PENNINE ecological

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

9 THE DENE, HURST GREEN,

RIBBLE VALLEY, BB7 9QF.

JUNE 2025

CIEEM Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

25 YEARS

Arboricultural ASSOCIATION Professional Member

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A report for

Mark Lincoln

A report by

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in June 2025 by Mark Lincoln to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of 9 The Dene, Hurst Green, Ribble Valley, Lancashire, BB7 9QF (refer to Figure 1.1 for the building's location).

The PRA survey, desk-based searches and subsequent report are required to support the submission of a planning application that will see the property being renovated (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1 - Site location plan.

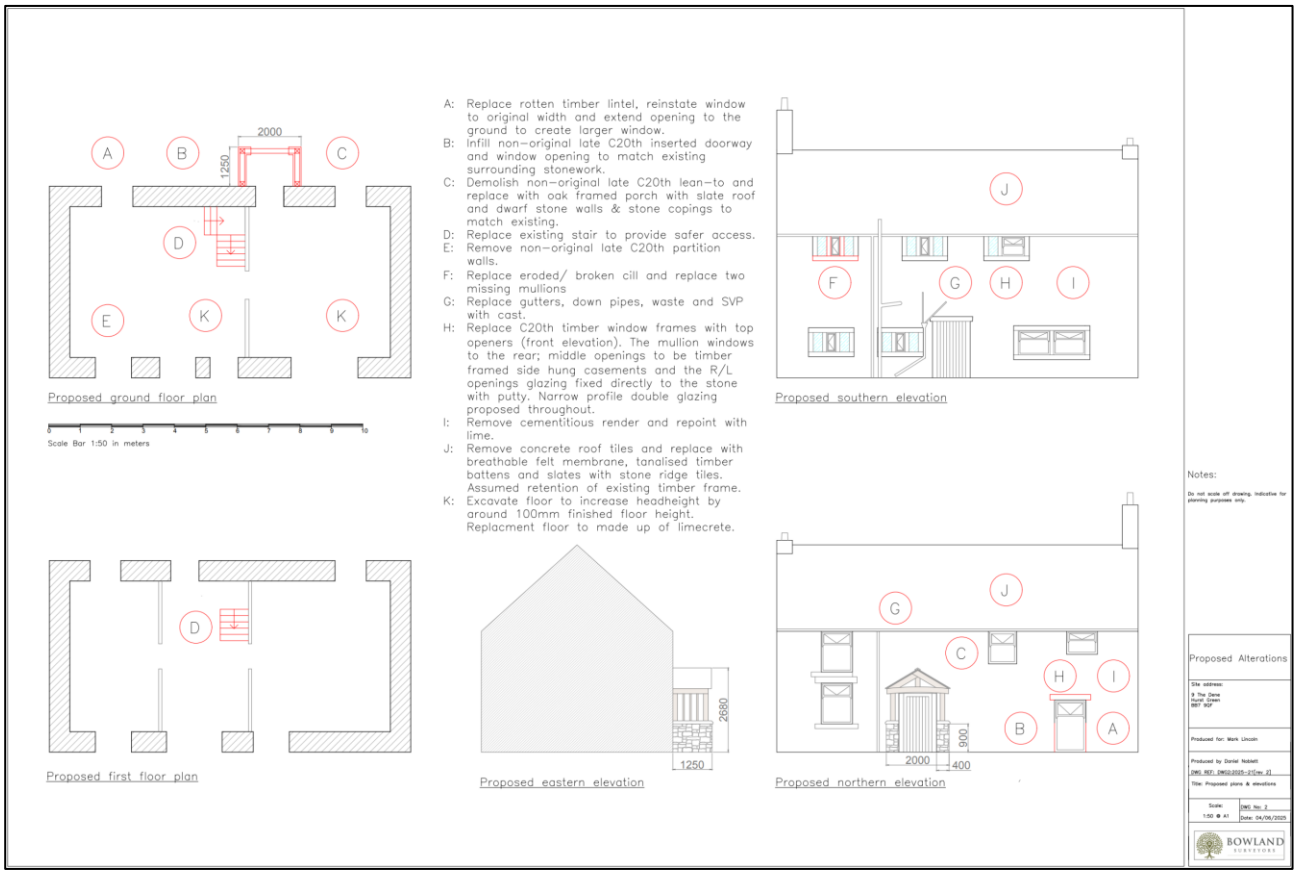


Figure 1.2 - Building proposals.

1.2 Report Structure

The study includes the following elements:

- A desk-based search of freely available online ecological information (e.g., Defra's MAGIC mapping tool, Google Earth, Ordnance Survey mapping etc.).
- A Preliminary Roost Assessment survey and evaluation of the building to support roosting bats.
- A full evaluation of the ecological significance of the desk based and PRA results
- Conclusions and recommendations for further survey or study if required and/or precautions when and where appropriate.

1.3 Site Location

The building is located immediately south of The Dene road and west of Dean Brook. Surrounding the building are residential properties and matured woodland. The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference[1] for the site is SD 68323 37869.

[1] Ordnance Survey National Grid reference used throughout the report.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BATS

2.1 Background Information on Bats

a) Summary of Legislation and Planning Policy

In England, the main pieces of legislation pertaining to the protection of bats are The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015.

For further information and direction to further legislation relevant to bats please refer to Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust and the *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Reason and Wray, 2023).

When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 15 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Paragraph 186 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in December 2023) (NPPF, 2023) states:

186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

i. if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

ii. development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

iii. development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,

iv. development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

b) Use of Buildings, Structures and/or Trees by Bats

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance (all British bats are insectivorous). Climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage.

Definitions of the bat roosts most likely to be encountered during the PRA of buildings, structures and/or trees are summarised below (for further details refer to Collins (2023[2])).

a) Day roost; a place where individual bats, or a small groups, rest or shelter during the summer.

[2] Collins, J. (ed.) 2023. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) The Bat Conservation Trust, London

b) Night roost; a place where bats rest or shelter in the night but are not found in the day. May be used by a single individual on occasion or it could be used regularly by the whole colony.
c) Feeding roost; a place where individual bats, or a few individuals, rest or feed for short periods during the night but are not present during the day.
d) Transitional roost; a place used by a few individuals or occasionally small groups for generally short periods of time on waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation.
e) Maternity roost; a place where female bats give birth and raise their young to independence. In some species males may also be present in the maternity roost.
f) Hibernation roost; a place where bats maybe found individually or together during winter. They have a constant cool temperature and high humidity.
g) Satellite roost; An alternative roost found in close proximity to the main nursery colony used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding females throughout the breeding season.

The bats of Lancashire, as across much of the UK use built structures e.g., residential properties, bridges and culverts etc. as well as features in trees e.g., knot holes, woodpecker holes, peeling bark and torn limbs to roost in and also forage amongst.

The most frequently encountered species are the common and soprano pipistrelle bats; their abundant status in this region is reflected throughout the UK.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies relating to desk-based searches and PRA undertaken in June 2025 are outlined below.

3.1 Desk-Based Study

3.1.1 Local Records Centre Ecological Data

A request for ecological data to the local records centre was not undertaken for this study due to the relatively small-scale of the proposals.

Should the data be requested by the Local Planning Authority, then a retrospective request can be made, and the data be included within this report and any necessary ecological evaluations be made.

3.1.2 MAGIC Database

Using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) web site (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/) searches for statutory designated sites within 2km and European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) within 1km were undertaken.

Only those statutory protected sites where bats are included as a Reason for Designation, a notable feature or are of particular interest to the site will be included within this report. It is accepted that most statutory sites will comprise habitats that are likely to be support bat roosts, foraging and or commuting habitats etc. however, unless the proposals are such that the statutory is to be detrimentally or adversely impacted on by the proposals (of which an assessment will therefore be undertaken) then further consideration is not deemed necessary within this report.

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) Methodology

A daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment survey was conducted on 26th June 2025. Weather conditions were as follows; 14°C, overcast, calm with no rain.

As per the 4th Edition of the 2023 *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023) the PRA involved a detailed internal and external inspection of the structure to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/exit points; potential and actual bat roosting locations i.e., Potential Roost Features (PRFs), any evidence of bats found and the number of ecologists that will be required for any subsequent surveys should they be required.

A PRA is designed to answer specific questions as listed below (taken from Collins, 2023). It should be noted that often all of the questions below cannot be fully answered but by attempting to do so it will improve the assessment of the structure's (or tree's) suitability to support a roost.

- Are actual or potential bat roosts present (and if so, where)?
- Which bat species use the site for roosting?
- How many bats do these roosts support?
- Where are the bat roost access points?
- Where are the bat roosts and how do the bats get to them from the access points (although this is not always possible to establish if the roosts are inaccessible for humans)?
- What is the current arrangement of vegetation and lighting in relation access points?
- At what times of the year are bats present? How does use change seasonally?

Evidence searched for during both the internal and external inspection included the following:

- Evidence of live or dead bats.
- Bat droppings.
- Urine splashes.

- Fur-oil staining.
- Squeaking noises (from live bats).

It should be noted that evidence of bats externally is often not detected, particularly bat droppings which are washed or blown away as a result of rain and/or wind. Depending on the building's use, evidence of bats internally may also be absent due to the bats using cracks and crevices not accessible by the ecologist and/or presence of livestock, general upkeep leading to floors being swept regularly and in doing so removing any evidence, etc.

All elevations were visually accessible and was undertaken with the use of 10x42 magnification binoculars, a Clulite CB2 model 1 million candle power torch, Ridgid CA-350 endoscope and ladders where necessary.

3.3 Habitat Assessment

Bats will forage in a numerous habitat including waterways, woodlands (coniferous and deciduous), along hedgerows, grasslands, pastoral and arable farmland, as well as urban environments and moorlands. A wide variety of habitats is also likely to support an abundance of prey items throughout the year (Collins, 2023).

There are a few key characteristics that make good bat foraging habitats (JNCC, 2001):

- Suitable habitat structure; This varies for different bat species and needs to match the particular flight capabilities and echolocation calls they use;
- High densities of insects; Different groups of insects are important to different types of bats; and
- Habitat corridor; These provide both foraging areas and routes that allow bats to move freely between their roosts and feeding areas.

Given the importance attributed to the types of habitats used by bats, during the survey the surrounding habitat was also evaluated as roost selection is often closely correlated with the surrounding landscape.

3.4 Surveyor Credentials

The PRA survey was undertaken by Stuart Macpherson, who is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 14 years' experience in land management, ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following:

- Highly experienced in conducting Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey / UK Habitat Classification Surveys on small planning applications, large housing schemes, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- Proficient field botanist.
- Highly experienced with the recently introduced Biodiversity Net Gain assessments.
- Natural England licensed bat surveyor; licence reference number 2021-10079-CL18-BAT. I was accredited under two colleagues CL18 licences from 2017.
- Named (and Accredited) Ecologist on numerous bat mitigation licences.
- Bat carer with the South Lancashire Bat Group.
- Natural England licensed barn owl surveyor, licence reference number CL29/0477.
- Committee Member of the Mid-Cheshire Barn Owl Conservation Group.
- Natural England licensed great crested newt surveyor, licence reference number 2015-16213-CLS-CLS.
- NPTC qualified tree climber (Units 206 and 306 Tree climbing and Aerial Rescue).
- I have undertaken breeding, wintering and passage bird surveys on a range of habitats including coastal and estuarine habitats, moorland, lowland heath, chalk downland and farmland.
- Mammal surveys including badger, otter and water vole.
- Ecological Evaluation and Impact Assessments in association with large scale infrastructure projects.

3.5 Survey Constraints

The loft space was not fully accessible, however, there were holes measuring 20cm across in the first-floor ceiling giving access for photographs of the loft space to be taken.

There are no other constrains associated with the assessment.

4. RESULTS

The results of the desk-based searches and PRA survey are outlined below.

4.1 Desk-Based Searches

4.1.1 Local Records Centre Ecological Data

A request for ecological data to the local records centre was not made as previously stated within this report.

4.1.2 MAGIC Database

(a) Statutory Designated Sites

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km.

(b) Granted European Protected Species Licence Applications

There are no granted EPSML for bats within 1km of the site.

4.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

Summary

Although no evidence of bats was recorded the features identified during the external inspection meant the building was of **moderate suitability** to support roosting bats. Photographs of the building and identified PRFs are provided at the end of this report.

In accordance with Collins (2023) a moderate suitability building is described as follows; 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, 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.

Building Description

A brief description of the building is provided below.

The building measured approx. 12m by 6m and was approx. eight meters in height at its maximum.

The building is the middle property of a row of three terrace houses. The external walls were constructed of stone. The south facing elevation was once rendered but the render has all been removed. The northern elevation is mostly rendered with a small area on the north eastern corner of the property missing. There are cavities between the stone bricks on the northern elevation which appeared to be superficial. The southern elevation also had several larger cavities between the stone bricks with some shining light though into the building potentially providing direct access for bats. There is a small lean-to extension with a glass roof attached to the northern aspect of the building.

The building had a pitched roof made from interlocking concrete roof and ridge tiles. The roof was in good condition with no raised or missing roof/ridge tiles identified. The chimney on the western part of the roof (south facing aspect) had lead flashing around the base which was slightly raised creating a gap that bats could potentially use to access the roof or ridge tiles.

The wooden windows and fascia boards were in poor condition. Areas of the fascia boards were loose from the wall plate creating suitable gaps for bats. The windows had multiple cracks in the wood around the window frames. These cracks in the wood were not assessed to be suitable features.

The loft space was made up of timber beams and rafters with roofing felt separating the roof tiles and the loft space. Although the loft space was not accessible, from the pictures taken, no evidence of bats was identified.

4.3 Habitat Assessment

The immediate surrounding comprises mature woodland and scrub both of which are present on the eastern and western banks adjacent Dean Brook. This habitat is optimal and likely an important resource for both foraging and commuting bats as well as potentially providing tree roosts. In the wider landscape there are wooded corridors, hedgerow bound fields and watercourses that are likely to be important habitats for bats.

Overall, the habitat associated with the building was of **high suitability** for bats.

5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Where relevant, this section evaluates the site in relation to statutory sites, and protected habitats/species listed in national and local legislation and policy.

5.1 Statutory Designated Sites

(i) Evaluation

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site where bats are included as a Reason for Designation or a notable species.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations.

5.2 Bats

(i) Evaluation

In England, the main pieces of legislation pertaining to the protection of bats in the UK are The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015. For further information and direction to further legislation relevant to bats please refer to Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust.

The building was deemed to be of moderate suitability to support roosting bats.

(ii) Recommendations

The building was deemed to be of **moderate roost suitability** to support roosting bats. It is therefore recommended two dusk emergence surveys are undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (Collins *et al*., 2023).

The surveys will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats (i.e., between May and August inclusive). Following the completion of the surveys further recommendations will be made in respect of any issues in relation to bats.

Suggested surveyor numbers (two) and locations (surveyor 1 (S1), surveyor 2 (S2), are provided below in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 - Suggested surveyor locations (four required per survey).

REFERENCES

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

NPPF (2023). National Planning Policy Framework, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Online References

Natural England – MAGIC. Accessed various dates. Latest access June 2025 http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx

Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access June 2025.

Appendix A: Site Photographs 26th of June 2025

Photograph 1: Overview of northern aspect.

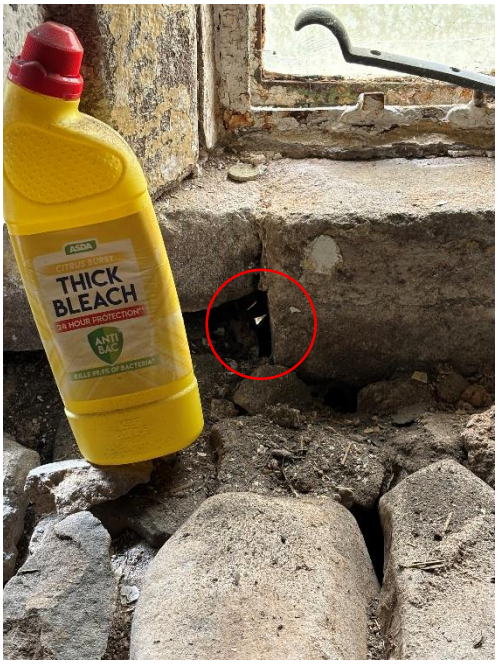
Photograph 2: Raised lead flashing around chimney on northern aspect.

Photograph 3: Overview of southern aspect.

Photograph 4: Cavities between stone bricks on southern aspect.

Photograph 5: Raised lead flashing around chimney on southern aspect.

Photograph 6: Areas where the fascia board has separated from the wall plate on southern aspect.



Photograph 7: Light shining through from outside between stone bricks.

Photograph 8: Overview of timber beams and rafters in the loft space.

Photograph 9: Overview of the loft space.

Photograph 10: Overview of the surrounding habitat.