Preliminary Roost Assessment

Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke Lane, Higham on the Hill, CV13 6ES

November 2025

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Summary

- A preliminary roost assessment for bats was conducted at Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke lane, High on the Hill, CV13 6ES on 19/11/2025 by Matthew Kirby.
- The proposed development was for an extension to the side of the property.
- One buildings was present on site that would be effected by the development. An external and internal inspection of the buildings was undertaken.
- The surrounding landscape had good commuting routes, foraging habitat. Three previous roosts were identified within a 3km radius, none of which were in close proximity to the site.
- One negligible roost features were identified on the exterior of the building 1. No droppings or other forms of evidence were found internally.
- The overall potential of the buildings was deemed to be **negligible**.
- Likely absence of bats **has** been established.
- No further surveys are required.
- Bats are highly mobile, and should a bat be discovered during construction then works should cease and an ecologist should be contacted to advise on how to proceed.
- The information within this report is valid for 12 months from the date of the initial survey.

This report is valid for up to 12 months after the initial survey date. After this time, a new survey will be required.

The information within this report is based on the information gathered at the time of the survey, the possibility of other ecological issues arising in the future cannot be eliminated.

This report remains the property of Oak Ecology Ltd until payment has been made in full.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1.Commissioning brief and site location

Oak Ecology was commissioned to undertake a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of a residential dwelling at Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke Lane, Higham on the Hill, CV13 6ES (here after referred to as the site).

1.2.Site description and proposed development

The site, centred at SP 38403 95775, consisted of a detached barn and storage room with a hipped roof. The surrounding landscape was primarily rural with large expanses of arable fields in the surrounding area. The proposed development is for an extension to the side of the property and a conversion into a day room.

Figure 1: Red line boundary.

Figure 2: 1km radius buffer zone.

1.3.Scope of the survey

The purpose of this survey was to:

- Identify the suitability of the structures to support roosting bats.
- Identify likely presence/absence of bat roosts at the site.
- Determine the need for any further bat surveys to inform mitigation scheme or a bat mitigation licence.
- If bat roosts are present, determine species, access and egress points, roost type, and size.
- Assess the impact of the proposed works on bats.
- Provide a bat mitigation strategy to maintain the favourable conservation status of the bat species in question, and
- Determine the need for a bat mitigation licence from Natural England.

1.4.Legislation and planning policy

A number of UK and European legislation and policies deal with the conservation of biodiversity. This section briefly outlines the legal and policy protection afforded to bats and their habitats.

Bats and their roost sites are protected under UK and European legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Habitats Directive. The legislation makes it an offence for any person to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats, where that disturbance may affect the ability of those bats to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, or is likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of any bat species, whether in a roost or not.
- Damage or destroy a place of shelter (roost) of a bat, be that a resting or breeding place.
- Possess a bat, whole or in part, alive or dead.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost
- Sell or offer for sale or exchange whole or parts of bats, alive or dead.

The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) section 15 outlines how applications need to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Paragraphs 174 to 177 state that sites with biodiversity value should be protected and enhanced, minimising impacts on biodiversity and establishing ecological connectivity. Furthermore, the protection of priority sites and species through developments is outlined and states where significant harm is unavoidable through alternatives or mitigation, planning permission should be refused. Finally, this section concludes that developments with aims to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported and any improvement around developments should be encouraged to achieve net gains for biodiversity.

2. Methodology

2.1.Surveyors and equipment

The site was attended on the 19th November 2025 by Matthew Kirby, a senior ecologist with over 9 years' experience (Bat licence number: 2020-49774-CLS-CLS).

The daytime inspection was conducted in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition (Collins, 2023). The survey comprised two parts: an evaluation of suitability for roosting and a search for evidence of bats. The inspection was aided by a one million candlepower torch. Extendable ladders, binoculars, and endoscope were available for detailed inspections of accessible areas.

2.2.Survey

The survey took approximately 1 hour and consisted of an external and internal assessment of the building. The building was systematically checked for evidence of the following:

- Live or dead bats,
- Droppings,
- Staining from bat urine,
- Feeding remains such as moth wings,
- An absence of cobwebs on suitable flight lines.

The building was then subject to an evaluation of its roosting suitability for bats, the likely species, type of roost and the number of bats the building could support. Factors that were considered included:

- Connectivity to the surrounding habitat – flight lines and good foraging habitat,
- Internal light levels and temperature,
- Weather-proof properties,
- Building construction,
- Potential access into the building e.g., cavities in brickwork, missing/loose tiles, gaps under flashing etc.
- Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) within the roof void e.g., roof timbers, ridge etc.

After consideration of all the factors the building was assessed as having negligible, low, moderate, high suitability to support roosting bats, in accordance with the BCT guidelines.

Table 1:Categorisation of the suitability of structures for roosting bats. (Collins, 2023).

Potential	Description
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. 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 that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely for a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the categorisation in this table are 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 surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g. maternity or classic cool/ stable hibernation site.
Confirmed	Bats or evidence has been recorded during the surveys.
Access Points	Features on a building that provide bats access into a building, but are unlikely to roost directly in.

2.3.Limitations

No limitations.

3. Results

3.1. Weather Conditions

Table 2: Weather conditions at the site on 19/11/2025.

Parameter	Result
Temperature	8 °C
Precipitation	0 – Dry
Wind speed	0 Beaufort – Calm
Cloud cover	70%

3.2. Data Search

A 1km search radius was conducted using Magic (2025), to identify any previous confirmed roosts in the area. The search returned zero European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences within in 1km. An extended search of 3km identified four EPSM licences, two of which were for the same project.

Table 3: EPSM licences found within 3km of the site.

Reference	Species	Date	Approx. bearing
EPSM2011-3892	Common pipistrelle, Brown long-eared bat, Natterers bat	2012 – 2014	2.1Km E
2016-25946-EPS-MIT-1	Common pipistrelle	2016 - 2016	2.3Km E
2016-25946-EPS-MIT-2	Common pipistrelle	2017 – 2026	2.3Km E
EPSM2011-3911	Common pipistrelle, Brown long-eared bat	2011- 2014	2.7Km NE

3.2.1. Statutory Designated sites.

There were zero statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the site.

3.2.2. Important habitats

The priority habitat index (PHI) identified two habitat types: deciduous woodland, and lowland meadows within the 1km buffer zone.

3.2.3. Connectivity and foraging

There was low potential for foraging within the site itself, non-native hedgerows, and a small line of trees.

The immediate surrounding area had a significantly higher affinity for bats. Bats would benefit from commuting and foraging features such as: Scattered trees, small woodland pockets, water bodies, hedgerows, and minimal disturbance from lighting.

3.3.Survey results

3.3.1. Site Description

Building 1 (B1) – Barn

The barn was a single-storey dwelling, ~85 m^2 with a hipped roof, with a small storage room on the southeast aspect. The barn was situated in the northeast corner of the site with Stoke lane running adjacent to the northeast aspect. A small, wooded area immediately connects the barn bearing north and provided commuting routes to the wider landscape.

The site was situated primarily within a rural environment with large expanses of green spaces surrounding the site, such as gardens, woodland, grassland, and arable fields.

3.3.2. External inspection

One building weas present on site that would be impacted by the development. B1 was constructed from brick and a tiled roof. No insulation or roofing felt was present.

The exterior condition of both buildings was fair; no major damages or holes were identified. A small number of tiles were out of place and broken however, these did not create cavities that could be exploited by bats (B1.1).

3.3.3. Internal inspection

B1 did not have a separate loft space, the underside of the roof tiles could be observed from the inside. No gaps were observed that would allow bats access. Evidence of rodents were identified throughout the building. The building was frequently used for storage and would likely receive a high level of disturbance from the residents. No direct or indirect evidence of bats was identified within the building.

Table 4: PRF Summary.

Feature ID	Type	Height/bearing	Notes	Potential
B1.1	Tiles	2m SE	Out of place tiles on small section of roof	Negligible

3.3.4. Overall potential

The surrounding area had high potential to support bats, with good foraging habitats in the wider landscape. Connectivity to the wider landscape to more suitable habitats was high.

One negligible roost features were identified during the survey. Given the lack of suitable roosting features the likelihood of bats using the buildings has been confidently assessed as negligible (BCT, 2023).

Figure 3: Wider landscape map.

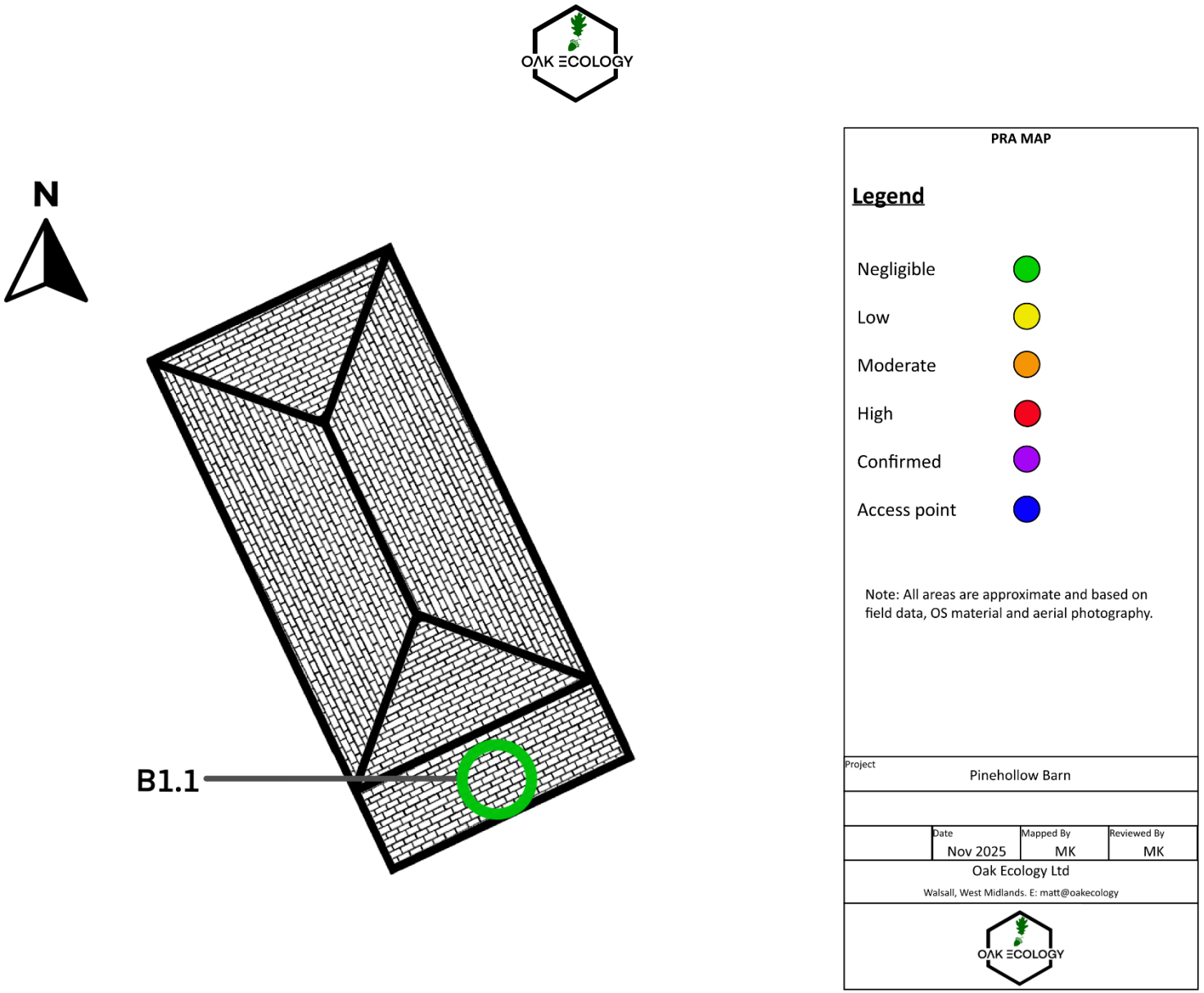

Figure 4: PRA map.

3.3.5. Photos

Figure 5: Site overview.

Figure 6: Southwestern aspect.

Figure 7: Southeastern aspect (B1.1).

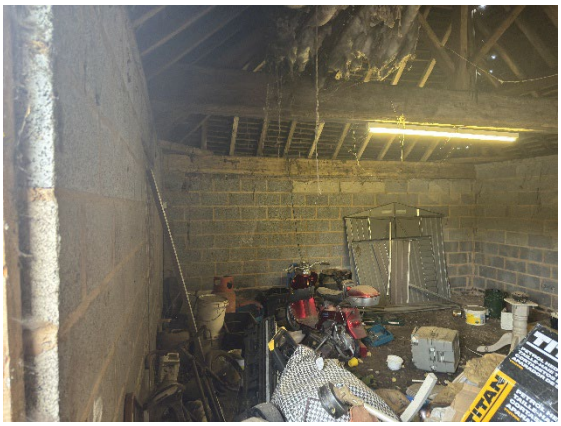

Figure 8: Internal view.

Figure 9: Internal view.

Figure 10: Internal view.

4. Discussion and conclusion

4.1. Interpretation of results

The immediate surrounding area had high potential to support bats, with three previously confirmed roosts identified within a 3km radius. The nearby woodland and waterbody are likely to hold valuable features for local bat populations. The proposed development would have no impacts on these habitats.

The building had an overall potential of **negligible**. Likely absence of bats within the building **has** been adequately established and under good practice guidelines, no further surveys are required.

Bats are a highly mobile species and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that bats will not inhabit any newly developed features in the future.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Further surveys

No further surveys are required.

The information within this report is valid for 12 months from the date of the initial survey.

5.2. Outline avoidance, mitigation, compensation

Works to non-hibernation potential buildings are less likely to disturb bats if undertaken in the winter months.

During construction any newly created openings should be covered to prevent any inhabitation from bats.

Should bats be discovered during construction then all works should cease, and a qualified and experienced ecologist should be contacted to advise on how to proceed.

Light pollution has a negative effect on foraging bats. During and post construction, light disturbance should be avoided if possible. Further information can be found in Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night (2023).

6. References

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