



PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

**PLUMPTON COTTAGE,
BURY AND ROCHDALE OLD ROAD,
HEYWOOD,
OL10 4AT.**

JULY 2026

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Plumpton Cottage, Bury and Rochdale Old Road, Heywood, OL10 4AT.

A report for

**Irwin Mitchell LLP
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A report by



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in July 2026 by Irwin Mitchell LLP to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of five trees (T1, T3, T4, T5 and T6) at Plumpton Cottage, Heywood (refer to Figure 1.1 for tree locations).

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 redeveloped in to housing.

This report can read in conjunction with: Site Tree Appraisal, Plumpton Cottage, Bury & Bolton Old Road, OL10 4AT (Rowbottom's Tree Services Ltd, Independent Arboricultural Consultancy, March 2026).



Figure 1.1 - Site location plan.

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 site is located along Bury and Rochdale Old Road, Heywood, OL10 4AT. The surrounding habitats include arable and pasture fields with associated areas of woodland. Immediately north west of the site comprises a residential estate. The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference¹ for the site is SD 85857 12134.

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 (2023²)).

- 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 Greater Manchester, 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 and July 2026 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 9th July 2026. Weather conditions were as follows; 24°C, sunny, calm with no precipitation.

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 where required.

3.3 Habitat Assessment

Bats will forage in a numerous habitats 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 survey was undertaken by Luke Pilling, who is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and has over two years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills relating to this site include:

- Two seasons of UKHabs survey.
- Breeding bird inspections and breeding bird checks.
- Competent in preliminary bat roost assessments. Undertaken four seasons of bat emergence and transect surveys.
- One season of terrestrial mammal surveys, supported by highly experienced ecologists.

The survey findings and report has been reviewed by Stuart Macpherson, who is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 15 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

There are considered to be no constraints associated with this 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 nationally designated statutory sites within 2km.

(b) Granted European Protected Species Licence Applications

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

4.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

Summary

No evidence of bats was recorded on any of the trees inspected. Photographs of the trees are provided at the end of this report.

Tree descriptions

A brief description of the trees inspected are provided in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Tree Descriptions

Tree No.	Description	Suitability
T1	A large beech tree with a DBH of approx. 67cm. The tree had smooth bark and was in very good condition with no cavities or inverts identified.	Negligible
T3	A sycamore tree with a DBH of approx. 33cm. No suitable gaps or cavities were identified throughout the tree. A large cavity was identified at the base of the tree; however, the whole cavity was inspected, and the bat roost suitability was identified.	Negligible
T4	A sycamore tree with a DBH of approx. 24cm. No suitable gaps or cavities were identified throughout the tree.	Negligible
T5	A large beech tree with a DBH of approx. 94cm. No features identified that would be suitable to support roosting bats.	Negligible
T6	A large beech tree with a DBH of approx. 54cm. The tree had smooth bark and was in very good condition with no cavities or inverts identified.	Negligible

4.3 Habitat Assessment

The immediate surrounding comprises dense woodland within the Plumpton Woods. A section of the River Roch also runs approximately 250m south of the site where several green corridors comprises the habitats between the site and the watercourse creating moderate opportunities for foraging 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.

All trees were of negligible suitability to support a bat roost.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations.

Should bats (or breeding birds) be recorded during any tree removal / pruning works then works must stop and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

If works have not be commenced within 12 months of the above survey date, then it is recommended a further inspection is undertaken to reassess the trees condition.

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

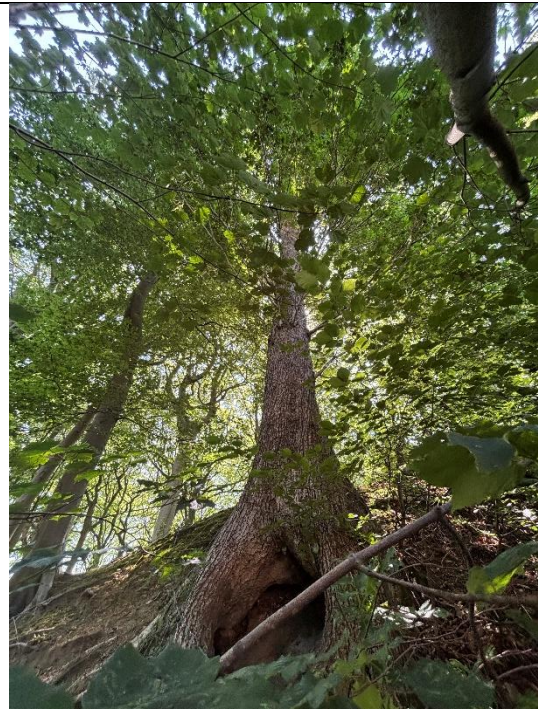
Natural England – MAGIC. Accessed various dates. Latest access July 2026
<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access July 2026.

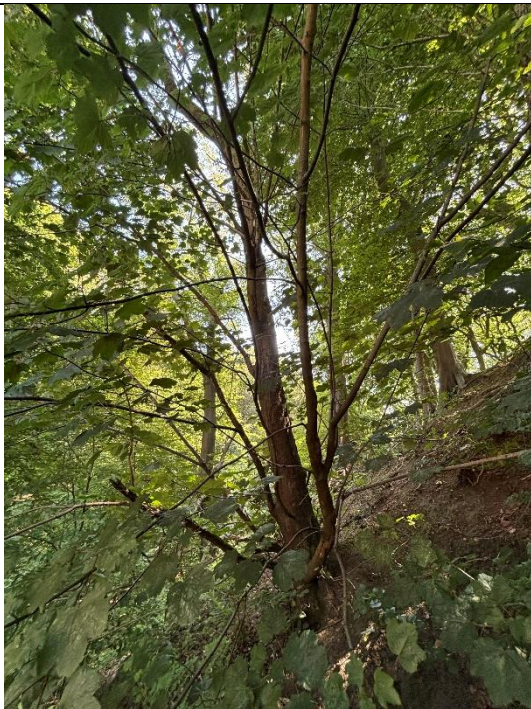
Appendix A: Site Photographs 9th of July 2026



Photograph 1: Overview of T1



Photograph 2: Overview of T3.



Photograph 3: Overview of T4.



Photograph 4: Overview of T5.



Photograph 5: Overview of T6.



Photograph 6: View of T5 and associated habitats.