

The Court House – field shelter

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Rosie Hayes



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Executive Summary

- **The PRA determined that The Court House – field shelter had NEGLIGIBLE bat roost potential, based on no PRF's present and no evidence of bats found internally and externally.**
- In July 2025 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Rosie Hayes to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey of a field shelter at The Court House in Aldbourne, Wiltshire.
- It is proposed that the shelter will be demolished and replaced with a new, larger field shelter.
- The desk-based assessment returned no SACs relating to Annex II bats within 7.5km. One EPSL, for brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats, was recorded within 2km of the Site.
- Mitigation and habitat enhancement recommendations are set out in section 4.2.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In July 2025 Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Rosie Hayes to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), also known as a bat inspection survey of a field shelter at The Court House in Aldbourne, Wiltshire.

1.2. Site Location and Description

The field shelter at The Court House, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', was situated in Aldbourne, (NGR SU 26302 75911). 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 consists of the following:

- Demolish existing field shelter and replace with a new larger shelter.

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*.

Ashleigh Cairns is an assistant ecologist who leads preliminary roost assessments, supports bat emergence surveys and has experience with a range of field survey techniques. She is an experienced bat surveyor who works as 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 4th August 2025 by Ashleigh Cairns (Accredited agent under Natural England licence: 2020-44508-CLS-CLS). 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
EPSM2009-480	Brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle	1km southeast

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
The field shelter	Timber field shelter with mono pitched shed roof of corrugated metal sheet construction. The shelter was timber clad with two stable doors with no top half and one full wooden board door on the east elevation. The shelter was built on hard standing. No evidence of bats was recorded externally.	No roof void, single skin construction. Internal timber frame with timber cladding on walls and corrugated metal roof sheets. Building is split in two with timber dividing wall and wooden cladding. Gaps present at the top of the dividing wall. Two old and disused bird nests found. Many spiderwebs present. No evidence of bats was recorded internally.

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
The field shelter	NEGLIGIBLE	- No PRF's recorded - No evidence of bats recorded externally or internally	No further survey work required.

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. One EPSL, for brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats, was recorded within 2km of the site.

It is not believed the proposed development will have a significant impact on the status of the known local roost.

4.1.2. Survey results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The field shelter at The Court House was assessed to have NEGLIGIBLE bat roost potential based on the absence of PRF's and no evidence of bats recorded internally or externally.

Requirements

Habitat enhancement measures:

- One Harlech bat box - https://www.birdfood.co.uk/harlech-woodstone-bat-box-black?gclid=EALalQobChMIwlbT2pqD_glVyz7tCh1AoAVbEAAYAiAAEgLxGfD_BwE. Installed at a height of at least 3m above the ground on a west facing tree or building elevation.
- One Woodstone bird box - https://www.birdfood.co.uk/national-trust-woodstone-32mm-nest-box-green?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=EALalQobChMI-ef86JqD_glVjdPtCh21_QonEAQYASABEgLZcPD_BwE. Installed at a height of at least 3m above the ground on a west facing tree or building elevation.
- One insect block - https://www.birdfood.co.uk/woodstone-insect-block-grey?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=EALalQobChMIrZm8-ZqD_glVEmHmCh2g5g_FEAQYAiABEgJu4fD_BwE. Installed at a height of 1.5m above the ground on a south facing tree or building elevation.

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 – external view of the field shelter, east elevation



Photo 2 – internal view of field shelter, southern side



Photo 3 – internal view of field shelter, northern side



Photo 4 – internal view of field shelter showing example of birds nest found



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.