
Coles Farm, Alcombe

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

August 2025/April 2026

Client: WebsterHart
Report Ref: SEB3147_01 V4
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Non-Technical Summary

Site Location	Coles Farm, Alcombe, Box, SN13 8QL (grid reference: ST 81116 69196).
Scope of Works	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the house at Coles Farm, supplemented with a desk study, undertaken on 14 th August 2025 (house) and 16 th April 2026 (basement).
Survey Methods	Assessment and survey undertaken with reference to BCT (2023).
Lead Personnel	Kate Hayward MCIEEM, level 2 licensed bat surveyor and Emma Shaw, level 1 licensed bat surveyor.
The Proposal	The Grade 1 Listed property is the subject of a Listed Building application for internal renovation works.
Description, Results and Evaluation	The site lies in a rural location between Corsham and Bath, approximately 1.4km north-west of the village of Box. The grounds of Coles Farm contain several buildings, formal gardens, trees, hedgerows and ponds. The site lies within the Consultation Zone for Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The house is three-storey and constructed with a combination of Bath Ashlar and rubble stone with stone-tiled roofs. Internally, the house has two roof spaces and a basement. A low number of bat droppings were found in the main roof space of the house, confirmed by DNA analysis as belonging to brown long-eared bat. No evidence of roosting bats was present in the basement and there was only one suboptimal access point into the basement from the outside (ground level vent). There are a low number of external features identified on the house, including loose and raised stone tiles and gaps in stonework. There are no suitable accesses for horseshoe bats for which the nearby SAC is designated. Therefore, no impacts on the SAC are predicted. The house is assessed as <i>High</i> suitability to roosting bats owing to its ecological context, age, style and construction.
Recommendations	Internal renovation works will not impact on roosting bats or nesting birds. No works are proposed to the roof or roof spaces. However, should access to the roof spaces be required, at any point, then a pre-works inspection and supervision by a Licensed Bat Ecologist is recommended.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In July 2025, Seasons Ecology was instructed by WebsterHart, to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of Coles Farm, Alcombe, Box, SN13 8QL (grid reference: ST 81116 69196).
- 1.1.2 The Grade 1 Listed property is the subject of a Listed Building application for internal renovation works to the house.

1.2 Scope and Objectives of Survey

- 1.2.1 The survey was undertaken to identify the presence of and suitability for the building to support protected species, namely bats and nesting birds. Recommendations are made, as appropriate, to avoid potential harm to bats and nesting birds during the works to ensure compliance with legislation and licencing requirements.
- 1.2.2 This report is based on the findings of a survey of the house undertaken on 14th August 2025 and an inspection of the basement undertaken on 16th April 2026.

1.3 Personnel

- 1.3.1 The survey was overseen by Kate Hayward MCIEEM who has produced this report. Kate is Principal Ecologist and Director of Seasons Ecology with over 25 years' experience as a professional consultant. Kate is a level 2 licensed bat surveyor and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).
- 1.3.2 The survey was led by Emma Shaw, Consultant Ecologist and Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Emma is a level 1 licensed bat surveyor with over five years' experience in surveying protected species.
- 1.3.3 The survey was assisted by Luke McEvoy-Hughes, Seasonal Ecologist, and Hayley Evenett, Assistant Ecologist.

2. Legislation

2.1 Bats

- 2.1.1 Bat species in England and Wales are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:
 - Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which bats use for shelter or protection; and
 - Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.
- 2.1.2 With the exception of disturbance, this legislation applies throughout the year whether bats are present or not at the time of works being carried out and generally irrespective of planning permission being obtained or being required.

2.2 Nesting Birds

2.2.1 All wild birds in England and Wales are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

3. Desk Study

3.1 Method

3.1.1 A web-based desk study was undertaken in August 2025 prior to the survey to provide local information that may be relevant to the proposal. The following online resources were consulted:

- The MAGIC website¹, to obtain information on statutory designations with bats as a primary feature within 4km of the site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones affecting the site and details of any European Protected Species licences for bats issued within 2km.
- Google Maps², to view aerial photographs, maps and mapnik data, to assess the ecological context of the site.

3.2 Results

Statutory Designations

3.2.1 There are two statutory designations with bats as the primary feature within 4km of the site. Both designations are components of Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

- Box Mines SSSI is the nearest designation, located approximately 2km to the west. This is an extensive network of man-made tunnels, seasonally supporting up to 10% of the British population of the rare greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Browns Folly SSSI is located 3km to the south-west. This site includes the hibernation sites associated with 15% of the British greater horseshoe bat population and is selected on the basis of the importance of this exceptionally large overwintering population. Small numbers of Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* have also been recorded hibernating in abandoned mines in this area.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones

3.2.2 The site itself is not covered by any statutory designations but lies within the Impact Risk Zone for nearby SSSIs. Relevant to this proposal, consultation with Natural England is required on

¹ <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

² <http://acme.com/planimeter/>

all planning applications where the development is outside or extending beyond existing settlements that increase lighting or impact trees, woodlands, waterbodies, rural buildings, or linear features (e.g. hedgerows, streams, rivers) through loss, fragmentation, or change of use. Therefore, consultation may not be required, the proposal being for existing buildings, although in a rural location.

- 3.2.3 The site lies within the Consultation Zone for Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

European Protected Species Licences

- 3.2.4 There are two European Protected Species licences for bats issued within 2km of the site. The closest licence is for a location approximately 1km to the east, for the species, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, greater horseshoe, Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* and brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*. The other licence is for a location approximately 1.7km to the south-west, for the species, lesser horseshoe.

Ecological Context

- 3.2.5 The site lies in a rural location between Corsham and Bath, approximately 1.4km north-west of the village of Box. The grounds of Coles Farm contain several buildings, formal gardens, trees, hedgerows and ponds.
- 3.2.6 Beyond the grounds of Coles Farm in all directions are arable and pasture fields with low-density, scattered residential properties, mature trees and patches of woodland. Approximately 100m to the north of the site is Briary Wood, a Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland.
- 3.2.7 The Bybrook River, a tributary of the River Avon, flows approximately 400m to the south of the site at its nearest point.

4. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

4.1 Method

- 4.1.1 The survey was undertaken on 14th August 2025 with an inspection of the basement undertaken on 16th April 2026. Assessment and survey methods refer to BCT, 2023³.
- 4.1.2 The house and basement, were assessed for their suitability to roosting bats. This assessment considered the style, construction and condition of the building (missing roof tiles, rotten beams, cracks in stonework and ivy cover, for example) and presence of any suitable access points. Based on these factors, the building and basement are assessed as having *Negligible, Low, Moderate or High* suitability to roosting bats.
- 4.1.3 A visual inspection was then undertaken of the internal areas/roof spaces and basement of the building to search for signs of bats, such as droppings, staining, scratch marks, feeding remains, and for actual bats. Any signs of nesting birds were also noted. A high-powered torch was used to aid the inspection.

Constraints to Survey

- 4.1.4 There were no constraints to the survey, all external elevations and the roofs of the building were able to be fully viewed, and all internal spaces were able to be accessed for inspection.

4.2 Building Description and Results

- 4.2.1 Elevation plans are provided at Annex 1 with Target Notes highlighting features of interest. Site photographs are provided at Annex 2.
- 4.2.2 The house and basement are described below.

The House

- 4.2.3 The house has a footprint of approximately 185m². It is three-storey and constructed with a combination of Bath Ashlar stone and rubble stone. The roofs are gabled, all with stone tiles and stone ridge tiles. There are three chimneys. Timber fascia boards and lead guttering follow the roofline. There are timber-framed windows and doors across all elevations.
- 4.2.4 The following external features and/or potential access points for roosting bats were identified:
- A high number of loose and raised stone tiles evident across all roof pitches.
 - Gaps in stonework on the south-east elevation (Target Note 1, Annex 1).
 - A gap at the apex on the north-west elevation (Target Note 2, Annex 1).
- 4.2.5 Internally, there is one large, L-shaped roof space and a smaller roof space over the kitchen. The L-shaped roof space is approximately 1.5m in height and 3m width. It has a combination of a traditional Bitumen-type liner and lath and plaster, both in poor condition with sections of the roof tiles visible, with gaps, and notably one large gap evident (Target Note 3, Annex 1). The roof space is uncluttered apart from one section containing a water tank.

³ BCT (2023): Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- 4.2.6 A low number of bat droppings were found in the roof space (approximately ten) (Target Note 4, Annex 1). A sample of the bat droppings was collected for DNA analysis to confirm species.
- 4.2.7 The smaller roof space over the kitchen is approximately 2m height and 6m by 4m. There is no liner below the roof tiles and there is daylight entering via gaps between the tiles (Target Note 5, Annex 1).

Basement

- 4.2.8 The basement is split into two compartments, one in the south-east corner and one L-shaped compartment extending from the north-east to the south-west of the basement. The north-east and south-east of the basement are well-lit due to two windows on the south-east elevation (Target Note 6, Annex 1). The south-west of the basement appears dimly lit, as the lightwell in this area is covered by a metal vent at ground level (Target Note 7, Annex 1). The metal vent is partially obstructed across the bottom two thirds of the vent, with the top being open and providing a sub-optimal access point into the interior. Internally, the basement provides no perching habitat and presents a very low number of suitable crevices, mainly surrounding the boiler in the north-west of the basement. One potential access point was noted to the rear of the boiler, being a historic coal shoot.
- 4.2.9 Externally, no further access points were identified into the basement, with the two south-east elevation windows appearing in good condition and well-sealed, and the exterior location of the historic coal shoot no longer evident externally, having been previously removed and filled in. The blocked lightwell in the south-west of the basement is partially obscured externally by a number of slate tiles, therefore reducing the suitability of this access point.

Surrounding Habitats

- 4.2.10 Surrounding the house are formal, well-managed gardens and scattered mature and semi-mature trees, including an orchard. The garden contains two small, ornamental ponds.

5. Evaluation

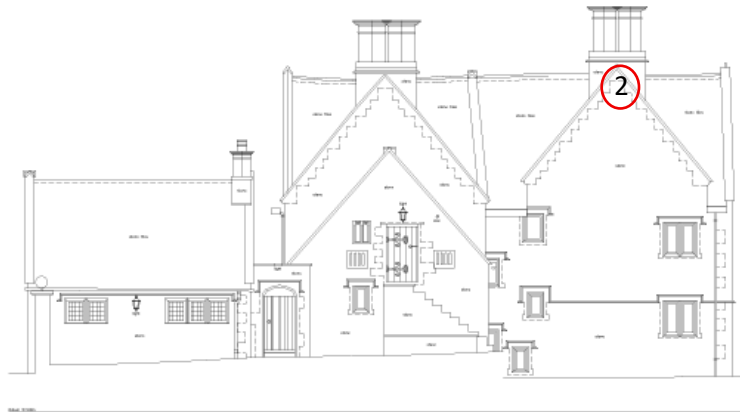
- 5.1.1 The house at Coles Farm lies in a rural location surrounded by open countryside. It is assessed as *High* suitability to roosting bats owing to its ecological context, age, style and construction. Evidence for the presence of roosting bats was identified within the main roof space of the house. DNA analysis of the bat dropping sample collected confirmed brown long-eared bat, indicating a day roost for low numbers of this species.
- 5.1.2 The basement has one suboptimal, partially obscured, access point, and only a very low number of suitable crevices within the interior, no suitable perching habitat and no evidence of roosting bats found. Therefore, it is considered that the basement has *Negligible* suitability to roosting bats.
- 5.1.3 The house has no suitable accesses for horseshoe bats, the site lying within the Consultation Zone for Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, for which horseshoe bats are a primary reason for the designation. Therefore, due to the nature of the proposals and the lack of suitable accesses, no impacts are predicted on the SAC.
- 5.1.4 The house is suitable to nesting birds, although no active or old nests were identified during the survey.
- 5.1.5 The grounds of Coles Farm and the surrounding open countryside offer high-quality foraging and commuting habitats for bats, including landscaped gardens with mature trees and ponds, arable and pasture fields, woodlands and hedgerows.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1.1 The Grade 1 Listed property is the subject of a Listed Building application for internal renovation works. There are no works proposed to the roof or roof spaces. Therefore, areas with suitability to roosting bats and the brown long-eared probable day roost in the main roof space of the house, will not be impacted.
- 6.1.2 It is not expected that access to roof spaces will be required. However, should this change at any point during the renovation works, then a Licensed Bat Ecologist should be contacted to carry out a pre-works inspection of the roof spaces and to be present whilst any minor works are carried out.
- 6.1.3 No other precautionary measures are required prior to and during the works.

7. Annexes

Annex 1: Elevations Plans - House



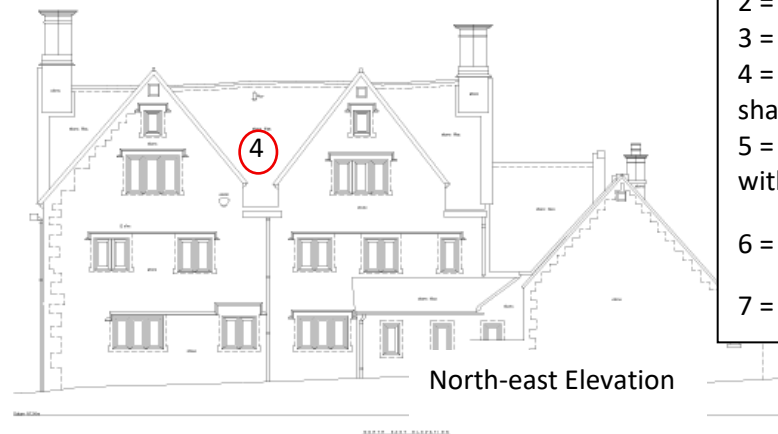
North-west Elevation



South-west Elevation



South-east Elevation



North-east Elevation

Target Note Descriptions

- 1 = Gaps in stonework
- 2 = Gap at the apex
- 3 = Large gap between roof tiles
- 4 = Low no. bat droppings in L-shaped roof
- 5 = Roof space above kitchen with gaps between tiles
- 6 = Windows in basement
- 7 = Metal vent in basement

Annex 2: Site Photographs (August 2025/April 2026)

Photograph 1: North-west elevation of the house.



Photograph 2: South-west elevation of the house.



Photograph 3: Part of the L-shaped roof space of the house.



Photograph 4: Basement windows.



Photograph 5: Partially obscured metal vent to basement.



Photograph 6: Well-lit internal area of the basement.



Photograph 7. Internal view of basement showing the metal vent.

