

Preliminary Roost Assessment

London Mill, Ashbourne Road, Leek,
Staffordshire, ST13 5AP

November 2025

Project	London Mill, Ashbourne Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5AS
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Executive Summary

Background

CW Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Steve Austin to undertake a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of London Mill, Ashbourne Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5AS in respect to a planning application to:

- Renovate and restore a former textile mill to accommodate 28 residential apartments.

Findings Summary

	Results	Impacts	Recommendations
Buildings			
Main building	The property is in poor condition. Significant structural damage on the eastern gable end is allowing significant water into the buildings on this aspect. The building was occupied by at least twenty pigeons upon the day of the survey. Multiple deceased pigeons were noted within the building. Along with several nests, none of which were presently active. Features as noted previously still exist, but soffits holes have become larger and less suited. Damaged bricks and mortar continue to exist, however the building is becoming more affected by weather and less likely to offer suitability for bats.	No impacts identified	No further surveys for bats are required. If bats are found at any stage of the works, then works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice. A check for nesting birds is required before roofline works commence to ensure no pigeons are trapped within the building.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 CW Ecology was commissioned by IncArchitecture on behalf of Vanguard Group Developments (Uk3) Limited, to undertake a preliminary roost assessment at London Mill, Ashbourne Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5AS, henceforth referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.1.2 The site has a central grid reference of SJ 98914 56424.
- 1.1.3 The site, shown in Figure 1, is located within the central southern area of Leek. The site is situated within 100 metres of Pickwood Recreation Ground, an area of open grassland and pockets of woodlands. This area extends to further open rural countryside and arable land. Leek is surrounded by large areas of rural countryside including Tittesworth reservoir to the north, within 2.26km of the site. The River Chumet, is located within 1.13km to the north west of the site at the closest point. A tributary of a local pond can be found to the south of the site within 150 metres, however on aerial imagery this appears to be grassland/woodland. Directly around the site is intensive industrial and residential buildings, with Ashbourne road directly adjacent to the site.
- 1.1.4 The site is comprised of an industrial textile mill. The site does not have any additional land associated with it, such as car parking or landscaping areas.
- 1.1.5 Previous ecological surveys have been undertaken on the building, most recently in 2022 when two emergence surveys were undertaken. No bats were seen to emerge during either the dusk or the dawn surveys. Activity levels of bats were low on both surveys, with only pipistrelle recorded.
- 1.1.6 Planning was granted in September 2024, one of the conditions was an up to date bat assessment.



Figure 1- Red line boundary.

2. Legislation

2.1 Wildlife and Countryside Act

2.1.1 All bat species are fully protected under section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). According to this act, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally capture, kill or injure one of these animals
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used by one of these animals for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb an animal whilst it is using this place sell, offer for sale or advertise for one of these animals live or dead

2.2 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations

2.2.1 Designated as European Protected Species' **all bat species** receive additional protection from the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), under Schedule 2. In accordance with this act, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a European Protected Species
- Deliberately disturb a European Protected Species
- Damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of a European Protected Species

2.2.2 The **greater and lesser horseshoe bats, barbastelle** and **Bechstein's bats**, are also listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. Areas which support populations of these species can, therefore, be considered for designation as a Special Areas of Conservation (**SACs**).

3. Method

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 A data search has not been requested on this occasion due to proportionality of the likely impacts on bats in the local landscape. Other requested details are displayed in Table 1.
- 3.1.2 A desk study was completed on Magic Maps to identify previously granted European protected species licences within 2km of the site.

Table 1 – Data Request

Data Source	Information Requested	Search buffer
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)	EPS Licence applications International and national statutory designations	2km

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.2.1 A preliminary assessment was undertaken on the 17th October 2025 of the buildings being affected by the proposed works using current best practice guidance (Collins, 2023). Please see appendix one for images of the buildings surveyed and potential roosting features.
- 3.2.2 The exterior of all buildings affected by the proposed works were inspected to identify potential access locations or features that may offer roosting potential. This could be missing or lifted tiles; gaps around lead flashing, fascia boards or soffit boxes; or cracked mortar. Where practical, an internal inspection of the roof space was also undertaken. Surveyors recorded indications of use by bats including but is not limited to, staining, discoloration, droppings and feeding remains. Where present, samples of droppings were taken with a note on size, shape, texture and predicted age recorded. Each building was then assigned a potential to support bats using the rationales detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 – Classification of Roosting Habitats in structures¹

Suitability	Rationale
Buildings	
High	A structure with more than one obviously suitable roosting feature. The feature is suitable for large numbers of bats, to be used for longer periods of time and at any time of year including hibernation. The features would present a high conservation status.
Moderate	A structure with more than one potential roosting feature (PRF) which is likely to offer roosting potential for bats, but not hibernation features or for large numbers of bats. The features would not present a high conservation status.
Low	A structure with one or more potential features, used opportunistically at any time of the year. However, it is unlikely to support bats, e.g., the feature is open to the elements or too small. May offer hibernation for singular opportunistic bats.
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.
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year – i.e., complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at ground/underground levels.

3.3 Surveyors

3.3.1 The survey was undertaken by Kate Williams, who holds a class 2 bat survey licence (2019-42888-CLS-CLS).

3.4 Weather Conditions

3.4.1 The starting temperature was 8°C, with high cloud, light winds and sunshine.

3.5 Constraints

3.5.1 No constraints noted.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023), see Table 4.1, guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats.

4. Results

4.1 Desk Study

Protected Species

- 4.1.1 Four protected species licenses were returned, these are detailed in the table below.

Table 3 – Protected Species Records from Magic Maps

Species	Action Taken	Distance	Date
Common pipistrelle	Destroy resting place	0.4km NE	2020
Common pipistrelle & Noctule	Destroy resting place	1km NW	2019
Common pipistrelle	Unknown	1km N	2014
Brown long-eared	Destroy breeding and resting place	1.9km SW	2013

4.2 Building Potential

Roost Potential

	Building/Tree and PRF Descriptions	Suitability/Likelihood
B1 – Main Building	Although the building offers moderate potential, due to the number of potential roosting features present, the deterioration of the building and the damage caused by water ingress should be taken into consideration when determining whether the building is likely to be offering habitable conditions for bats. Features present include damage soffit boxes, lost mortar and damaged bricks. No “attic” space is present, rather a small void between the tiles and thin wooden batons. The “ceiling” of the building is very damaged throughout due to water ingress. Where possible, these areas were inspected, including the void and tiles. The slate tiles are generally in good condition and tightly held, damage has taken place where the building has a substantial crack on the western gable end, where it is no longer structurally sound. A type of “attic” is present where the clock used to be. This was checked for bats and no evidence found. It was very well sealed compared to the rest of the roofline.	Moderate/Negligible

Hibernation Potential

	Building and PRF Descriptions	Suitability
B1 - Main Building	The building offers no hibernation potential for bats. The slate roofing tiles are generally in good condition, where tiles or damage is present water ingress is significant enough to remove any roosting opportunities. Significant internal damage is present, and continues to take place due to water ingress throughout the building. These conditions are highly unsuitable for bats, which require static temperatures and protection from adverse weather conditions.	None

Figure 4 – Roof plan of B1. Outline based on aerial image (Apple, 2025) and not to scale, all measurements are approximate.



4.3 Limitations

- 4.3.1 Magic Map data does not offer accurate locations for European protected species licences, this may mean that the application is closer or further than those licences detailed.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1.1 No further bat surveys are required prior to the proposed works taking place. Taking into the account the significant deterioration of the building, it is more likely than not that building is not longer suitable for bats. This is in large part due to the significant water ingress and other affects of the weather on the building. Previously noted roosting features do still exist, however, based on the lack of evidence noted on the previous surveys there is no reason to believe that when the building was in better condition that it would now offer suitable roosting for bats.
- 5.1.2 In the highly unlikely event that bats are found during works then works must stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.
- 5.1.3 Welfare considerations for pigeons must be employed to avoid unnecessary suffering or distress. Prior to roofing works taking place, nesting pigeons must be checked for, as this species can nest all year round. Where nests are found a five metre buffer must be adhered to, once the chicks have fledged and the nest is empty it can be removed.
- 5.1.4 This report is valid for two years from date of production.

6. References

- Collins, J. (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. London: The Bat Conservation Trust.
- Reason, P., & Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Ampfield: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Appendix 1 – Supporting photographs



Image 1: North facing aspect, rear of the building.



Image 2: South aspect, towards the centre of building.



Image 3: Western aspect, visible structural cracks visible in brickwork.



Image 4: South aspect, towards the western aspect of the front of the building.



Image 5: Rear eastern end of the building.



Image 6: Close view of damage soffits, rear central section.



Image 7: View of the small dormer extension to the front of the property.



Image 8: Top floor, internal view looking east.

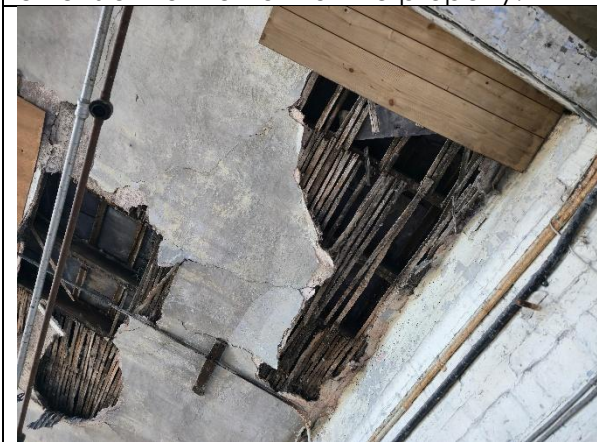


Image 9: View of the type of extensive water damage noted within the top floor. Rear view of the slate tiles is visible behind damage sections. Large amounts of chicken wire present in these gaps.



Image 10: Top floor, internal view looking west.