

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

**44 High Street,
Barkway,
Royston,
Hertfordshire
SG8 8EE**



PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

JULY 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed to undertake an ecological assessment of 44 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EE to establish if evidence of bat roosts is present. Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre informed North Hertfordshire District Council that the site has several roosts recorded in the area; therefore, a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was deemed necessary for the development before planning permission would be granted. The PRA will be conducted in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. 2016) and CIEEM UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray, 2023).



This report should be read in conjunction with other ecological reports to assist the local planning authority in determining if additional environmental studies may be required. The PRA was carried out on the 9th of July 2025, in the daytime with good weather (23°C), dry and light winds.

LEGISLATION

European and UK legislation details the management and protection of biodiversity and ecology within the UK planning systems. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the main protection for wildlife, including European Protected Species (EPS), such as bats under Schedule 5 and 9, alongside, the England and Wales Habitats Regulations 2017. This dual system of protection ensures all species of bats, and their breeding and resting sites are protected. Bats are classified as EPS and Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategies are materials which must be considered in planning applications where bats or their habitats may be affected.

SITE

The outbuilding planned for rebuilding is at the rear of 44 High Street, nearby to where planning permission had previously been granted for a dwelling to be built in

replacement of a stable (reference 20/0295/FP). The current proposal involves the rebuilding of the outbuilding into a car lodge and storage. The outbuilding is surrounded by a courtyard of hardstanding leading to the front gate.

The walls of the outbuilding are rendered breezeblock with a garage extending eastwards with a double timber door. The two other doors for the outbuilding include a timber stable door and a single timber door. The roof has sky lighting within each of the three sections. However, the garage section and the centre have been panelled to create a small loft space.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

The PRA was conducted on the 9th of July 2025 in good weather conditions by Assistant Ecologist Sara Bates under the bat licence of Kenneth Coyne (1015-15943-CLS-CLS). Kenneth Coyne is a qualified Ecologist, with over 40 years' experience in the environmental field.

Assessments of a building's potential for roosting bats can be undertaken at any time of the year, aligning with BCT guidelines. Bats can roost in a variety of situation including within roof voids, behind wooden boarding, within gaps between bricks, within wooden beams, or under roof tiles. Bat sign searches included investigation for bat droppings on walls and the detailed inspection of timbers. Where suitable gaps were located (enabling bat access) the holes were examined in detail for any signs of oil staining from the bats fur, urine streaks or accumulation of droppings. The floor areas of the outbuilding were systematically searched for any bat droppings or insect wings. All bats are insectivorous and parts of bitten insects such as moth wings are frequently found below where a bat has been seen feeding.

Additionally, the building was examined externally and internally to assess the potential of the building to provide roosting sites for bats. Suitability criteria for the buildings include construction details, stability of temperature, protection from the elements, light levels, cobwebs, level of disturbance, potential roosting locations and potential bat access points. Areas searched for potential bat access points included: gaps through the rood, openings in the wall and in any gaps present in external and internal timbers.

ANALYSIS

The PRA discovered **no signs of roosting bats** within the searches, including no droppings, insect meals or urine streaks. Each section of the outbuilding was investigated thoroughly using a high-powered torch, a Magenta Bat 5 bat detector, and binoculars for any droppings and insect meals on floors, shelves and other items in the storage. No windowsills were present at the building so the hardstanding around the building was investigated for signs with none found.

The south section of the outbuilding was able to have the loft accessed; this area had been plywood boarded to create a loft. The loft was bright from the skylight upon investigation many cobwebs were discovered and no signs of bats. Rat droppings were discovered in this loft area near the ladder hatch. Due to the bright light levels, cobwebs and the level of disturbance from the frequency of the usage of the building this section was determined **low suitability for bat roosts**.



Figure 1 South section loft of the surveyed outbuilding

The North section of the outbuilding has no loft space and is inhabited by a nesting wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) with a currently uninhabited swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nest inside. This area was thoroughly investigated with no bat droppings or insect meals found; thick cobwebs were covering the roof joints. There is an opening between the wall and the roof which would be accessible by birds and bats. However, no signs of bats were discovered including no urine stains around the opening. This area has a **low suitability for roosting bats**.

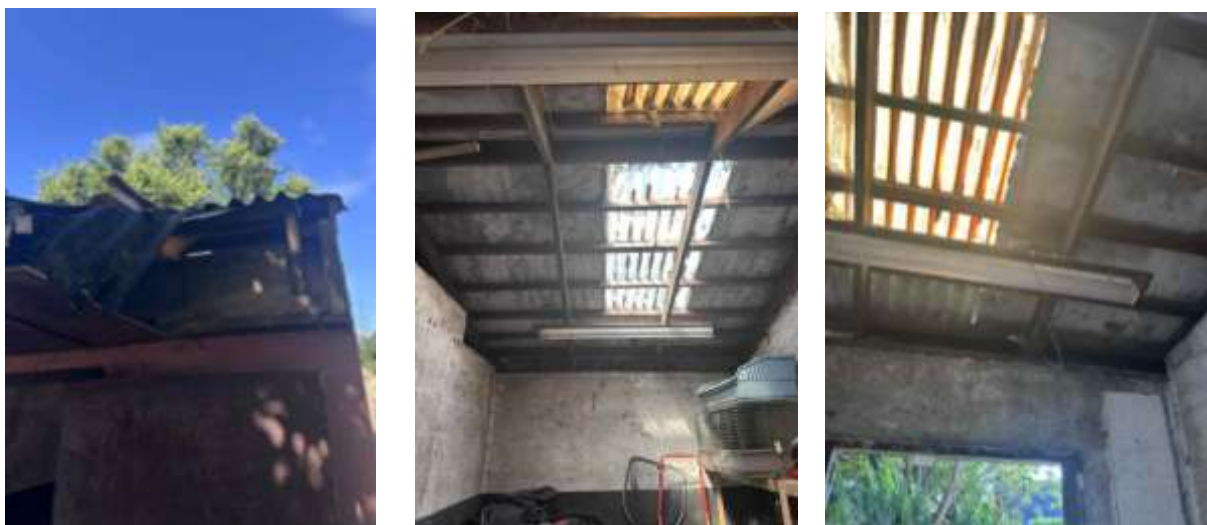


Figure 2 North section of the surveyed building with a Wood Pigeon sitting on nest (right photo)

The centre section of the outbuilding could not have the loft accessed due to the storage space occupied below. However, no access points were seen from the front

of the outbuilding, but the rear side was inaccessible to determine access points. The area was investigated for bat droppings and insect meals, and none were found. The area had thick cobwebs present, and the loft area also consisted of another sky light seen from the investigation of the South section loft which impacts the suitability for it being a roosting site. A small hole is present within the plywood ceiling, but no bat droppings below or oil staining was visible; and no exit points are available from this main section as the main door remains closed.



Figure 3 Centre section of outbuilding

CONCLUSIONS

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed to conduct a PRA of 44 High Street, Barkway, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8EE for a planning application at this site. To conclude, the outbuilding has a **negligible potential as a roosting site** for bats due to the light levels from the skylights, disturbance levels, and the amount of cobwebs present. The area may be used as a commuting and feeding site for bats. Due to the nesting birds within the outbuilding, proposed work should not be done within the bird breeding season (March-September) and where possible the top section of the stable door should be left open to allow the entry and exit of the birds and fledglings.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (4th ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, BCT, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-
Environmental Act 2021
Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation or developments affecting bats*. CIEEM
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981