

Bat Survey Report

Oakwood Cottage, Heywood
On behalf of Unearthed Land

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Executive Summary

- S.1 This report has been prepared by Rebecca Freeman MSc MCIEEM on behalf of Unearthed Land. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and subsequent bat emergence surveys at Oakwood Cottage, Heywood, OL10 4AG, hereafter referred to as the "Site". The Site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 85268 11799.
- S.2 A full planning application is to be made to convert a freestanding garage into three residential dwellings.
- S.3 The site is not covered by or adjacent to any sites that are the subject of statutory or non-statutory protection and no such sites would be affected.
- S.4 The development proposals include a re-profile and replacement roof, the existing building will be retained and refurbished to accommodate three residential dwellings.
- S.5 The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) determined the building to have High suitability for roosting bats. As a result, three bat emergence survey were undertaken in the bat survey season (May to September inclusive) to determine likely usage by bats.
- S.6 No emergencies were noted from the building on Site. Therefore no further survey or mitigation work is required for development to proceed with regards to bats.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. This report has been prepared by Rebecca Freeman MSc MCIEEM on behalf of Unearthed Land. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and subsequent bat emergence surveys at Oakwood Cottage, Heywood, OL10 4AG, hereafter referred to as the "Site". The Site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 85268 11799.
- 1.1.2. All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2. Context

- 1.2.1. The Site is located in a semi-urban setting immediately west of Rochdale (see Figure 1, below).
- 1.2.2. The structure in question on site consist of a brick-built garage with a tile roof.
- 1.2.3. A full planning application is to be made to renovate the Site into residential dwellings by converting the existing building.
- 1.2.4. This report:
 - Uses available background data and results of field surveys to describe and evaluate the ecological features relevant to bats within the site;
 - Evaluates the actual or potential ecological impacts and opportunities that might arise as a result of the site's development; and,
 - Makes recommendations for enhancements to contribute to the favourable conservation status of bats in the area of works.
- 1.2.5. This Assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018).



Figure 1 – Location plan of Site

2. Methods

2.1. Data Search

- 2.1.1. The aim of the data search is to collate existing ecological records for the Site and adjacent areas. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the assessment process as it provides information on issues that may not be apparent during a single survey, which by its nature provides only a 'snapshot' of the ecology of a given site.
- 2.1.2. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was accessed for information on protected or notable species or habitats. The search area comprised a 2 km radius for European Protected Species mitigation licences.

2.2. Surveys

- 2.2.1. The surveys followed standard methodologies set out in published guidance^{1 2 3 4} and comprised
- Building Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) – external and internal building inspection survey to assess potential of buildings on site to support roosting bats;
 - Emergence/re-entry presence/absence surveys - to determine presence or likely absence or roosting bats within buildings / trees.
- 2.2.2. Nathan Rimmer, Natural England Level 2 bat licence holder (License number: 2020-50733-CLS-CLS) was present for all surveys.

PRA Survey

- 2.2.3. A PRA was undertaken on all buildings within the site boundary. The assessment was undertaken on 8th December 2025 by Nathan Rimmer and Rebecca Freeman. The PRA was a daytime inspection and the conditions for all surveys were considered optimal. The location of the building at the site are shown on Plan 1.
- 2.2.4. The objective of the PRA survey was to establish the suitability of the building on site to support roosting bats, based on a site specific survey and habitat assessment. The building was searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016).
- 2.2.5. The onsite building was inspected from the ground using binoculars, high powered torch and digital camera. In relation to buildings, such signs may include bat droppings, urine splashes, staining and features suitable for allowing bats access

¹ Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

² Mitchell-Jones, A.J., & McLeish, A.P. (eds). (2004) *3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual*, JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 1 86107 558 8

³ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁴ Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018) *Bat Roosts in Trees : A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-Care and Ecology Professionals*. Pelagic Publishing ISBN 9781784271619

to roost (e.g. gaps behind soffits / hanging tiles / ridge tiles, lifted slates / flashing). The internal inspection of the building comprised a thorough search for evidence of roosting bats in accessible loft spaces (i.e. droppings, urine stains) and an assessment of the presence of potential roosting features internally.

- 2.2.6. The potential of the buildings to support roosting bats was assessed using the criteria shown in Table 1 below.

Table 2.1. Building / Structure Assessment Criteria

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain Potential Roost Features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree 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).
High	A structure or tree 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.

- 2.2.7. Consideration of the structures suitability to be utilised as a hibernation roost was also considered in line with published guidance ^{5 6}.

Emergence Surveys

- 2.2.8. All bat surveys undertaken were completed with reference to published guidance ^{7 8 9 10}.
- 2.2.9. The emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with best practice survey guidance, starting 15 minutes before sunset and finishing an hour and a half after sunset.
- 2.2.10. During the visit, three survey positions were utilised so as to best observe any bats emerging from the building. Each survey position was supported by a Night Vision

⁵ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁶ Middleton, N. (2019) Assessing Sites for Hibernation Potential. A Practical Approach, including a Proposed Method & Supporting Notes. Author: Neil Middleton (BatAbility Courses & Tuition) Version: Draft/V2.2019 Dated: 08.10.2019 [Assessing-Sites-for-Hibernation-Potential-BatAbility-10.2019.pdf](#)

⁷ Collins, J. (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. 3rd edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁸ Natural England (2022) Bats: advice for making planning decisions, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-advice-for-making-planning-decisions> [Accessed XX/XX/XXXX]

⁹ Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

¹⁰ Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2012) *The Bat Workers' Manual*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

Aid (NVA), this included Canon XA20 cameras, a Guide Track IR Pro thermal camera, a Nightfox Nova and Nightfox Whiskers.

2.2.11. Anabat Walkabout and EMT2 detectors were used to identify bats during the surveys, and BatExplorer software was used to analyse bat calls for species identification.

2.2.12. The surveys were completed during optimum weather conditions and these are detailed in below Table 2.2 along with the date and sunrise time.

Table 2.2. Dusk Emergence Survey Meta Data

Date	Survey Type	Timings	Sunset	Weather at Start	Weather at End
21/05/2026	Emergence	20:57 – 22:42	21:12	16°C Cloud 30% Wind 0 Rain 0	16°C Cloud 50% Wind 0 Rain 0
28/06/2026	Emergence	21:27 – 23:12	21:42	17°C Cloud 0% Wind 1 Rain 0	16°C Cloud 0% Wind 0 Rain 0
20/07/2026	Emergence	21:09 – 22:54	21:24	20°C Cloud 10% Wind 0 Rain 0	20°C Cloud 0% Wind 0 Rain 0

2.3. Limitations

2.3.1. There were no limitations associated with these surveys.

3. Results

3.1. Data Search

- 3.1.1. The Site is not covered by or adjacent to any statutory site of nature conservation interest.
- 3.1.2. There were no priority habitats recorded on or adjacent to the Site.
- 3.1.3. A review of DEFRA's MAGIC website confirms that there are no known license for bat species within 2km of the Site.

3.2. PRA

- 3.2.1. The single on site building is a large, freestanding garage of brick construction, with an unlined tile roof. The roof tiles are in generally good condition, though a small number were lifted and some were missing. Broken, lifted and missing tiles gave access for bats into the loft voids noted in the internal inspection (see para 3.2.2). Lifted ridge tiles were noted in three places along the ridge line, though at both apexes, ridge tiles were well sealed with concrete. The brickwork was well sealed, as were windows and wooden doors. There are multiple windows, all well sealed and appear to be intact. Wooden doors are present on the southern aspect.
- 3.2.2. Internally, the building is split into three main sections with brick partition walls between each section. The outermost sections had insulated ceilings, with no access for people into the loft space created above. The middle section had a wooden ceiling, with an access hatch. The loft void above was open and light due to the presence of windows. No insulated was noted on the external or internal walls, or what was visible of the roof space.
- 3.2.3. No evidence of bats was found during the internal or external searches.
- 3.2.4. Surrounding habitat consists of mature tree belts and open fields, with the River Roch approx. 60m west of the Site. The surrounding buildings are of a similar age and present a number of roost features including lifted and broken roof tiles.
- 3.2.5. Due to the loft voids present at either end of the building, with access for bats via roof and ridge tiles, the single onsite building was given **High** potential for roosting bats.

3.3. Emergence Surveys

- 3.3.1. Table 3.2 below includes details of emergence surveys completed.

Table 3.1 Emergence survey results

Date	Survey Type	Visit number	Results
21/05/2026	Emergence	1	No bats recorded emerging.

Date	Survey Type	Visit number	Results
28/06/2026	Emergence	2	No bats recorded emerging.
20/07/2026	Emergence	3	No bats recorded emerging.

- 3.3.2. No emergences were noted from the building on any of the three surveys.
- 3.3.3. Bat species recorded during the nocturnal building surveys, but not seen to emerge, consisted of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule calls. Bats observed during the surveys were mostly commuting along a tree line to the West of the Site, with only occasional foraging behaviour noted. Bat activity was generally consistent across the three surveys.

1. EVALUATION

1.1. Evaluation of results

- 1.1.1. The onsite building has been assessed as having high potential for roosting bats.
- 1.1.2. Surrounding habitat is suitable for foraging and roosting bats, there are a number of potential roost resources in close proximity to the Site.
- 1.1.3. Due to the requirement for the existing roof to be reprofiled and replaced, there is potential for bats to be impacted by the scheme.
- 1.1.4. Therefore, three bat emergence surveys were undertaken to establish if the building is in use by bats. The emergence surveys did not record any emergences, and no evidence was found to suggest a roost was present.
- 1.1.5. There was consistent bat activity on a tree line to the west of the Site, with common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats all recorded. It is therefore recommended that minimal lighting be included in the proposals to the west of the Site in order to maintain the existing relatively dark corridor.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan

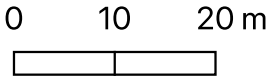


Site Location Plan

Key

 RLB

 Building



Plan Number
PV25026/P01

Appendix 2 – Photographs



Southern aspect



Western aspect



Eastern aspect



Northern aspect



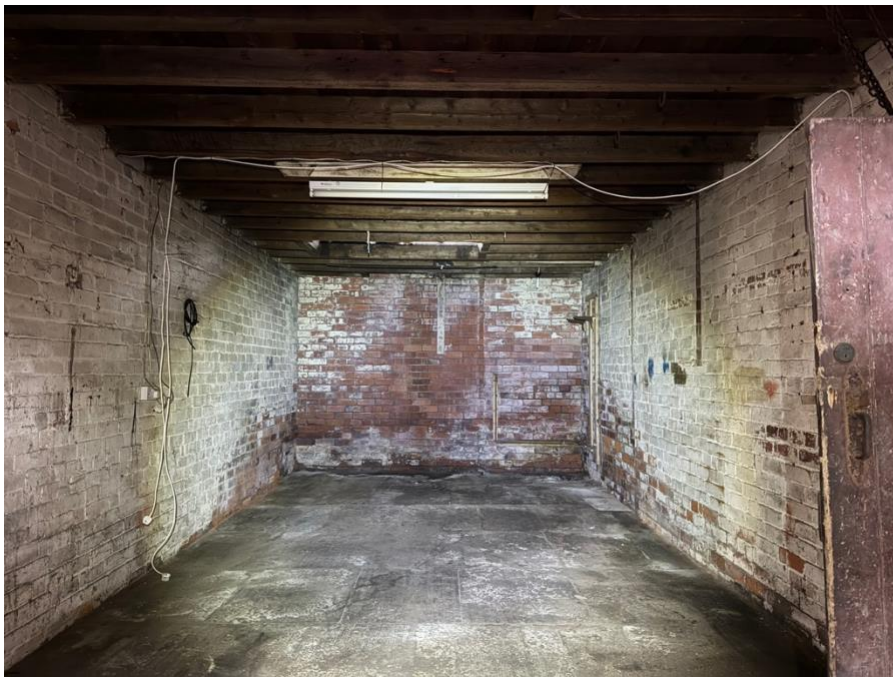
Lifted and missing tiles



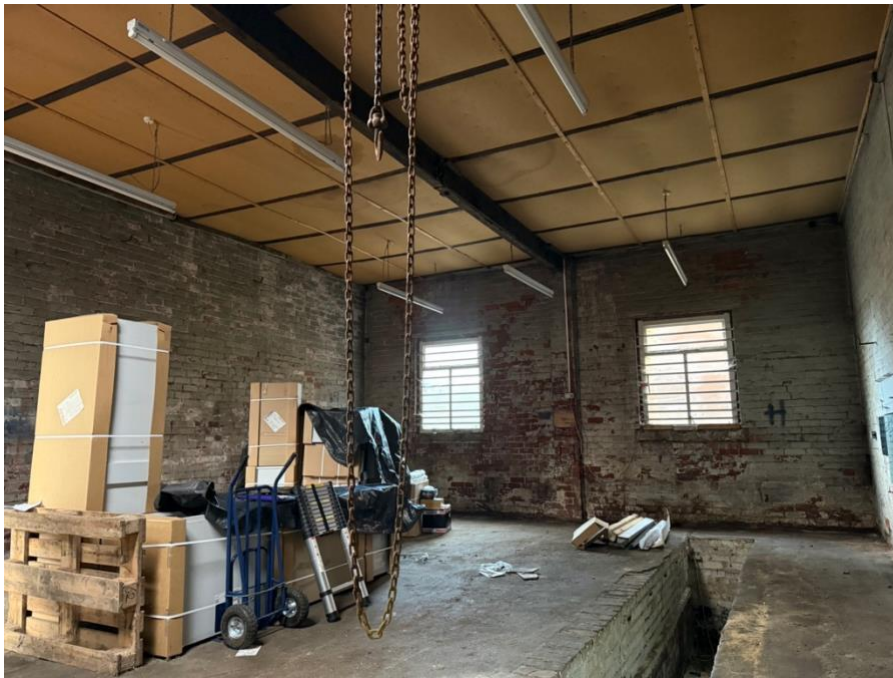
Gaps in ridge tiles



Internal area – eastern section



Internal area – middle section



Internal area – western section



Surrounding area – habitat



Surrounding area – roost resource example