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An Origin Enterprises Company

Alder House, Holden Lane, Bolton-by-Bowland



Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report Ref. ER-8794-01

23/09/2025

Lowood Estates

Report reference	ER-8794-01 - Preliminary Roost Assessment
Author	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA CIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
Technical Review	Christopher Shaw BSc (Hons), CEcol, MCIEEM Associate Ecologist
QA	Joanna Bertwistle BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Senior Ecologist
Authorised	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA CIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
Date	23/09/2025
Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.

Summary Statement

Three stone built barns have been assessed as having high to moderate bat roosting suitability, though no evidence of roosting was found in the areas that were safely accessible. These barns will require full emergence surveys in the bat activity season and two barns should be subject to hibernation monitoring. Should roosting be found, Natural England licensing would be required to re-develop the barns.

A single modern barn has been assessed as having negligible roosting suitability and no further survey is recommended on this building.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Lowood Estates to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of farm buildings at Alder House near Bolton-by-Bowland.
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises three stone built and one steel and asbestos sheet disused barns; see Figure 1 below. Proposals are to convert these to residential use.

Figure 1 Buildings surveyed



Method

3. A thorough daytime inspection of the site was made in September 2025 to look for evidence of bats and assess suitability for roosting. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, stains on masonry or timber from the oils in bats' fur and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.
4. Bat roosting potential of the building was classified according to the following criteria set out in Table 1, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings.

Suitability	Criteria
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
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 to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation - the categorisation described in this table is 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.

Box 1 Bat roosts

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Records

5. The local records provider, was asked to provide all records from within a 1km radius of the Site.
6. A single record of a roost was returned within 1km, this being approximately 800m to the south.

National, regional, and local Status

7. The application Site lies within the natural range of 8 species of bat. These are summarised in Table 2 below, together with a note on each species' national status, relative abundance, and status within the 1km search area.

EPSM Licences

8. There is one European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences returned within 1km of the Site. Located c.600m southeast of Site dating back to 2012, for the destruction of a day roost. Species comprised Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Whiskered and Brandt's bat.

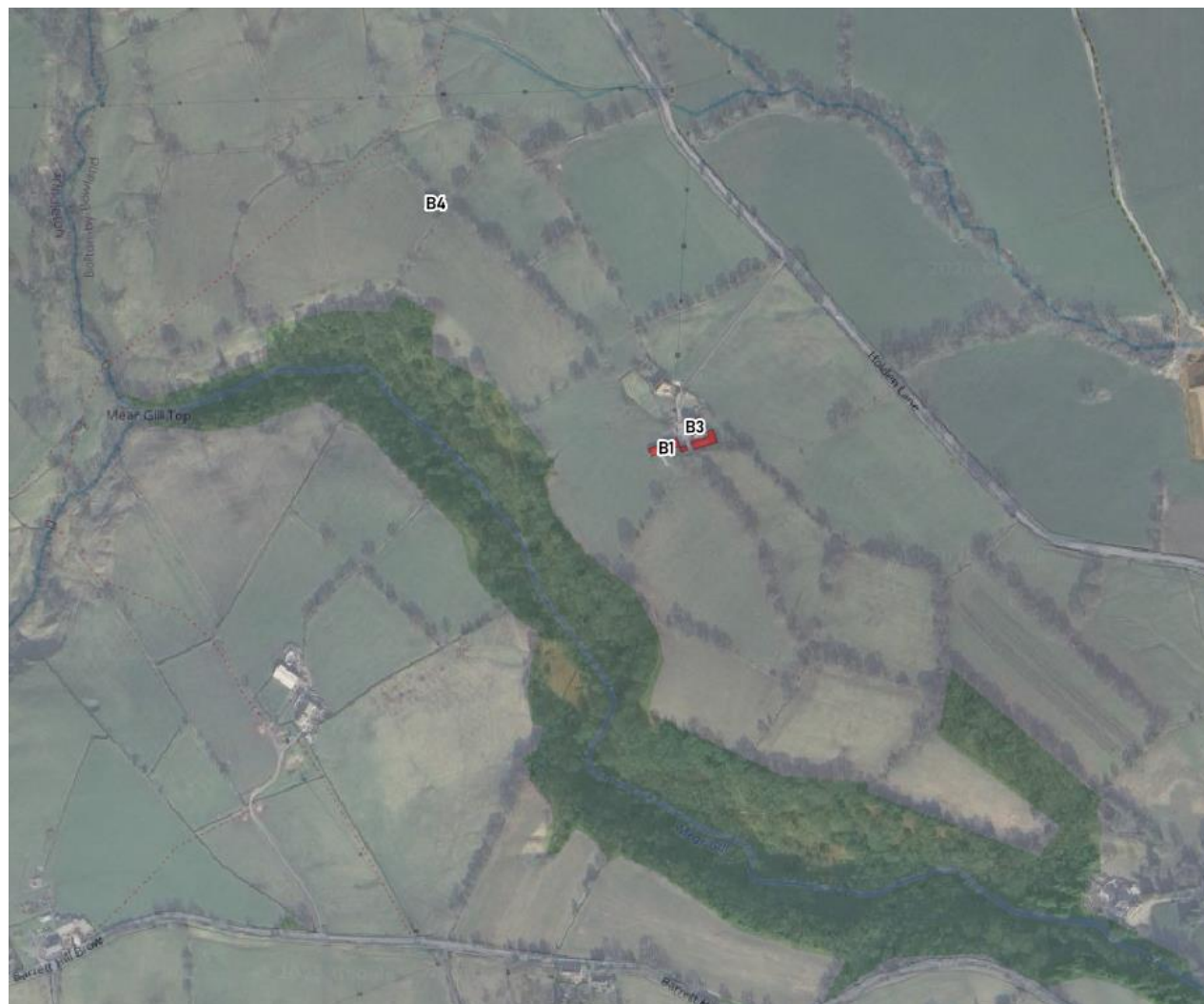
Table 2 List of bat species known to occur in West Yorkshire, ordered in increasing level of significance to their national population.

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Common and stable	Yes	Yes
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	-
Brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Common and stable	Yes	-
Natterer's bat <i>M. nattereri</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered bat <i>M. mystacinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	Yes
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	-
Brandt's bat <i>M. brandtii</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	Yes

Site Context

9. The Site is located in rolling pastoral landscape in the Ribble Valley north of Clitheroe. It is set among permanent pasture and silage fields bound by drystone walls with frequent mature trees which form connective corridors to more significant areas of woodland.
10. The landscape setting increases the likelihood of bats being present due to the connectivity of high value foraging resources.

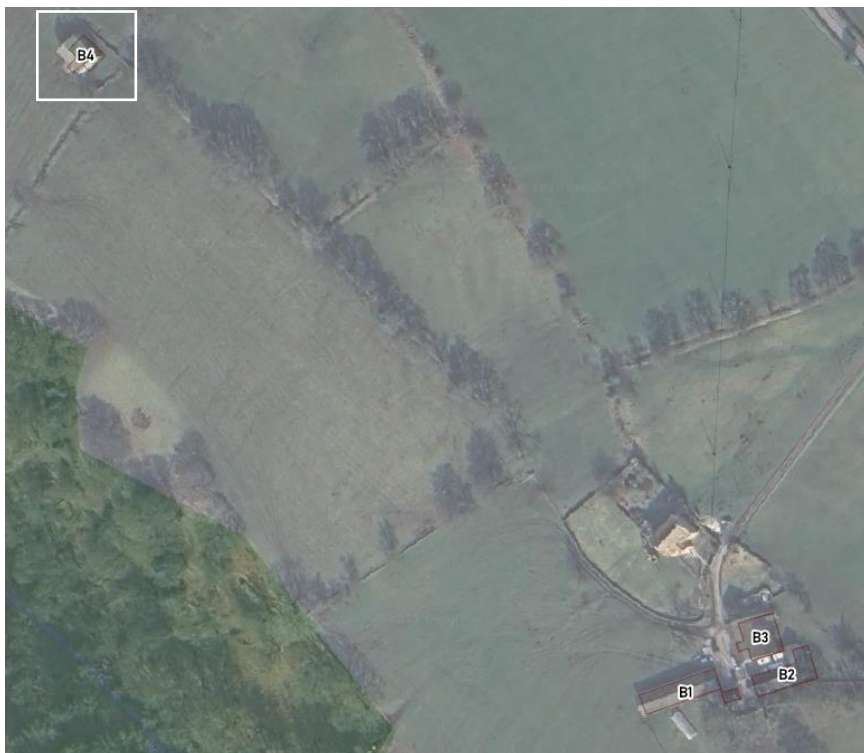
Figure 2 Site context.



Survey Results

11. Survey encompassed four buildings, referenced as B1, B2, B3 and B4 in the plan below.

Figure 3 buildings assessed.



Building 1 (B1)

12. This is a simple steel frame barn with blockwork dwarf curtain walls, open sides and sheet asbestos/cement roof. The nature of its construction makes it light drafty and thermally instable and unsuited to bat roosting.

Figure 4 A&B Construction of B1



Building 2 (B2)

- 13. This is a traditional stone built bars probably dating from the 1800s. It has solid walls with a stone double pitched roof

Figure 5 Gable of B2, PRF;s in the wall and at the eaves



- 14. The building has solid walls with lime cement and frequently failed pointing. It has a hayloft which is currently accessible through an open door and poorly fitted timber shutters. There are plenty of cracks and crevices in the stonework making numerous potential roost features. The wall plate is accessible behind the gutters and at the gable eaves.

Figure 6 PRFs at eaves



Figure 7 Front elevation of B2



Figure 8 Interior of B2



Building 3 (B3)

- 15. A large old stone built farmyard barn probably dating from the 1700s with a double pitched local sandstone slate roof.

Figure 9 Gable of B2, PRF;s in the wall and at the eaves



- 16. The barn has one large open ground to ceiling void with exposed timber and remnant but heavily damaged bitumen felt lining. PRFs here abound in the form of cracks in masonry, exposed wall plate, gaps behind roof slates and lining membrane and joint holes in exposed beams.

Figure 10 Interior of B3 supporting numerous PRF's



- 17. There is a lean-to extension which looks to have been used as a milking parlour. This is accessible through open doors and windows, a feature taken advantage of by the resident swallow populations which nest internally.

Figure 11 Milking parlour attached to B3



- 18. Externally missing pointing and crumbled mortar and damaged window and roof frames make numerous potential access cavities into the walls

Figure 12 PRFs in B3, broken windows and missing mortar



Figure 13 Rubble cavities accessible through dislodged window frames



Building 4 (B4)

19. A large old stone built field barn probably dating from at least the 1700s with a double pitched local stone roof.

Figure 14 Barn in its setting



20. The walls support numerous cracks and areas of lost mortar which create good PRF's in voids in rubble filled walls. Open wall vents are found on the gables which lead directly to the barn's interior.

Figure 15 showing ventilation holes on southern gable.



21. Internally the barn has an unlined roof with exposed beams and timbers. There are not too many wall crevices however due to some relatively recent lime pointing work. But an undercroft is accessible through collapses floor sections and a stairwell. This undercroft has potential to attract hibernating bats in particular.

Figure 16 Unlined roof and exposed timbers



Figure 17 Undercroft access



Summary

22. Based on the features present, the three buildings are assessed as having negligible and high suitability for supporting roosts.

Table 3 Summary of Roost Potential of Buildings.

Building	Key Features	Bat Roost Suitability
B1	None	Negligible
B2	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential.	Moderate
B3	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential. Internal wall cavities suitable for hibernation.	High
B4	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential. Under croft suitable for hibernation	High

Figure 18 Showing bat roost suitability of on-Site buildings.



Conclusions & Recommendations

23. While no evidence of bats was noted during the survey, significant areas were either inaccessible due to unsafe floors and/or clutter prevents access or obscures evidence. Therefore, not finding evidence does not mean evidence of absence of bats.
24. At this stage it is considered likely that some roosting will be found of more common species like pipistrelle but equally some of the more rural species like myotis and brown long eared can be anticipated. Roosting could be anticipated in the spring to autumn season in Building 2 but there is potential for hibernation in B3 and B4.
25. In line with best practice guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023), further survey should be carried out to establish if potential roost features are being used by bats. This should take the form of three surveys of B3 and B4 and two for B2. Surveys should be undertaken during the active bat survey season, which runs from May to August inclusive, with September providing sub-optimal conditions.
26. Additionally, hibernation monitoring is recommended on B3 and B4. This to be in the form of static bat detectors left to run from November to March.
27. Should evidence of bats be found, and proposals will result in impacts to bats or their roosts, a mitigation licence from Natural England is likely to be required. Further survey would likely be necessary to support a licence application. There is no reason to suppose that development proposals could not accommodate any bats potentially roosting on site, but some design modifications may be needed to do this, all depending on the findings of follow up survey.

Table 4 Summary of recommended surveys

Building	Key Features	Survey
B1	None	None
B2	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential.	Two emergence surveys between May-August 2026
B3	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential. Internal wall cavities suitable for hibernation.	Hibernation monitoring November 2025 - March 2026 Three visits May-August 2026
B4	Holes leading to wall cavities, Eaves and fly in roost potential. Undercroft suitable for hibernation	

Surveyor safety guidance

According to Brooks Ecological BE-SOP-01 Bat Emergence Surveys the site is assessed as:

Code 1: *Rural/semi-rural or within private curtilage. Or urban in enclosed site with owner/occupier present.*

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