

Holmside Farm, Holmfirth

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment



HABITAT WORKS

April 2026



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Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

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Executive Summary

Habitat Works Limited (Habitat Works) was commissioned in March 2026 by Mr. John Green to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) of a series of agricultural buildings located at Holmside Farm, Holmfirth West Yorkshire (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 11408 06703), hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as displayed in Figure 1.

The PBRA was required to inform proposals for the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the construction of a residential property with associated gardens and hardstanding.

The buildings on the Site are considered to both offer 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, and as such, in line with good practice guidance, further survey is required to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats ahead of the proposed demolition (Collins, 2023). This surveys should be undertaken as dusk emergence surveys and should be undertaken within the core bat survey period (May to August inclusive).

As the buildings are considered to be of 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, a single nocturnal survey will be required to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats, in line with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). It is recommended that the survey of each building should be undertaken within the core maternity period of June to mid-July.

A sufficient number of surveyors will be required on each nocturnal survey to ensure full coverage of the PRFs on the given target building. Surveyors should be equipped with full spectrum bat detectors and infra-red video cameras and record the species and number of bats using any roosts on the Site as well as recording incidental bat activity observed during the survey period. Surveyors should be in place at least 15 minutes prior to sunset for a minimum of 1.5 hours after sunset. The surveys should be conducted during periods when weather conditions are dry, with relatively low winds and temperatures in excess of approximately 10°C.

Where bat roosts are identified, a sufficient number of surveys will need to be undertaken in order to fully characterise the roosts present; the number of surveys detailed above are the minimum number required to confidently determine presence/likely absence only.

Irrespective of the results of the additional surveys, it is recommended that as compensation for the loss of PRFs across the Site, bat boxes or bat access roof tiles should be incorporated into the design of the new property as part of the development proposals. The model of boxes used should be suitable for crevice dwelling bat species, such as the Schwegler 1FR Bat Tube. The bat boxes should be placed as high as possible above the ground on the building, facing southern aspects to maximise chances of occupation.

Given the nature of the proposals it is anticipated that most habitats of value to foraging and commuting bats will be retained with new infrastructure being constructed in the locations of existing infrastructure and, as such, it is not considered necessary to undertake a full suite of bat activity surveys and static monitoring in this regard. It is anticipated that the nocturnal surveys detailed above will provide a robust understanding of the species present on the Site and information obtained from these surveys can be used to develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Habitat Works Limited (Habitat Works) was commissioned in March 2026 by Mr. John Green to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) of a series of agricultural buildings located at Holmside Farm, Holmfirth West Yorkshire (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 11408 06703), hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as displayed in Figure 1.
- 1.1.2 The PBRA was required to inform proposals for the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the construction of a residential property with associated gardens and hardstanding.
- 1.1.3 This report details the findings of a PBRA, comprising a data consultation undertaken and PBRA survey undertaken by Habitat Works in March 2026. Methodologies employed during the surveys are described along with the survey findings, evaluation, assessment and recommendations for any further survey work and/or mitigation/enhancement as required.
- 1.1.4 Recommendations are made in terms of impacts of the proposed development through habitat losses/potential gains on the Site post-development and the retention and protection of key ecological features.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data Consultation

- 2.1.1 Data consultation was undertaken by Habitat Works with the local records centres West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) and West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG) as part of the ecological appraisal process, to determine whether any records relating to bats had previously been recorded within 2 km of the Site.
- 2.1.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<http://www.magic.defra.gov.uk>) was also consulted by Habitat Works for information on the presence of European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences for bats within 2 km of the Site.
- 2.1.3 Information returned from MAGIC and WYES and WYBG with relevant assessments will be incorporated into the report as appropriate. All records will be reviewed, however particular interest will be placed on records within the past 10 years, with records prior to these considered historic.

2.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

- 2.2.1 A PBRA was undertaken on 19th March 2026 by licenced bat surveyor and Ecology Team Manager Joe Travis BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM (Bat Level 2 Survey Class Licence CL18 Ref: 2024-11983-CL18-BAT) and Assistant Field Ecologist Chris Birkinshaw BA (Hons) ACIEEM in line with industry good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).
- 2.2.2 Buildings within the Site were subject to a ground-based external and internal assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats during the survey.
- 2.2.3 An individual structure may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats associated with it and it is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats due to their transient nature. Consequently, it is customary when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of roosting potential as follows: negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed (Collins, 2023).
- 2.2.4 Photographs are provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2.5 The Site was also assessed for its suitability for foraging and commuting bats in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

2.3 Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.3.1 In line with CIEEM guidance, this report is valid for a period of 12 months. In the event that works have not been commenced by April 2027, an update assessment should be undertaken.

3. Findings and Evaluation

3.1 Site Description

- 3.1.1 The Site is located in the western extents of Holmsbridge, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire and comprises a series of existing farm outbuildings, in addition to associated hardstanding. The location of the Site is provided within Figure 1.
- 3.1.2 The Site is immediately bounded by pastoral fields to the south of the Site. Immediately to the north is an area of deciduous woodland associated with Digley Brook that flows from the Digley Reservoir. An avenue of mature trees is present to the south of the Site which connects to a coniferous woodland that connects to Brownhill Reservoir.

3.2 Data Consultation

- 3.2.1 West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG) returned a total of 13 records relating to bats for locations within 2 km of the Site, of which 11 are historic. Of these records, 10 pertained to roosts (six of which were maternity roosts). These roost records comprise a total of five common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* roosts and a single brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* roost in addition to three unidentified bat roosts. The closest of these roost records pertains to a common pipistrelle roost located approximately 1.1 km east of the Site in 2003.
- 3.2.2 The remaining records pertain to foraging and unidentified bat activities which include common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats in addition to unidentified bats. The closest record relates to a pipistrelle bat located approximately 650 m southwest of the Site in 2017.
- 3.2.3 West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) returned a total of 85 records pertaining to bats for locations within 2 km of the Site, of which, 46 are historic. Of these records, 13 records pertained to roosts (one of which was a maternity roost). Roost records comprise a total of six common pipistrelle roosts and three brown long-eared bat roosts, in addition to a single unidentified *Myotis* *Myotis* sp. roost, single unidentified *Pipistrellus* *Pipistrellus* sp. roost and two unidentified bat roosts. The closest of these roosts pertained to a common pipistrelle roost located approximately 650 m east of the Site in 2016.
- 3.2.4 The remaining records pertain to foraging and unidentified bat activities which include, brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentoni*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisteri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, in addition to unidentified *Myotis* sp., unidentified *Pipistrellus* sp., and unidentified bats. The closest of which pertained to common pipistrelle located approximately 200 m southeast of the Site in 2010.
- 3.2.5 A total of four EPS licences relating to bats were identified using MAGIC within 2 km of the Site. The first of these relates to the destruction of common pipistrelle and whiskered bat resting place and the destruction of a roost. Three separate licences were active at the same location between 2018 and 2024, which was located approximately 650 m east of the Site (2018-33329-EPS-MIT, 2018-33329-EPS-MIT 1 and 2018-33329-EPS-MIT 2). The final EPS licence within 2 km of the Site relates to the destruction of a brown long-eared bats roost. The licence was active between January 2018 and August 2018 which was located approximately 700 m southwest from the Site (2017-32406-EPS-MIT).

3.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Roosting Bats

- 3.3.1 The buildings present on the Site were subject to a PBRA, as displayed within Figure 1. Building descriptions and assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats are detailed below.

Building 1

- 3.3.2 Building 1 is a large, single storey, building with a series of with a pitched and gable ended roof. The building is constructed mostly of corrugated steel sheets sat upon a wooden frame, with the northern facing gable end comprising a heavily eroded block wall. The building is open and access to the internal of the building is present throughout the building. Internally, the building is open to the roof, with no roof void present.
- 3.3.3 The building supports Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) for roosting bats in the form of crevices between the corrugated steel sheets of the building, in addition to the crevices created from the weathering of the blocks on the northern aspect. All of these features are small in size, and could likely only support individual bats, however these features are repeated across the building creating a number of potential individual roosting features.

Building 2

- 3.3.4 Building 2 comprises a series of farm outbuildings that are all connected to one another internally. The buildings are a combination of brick-built outbuildings, and steel structures supporting corrugate steel and corrugated asbestos panelling. Much of the roof of these buildings is in a state of disrepair, with internal access opportunities present for roosting bats throughout.
- 3.3.5 Eternally, the building supports a range of PRFs for roosting bats, these include small gaps between brickwork where mortar is missing, in addition to areas of lifted lead flashing which is present in areas where the wall plate meets the roofing materials. These PRFs are all small in size, offering only suitability for individual bats.
- 3.3.6 Internally, the building is open throughout, and a hay loft is present in the western aspect of the building. Similar to Building 1, crevices suitable to support individual roosting bats are present where corrugated panels overlap. Small crevices are also present in areas of damage to internal breezeblock walls, in addition to where roof trusses are present adjacent to an internal wall, creating a small crevice between the two.
- 3.3.7 A number of bird nests were recorded throughout Building 2 during the survey, however none were considered to be active at the time of survey.

Summary

- 3.3.8 Given the presence of the PRFs across the two buildings, in combination with the good-quality foraging habitats in the surrounding locality with good connection to the Site, namely Digley Brook, Digley Reservoir and Brownhill Reservoir, it is considered that both Building 1 and Building 2 are of 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, in line with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). Although not formally assessed in this survey, adjacent buildings within the farm complex appeared to offer significantly greater variety of PRFs across the buildings, and as most are residential properties, likely contain roof voids that are more likely to support maternity colonies of bats.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

- 3.3.9 The Site offers negligible potential for foraging and commuting bats. The on-site areas surrounding the buildings have no vegetation present which could offer foraging opportunities for roosting bats. Given the

absence of vegetated habitats on the Site itself, it is considered that the Site possesses 'Negligible' suitability for foraging and commuting bats (Collins, 2023) and taken together Site habitats are of no more than site level importance to foraging and commuting bats.

4. Impact Assessment and Enhancements

4.1 Proposals

- 4.1.1 Proposals for the Site comprise the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the construction of a residential property with associated gardens and hardstanding.

4.2 Legislation

- 4.2.1 All species of bat occurring within the UK are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Under regulation 41 bats are protected from deliberate capture, injury or killing, from deliberate disturbance and from deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost).
- 4.2.2 All UK bats are also included on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). However, their protection is limited to certain offences. Under the 1981 Act (as amended) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any such place.
- 4.2.3 *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle bats are included as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

4.3 Assessment

- 4.3.1 The buildings on the Site are considered to both offer 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, and as such, in line with good practice guidance, further survey is required to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats ahead of the proposed demolition (Collins, 2023). This surveys should be undertaken as dusk emergence surveys and should be undertaken within the core bat survey period (May to August inclusive).
- 4.3.2 As the buildings are considered to be of 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, a single nocturnal survey will be required to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats, in line with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). It is recommended that the survey of each building should be undertaken within the core maternity period of June to mid-July.
- 4.3.3 A sufficient number of surveyors will be required on each nocturnal survey to ensure full coverage of the PRFs on the given target building. Surveyors should be equipped with full spectrum bat detectors and infra-red video cameras and record the species and number of bats using any roosts on the Site as well as recording incidental bat activity observed during the survey period. Surveyors should be in place at least 15 minutes prior to sunset for a minimum of 1.5 hours after sunset. The surveys should be conducted during periods when weather conditions are dry, with relatively low winds and temperatures in excess of approximately 10°C.
- 4.3.4 Where bat roosts are identified, a sufficient number of surveys will need to be undertaken in order to fully characterise the roosts present; the number of surveys detailed above are the minimum number required to confidently determine presence/likely absence only.
- 4.3.5 Irrespective of the results of the additional surveys, it is recommended that as compensation for the loss of PRFs across the Site, bat boxes or bat access roof tiles should be incorporated into the design of the new property as part of the development proposals. The model of boxes used should be suitable for crevice dwelling bat species, such as the Schwegler 1FR Bat Tube. The bat boxes should be placed as high as possible

above the ground on the building, facing southern aspects to maximise chances of occupation.

- 4.3.6 Given the nature of the proposals it is anticipated that most habitats of value to foraging and commuting bats will be retained with new infrastructure being constructed in the locations of existing infrastructure and, as such, it is not considered necessary to undertake a full suite of bat activity surveys and static monitoring in this regard. It is anticipated that the nocturnal surveys detailed above will provide a robust understanding of the species present on the Site and information obtained from these surveys can be used to develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

5. References

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

Figure 1. Building Suitability Map



Legend

 Site Boundary

Building Suitability

 Low



0 5 10 15 20 m



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Holmside Farm, Holmfirth

Figure 1
Building Suitability Map

Appendix 1. Site Photographs



Photograph 1. Northeast corner of Building 1



Photograph 2. Western aspect of Building 1



Photograph 3. Southwest corner of Building 2



Photograph 4. Southeast corner of Building 2



Photograph 5. Northeast corner of Building 2



Photograph 6. Internal of Building 1



Photograph 7. Example of weathered blocks on northern aspect of Building 1



Photograph 8. Internal of Building 2



Photograph 9. Hay loft in Building 1



Photograph 10. Example of bird nest in Building 1