 1 – Ridgefield Farm will be extended on the ground and first floors.
- The desk-based assessment returned no SACs relating to Annex II bats within 7.5km. No EPSL were recorded within 2km of the Site.
- Mitigation and habitat enhancement recommendations will be provided based on the results of the bat emergence surveys.
- **Update: eDNA analysis of the bat droppings collected confirmed they were from brown long-eared bats. See Appendix A.**

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In November 2025 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Ross Tunbridge to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey of a house, Ridgefield Farm, located near Corsham in Wiltshire.

1.2. Site Location and Description

Ridgefield Farm, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', was situated in outside Ridge, near Corsham in Wiltshire, (NGR ST 87598 67766). An aerial photo view of the site can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Red line boundary for the Site.



1.3. Development Proposals

The current proposal consist of the following:

- Building 1 – extend on the ground and first floor eastern elevation.

1.4. Survey Objectives

The objectives of the bat inspection survey comprise the following:

- Assess the buildings within the survey area for the potential for bats to use it to roost.

1.5. Quality Assurance

All ecological surveys are led by Ecologists who are members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) at the appropriate level. By joining the CIEEM staff sign up to a professional code of conduct.

1.6. Staff involved

Daniel Ahern is an experienced ecologist with a wide skills base gained in both the private and public sectors. He has been technical lead on large capital projects for regulators, government and utilities. Daniel has led freshwater & terrestrial ecology teams and has a robust understanding of current legislation and monitoring requirements. He currently holds NE licences for bats (level 2), white-clawed crayfish & GCN. Daniel has held SNH and NPWS licences for fresh-water pearl mussel and white-clawed crayfish in addition in addition to NE licences for *Lurionium natans*.

Samuel Horner is an assistant ecologist who supports preliminary roost assessments, has experience supporting and completing bat surveys. He is an accredited agent under the Natural England Class 2 Licence 2020-44508-CLS-CLS.

Methodology

2.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment

An internal and external bat inspection was undertaken on 1st December 2025 by Daniel Ahern (Natural England licence: 2025-86241-CL18-BAT) and Sam Horner. The inspection followed methods described in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (fourth edition) (Collins; 2023).

2.2. Desk Study

A desk study was carried out with the aim of supplementing the field survey results by collating and reviewing existing ecological information relevant to the site and the local area.

Bat European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) records from within 2km of the site were obtained from the MAGIC website, in addition details of designated sites, within 7.5 km of the site, relating to Annex II bat species were also obtained from the same website.

2.3. External Inspection

The exterior walls and roof of the building were viewed from ground level and features that provide potential bat access points or roosting places were noted and referred to as potential roost features (prf). Features that were looked for include:

- cracks/holes in mortar;
- gaps between ridge tiles and ridge and roof tiles;
- gaps in soffit boxes;
- gaps under wooden cladding; and
- gaps around the eaves.

Areas where bat droppings may accumulate, such as on the ground, ledges, window sills and walls, were also inspected.

Any features that may potentially be used by bats were identified and any evidence of bat activity, as listed below, were noted.

2.4. Internal Inspection

The internal inspection comprised a thorough search of the roof void within the building, see Figure 2 below for a floor plan, for evidence indicative of past or current use by roosting bats. Direct evidence of bat presence may include:

- live bats or bat corpses;
- droppings;
- bat sounds;
- scratch marks;
- urine stains; and
- clean, cob-web free gaps around potential entrance points.

Potential access points and roosting sites were also noted.

In any roof voids, a systematic search for evidence of bat presence was undertaken, concentrating on roof beams, ceiling joists and exposed surfaces.

Any evidence was recorded.

2.5. Bat Roost Assessment

The findings of the internal and external surveys inform an assessment of the structure, classifying the bat roost potential it has. The different classifications are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat roost assessment classifications

Classification	Description
NONE	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (ie a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
NEGLIGIBLE	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats; however, a small elements of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
LOW	A structure with one or more potential roost sites which could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter or protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats, (ie unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
MODERATE	A structure with one or more potential roost sites which could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation space-space the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
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 and suitable surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
CONFIRMED	Evidence of bats roosting in the building or structure is recorded, bats, their droppings or feeding remains.

2.6. Equipment

The following equipment was available to use during the survey:

- close-focusing binoculars;
- P7 Lenser torch;
- camera;
- Depstech endoscope.

2.7. Limitations

The data provided by the online resources were not exhaustive. It is possible that bat species not included in the data search occur within the vicinity of the proposed development site.

The internal and external inspection survey provides a snapshot of conditions at the time of survey. Bats are mobile creatures that will move into and out of areas.

The details within this report will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue.

Results

3.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2. Desk Study

Statutory Conservation Sites

Records of Special Areas of Conservation relevant to Annex II bat species within 7.5km of the Site are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Statutory designated sites.

Name	Area (ha)	Designation	Description	Distance & direction from the Site
Statutory sites				
None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Key

SAC – Special Area of Conservation

Bat Species

Records of bat EPSL within 2km of the Site are presented in Table 3 below recorded within the last 30 years.

Table 3: Bat EPSL records within 2km of the Site

EPSL Reference	Species named	Distance & direction from the Site
None	n/a	n/a

3.3. Bat Inspection Survey

The results of the building inspection are set out in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Bat inspection external & internal survey results

Building	External description	Internal description
Building 1 – Ridgefield Farm	The building was detached modern house, built in 2007. The roof was a simple, dual pitch design, clad with clay pan tiles. A low number of PRF were recorded in the roof structure where tiles were misaligned, particularly around a ventilation tile in the western face of the roof. The eaves were enclosed with uPVC soffits and fascias. No PRF were recorded. The walls were constructed from brick. No PRF were recorded. No evidence of bats was recorded externally.	A single void was accessible within the roof. It was in good condition with a complex roof truss arrangement. The underside of the roof was visible, this was constructed from type 1F felt. C200 bat droppings were recorded in cobwebs and on the floor immediately adjacent to the southern gable end wall. Update: eDNA analysis of the bat droppings collected confirmed they were from brown long-eared bats.

Results of the bat roost assessment are set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Bat roost potential for the buildings surveyed

Building	Bat Roost Potential	Reason	Requirements
Building 1 – Ridgefield Farm	CONFIRMED	• Low number of PRF recorded in the roof cladding • C200 bat droppings recorded in the roof void	Three emergence surveys should take place between 1 st May and 30 th August to confirm the presence or absence of bats. Hibernation surveys should take place between December and the end of February.

Discussion and Recommendations

4.1. Discussion

4.1.1. Desk based assessment results

The desk-based assessment returned no SACs relating to Annex II bats within 7.5km. No EPSL, were recorded within 2km of the site.

A PRA of adjacent polytunnels, within the sider site, completed by Luscinia Ecology in 2024, confirmed the structures had NEGLIGIBLE bat roost potential.

4.1.2. Survey results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The PRA determined that building 1 – Ridgefield Farm was CONFIRMED to house a bat roost, this is based on c200 bat droppings being recorded in the roof void. A sample of the droppings have been sent for eDNA analysis to confirm species.

Update: eDNA analysis of the bat droppings collected confirmed they were from brown long-eared bats. See Appendix A.

Requirements

- Mitigation and habitat enhancement recommendations will be provided based on the results of the bat emergence surveys.

References

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

Gunnell, K., et al (2010) Designing for Biodiversity: A technical guide for new and existing buildings. (2nd edn). RIBA.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (ed.) (2004) Bat Workers' Manual (3rd edn). JNCC.

Photographs

Photo 1 – northern elevation of building 1



Photo 2 – western elevation of building 1



Photo 3 – southern elevation of building 1



Photo 4 – southern and eastern elevations of building 1



Photo 5 – roof void in building 1 showing complex truss design



Photo 6 – bat droppings recorded in cobwebs on the northern gable end



Legislation and Policy

Bats

All species of bat found in the UK are listed under Schedule 5 of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended 2018) and are afforded protection under Section 9(1), Section 9(4)(b&c) and Section 9(5) of the Act. Under this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally or recklessly:

- Kills or injures any bat;
- Disturbs any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstructs access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection.

Bats are afforded additional protection through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of *The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017* (as amended). Under Part 3 of this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he:

- Deliberately captures, injures or kills a bat;
- Deliberately disturbs a bat; or
- Damages or destroys a bat breeding site or resting place.

Disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, rear or nurture their young, migrate or hibernate. It also includes any disturbance likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species. Consequently, attention should be given to dealing with the modification or development of an area if aspects of it are deemed important to bats, such as flight corridors and foraging areas.

Breeding Birds

Wild birds, their nests and eggs, are afforded protection under Section 1(1) of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Under this legislation, a person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally:

- Kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1;
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- Takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird.

Appendix A

Summary

Most biological materials (tissue, feces, hair, blood, etc.) contain small amounts of DNA from the organism of which it originated. Using molecular methods such as PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and DNA sequencing, SureScreen Scientifics are able to analyze an unknown sample to determine which species the sample originates from our methods are optimized for the detection of species including bats (over 92% of bat species worldwide can be identified including all 18 UK bat species), mammals; bees, wasps & hornets; birds; fish; plants (from roots, leaves, stem and even dried wood) and many more species.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Sample Type	Species Name	Match(%)
B6011	5868 - Ridge Field Farm	ST 87598 67766	Bat Dropping	Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus)	99.48
Genetic Sequence CGGAGGCTTCGGGACTGATTGGTGCCACTAATAATTGGAGCCCCTGATATAGCTTTTCCCGAATAAATAACATAA GCTTCTGACTGCTTCCCCATCTTTTCTACTACTTTTAGCTTCGTCTGCAGTAGAGGCTGGAGCAGGTACCGTTGA ACAGTCTATCCTCCTTTAGCGGGAAACCTATGCACATGCATGGAGAG					
B6012					
Genetic Sequence GCTAGGAGGATTTGGTAACTGACTCATTCTCTAATAATTGGTGCGCCAGATATAGCATTTCACGAATAAATAATA TAAGCTTCTGACTACTCCACCATCATTTCTCTATTACTTGCCTCATCAACCGTAGAAGCCGGGGCTGGGACTGG CTGAACGTATATCCACCACTAGCCGGAAACCTAGCACACGCAGGAGAG					

Matters affecting result: none
Reported by: Vanessa Hind

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