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PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Proposed Demolition of Existing Outbuilding & Erection of Replacement Outbuilding at Framfield,
Church Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0EH

Planning Application Reference: PL/2026/01921

Survey Date: 22nd May 2026

Report Date: 22nd May 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) has been prepared in support of a planning application for the demolition of an existing detached single-storey outbuilding located at Framfield, Church Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0EH.

The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance and relevant wildlife legislation to determine whether the proposed works are likely to affect roosting bats and whether any further survey work or licensing requirements are necessary.

All species of bat and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is therefore necessary to determine whether the building supports, or has the potential to support, roosting bats prior to demolition.

2. Survey Objectives

2.1 Purpose of Assessment

The principal aim of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey is to determine the actual and potential presence of bats within buildings and structures that may be affected by development proposals.

The survey seeks to:

- Identify evidence of current or historic bat occupation;
- Assess the suitability of the structure to support roosting bats;
- Identify potential roost features (PRFs);

- Determine whether further bat surveys are required;
- Assess likely impacts arising from the proposed development;
- Establish whether a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) may be required;
- Provide recommendations for mitigation, compensation and enhancement where appropriate.

This report aims to establish whether the proposed demolition of the existing outbuilding is likely to impact roosting bats and whether any licensing requirements would be necessary to enable the development to proceed lawfully following planning approval.

2.2 Zone of Influence

The results of the site inspection and details of the proposed development were used to establish the likely Zone of Influence (ZoI) for bats.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) defines a Zone of Influence as the area or ecological resource that may be affected by biophysical changes arising from a development proposal.

The proposed development comprises demolition of an existing single-storey outbuilding within an established residential curtilage. The works are localised in nature and do not involve the removal of significant areas of habitat, mature trees, hedgerows or other landscape features known to support bat commuting or foraging activity.

Consequently, the ZoI in relation to potential impacts on roosting bats is considered to be confined to the building itself and directly associated structural features.

Although bats may utilise adjacent hedgerows, trees and garden habitats for commuting and foraging, these habitats will be retained and are not directly affected by the proposed works.

The site lies on the extreme boundary of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS) Yellow Zone and is effectively positioned on the outer edge of the strategy area, being close to the point at which the site would fall outside the mapped zoning.

Given the limited scale of the proposals and the retention of surrounding habitats, the survey area was confined to the building and its immediate surroundings.

3. Site Description

The application site comprises a detached single-storey brick outbuilding situated within the grounds of Framfield, Church Lane, Trowbridge.

The structure comprises:

- Solid brick external walls;
- Corrugated sheet mono-pitch roof;
- Exposed steel roof supports;
- Open internal roof structure;
- No loft space;
- No ceiling void;
- No enclosed roof void.

The building is currently used for general storage.

The surrounding site comprises managed garden habitat with adjacent boundary hedgerows, shrubs and mature trees which provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats within the wider landscape.

The building exhibits signs of age-related deterioration & is in a currently dangerous state structurally, whereby any day the building could partially collapse as a result of spreading/moving brickwork, evident in the large cracks in the brickwork and the floor slab within the building. Other items of disrepair include:

- Missing bricks;
- Cracks within brickwork;
- Mortar loss;
- Localised structural movement;
- Openings around wall heads and roof junctions.

Appendix A should be reviewed, which document site photos of the building as per 22nd May 2026.

4. Desk Study & Ecological Context

The site is located on the boundary of the Yellow Zone identified within the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS).

The TBMS recognises the importance of maintaining habitat connectivity for bat species through retention of foraging and commuting habitat such as hedgerows, woodland edges and dark corridors.

The application site occupies a peripheral location within the strategy area and is effectively situated on the cusp of falling outside the designated zoning.

The adjacent hedgerows and mature vegetation provide suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats. These habitats are retained as part of the proposals and no significant habitat loss is proposed, and as an enhancement, additional hedgerow planting is proposed once the building is demolished.

The proposed demolition relates solely to the existing outbuilding and therefore any potential impact is limited to the structure itself.

5. Survey Methodology

5.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on 22 May 2026 in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

The survey comprised a detailed daytime internal and external inspection of the building.

The principal aim of the survey was to determine the actual and potential presence of bats and to identify any features capable of supporting roosting bats.

5.2 External Inspection

The external inspection included a detailed assessment of:

- Cracks and crevices in masonry;
- Missing bricks;
- Ventilation openings;
- Roof-wall junctions;
- Gaps beneath corrugated roof sheets;

- Structural defects;
- Potential access points;
- Areas formerly obscured by ivy.

The following evidence of bats was specifically searched for:

- Bat droppings;
- Feeding remains;
- Staining;
- Grease marks;
- Roost entrances;
- Bat carcasses;
- Live bats.

5.3 Internal Inspection

The internal inspection comprised examination of:

- Wall cavities;
- Masonry defects;
- Roof sheet junctions;
- Structural cracks;
- Steel roof supports;
- Areas of hanging vegetation;
- Roof/wall interfaces;
- Sheltered corners and recesses.

Searches were undertaken for:

- Roosting bats;
- Bat droppings;
- Feeding remains;
- Bat carcasses;
- Urine staining;
- Scratch marks;
- Roosting evidence.

The entire structure was visible from ground level, enabling comprehensive inspection of all accessible areas.

5.4 Assessment of Roost Potential

Most British bat species are crevice-dwelling and frequently occupy inaccessible locations within buildings, including:

- Roof coverings;
- Wall cavities;
- Cladding;
- Flashings;
- Soffits;
- Mortar gaps;
- Expansion joints.

The absence of evidence during a daytime inspection does not necessarily confirm absence of bats.

Accordingly, where no evidence is identified, assessment is based upon:

- Availability of potential roost features;
- Accessibility of those features;
- Internal environmental conditions;
- Levels of shelter;
- Thermal stability;
- Connectivity to surrounding habitat.

Buildings are then assigned a suitability category ranging from None to High in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidance.

6. Survey Results

6.1 External Inspection Findings

The building contains numerous openings and defects within the masonry including:

- Missing bricks;
- Cracks within brickwork;
- Localised mortar loss;
- Gaps at wall heads.

These features theoretically provide opportunities for opportunistic bat access.

However, many openings were found to be occupied or obstructed by mature ivy stems and root growth.

No evidence of bats was recorded externally including:

- No droppings;
- No staining;
- No feeding remains;
- No carcasses;
- No live bats.

6.2 Ivy Cover Assessment

At the time of survey the building was extensively covered by mature ivy (some dead sections).

The roof covering was almost entirely obscured by dense ivy growth and woody stems.

The photographs demonstrate:

- Extensive historic ivy colonisation;
- Large woody stems covering roof edges;
- Vegetation extending across roof sheets;
- Ivy growth occupying many crevices and openings;
- Numerous stems extending through the building fabric.

Inspection identified that many apparent crevices and openings had become infilled by woody vegetation growth, significantly reducing the availability of sheltered voids.

Internally, substantial quantities of ivy stems and tendrils were observed hanging beneath the corrugated roof covering.

The hanging vegetation creates a cluttered environment beneath the roof and substantially reduces unobstructed flight space.

Whilst ivy can occasionally support roosting bats where dense sheltered cavities are present, no such features were identified during the inspection.

No evidence of bat occupation was recorded within the vegetation.

In this instance, the ivy is considered to reduce rather than enhance the suitability of the building for roosting bats.

6.3 Internal Inspection Findings

The building was inspected throughout all accessible areas.

The photographs confirm:

- No loft space present;
- No roof void present;
- No suspended ceiling;
- No enclosed cavity spaces;
- Open access to underside of roof sheeting throughout.

The corrugated roof covering is directly visible from floor level.

Numerous small openings permit:

- Significant daylight penetration;
- Air movement;
- Temperature fluctuation;
- Exposure to external conditions.

The internal environment is therefore highly ventilated and thermally unstable.

Although structural defects occur within walls and around some openings, these areas are generally:

- Shallow;
- Exposed;
- Subject to airflow;
- Occupied by vegetation growth.

No evidence of current or historic bat occupation was identified.

Specifically, no:

- Bat droppings;
- Feeding remains;
- Bat corpses;
- Urine staining;
- Grease marks;
- Scratch marks;
- Live bats

were recorded anywhere within the structure.

7. Bat roost Potential Assessment

The building contains several potential roost features in the form of:

- Cracks within brickwork;
- Missing bricks;
- Ventilation openings;
- Localised gaps around roof edges.

However, these features are generally:

- Small and exposed;
- Occupied by ivy growth;
- Highly ventilated;
- Subject to daylight penetration;
- Lacking thermal stability.

The building lacks many characteristics typically associated with regularly occupied bat roosts, including:

- Enclosed roof voids;
- Sheltered attic spaces;
- Stable microclimates;
- Deep cavities;
- Protected crevice systems.

The surrounding hedgerows and mature vegetation provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

However, the presence of suitable surrounding habitat does not necessarily indicate that the building itself provides suitable roosting habitat.

The extensive ivy growth, combined with open internal conditions and absence of enclosed roof voids, substantially reduces suitability for bat occupation.

The building therefore most closely accords with the Bat Conservation Trust definition of:

LOW SUITABILITY

"A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection or appropriate conditions to be used regularly or by larger numbers of bats."

8. Impact Assessment

The proposed development comprises demolition of the existing outbuilding.

No evidence of bats was identified during the survey.

The building has been assessed as possessing Low Bat Roost Potential.

Consequently, the likelihood of bats being affected by the proposed works is considered low.

The surrounding hedgerows, trees and other commuting habitat will be retained.

No significant impacts on bat foraging habitat or commuting corridors are anticipated.

9. Recommendations

Precautionary Method of Demolition

Although no evidence of bats was recorded, demolition should proceed using a precautionary approach.

Should any bat be discovered during demolition:

- Works must cease immediately;
- The bat should not be handled unless necessary;
- A suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice;
- Natural England licensing requirements should be reviewed if required.

10. Conclusion

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on 22 May 2026 of the existing single-storey brick outbuilding at Framfield, Church Lane, Trowbridge.

The survey identified:

- No evidence of current bat occupation;
- No evidence of historic bat occupation;
- No droppings;
- No feeding remains;
- No staining;
- No carcasses;
- No live bats.

The building contains a limited number of potential roost features in the form of masonry defects and openings. However, these are generally exposed, heavily ventilated, partially occupied by ivy growth and lack suitable shelter or thermal stability.

The structure has no roof void, no loft space and no enclosed roof cavities. Extensive ivy growth has further reduced the availability of suitable roosting crevices and created a cluttered internal environment beneath the roof covering.

Whilst the site lies on the extreme boundary of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy Yellow Zone and is surrounded by habitat suitable for bat commuting and foraging, the building itself is considered to provide only limited opportunities for opportunistic use by individual bats.

Accordingly, the building is assessed as possessing **LOW BAT ROOST POTENTIAL**.

Based upon the findings of this assessment:

No further bat surveys are considered necessary.

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) is not considered necessary.

The proposed demolition is unlikely to result in an offence under current wildlife legislation provided the precautionary measures outlined within this report are implemented.

Appendix A – Site Photos

1. North-East Elevation photos











2. South-West Elevation Photos







3. South-East Elevation Photos





4. North-West Elevations Photos





5. Internal Photos













