Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover

Thackray Close, Huntingdon
Reference: 82-461-R1-1
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Thackray Close, Oxmoor Estate, Huntingdon, Hartford, Huntingdonshire PE29 1NA
Coordinates	E 524390, N 273161
Site Area	Approximately 0.01 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprised two garage blocks, one comprising six garage units and the other comprising four garage units.
Proposed Development	Development proposals include the demolition of two garage blocks and the creation of a car parking area.
Results	Both garage blocks were found to hold no external bat roosting features. An internal inspection of unit B1d identified no evidence of bats and limited potential areas that could potentially be utilised by roosting bats. In addition, a moderate-sized hole was found within the southern wall of the unit, which allowed light into the internal space, thus deterring bats from roosting within the internal area. Units B1a, B2e and B2f were found to have broken roof sheeting; as such, significant levels of lighting could enter the single internal space during the daytime, preventing the formation of a dark sheltered area suitable for roosting bats. The above units were considered to have 'none' potential roosting features. Due to the presence of damaged asbestos, B1b–c and B2a-d could not be internally inspected. The structure and composition of the building limited the potential for any roosting features, as no cavities were present, and the beams and asbestos roofing sheets sit mostly away from each other. However, access points to the internal space of both garage blocks were present on the eastern or western aspect, respectively. While no suitable features were noted, there is potential to use unsuitable features on occasion, providing a small level of uncertainty to the presence of bats within inaccessible garage units. As such, these units have been considered to be of 'negligible' potential for roosting bats. In addition, the buildings (B1a-d, B2a-f) provided suitable nesting areas for birds under the overhang of the garage door and within the internal space where access was available. During the survey, however, no evidence of nesting birds was identified.
Conclusions and Recommendations	No further survey work is anticipated to be required, but to address the small level of uncertainty, it is recommended that the units found to hold negligible potential are internally checked for roosting bats by a licensed ecologist prior to demolition. If bats are found roosting within these features, work will cease, and a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required. It is recommended that demolition of the building should occur outside the nesting bird season (March to September, inclusive). However, should this not be possible, a nesting bird survey should be undertaken on units B2a-f and B1a-d no more than 48 hours prior to the demolition. If a nest or nest in construction is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

1. INTRODUCTION 5
   1.1. Background 5
   1.2. Proposed Development 5
   1.3. Site Location 5
   1.4. Objectives 6

2. METHODOLOGY 7
   2.1. Desk Study 7
   2.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment 7
   2.3. Ecological Walkover 8
   2.4. Limitations 8

3. RESULTS 9
   3.1. Local Bat Group Records 9
   3.2. Desk Study 9
   3.3. Site Context 9
   3.4. Preliminary Roost Assessment 10
      3.4.1. Building (B1, Units a-d) 10
      3.4.2. Building (B2, Units a-f) 12
   3.5. Nesting Birds 14
   3.6. Ecological Walkover 15

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 16
   4.1. Bats 16
   4.2. Nesting birds 16

5. REFERENCES 17

APPENDIX I PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN 18

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by Places for People to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Thackray Close, Huntingdon, hereafter referred to as "the site". A site walkover was also undertaken to assess the site for any additional protected species constraints.

This report has been prepared by Samantha Pritchard, BSc (Hons), MSc, Principal Ecologist at E3P. Samantha holds an Associate CIEEM (ACIEEM) membership and has experience undertaking Preliminary Roost Assessment, protected species surveys and ecological mitigation for a wide variety of projects across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the demolition of two garage blocks and the creation of a car parking area.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within the northern area of Huntingdon within a predominantly residential area. The site is surrounded on all aspects by residential dwellings, with associated access roads and green space. Within the wider area, Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery School lies approximately 200 m to the east, while Sallowbush pre-school lies approximately 160 m to the west. To the north lies a care home and Little Munchkins Nursery and Preschool, approximately 130 m and 200 m from the site, respectively, and to the south, Cambridge Regional College is approximately 420 m from the site. The Great Ouse River and Godmanchester Nature Reserve lie approximately 1.2 km and 1.7 km southeast of the site boundary, respectively.

Please refer to **Figure 1** for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 Approximate Site Location



1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are as follows:

- Determine if bats currently, or could potentially, utilise the building for roosting.
- Determine whether further surveys (e.g. nocturnal bat surveys) and/or further mitigation are necessary for development to proceed.

The objectives of the Ecological Walkover are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present.
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The survey findings are detailed in this report, as well as any recommendations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- MAGIC – A government web-based interactive mapping system, demonstrating European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and Natural England Licences, which have been previously granted within England. In addition to looking at suitable habitat for commuting and roosting bats within the surrounding area.
- Information and species records from the Cambridgeshire Bat Group.

A search via MAGIC was undertaken in May 2025 to identify EPSL within 1 km of the site boundary. This search area is considered suitable for the size of the development and the surrounding habitat.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 16th May 2025 by Samantha Pritchard, who has undertaken multiple PRAs on buildings and trees across the UK. The weather was warm and sunny.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the building, searching for signs of bats or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023). The survey also looked for evidence of nesting birds in and on the buildings present.

The building was categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in **Table 1** in accordance with Collins (2023).

The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars to access all areas where safe to do so.

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Buildings

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
None	No habitat features on site are likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
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.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. 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.
Moderate	A structure 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.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
High	A structure 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 due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.

2.3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

A site walkover was undertaken by Samantha Pritchard on 16th May 2025 to assess the site for any protected or notable species.

The walkover survey was undertaken according to the standard methodology as detailed by the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010). The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including but not limited to Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.4. LIMITATIONS

Internal access was only possible within one of the internal garage units (B1d) at the time of the survey, due to the presence of damaged asbestos sheeting within the garage's roof structure. However, full external access to the buildings and inspection of the single internal garage provided an understanding of the internal layout and composition of the other units to assist in the assessment.

These constraints have been taken into consideration during the assessment.

3. RESULTS

3.1. LOCAL BAT GROUP RECORDS

Based on information from Cambridgeshire Bat Group, species present within the local area include Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.2. DESK STUDY

A MAGIC review did not identify any European Protected Species Licence located within the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 1.1 km south of the site boundary, which comprised a licence for the destruction of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) resting place. The licence was active between 2021 and 2023.

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The red line boundary comprised two garage blocks, one consisting of six garage units and the other four. All of which have not been in use for around three to four years. Access to the site comprised a hardstanding access road, with closely mown grassland, a substation based on an area of hardstanding and a singular mature tree surrounding the site. The onsite habitats are anticipated to offer little value in terms of foraging and commuting bats and birds, however, the buildings may offer some suitability with respect to roosting bats and nesting birds.

The immediately surrounding habitat consists of residential housing and associated infrastructure, and small pockets of green space. These areas of green space are heavily managed and offer some value in the form of foraging, for bats and birds within the area, and nesting habitat for the local bird species. The surrounding residential housing may offer potential roosting opportunities within the roof features.

A small parcel of Lowland meadow, UK biodiversity action plan priority habitat, lies approximately 720 m southwest of the site boundary. This is associated with an open space area within Huntingdon town. In addition, parcels of deciduous woodland lie within the town and surround the north edge of Huntingdon town, associated with the A141 road. The closest parcel of habitat lies approximately 450 m north. These habitats provide further foraging and commuting habitats for bats and birds in the wider area. In addition, the deciduous woodland parcel offers potential roosting and nesting features.

The Great Ouse River and Godmanchester Nature Reserve lie approximately 1.2 km and 1.7km southeast of the site boundary, respectively. The Great Ouse River extends east to west within the surrounding landscape to the south. This watercourse is anticipated to offer high-value foraging and commuting habitat for local bats and bird species, especially those which specialise in feeding along watercourses. The river is bordered by numerous UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats, including Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Lowland Meadows, Deciduous woodland and lowland fens providing high-quality foraging, nesting and roosting habitat.

3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the two on-site garage blocks. No other buildings, structures or trees were present within the site boundary. The assessment also includes a check for nesting birds.

3.4.1. BUILDING (B1, UNITS A-D)

Building B1 was a garage block which consisted of four units, each containing a single internal room. The building comprises a single-layer brick-built wall with an asbestos corrugated sheeting roof. The roof itself was slightly slanted to the western side. On the roof edge, an 'L' shaped asbestos sheet has been used to seal the roof to the wall (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Showing Building B1



During the survey, it was noted that the roof on the northernmost garage block (B1a) had been significantly damaged, allowing high levels of light into the internal room during the daytime. This would prevent roosting bats from finding a sheltered, dark area to roost within the internal space. Therefore, the internal space of this unit is considered to have no potential roosting features for bats. The three other units within building B1 were found to have unbroken roof sheeting, providing a potentially dark sheltered space by blocking light ingress to the internal space.

The external brickwork appeared to be in good condition, except in one area on the southern wall. This provided access, via a large hole, into the interior of the garage (B1d) (Figure 3), in addition, significant levels of light. A thorough inspection of the asbestos boarding revealed some gaps between the boarding and the brickwork. However, many of these were too small for use by individual bats. Those of suitable size were heavily covered by cobwebs, suggesting that these have not been utilised by bats recently.

The barge board that lies above the garage doors was held in place by vertical concrete beams and was not capped above. The boarding was in poor condition and had peeling, leaving vertical gaps. However, the gaps were found not to be sealed at the top, allowing light to shine through and water ingress. Therefore, this would not provide a dark, sheltered crevice.

No further potential roosting features were identified for inspection.

Figure 3 **Showing the hole in the southern wall**



On the eastern aspect of the building, it was noted that the insulation foam used to fill in the gaps between the bricks and the corrugated sheeting was missing in numerous spaces. This didn't provide a roosting cavity but provided potential access directly into the internal space, alongside light. The lighting would access the garage at the topmost point of the roof, shining down the slanted roof and throughout the internal space. Therefore, potentially deters bats from utilising the garage units. In addition, many of these access points were found to be covered in cobwebs, suggesting that they have not been used by bats to access the building.

Figure 4 **Showing the missing insulation foam**



Due to the presence of damaged asbestos within the garage block, only one unit (B1d) could be accessed at the time of the survey to ascertain the internal structure of the building. Based on an inspection of unit B1d, the garage's internal walls consisted of a single layer of concrete blocks, containing no features for roosting bats. The asbestos roof sheeting was visible throughout, with no felt backing present, ruling out the presence of a loft space. The corrugated shape of the roofing sheets prevents the formation of enclosed perches for bats to utilise the roof. There was very limited potential identified for a few bats to roost against the upright column where it meets the roof. However, as shown in Figure 5, a large gap is present within this area, preventing the formation of a crevice in most cases. In addition, it is likely to suffer from the light ingress coming from the eastern side of the building as detailed above.

As previously outlined, missing insulation foam on the eastern side of the building has led to light ingress within the internal space. In addition, small holes within the roof sheeting were also present. These were too small to be utilised by bats; however, they would result in further light ingress. Overall, the light ingress would deter bats from utilising the internal space.

B1d was thoroughly inspected for roosting bats, and no evidence was noted.

Figure 5 Showing the hole in the southern wall



Overall, garages (B1b – B1c) were considered to hold **negligible potential** for roosting bats, as access to the internal space was not possible. While garages B1a and B1d were considered to hold **no roosting** potential for roosting bats, due to the comprehensive inspection of the internal space or broken roof structure, respectively.

3.4.2. BUILDING (B2, UNITS A-F)

The building comprised a six-garage block with each garage consisting of a single internal room, of the same construction as building B1. However, unlike B1, the roof structure slopes from west to east (Figure 6). Internal access to the garage block was not possible due to the presence of damaged asbestos; as such, the internal construction has been assumed to be similar to that of B1d.

Figure 6 **Showing Building B2**



During the survey, it was noted that the roof on the two southern most garage blocks (B2e and B2f) had been damaged, allowing significant light ingress into the internal space. This would prevent roosting bats from finding a sheltered, dark area to roost within the internal space. Therefore, it was considered that the internal space of these two units would not be suitable for roosting bats. The four other units within the block were found to have unbroken roof sheeting, providing a potentially dark sheltered space by blocking light ingress to the internal space.

A thorough search of the external features, including an inspection of brickwork and folded 'L' shaped sheeting, identified no suitable roosting features. Where small gaps were identified, they were found to be open at the top, as such open to the elements, including rain and lightning, or too small to be utilised by an individual bat.

The barge board that lies above the garage doors, similar to building B1, was held in place by vertical concrete beams and was not capped above. As such where the boarding has peeled away vertically to provide a gap suitable for roosting bats. The gap was found not to be sealed at the top, allowing light to shine through and rain to get in. Therefore, not provide a dark sheltered crevice suitable for roosting bats.

Again, insulation foam was noted to be missing on the back of the building (western aspect), which filled in the gaps made by the corrugated sheeting (Figure 7), against the brick wall. As such, roosting bats would be able to access the four sealed garages. However, light ingress to the single internal space was also possible. Due to the location of the lighting, any light ingress would shine down the slanted roof and internal space, as such, potentially deterring bats from utilising the garage units.

Figure 7 **Showing western aspect of building B2**



The internal structure was likely to be similar to building B1, suggesting the internal space would likely hold limited roosting features. However, this cannot be confirmed. Due to the presence of the gaps between the wall and the asbestos sheeting on the western side, it is known that the internal space will be subject to light ingress, which would deter bats from utilising the space.

Overall, the garage block is determined to have **negligible roosting** potential due to the lack of internal access to the units. Except for blocks B2e and B2f, which are determined to have **no roosting** potential for bats, resulting from the broken roof structure.

3.5. NESTING BIRDS

Buildings B1 and B2 are described in full in Section 3.4. During the survey, no evidence of nesting birds was identified. However, suitable features were noted on the buildings.

Externally, there were opportunities for birds to nest behind the barge boards at the front of both buildings, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 **Showing western aspect of building B2**



Otherwise, with access possible to all on-site units' internal space, utilising the gaps within broken roof sheets or gaps between the corrugated sheets and brickwork, there is potential for birds to be nesting within the units themselves. As only unit B1d could be thoroughly inspected, it cannot be ruled out that birds are not nesting within the other units.

3.6. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

The red line boundary follows the exact footprint of the two garage block buildings. As such, the ecological walkover was limited to the building structures and any vegetation growing out from them.

As such the walkover, only identified an individual elder (*Sambucus nigra*), with a diameter at breast height of less than 7.5 cm, on the northern boundary.

Figure 9 Showing Elder Sapling on the northern Site Boundary.



The surrounding area outside of the site boundary includes closely mown grassland, an area of tall forbs, comprising cleavers (*Galium aparine*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale agg.*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), a substation building based on an area of hardstanding and a mature tree. However, these habitats are not anticipated to be impacted by the proposed works.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

The site includes two garage blocks comprising ten units labelled B1a-d and B2a-f. The Preliminary Roost Assessment determined that garage units B1a, B1d, B2e and B2f held no roosting potential for bats. While B1b, B1c and B2a–d held negligible potential for roosting bats. The negligible potential is defined as while no evidence of bats were found and no suitable roosting features. There is a small level of uncertainty remaining on the garages that could not be internally accessed. While the internal structure of garages provides very limited, mostly unsuitable roosting perches, bats are known to use apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

No further survey work would be required, but to address the small level of uncertainty, it is recommended that the units found to hold negligible potential are internally checked for roosting bats by a licensed ecologist prior to demolition. If bats are found roosting within these features, work will cease, and an EPSL will be required.

4.2. NESTING BIRDS

The survey determined that while no evidence of nesting birds was found, there is potential for nesting birds to be present within the internal space of the inaccessible units. In addition, external features were found to be suitable for nesting birds on both buildings in the form of the overhanging in front of the garage doors, behind the barge boards, and on each unit.

Therefore, it is recommended that demolition of the buildings B1 and B2 is undertaken outside nesting bird season (March to September, inclusive). Should this not be possible, the nine garage units that could not be checked internally should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist, no more than 48 hours prior to demolition. If a nest or nest in construction is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged.

No further protected species constraints were identified.

5. REFERENCES

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END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN





Key:

- Red Line Boundary
- Nesting bird checks required, prior to demolition
- Negligible potential for bats
- No potential for bats

Notes

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