

Byrons Covert, Wellsborough, Nuneaton

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

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Site Details

Report	Preliminary Roost Assessment
Site Address	Byrons Covert, Bosworth Road, Wellsborough, CV13 6PB
Central OS Grid Reference	SK 37699 03133
Client	Mr. & Mrs. Newman

Document Control

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Disclosure:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Croft Ecology was commissioned by Mr. & Mrs. Newman to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of an existing residential property at Byrons Covert, Wellsborough ahead of the proposed extension and modernisation of the property.
- The survey was undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel on 24 February 2026.
- The Site comprised an existing two-storey brick residential dwelling with a half-hipped cement tile roof, building B1.
- The building B1 was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. As a result, further survey effort of the building is required to confirm the presence/likely absence of roosting bats and to determine whether any subsequent mitigation is required.
- Proportionate enhancement measures are included in Section 4, comprising a bat box or bat tile to provide enhanced opportunities for roosting bats.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Aims	5
1.2	Site Location	5
1.3	Planning and Legislative Context	6
2	Methodology	7
2.1	Personnel	7
2.2	Data Search	8
2.3	Survey Date and Conditions	8
2.4	Preliminary Roost Assessment	8
2.5	Survey Limitations	10
2.6	Evaluation of Constraints and Opportunities	10
3	Results	10
3.1	Designated Sites	10
3.2	Species Records	11
3.3	Preliminary Roost Assessment	11
4	Discussion and Recommendations	14
4.1	Proposed Development	14
4.2	Designated Sites	14
4.3	Bats	14
4.4	Birds	14
4.5	Summary of Further Surveys Required	15
4.6	Mitigation and Compensation Requirements	15
4.7	Opportunities for Enhancement	15

5 Conclusion 16

6 References 17

1 INTRODUCTION

Croft Ecology was commissioned by Mr. & Mrs. Newman to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of an existing residential dwelling at Byrons Covert, Wellsborough (central grid reference: SK 37699 03133). The proposed development will involve the extension and modernisation of building B1 which will impact sections of the roof and dormer windows.

1.1 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

- identify the potential for/evidence of bats and birds within the Site;
- identify further surveys that may be required to fully understand likely impacts on bats;
- identify any mitigation measures or licensing likely required; and
- identify any opportunities for biodiversity enhancements.

1.2 Site Location

Byrons Covert is located within a rural area 1.5km east of Wellsborough and 2.4km west of the town Market Bosworth. The Site contains additional buildings in the form of garages and outbuildings and is surrounded by woodland, agricultural crop-growing and/or grazing pasture fields. Across the wider agricultural landscape, some ecological corridors are present such as woodlands, hedgerows, tree-lined watercourses, ponds and lakes.

The existing main residential building, B1 located within the larger red line boundary, is to be extended in its footprint which is demarcated by the smaller red line boundary in Figure 1 below. The remainder of the buildings within the Site are to be retained and unaffected by the proposed development.



Figure 1. Site red line boundary

1.3 Planning and Legislative Context

1.3.1 Bats

Both UK legislation together with national and local planning policies provide varying levels of protection to bats.

All British bat species (Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae) are legally protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are fully protected under Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The latter piece of legislation resulted in them being known as “European Protected Species”. This means that it is illegal to deliberately take, injure, or kill the animal; to intentionally or recklessly disturb the animal whilst they are in a 'place used for shelter or protection' or damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (even when the animal is not present). It is also illegal to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection; or to possess, control, sell, or transport live or dead individuals or their body parts.

If you cannot avoid disturbing these species or damaging their habitats, you may be required to apply to Natural England for a licence to carry out such works under the close supervision of a licensed ecologist.

1.3.2 *Nesting Birds*

All wild birds are afforded partial or full protection under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some rarer species, or those that are vulnerable to disturbance or persecution, are protected by special penalties. These species are listed on Schedule 1 of the Act. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take a wild bird;
- take, damage, destroy or interfere with a nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built (or at any time for a nest habitually used by white-tailed eagle);
- obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest;
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird;
- disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 whilst it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or whilst lekking; and
- disturb the dependent young of any wild bird listed on Schedule 1.

It is also an offence to possess or control a live or dead wild bird, an egg of a wild bird (or any such derivatives), or to knowingly cause harm to wild birds.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Personnel

The PRA survey was undertaken by Anna Scott-Swift MCIEEM, Director of Ecology and Charlotte Mathews, Senior Ecologist at Croft Ecology. The report was written by Charlotte who has 8 years of experience working in the field of ecology and has undertaken dozens of Preliminary Roost Assessments. The technical review was undertaken by Anna Scott-Swift MCIEEM. Anna has over 20 years of experience working in the field of ecology and has undertaken and reviewed dozens of Preliminary Roost Assessments. Anna also holds protected species survey licences for bats (2015-12592-CLS-CLS), great crested newts (2015-17871-CLS-CLS), and barn owls (CL29/00392).

2.2 Data Search

The Government's website MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) was accessed on 03 March 2026 to conduct an initial search for designated sites, priority habitats and Natural England European Protected Species mitigation licences issued within 1km of the Site and to assess whether the Site was located within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) impact risk zone (IRZ).

Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) were also contacted for details on protected, notable and invasive species records within a 1km radius of the Site boundary.

Additionally, aerial photography was viewed to assess habitat connectivity around the Site's locale, which may be important to ecological features present on Site and for the consideration of suitable ecological enhancements.

2.3 Survey Date and Conditions

The Site was visited on 24 February 2026 and included an existing residential property, building B1 within the red line boundary (see Figure 1). Weather conditions at the time of survey were dry with 70% cloud cover and light air. The air temperature was 11°C.

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken in accordance with the methodology described within the Bat Survey Guidelines 4th edition (Collins, 2023). This included a daytime inspection, comprising both an external and internal check to assess the construction of the building and whether there were any potential bat access points or roosting opportunities. It also included an assessment for any evidence of bats (internally or externally) such as droppings, staining or scratching around access/egress points, any individuals, or any audible 'chattering' (more typical in maternity colonies).

A high-powered LED torch was used together with 8 x 42 binoculars, where necessary, with a dental mirror available for searching in difficult-to-reach places and a Rigid SeeSnake endoscope CA-350.

The descriptions in the table below were used in assessing the roosting potential of the building.

Table 1. Assessment of bat roosting potential¹

Roosting potential	Description
None	A complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all levels above ground and underground.
Negligible	No obvious features on site likely to be used by roosting bats BUT a small degree of uncertainty remains for opportunistic bats to make use of unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	The structure has one or more potential roost site that could be used by individual roosting bats BUT conditions within the structure and the habitat surrounding the site are sub-optimal, hence the site is unlikely to be used as a maternity roost.
Moderate	The structure has a small number of potential roost sites that could be used by small numbers of roosting bats and more than one bat species BUT conditions within the structure suggest and/or the habitat surrounding the site indicate that a maternity or roost is unlikely.
High	The structure has many potential roost sites that could be used by a maternity roost or hibernation roost of bats, with additional roosts of other bat species likely to be present.

¹ Based on Table 4.1 in the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. 2023).

2.5 Survey Limitations

Access was possible externally and internally to building B1 to conduct the PRA, which can be undertaken at any time of year. The roof void present had restricted access due to its location in the eaves voids with much of its area being too small to access, however a check of the immediately visible areas close to the loft hatch was conducted. As such, there remained some limitations to the survey undertaken, although as such monopitched voids are not typically used by void-seeking bats, the presence of crevice-dwelling bats has been considered within the wider context of the building and hence overall there was considered no significant limitation to the assessment made within this report.

2.6 Evaluation of Constraints and Opportunities

All potential ecological constraints to the development were identified. In the context of the Mitigation Hierarchy², consideration was then given as to how any significant effects could be avoided, minimised or mitigated. Following this, appropriate compensation and enhancement measures were outlined. Where additional surveys are required to better understand the likely presence of, and hence impact of the proposed development on, a given ecological feature, these are detailed in Section 4. Lastly, opportunities for enhancements have been provided.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Designated Sites

No statutory or non-statutory designated sites were located within 1km of the Site.

The Site does fall within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 1.38km north of the Site Boundary. However, given the distance from the

² *“The overarching aims of ecological work used to inform the planning process are to minimize harm and to maximize benefits for biodiversity resulting from development. The generally accepted way of doing this, now embedded within the planning system, is to follow the “mitigation hierarchy”. This seeks as a preference to avoid impacts then to mitigate unavoidable impacts, and, as a last resort, to compensate for unavoidable residual impacts that remain after avoidance and mitigation measures.” Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development (BS 42020:2013)*

SSSI and the nature of the Site's proposals, the proposed development does not meet any of the criteria that would warrant any further investigation.

Deciduous woodland recorded on the priority habitat inventory available on the MAGIC website is present directly adjacent to the eastern site boundary as well as 0.56km northeast, 0.75km east, 0.89km southeast, 0.92km northeast and 0.92km northwest of the Site.

Lowland raised bog recorded on the priority habitat inventory available on the MAGIC website is present 0.75km north of the Site. All such areas would provide a valuable foraging resource for bats.

3.2 Species Records

The data search returned 38 records of at least five species of bats, including unidentified bat Chiroptera, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, unidentified Myotis bat *Myotis spp.*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. One record of a European Protected Species mitigation licence for bats was identified on the MAGIC website located 140m north of the Site for damage/destruction of a common pipistrelle and brown long-eared breeding and resting site.

The data search returned 10 records of birds within 1km of the Site, including peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, quail *Coturnix coturnix*, black tern *Chlidonias niger* and ruff *Calidris pugnax*. Of these bird's ruff are red listed, avocet and quail are amber listed as a Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC). The woodland, waterbodies and agricultural habitats nearby the Site are likely to support a variety of bird species; however, none of the birds recorded nearby are likely to inhabit the Site.

3.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Site comprises a single dwelling, building B1, a brick-built rendered two-storey residential property with a half-hipped roof finished with cement roofing tiles (see Photo 1). There were upvc windows, doors, soffits and guttering around building B1, with two dormer windows to the eastern aspect and two dormer windows to the western aspect with a barge board and hanging tiles present. Much of the roof was well sealed, however, there were lifted roofing tiles present and several gaps under the barge boarding around the dormer windows and at the apex.

The lifted tiles on the roof on the western aspect and the gaps underneath the barge boarding around the dormer windows on both the eastern and western aspect provided access and opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. Internally there was one accessible roof void present in building B1, between the eaves and the dormers on the eastern elevation. The void was narrow, extended along the entire length of the property and it was approximately 80cm at its tallest point. The roof void was located above the ground floor and underneath the dormer windows on the eastern aspect of the building. The timber rafters and any roofing membranes were not visible as they were covered in silver multifoil insulation (see Photo 3).



Photo 1: The existing residential building that will be extended and modernised within the proposed development.



Photo 2: Roof void A within building B1.

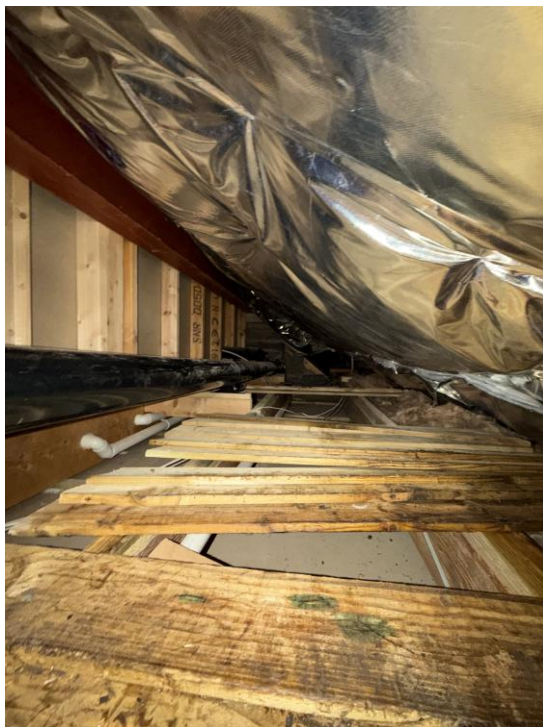


Photo 3: Roof void A in building B1

The nature of the features present on the external of building B1 could provide access/egress for bats and provide gaps for crevice-dwelling bats species. Roof void A was uncluttered and extended along the length of the dwelling, however, the silver multifoil insulation looked to be

relatively new and in good condition so it reduced the suitability of the loft for void-dwelling species. No bats or evidence of bats were observed during the internal inspection, although the whole roof void was not accessible due to the size and access restrictions. Therefore, if any gaps were present which allowed access internally, the presence of bats could not be ruled out entirely. As a result, building B1 is considered to have **moderate** potential for roosting bats.

Thus, further bats surveys are required for building B1; details are outlined in section 4.3.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Proposed Development

The proposals are for the extension and modernisation of the existing building B1.

As the Site is already a residential property immediately surrounded by hardstanding and gardens, it is not anticipated that any ecologically significant habitats will be impacted.

4.2 Designated Sites

Given the small scale and footprint of the proposal, it is not considered likely the proposed development will detrimentally impact the Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 1.38km north or the deciduous woodland habitats of principal importance located within 1km of the Site. As such, no specific mitigation measures would be required.

4.3 Bats

Given the features present, the surrounding suitable habitats such as nearby woodlands and waterbodies, and nearby records of a bat roost, building B1 has been assessed as having moderate bat roosting suitability. Therefore, further bat surveys are required.

In the event roosting bats are found during the further surveys, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) would potentially be required from Natural England prior to work commencing.

4.4 Birds

No birds' nests or evidence of birds were identified in the buildings. However, due to the limitations accessing all areas of the roof void present and the potential for some bird species to nest under features such as lifted tiles, it is recommended that the building is extended outside of nesting bird season March – August. If this is not possible, a check for nesting birds

should be conducted by a suitably competent person within the 24 hours prior to works commencing. Should any active nests be recorded, these would need to be retained, within a suitable habitat buffer until the young have fledged, and/or the nest is no longer active, to be agreed/advised by the ecologist.

4.5 Summary of Further Surveys Required

- Two dusk bat emergence surveys are required for building B1 between May and August to establish presence/likely absence of roosting bats and, if present, to characterise the roost(s) and specify any necessary mitigation measures.

4.6 Mitigation and Compensation Requirements

- No night-time work is anticipated. Any lighting to be installed as part of the scheme should use warm white LEDs to reduce the blue light component and will use a motion-sensor to limit artificial light exposure. Lighting will avoid the bat box, to be installed to provide enhanced roosting opportunities (see below).
- In the event it is not possible for works to avoid the typical bird nesting season of March-September, works must be preceded by a nesting bird check (within 24 hours) by a competent person to ensure no nesting is taking place. If there is evidence of nesting birds, work cannot proceed until nest-building and chick-rearing is complete or until an ecologist is able to advise on a suitable buffer distance to allow work in other areas of the Site.

4.7 Opportunities for Enhancement

- A bat box or bat tiles should be incorporated into the proposed extension of the building. The bat box or tile should be installed between the southwest and southeast aspect and should be situated at least at eaves height and away from artificial light sources. Further details on suitable box types and locations should be discussed and agreed with the architect and ecologist.

5 CONCLUSION

The extension and modernisation of the existing building B1 which will impact sections of the roof and dormer windows may impact roosting bats and nesting birds. However, further bat surveys will provide more details on whether a bat roost is present or likely absent from the building. Further mitigation and compensation will be determined from the outcome of the further surveys.

Mitigation measures described above, including sensitive timing of works and lighting design will be adopted to ensure works are undertaken in line with relevant environmental legislation and planning policy.

The inclusion of bat boxes or tiles will provide biodiversity enhancements in line with the National Planning Policy Framework³ (NPPF, 2025).

³ Paragraph 187 (d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ... (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...*”.

6 REFERENCES

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