Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment & Ground Level Tree Assessment

Land adjacent to 3 Peckleton Lane

November 2025

Client/Agent Name:	Graham Priestnall
Report reference:	200_128
Report issue date:	November 2025
Version:	1
Survey date:	26th November 2025
Surveyed by:	Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM
Author:	Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM

Contents

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd on behalf of Graham Priestnall. It presents the findings of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for land situated adjacent to 3 Peckleton Lane, Desford, Leicester LE9 9JU.

The proposed development encompasses the construction of a self-build dwelling, demolition of existing garages, and modification of parking provisions, including removal of hedgerows and trees located east of the garage.

No evidence of roosting bats was detected during surveys of either the building or the trees present on the site. The sycamore specimens assessed were classified as having low bat roosting potential (PRF-I), and the surrounding landscape offers limited suitable habitat for bat foraging and commuting. The building itself is considered to have negligible suitability for supporting bat roosts due to its location and lack of appropriate structural features.

Pursuant to best practice guidance (Collins, 2023), a precautionary approach is recommended for this project. No additional bat surveys are required, provided all activities adhere to the method statement set out in Appendix 1 and the precautionary measures described in Section 6 regarding tree removal, which must be conducted with ongoing input from a licensed bat ecologist. A European Protected Species derogation licence will not be necessary if these protocols are followed.

Five trees containing potential bat roosting features have been identified for removal. In accordance with current guidelines, further survey work on trees exhibiting PRF-I characteristics is not required. Instead, the Roost Resource Approach will be implemented, involving the installation of two Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C' units (or approved equivalents) within the new building under supervision, to compensate for any possible loss of bat habitat.

In summary, the site poses a negligible risk to bats, and the mitigation measures outlined are deemed adequate to protect any possible bat interest throughout the course of the proposed works.

All breeding birds and their nests receive statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Although there was no indication of breeding birds within the building, pre-works checks for nesting birds are advised should activities take place during the breeding season (March to September). All trees on site are considered suitable for nesting; therefore, tree operations should ideally occur outside of the breeding season (March to August). If works are unavoidable within this period, a qualified ecologist should inspect for active nests, which, if found, must remain undisturbed until vacated.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd for Graham Priestnall. The report provides the results of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) at Land adjacent to 3 Peckleton Lane, Desford, Leicester LE9 9JU. The survey building is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SK 53413 59401.

The proposal involves the erection of a self-build dwelling, demolition of existing garages and alteration of parking arrangements, including the removal of hedgerow and trees to the east of the garage.

The legislation with regard to bats (*Chiroptera*) is listed below.

1.1 Legislation applicable to bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations'). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat. It is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, to reproduce, to nurture their young, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate. Under this legislation development work that could affect a bat or bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural England.

Licences in respect of European Protected Species affected by development can be granted under Section 55(2) (e) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019), for the purpose of 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.

Under section 55(9) of the Regulations licences can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative to the work specification
- and the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural England aim to process EPS licence applications within 35 working days of receipt and Low Impact Class licenses are typically registered within 14 working days of receipt.

1.2 Legislation applicable to breeding birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all native birds and their nests, whilst in use, are protected from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season. To avoid conflict, development work that could affect breeding birds should be timed to take place outside of the breeding season, variable between

March and September. Note that a nest is protected from the beginning of its construction until the young have fledged and left the nest.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location of the building

Figure 1: The location of the building (in red), aerial imagery courtesy of Google (2025).

The Site is located in a residential area in Desford, Leicestershire. Other residential infrastructure borders the Site to all aspects. The wider landscape is also dominated by residential and commercial infrastructure to all aspects.

Description of the building

Red brick built double garage, covered in asbestos corrugated panels, mixture wood and plastic barge boards, and wooden windows and doors throughout.

See photographs 1 to 5.

Photograph 1: The western elevation of the Building.

Photograph 2: The south and eastern elevations of the garage.

Photograph 3: The western elevation of the garage.

Photograph 4: The internal view of the building.

Photograph 5: The internal view of the building.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop study

The desktop study involved examining web-based resources. The following resources were examined:

- MAGIC - Multi-Agency Geographic Information website for maps of statutory designated nature conservation sites and previously Granted European Protected Species Applications for Bats within 1km of the survey area.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment & Ground Level Tree Assessment

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment including a Ground Level Tree Assessment was completed on the Building and all trees to be impacted by the proposals. The survey was completed in accordance with the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2023), comprising a visual inspection of the building (formerly referred to as a bat scoping survey) and trees as part of the ecological assessment of the potential development footprint.

The methodology included examining the building and trees for potential roost features and assessing the likelihood of these features being used by bats. This included searching for evidence of bat roosting in the form of feeding remains, droppings, staining, worn surfaces and the bats themselves (alive or dead).

Equipment used included a powerful torch, collapsible ladders, endoscope, camera, and binoculars.

3.3 Survey constraints

The survey was undertaken outside of the main bat survey season of May to September. Any evidence of bats on the external elevations of the building may be removed by the actions of water and wind, though evidence within sealed and undisturbed areas such as attic spaces would remain unaffected.

3.4 Personnel

The PBRA was undertaken by Clayton Ecology Ltd on the 26th November 2025. The survey was carried out by Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (Bat Licence: 2025-84485-CL18-BAT).

3.5 Breeding birds scoping survey

Features that had potential to support nesting birds were recorded along with any breeding bird activity observed during the visual inspection.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Desk Study

No Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Statutory Designated Sites, Special Areas of Conservation or National Nature Reserves were identified within the search radius.

Magic Map identified the following previously granted (Bat) European Protected Species Derogation Licences within 1km of the Site.

4.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results

4.2.1 Building

No evidence of bat activity was identified during the visual inspection of the Building.

Potential access points for bats were noted, including a significant gap above the garage door (see photograph 6 below). However, internal features suitable for roosting were minimal, and no indications of historic use, such as droppings or urine staining, were observed. The building appeared draughty and cold.

The fascia boards around the building's exterior, typically considered potential roosting sites for bats, were covered with webs and displayed no signs of previous occupancy (see photograph 7 below).

Photograph 6: Gap above the garage door.

Photograph 7: An example of the fascia boards with dense webbing.

4.2.2 Geographic Location

There are mature trees close to the Site which could add cover and connectivity for roosting bats. Nearby habitats of value to bats in terms of providing commuting and foraging opportunities include:

- Mature trees and garden hedgerows within the residential area surrounding the Site.

The landscape is not well connected and is therefore considered to provide low foraging and commuting habitat for light tolerant bat species within the local range.

4.2.3 Conclusions

The Building was assessed as having **negligible potential** for roosting bats, based on the geographic location and small number of potential bat roost features present.

4.3 Ground Level Tree Assessment

All of the trees were inspected and categorised as either PRF – None (no suitable bat roosting features), PRF – I (suitable features for individuals or very low numbers of bats), or PRF – M (features that are suitable for maternity colonies).

None of the trees inspected were identified as suitable for maternity colonies.

The holly was identified as unsuitable for roosting bats, but may provide suitable nesting areas for birds.

The six Sycamore trunks originated from a single root system at their base and were recently pruned by a neighbouring property owner. These trees exhibited symptoms of

disease, with most displaying lifted bark. This condition may offer potential roosting habitats for individual bats, although no bats were observed during the survey. The extent of bark lifting could increase over time. The trees have been classified as PRF-I, indicating suitability for individual bats or small populations.

Photographs 8: The holly along the boundary which may be impacted, and the six Sycamore stems.

Photographs 10: Lifted bark shown on the trees.

4.4 Scoping survey results: breeding birds

There was no evidence of bird species having previously utilised the structure for nesting. The Holly and to a more limited extent the Sycamore trees may provide suitable nesting areas for birds, however there was no previous evidence noted.

4.5 Scoping survey results: other species

No evidence of other protected or invasive species was identified during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape.

5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the Building.

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the Ground Level Tree Assessment, however the sycamore trees were identified as PRF – I. PRF-I features are assessed as having Low Roost Suitability.

The landscape is considered to provide low foraging and commuting habitat for light tolerant bat species within the local range.

The Building was assessed as have **Negligible Potential** for roosting bats, based on the geographic location and lack of potential bat roost features present.

5.2 Recommendations

Collins (2023) states in section 5.2.44 "A single survey during the summer months may be adequate to ensure nothing obvious has been missed and/or precautionary measures could be applied during works.".

Therefore based on our findings, including the lack of data of bat presence within the local area, the transient nature of bat roosting, and the guideline advice, we would recommend a precautionary approach in this project. It is the conclusion of this report that the building is of negligible risk of supporting roosting bats. As a result, no further surveys are recommended for the structure. However some precautionary procedures are required due to the low risk of a bat roost being present when works are begun. These works must be commenced using the method statement provided in Appendix 1 and with regular consultation with a licenced bat ecologist.

The development proposal will not require the submission for European Protected Species derogation licence.

No further surveys are required if precautionary measures in Appendix 1 are adhered to when works to the building are undertaken.

The five trees with potential bat roosting features, are all to be cleared. In line with Collins (2023) Table 6.3 "no further surveys" are required for PRF – I only. A Roost Resource Approach alongside a Precautionary Working Method Statement will offset the losses and safeguard the bats. This is detailed within the Environmental Construction Method in section 6.2.

As the Roost Resource Approach, two bat boxes will be integrated into the fabric of the new building. They will be Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C' or similar and will be situated under the direct guidance of a licenced bat worker. An example of these type of bat boxes is shown below.

Screenshot 1: An example of a Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C' courtesy of NHBS.com.

The proposed works will not require an application for a European Protected Species derogation licence as long as the Environmental Construction Method is followed when works are commenced. This is outlined in section 6.

5.3 Breeding birds

All breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) that protects nests, whilst in use, from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season.

As there is no evidence of past or current use of the Building by breeding birds, there are no seasonal constraints to works to the building. However, if works are required within the bird breeding season of March to September, the building should be checked to ensure there are no nesting birds present prior to works commencing.

All of the trees on-site were considered to be suitable for nesting birds. As a result, all works to trees should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, typically March to August. No evidence of previous bird nesting within the Building was found during the survey.

If works are required within the breeding bird season they must be proceeded by an assessment by Suitably Qualified Ecologist to ensure that there are no nesting birds present.

In the event that an active bird nest is found during the works, it must be retained in-situ and left undisturbed until no longer in active use. A nest is classed as active when it contains eggs or chicks and when it is being built.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRUCTION METHOD

6.1 Protecting Individual Bats During Building Works

There are no additional requirements for bats, but it's essential to follow the guidance in Appendix 1 when demolishing the garage.

6.2 Protecting Individual Bats During Tree Felling and Removal

Trees must be felled using the "soft fell" technique, overseen by a licensed ecologist, to avoid harming any bats.

6.2.1 Ecological Clerk of Works

- Must hold a valid Class 2 Bat License.
- Has full authority to halt work immediately if a bat or evidence of bats is found.
- Responsible for inspecting features with an endoscope and handling any bats discovered.

6.2.2 Timing of Works

- No work will occur during the main hibernation period (November to March); work can only proceed when overnight temperatures are above 5°C.
- If work takes place between **March 1st and August 31st**, the ecologist must check for active bird nests before starting. If a nest is found, a 5-meter buffer zone must be set, and the tree cannot be cut until chicks have fledged.
- Avoid working during heavy rain, freezing temperatures below 0°C (when bats cannot fly away), or high winds due to safety concerns.

6.2.3 Toolbox Talk

Before starting, the Ecological Clerk of Works will brief arborists on:

- Which specific trees have Potential Roost Features (PRF-I).
- The locations of lifted bark features on those trees.
- Procedures for "Soft Felling."
- Emergency protocol if a bat is found.

6.2.4 Soft Felling

- Sectional Cutting: Dismantle trees in sections whenever possible.
- Buffer Zones: When cutting near a PRF (like a rot hole), make cuts at least 50cm above and below it to avoid damaging the cavity.
- Controlled Lowering: PRF sections should be rigged and slowly lowered using ropes, not dropped.
- Ground Inspection: Once on the ground, the ECoW will inspect these sections immediately.
- Soft Release: If a section contains a deep, un-inspectable cavity, leave it gently on the ground (with the hole facing up and clear) for 24 hours so undiscovered bats can exit overnight.

6.2.5 Roost Resource Strategy

Two integrated bat boxes will be added to the new construction to boost local roosting options, focusing on crevice-dwelling species like pipistrelles. These must be Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C' or equivalent and installed under the supervision of a licensed bat worker.

6.2.6 Temporary Receptor Site

If a bat is found during works, return its feature if safe and suitable, then stop work and consult the licensed bat ecologist.

If returning the bat is unsafe, the ecologist will capture it and place it in a holding box temporarily. Then, a bat box will be installed on a building or retained tree onsite, and the bat released into it to depart naturally.

REFERENCES

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

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE FOR IF A BAT IS DISCOVERED DURING WORKS WHEN AN ECOLOGIST IS NOT PRESENT

If at any point in the building/tree works bats are discovered, then contractors must stop work immediately and telephone **Clayton Ecology** on **07887361487**.

Clayton Ecology will either provide an appropriately licensed bat worker to the site or provide a member of staff who will liaise directly with the contractor. Actions will then be taken following advice given. This may include removal of bats, but only where the bat ecologist considers this to be a viable and safe option.

Bats are a protected species and there should be no attempt to handle a bat if discovered. The bat should be covered with a light material (cloth) and the bat worker called out to carry out the rescue.

Only when the bat ecologist is satisfied that the risk to bats is ceased will works recommence.

Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then works will be stopped until they can be supervised by an appropriately licensed bat worker.

If a bat is found under a tile or within any other aspect of the building/tree fabric, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants and should not be a fibreglass-based material.