

Bat Activity Survey Report	
For:	Olivia Mckee
Site:	Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD
Report Date:	30 th July 2025
Report Reference:	SQ-3210

Lead Ecologist:

Natasha Estrada BSc (hons), MRes, MCIEEM

Natural England Bat Licence: 2015-12213-CLS-CLS



Hollingworth Heights
 Peanock Lane
 Littleborough
 Rochdale
 OL15 0AD

Client:	Olivia Mckee
Site Name:	Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD
Grid Reference:	SD 93340 14492
Report:	Bat Activity Report
Date of survey:	May, June & July 2025
Lead Ecologist:	Natasha Estrada BSc (hons), MRes, MCIEEM Natural England Bat Licence: 2015-12213-CLS-CLS

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1	-	Draft for review	25 th July 2025	Sam Toon BSc(hons), Estrada Ecology Ltd	Natasha Estrada BSc(hons), MRes, MCIEEM, Estrada Ecology Ltd
2	n/a	FINAL	30 th July 2025	Joanne Toller BSc(hons), Estrada Ecology Ltd	Natasha Estrada BSc(hons), MRes, MCIEEM, Estrada Ecology Ltd



Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

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This report should not be submitted as part of a planning application without any accompanying species-specific reports which may have been recommended herein.

Data within this report is valid for a maximum of eighteen months from the date of the survey. After this period, an updated site visit will be required to determine a new ecological baseline.

Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this report and its contents, in view of potential ecological constraints to development or the presence or absence of species, it must only be viewed as a snapshot in time and, therefore, not be viewed as definitive. Due to external factors, such as seasonality, weather etc, having the potential to affect survey results, no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes that may, or may not occur, after the date this report was produced.

Summary

Estrada Ecology Ltd was commissioned to conduct three bat activity surveys on Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD (hereafter, referred to as the site).

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was conducted by Rachel Hacking Ecology in April 2025 (*Report Ref: RHE.4483, dated April 2025*) which recorded the property, Hollingworth Heights as containing no field sign evidence of bats but multiple potential roost features. Consequently, the building was assessed as containing high roost suitability when assessed by licensed bat ecologist Simon Holden (2019-42937-CLS-CLS) of Rachel Hacking Ecology and further survey effort recommended to ascertain presence/ likely absence of use of the structure by bats.



Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

Findings and recommendations

Bats and roosts

Three dusk activity surveys, following BCT Survey Guidelines 2023, were undertaken following suitable weather conditions, as outlined herein.

During the survey, a peak count of two Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats was recorded roosting at two locations within the building. No use by any other species of bat was recorded within the structure. Bat activity over the survey period was recorded as generally low and no impacts on foraging grounds or commuting lines are predicted via the proposals.

Based on field sign evidence, the building is confirmed to be used by bats for roosting. As a result, formal mitigation will be required to facilitate the proposals for demolition and subsequent redevelopment of the site. A mitigation licence from Natural England should be obtained or the site entered into the bat Low Impact Scheme before the onset of any works.

Hibernating bats

Crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle species, use structures for shelter and protection in winter when they hibernate. During hibernation, bats need roosts that are cool and remain at a constant temperature. They are difficult to detect in hibernation, in well-concealed crevices, and leave no obvious signs of their presence. The building was assessed for its potential to support features which bats could utilise for hibernation. The structure recorded very low potential for hibernacula use, due to the absence of crevices or cracks of a suitable depth and thermal mass which could support hibernating bats.

Breeding birds

No evidence of breeding birds was recorded at the time of survey within or upon any structure. No impacts are predicted on breeding birds at this juncture.

Contents:

	Summary
1	Introduction and Site Description
2	Protected Species Legislation
3	Survey Objectives
4	Survey Methodology
5	Survey Findings
6	Survey and Site Assessment
7	Ecological Constraints
8	Interpretation and Evaluation
9	Assessment of Potential Impacts
10	Conclusions and Recommendations
11	Method Statement
	References

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

1 Introduction and Site Description

- 1.1 Estrada Ecology Ltd was commissioned to conduct three bat activity surveys on Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD (hereafter referred to as the 'site').
- 1.2 Under current proposals, it is understood that the existing house is to be demolished and the site redeveloped into a single residential house, subject to the necessary consents.
- 1.3 A survey undertaken by Rachel Hacking Ecology in April 2025 recorded the property to contain no field sign evidence of bats but a high level of roost suitability (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; *Report reference RHE.4482; April 2025*). Subsequently, three bat activity surveys were recommended to ascertain presence/ likely absence of use of the structure by bats.
- 1.4 The plot contains the former dwelling house, Hollingworth Heights along with several extensions, outbuildings and garages erected more latterly. The property is surrounded by hardstanding with an established vegetated garden. To the north is a modified grassland field which falls within the curtilage of the plot.
- 1.5 The site is located within a semi-rural location adjacent to the southern bank of Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The immediate landscape to the north is dominated by the lake with agricultural and grazing land dominating the landscape outside the southern and eastern aspects of the plot. To the northwest approximately 370 metres is the town of Littleborough.
- 1.6 The site is located approximately 3.7 kms east of the town of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The central grid reference for the site is recorded as SD 93340 14492.



Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

Figure 1: The building location in its wider setting (shown with red keyline).



Google Earth

2 Protected Species Legislation

- 2.1 All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 2.2 The Regulations prohibit: the deliberate killing, injuring or taking of bats; the deliberate disturbance of any bat species, in such a way as to be significantly likely to affect:
 - their ability of to survive, hibernate, migrate, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or the local distribution or abundance of that species.
 - damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost); and
 - the possession or transport of bats or any other part thereof.
- 2.3 Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion in Schedule 5. Under the Act, they are protected from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level); obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding or rest; selling, bartering or exchange of these species, or parts of.

2.4 Seven British bat species are listed as Species of Principle Importance (SPI) under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are: barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*); Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*); noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*); soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*); brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*); greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*); and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

2.5 Under the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, the presence of any protected species is a material planning consideration. The Framework states that impacts arising from development proposals must be avoided where possible, or mitigated / compensated for, and that opportunities for ecological enhancement should be sought.

2.6 Under certain circumstances, a licence may be granted by Natural England to permit activities that would otherwise constitute an offence. In relation to development, a scheme must have full planning permission before a licence application can be made.

3 Survey Objectives

3.1 The objective of these surveys was to establish if bats were using the site for roosting, or as a place of shelter; and, to identify to species level, determine the population size and nature of the roost within the property on site.

3.2 This report presents the findings of bat activity surveys undertaken in May, June and July 2025 and aims to:

- Outline any potential impacts of the proposed development on bats, as a result of the findings of the desk study and field surveys.
- Provide recommendations for mitigation and / or compensation measures to ensure any impacts on bat activity is avoided or minimised where applicable.
- Provide recommendations for enhancing the site for bat activity where possible; and

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

- Provide recommendations for mitigation and / or compensation measures to ensure any impacts on breeding bird species is avoided or minimised.

4 Survey Methodology

4.1 Desktop study

- 4.1.1 Consultation with previous survey reports of the site was undertaken to add context.
- 4.1.2 Further inspection, using colour 1: 25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk), MAGIC (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk), was also undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

4.2 Initial inspection survey

- 4.2.1 An initial inspection survey of the site was undertaken in April 2025 by Sam Holden MCIEEM of Rachel Hacking Ecology and recorded Hollingworth Heights as containing no field sign evidence synonymous with use of the structure by bats but a high level of roost suitability (*Rachel Hacking Ecology; Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Report Reference: RHE.4483; April 2025*).
- 4.2.2 Consequently, the building was categorised as containing high roost suitability and further survey effort in the form of three bat activity surveys were recommended to ascertain presence/ likely absence.

4.3 Bat activity surveys

- 4.3.1 Three bat activity surveys were undertaken on the evenings of 28th May 25th June and 23rd July 2025 by Estrada Ecology Ltd following guidance from Collins, J., Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition, 2023.
- 4.3.2 Prior to the start of the activity surveys an external examination, where accessible, was undertaken of all cavities, holes, cracks and fissures in timber and brickwork (where applicable), using an Explorer Premium

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

Image Recording telescopic borescope, a Seek compact pro thermal camera and close-focusing binoculars. Features were examined for bat field signs to identify bats in situ, potential roost sites and access points and any signs of occupation such as scratch marks; droppings; smudge marks; discarded moth wings; and urine staining etc.

- 4.3.3 The number of surveys on the building is determined by its potential to support bats; any field sign evidence gathered during the initial inspection survey in April 2025, and any subsequent activity recorded during activity surveys.
- 4.3.4 The dusk emergence surveys commenced twenty minutes prior to sunset and continued up to two hours after sunset.
- 4.3.5 Echo Meter Touch 2 Pros paired with Bat boxes Duets and Anabat Scouts were used to aid identification of the species. The survey results were aided by the use of Night Fox Whisker IR Cameras and XB5850nm IR flashlights.

Figure 2: Location of surveyors (with IR Cameras ●) over the survey period and standalone IR camera position (●).



Google Earth

NB: All Potential Roost Features covered by surveyor and IR Camera

4.4 Timings

- 4.4.1 The activity surveys were conducted during suitable weather conditions as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Environmental conditions throughout the survey period.

Date	Sunset / Sunrise	Start time	End time	Weather conditions
28 th May 2025	21:22	21:00	22:50	Temp 12°C, Humidity 77%, No precipitation, wind speed 2mph SW
25 th June 2025	21:43	21:14	23:02	Temp 18°C, Humidity 82%, No precipitation, wind speed 2mph SW
23 rd July 2025	21:21	21:00	22:40	Temp 18°C, Humidity 87%, light drizzle, wind speed 2mph NW

4.5 Personnel

- 4.5.1 The bat activity surveys were led by experienced ecologist Natasha Estrada (Natural England Bat Licence 2015-12213-CLS-CLS): full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM); a licensed bat ecologist for approximately twenty years; and the named ecologist on several Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses in respect of *Pipistrelle* species, brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and Natterer's bats (*Myotis nattereri*).
- 4.5.2 Natasha was assisted by ecologists John Davies BSc(hons) and Joanne Toller BSc (hons) who are formally enrolled on a bat licence training programme with Ecology Training UK Ltd. Assistant ecologists Aimee McManus BSc(hons), Marie Brown MSc and Emily Southern BSc(hons) assisted on a rotational basis to maximise survey efforts.

5 Survey Findings

5.1 Desktop study

- 5.1.1 No biological records were commissioned for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report.
- 5.1.2 No mitigation licenses were returned for a 1 km radius from central grid following consultation with Magic Map.

5.2 Initial inspection survey

- 5.2.1 Prior to the start of the activity surveys, a visual inspection of the buildings was undertaken, where accessible.
- 5.2.2 No fresh field sign evidence to indicate use of any structure was recorded and no bats were recorded in situ within accessible parts of the building.

5.3 Bat activity surveys

- 5.3.1 During the first activity survey, one Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was recorded emerging from a fissure below a second storey window (Figure 3A) at 21:57. No further emergences or re-entry behaviour was recorded throughout the remaining duration of the survey.
- 5.3.2 Low levels of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) contacts were recorded over the survey foraging along the northern aspect of the garden between 21:57 and 22:22 before dispersing northeast in the direction of Hollingworth Lake.
- 5.3.3 No evidence of breeding birds using the property was recorded over the first survey period.
- 5.3.4 During the second bat activity survey, one common pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the same location as during survey one (Figure 3A) at 22:01. An additional single common pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging at 22:14 from the northern aspect of the property underneath a lifted hanging tile (Figure 3B).
- 5.3.5 Low levels of Common and Soprano pipistrelle foraging was recorded over the duration of the survey period with low levels of common pipistrelle (<5) foraging around mature trees on the southeastern boundary. Both common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded foraging within the northern aspect of the garden, entering the site from the west before dispersing over Hollingworth Lake.
- 5.3.6 During the third activity survey, one common pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the previously recorded roost on the

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

southern aspect of the property at 21:43. No further emergences from the property were recorded throughout the remaining duration.

- 5.3.7 Bat activity from non-emerging individuals was similar to that on the second survey with common and soprano pipistrelles foraging within the southeastern aspects and northern aspects of the garden before dispersing in the direction of Hollingworth Lake. In addition, four Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) contacts were recorded, with all individuals flying over the far north of the site west to east.

Figure 3: Roost locations recorded.

A, Southern aspect



B, Northern aspect**5.4 Commuting route assessment**

- 5.4.1 Bats are known to utilise linear features as commuting lines to foraging grounds and between roosts. Under current proposals, no encroachment on habitat suitable for use by bats is predicted and thus no impacts.
- 5.4.2 Evidence to suggest use of land outside the eastern and southern site boundary as a minor foraging resource was recorded over the survey period.
- 5.4.3 Minor instances of foraging within the garden area and flybys were recorded over the survey period. No major commuting lines or foraging habitats were recorded over the survey period.

Hollingworth Heights
 Peanock Lane
 Littleborough
 Rochdale
 OL15 0AD

Figure 4: Example of surveyors Field View



6 Survey and Site Assessment

- 6.1 Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD is confirmed as being used by low numbers of common pipistrelle bats for roosting with two roost locations identified. Based on survey data, the roosts are classified as a day roosts, each used by a peak count of 1 bat.
- 6.2 No evidence to infer the site contains species other than those aforementioned was recorded over the survey period.
- 6.3 No evidence to suggest the site serves as a major foraging resource or commuting habitat for bats was recorded over the survey period.

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

- 6.4 No evidence of use of the structure by breeding birds was recorded over the survey period.

7 Ecological Constraints

- 7.1 Due to the variable properties of bat echolocation calls and the format of frequency division recordings, it is not always possible to identify a series of echolocation calls down to species level.
- 7.2 In most cases, it is usually possible to identify to genus level which is suitable to allow potential affects to be assessed, and appropriate mitigation designed.
- 7.3 No failure of equipment occurred over the survey period.

8 Interpretation and Evaluation

- 8.1 Hollingworth Heights is confirmed as being used by low numbers of common pipistrelle bats on a non-breeding basis, as a probable day roost.
- 8.2 In order to legally facilitate the proposed demolition works, a mitigation licence will need to be obtained from Natural England in advance of the onset of any works or the site entered into the Bat Low Impact Scheme. It should be noted that a mitigation licence cannot be obtained until planning permission has been granted.
- 8.3 Included herein is an indicative method statement and evidence to support the derogation tests. It should be noted that mitigation is based on best practice and the experience of a licensed bat ecologist. This could be subject to minor changes via the Natural England licensing process.

9 Assessment of Potential Impacts

9.1 Impacts on bats and their roosts

- 9.1.1 The results of the bat activity surveys confirm that Hollingworth Heights, is used by common pipistrelle bats on a likely non-breeding basis.

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

- 9.1.2 The activity survey results recorded no evidence to suggest use of the survey site as a major commuting route or foraging ground. Under current proposals, no impacts on major foraging grounds or commuting lines are predicted.
- 9.1.3 It is deemed that a Protected Species Mitigation Licence (formerly European Protected Species Mitigation Licence) will be required to facilitate the proposed works or the site entered into the Bat Low Impact Scheme. The licence (or registration) must be obtained prior to any commencement of works on the building.

9.2 Impacts on breeding birds

- 9.2.1 At the time of survey, no evidence to indicate use of any aspect of the building by breeding birds was recorded.
- 9.2.2 It is understood that works are due to commence outside the breeding bird season. However, should timings change and nests or activity to suggest birds are breeding or attempting to breed in any building be recorded, then all works should cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted.
- 9.2.3 A suitable buffer zone, as advised by a suitably qualified ecologist, should be installed in order to protect the nest and prevent disturbance.
- 9.2.4 Mid development, it is recommended that integrated nesting features are incorporated into the new dwelling to ensure nesting opportunities across the site.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 10.1 The result of the bat activity surveys confirms that Hollingworth Heights, Peanock Lane, Littleborough, Rochdale, OL15 0AD is used by low numbers of Common Pipistrelle bats for roosting on what is deemed a day roost basis. No evidence to suggest natal use of the property was recorded over the survey period.
- 10.2 As a result, to legally facilitate the proposals to demolish the building and subsequently destroy the roosts, a mitigation licence will be

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

required from Natural England in advance of any works on the structure or the site entered into the Bat Low Impact Scheme.

- 10.3 An indicative mitigation strategy has been compiled capable of supporting the three derogation tests and is outlined within section 11.0 herein.
- 10.4 No impacts on major foraging lines or commuting corridors are predicted via the proposals. Minor foraging areas recorded outside the site boundary will be unaffected by the proposals subject to a suitable lighting strategy to minimise any splay.

11 Indicative Method Statement

- 11.1 Immediately prior to the works under licence, an initial inspection by the named ecologist will be conducted to ensure no bats are in situ. Two Schwegler 2F bat boxes (or similar) will be erected around the site, prior to the onset of works to ensure continuous roosting provision is available mid-term. The boxes will be housed within the site boundary but away from the zone of works (Appendix Two).
- 11.2 The site is identified as being used by low numbers of common pipistrelle bats for roosting (peak count 2). No field sign evidence to indicate use as a maternity or larger bachelor roost was recorded over the survey period. No field sign evidence of use of the structure by any other species of bat other than the aforementioned species was recorded over the survey period.
- 11.3 Given the non-breeding nature of the roost and the relatively common conservation status of the species, the proposals are deemed to have a low impact on bats. A pre- works' inspection will ensure no measurable disturbance is caused to bats as will the timings of the works, outside the main bat activity season. Mid-term roosting provision will be in situ prior to the onset of works to provide roosting opportunities to bats.

11.4 Long-term impacts on roosts

- 11.4.1 Permanent in situ roosting provision will be provided in the new structure and in situ for the long term.
- 11.4.2 No impacts are predicted in respect of the species recorded. It is envisaged that integrated roosting provision for bats will be in situ for the long-term enhancing bat use of the new structure. No impacts on foraging and commuting areas are predicted, under current proposals.

11.5 Post development interference impacts.

- 11.5.1 No additional impacts in respect of disturbance from lighting are predicted. Any lighting erected on the new buildings will avoid splay onto integrated roosting provision and along boundary features.
- 11.5.2 No impacts are predicted in respect of severance of terrestrial lines or impacts on commuting and foraging grounds. The property is located within a rural location, with suitable foraging and commuting grounds outside the site boundary. These areas are unaffected by the current proposals.

11.6 Long term impacts: Fragmentation and isolation

- 11.6.1 Current proposals are unlikely to cause any additional isolation or fragmentation in comparison to the existing site.
- 11.6.2 Potential flight lines, commuting routes and foraging areas outside the boundary of the development site will not be affected by the proposed works.

11.7 Works to be undertaken by the named ecologist under Natural England Mitigation Licence.

- 11.7.1 Pre-works' endoscopic surveys will be conducted immediately prior to the commencement of works by the named ecologist, to ensure that no bats are in situ.
- 11.7.2 Should any bats recorded in situ; they will be transported by the named ecologist to pre-erected bat boxes located around the wider

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

site. The roost will then be closed following methodology outlined within the terms of the mitigation licence by the named ecologist.

- 11.7.3 It is proposed that integrated bat boxes be installed within the new building on the southern or southwestern aspects to provide long term roosting sites across the site.
- 11.7.4 Integrated bat boxes require no on-going management and are self-contained. Droppings are released via the access panel. Being durable and integrated, it is expected that the boxes will be in situ for the lifetime of the building.
- 11.7.5 The flight path to the box should not have any light overspill in the vicinity which could deter bats from using the box. No vegetation should be allowed to grow that could impede the flight line to the integrated boxes.

11.8 Derogation Tests

- 11.8.1 **Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.**
- 11.8.2 The demolition of the property and redevelopment of the site is the only route the applicant can follow. The building is in a poor state of structural repair and does not meet the needs of the applicant in its current layout.
- 11.8.3 As a result, the maintenance and security of the building is likely to provide a financial constraint should it remain in situ.

11.9 There is no satisfactory alternative.

- 11.9.1 The building in its current condition does not meet any of the client's requirements. Retaining the building will continue to be a financial constraint in terms of maintenance and the retention of an unusable asset.

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

- 11.9.2 To adopt the “Do nothing” option would ultimately accelerate the cycle of decline of the building leading to sub optimal conditions for bats and ultimately lead to deterioration of the existing roosts.
- 11.10 The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.**
- 11.10.1 The level of impact on the site is considered low as proportionate mitigation will be provided for the species prior to the onset of works.
- 11.10.2 The impact is low in a wider context and is not thought to contribute in any way to the reduction in abundance or distribution of any bat species or roosting habitat in a regional or national context.
Therefore, the favourable conservation status of the species would not be detrimentally affected by the redevelopment of the site.
- 11.10.3 No impacts in respect of changes to the foraging and commuting landscape for bats are predicted under current plans.

References:

Collins, J (2023). Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition.



Appendix One: Example of IR Footage over the survey period.





BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY REPORT

Hollingworth Heights
Peanock Lane
Littleborough
Rochdale
OL15 0AD

July 2025

Appendix Two: Proposed location of mid-term provision for bats housed in pairs.



Google Earth



Appendix Three: Minor foraging areas recorded over the survey period.

Key	Behaviour
	Dispersal post emergence
	Minor foraging areas