

**Barns at
Porter's End Farm,
Porter's End Lane,
Kimpton,
Hertfordshire.**

Preliminary Roost Assessment

August 2025

Report for

Mr. Rob and Mrs Carly Proctor,
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By



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1. Disclaimer

This survey was carried out and an assessment was made of the site at a particular time. The evidence this report contains can be used to draw conclusions as to the likely presence or absence of bats and the impacts of any proposed development works. The survey should not be regarded as a complete study, rather a snapshot in time. Every effort has been taken to provide an accurate assessment of the situation pertaining to this site at the times of the survey but no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes after the survey has taken place.

2. Summary

A site at Porter's End Farm, Porter's End Lane, Kimpton, Hertfordshire, is the subject of a planning proposal for the construction of new dwellings following the demolition of two redundant barns.

The presence of protected species is a material consideration when local authorities consider development proposals and, as the presence of protected species, particularly bats within the two buildings, has been considered a possibility, a site visit and inspection as part of a Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on the 26th August 2025 by Chris Vine BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, MRSB.

Bats

The site has formerly been in agricultural use and consists of the two redundant barns which stand alongside each other within an area of managed grassland bordered by hedgerows and trees.

The hedgerow and trees bordering the site may provide some bat foraging habitat within the vicinity of the barns, as well as garden shrubs and trees, nearby areas of managed grassland and parkland and a small wooded area. Wider surrounding areas consist mainly of large areas of arable farmland.

No evidence of bats or bat roosting sites was found anywhere on the outside or inside the two barns and no potential bat roosting sites were identified.

A small number of trees growing close to the buildings, were of small size and lacked any potential roost features which could be used by bats and are considered unlikely to be used by bats as roosting sites.

It is concluded that the barns are unlikely to be used as a roosting site by bats. Bats are likely to be absent.

The two barns are considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats and the proposed demolition of the buildings is unlikely to result in the disturbance of bats and unlikely to adversely affect bat populations in the local area.

It is recommended that the proposed demolition of the barns is carried out as planned.

Advice is given if, in the unlikely event, bats are encountered or thought to be present at any time during the demolition works.

Nesting birds

No evidence of nesting birds was found but shrubs and trees growing on / immediately adjacent to the buildings, particularly ivy growing on one of the barns, as well as shrubs and trees along the site edges were noted as nesting habitat for a variety of bird species.

A variety of bird species are likely to use the shrubs and trees for nesting during the bird nesting season, March to August (inclusive) and should not be disturbed.

The proposed demolition of the barns, and any cutting or removal of the nearby shrubs and small trees, may disturb nesting birds if they are present when any such works are carried out. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

To avoid the disturbance of nesting birds it is recommended to carry out the demolition of the barns and any cutting or removal of nearby shrubs and trees, outside of the bird nesting season - between September and February (inclusive).

Should any works likely to disturb nesting birds be carried out during the bird nesting season, prior to any such works a thorough check must be made, by an ecologist, for the presence of nesting birds. Works should then only commence in the absence of nesting birds. It may be necessary to restrict certain works between the months of March and August (inclusive) if nesting birds are found to be present.

3. Introduction and objectives

3.1 Background and Introduction

A site at Porter's End Farm, Porter's End Lane, Kimpton, Hertfordshire, is the subject of a planning proposal for the construction of new dwellings following the demolition of two redundant barns.

The presence of protected species is a material consideration when local authorities consider development proposals – in order to prevent a net loss of species and habitats, the National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

As the presence of protected species, particularly bats within the two buildings, has been considered a possibility, a site visit and inspection as part of a Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on the 26th August 2025 by Chris Vine BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, MRSB.

3.2 Objectives

To examine the buildings and record any features that bats could use for entry / exit and roosting and identify any evidence to determine the presence or potential presence of bats, species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Environmental Protection Act 1990) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), with respect to its proposed demolition.

The results of the survey would be recorded and an assessment made of the likely impact of the proposed works, based on the suitability of the building and any evidence of bats found; information from the survey can be used to suggest further surveys or appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, if necessary, to ensure that the presence of bats at the site is maintained and to comply with the legislation affording bats protection.

3.3 Legal status

All British bats are protected under Section 9 Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and amendments, and are European Protected Species listed on Schedule 2 and 4 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which, in the United Kingdom, implements the European Commission Directive 92/43/EEC.

Bats are also protected under the Berne Convention, and they are given migratory species protection within the Bonn Convention Agreement.

It is normally an offence to deliberately capture or kill bats, to deliberately disturb a bat or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site of any bat. It is an offence to disturb or obstruct any bat roosting site.

The presence of bats does not necessarily mean that development cannot go ahead, but that with suitable, approved mitigation, exemptions can be granted from the protection afforded to bats by means of licenses issued under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Natural England is the appropriate authority for determining licence applications and issuing licenses for works associated with developments affecting bats.

In cases where licences are required, certain conditions have to be met to satisfy Natural England; before a licence can be issued to permit otherwise prohibited acts, three derogation tests have to be satisfied. These are:

1. Licences may be granted to *'preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment*.
2. A licence may not be granted unless it is satisfied *'that there is no satisfactory alternative'*.
3. A licence cannot be issued unless the action authorised *'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'*.

Natural England usually expects the planning position to be fully resolved as this is necessary to satisfy tests 1 and 2. Full or outline planning permission, if applicable, will need to have been granted and any conditions or reserved matters relating to bats fully discharged prior to any licence application.

For test 3, Natural England has to be satisfied that sufficient survey effort has been carried out and that the impact assessment and proposed mitigation measures (submitted with the licence application) are adequate to maintain the species concerned at a favourable conservation status.

4. Site description

The barns are located at Porter's End Farm, to the south / southeast of Porter's End Lane, approximately 1.5 km southwest of the village of Kimpton and 3 km northeast of Harpenden, Hertfordshire, at OS grid reference TL16251725 (see Fig 1.).

The site has formerly been in agricultural use and consists of the two redundant barns which stand alongside each other within an area of managed grassland bordered by hedgerows and trees (see Photos 1 & 2.).

The two barns, for the purposes of this survey, are referred to as the northern barn and southern barn:

Northern barn

The larger of the two barns, this former agricultural building is of a simple metal framed construction, clad and roofed with unlined corrugated sheeting with two large shutter doors at its west end (see Photos 3 & 4.).

The building, which was empty at the time of the survey, encloses a single internal space, open to the roof on the inside with no enclosed spaces (see Photo 5.).

Southern barn

This barn is also of metal framed construction, clad and roofed with unlined corrugated sheeting. The building has large metal doors at its west end.

The roof of the building has a number of rooflights providing daylight illumination to the interior, which consists of a single internal space, open to the roof on the inside with no enclosed spaces.

Apart from a few stored items / materials the building was empty at the time of the survey (see Photos 6 & 7.).

Another agricultural building is present a short distance to the south with further buildings to the south of that.

A dwelling house and associated gardens is present immediately to the west, with similar residential properties located to the northwest, on the opposite side of Porter's End Lane.

Areas of managed grassland and parkland are present to the north and east.

Surrounding areas include buildings, roads, large areas of arable farmland, managed grassland, small wooded areas, hedgerows and scattered trees.

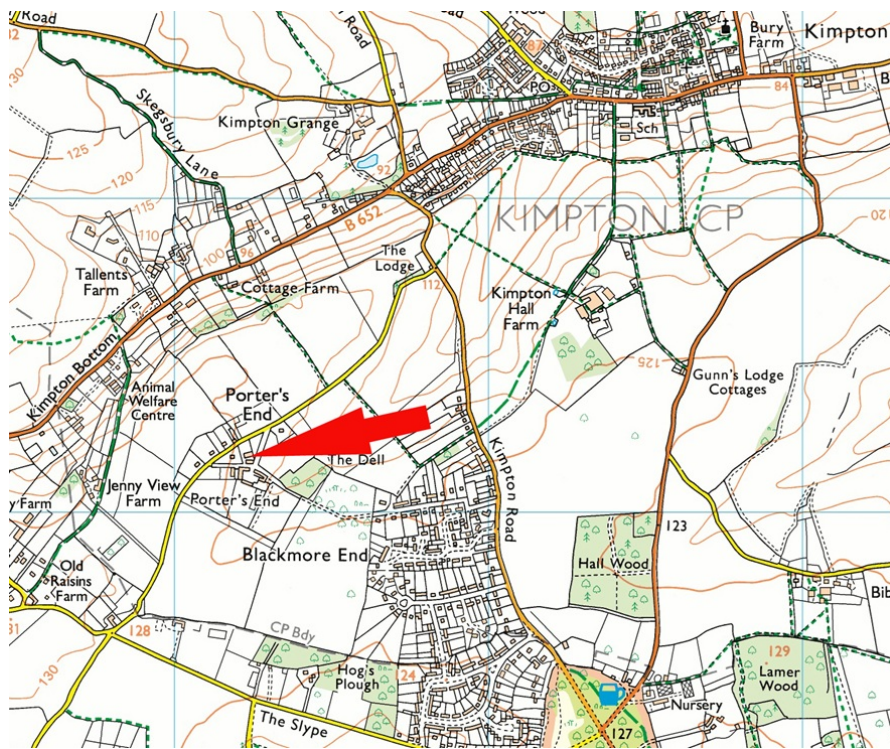


Fig. 1. Map showing location of barns at Porter's End Farm.



Photo 1. Aerial photo (from Google Earth, March '25) showing location of barns.



Photo 2. View onto site from Porter's End Lane.



Photo 3. View of northern barn looking southeast.



Photo 4. West end (front) of northern barn.



Photo 5. Interior of northern barn looking east.



Photo 6. West end (front) of southern barn.



Photo 7. Interior of southern barn looking east.

5. Methodology

5.1 Desk Study

The government's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was used to search for any European Protected Species licenses for bats issued within 2 km of the site, and thus confirmation of the presence of these species within this area.

Knowledge of the local areas, gained from numerous similar surveys carried out within surrounding areas, was also used to make an assessment of the bat species likely to be present in the vicinity.

5.2 Daylight inspection

The site was inspected during daylight hours on the 26th August 2025.

The barns were inspected from ground level on the outside and inside, within all accessible areas, noting any evidence of bats and potential bat access points and roosting sites.

Particular attention was given to any small crevice in which bats may roost such as any gaps within and behind structural beams, cladding and door frames often used by roosting bats in buildings.

Floors, walls and exposed surfaces were inspected for bat droppings, bat urine, feeding remains, oil staining from the fur of bats (indication of frequent use of a particular site), and wear of substrates caused by the movement of bats in and out over a long period of time.

A digital camera, high power torch and inspection mirrors were used to assist in the survey.

The two buildings were assessed for their suitability for roosting bats as per the criteria within latest bat survey guidelines:

None: No habitat features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year i.e. a complete absence of crevices and or any suitable places of shelter which bats could use.

Negligible: No obvious habitat features 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 which could be used by individual roosting 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 which could be used by roosting bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a bat roost of high conservation significance such as a maternity roost or hibernation roost.

High: A structure with one or more potential bat roosting 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.

Any trees within the site, likely to be affected by the proposed development, were also inspected for any evidence of bats and potential bat roosting features and for their suitability for roosting bats.

5.3 Survey limitations

Due to the buildings position immediately alongside a wall and hedgerow field boundaries, where trees and other vegetation obstructed and obscured the barns, it was not possible to access all round and view the full extent of the building's exterior. However, this limitation was considered unlikely to affect the results of the survey and the conclusions made regarding the suitability of the barns for roosting bats.

6. Results

6.1 Desk study

The MAGIC web site showed four European Protected Species licence for bats for the surrounding 2 km:

A site approximately 1.4 km to the southeast, for the damage of the roosting site of brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) in 2019.

A site at Kimpton, approximately 1.5 km to the northeast, for the destruction of the roosting site of common pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) in 2014.

A site approximately 1.5 km to the northwest, for the destruction of a roost of common pipistrelle bats in 2012.

A site approximately 1.9 km to the north / northwest, for the destruction of the roosting sites of common pipistrelle bats, soprano pipistrelle bats and brown long-eared bats in 2019.

Numerous bat surveys carried out in the local surrounding areas between 2006 and 2024 have also identified the presence of common pipistrelle bats and brown long-eared bats as well as serotine bats (*Eptesicus serotinus*), noctule bats (*Nyctalus noctula*), Natterer's bats (*Myotis nattereri*) and soprano pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

6.2 Site survey

As described above the site has formerly been in agricultural use and consists of the two redundant barns which stand alongside each other within an area of managed grassland bordered by hedgerows and trees with some ruderal vegetation and some small shrubs, including ivy, and trees growing on / immediately adjacent to the buildings.

The hedgerow and trees bordering the site may provide some bat foraging habitat within the vicinity of the barns, as well as garden shrubs and trees, nearby areas of managed grassland and parkland and a small wooded area approximately 200 metres to the southeast. Wider surrounding areas consist mainly of large areas of arable farmland.

Northern barn

From the outside it was noted that bats can easily access the interior of the barn via the following:

A permanently (seized) partially open sliding door on the north side.

A small opening in the sheet cladding, at the eaves, approximately halfway along the north side.

An opening within the roof at the northwest corner of the barn, where some roof sheeting was missing.

Gaps at the top of two shutter doors at the front.

No evidence was found to suggest bats had used any of the above potential access points and no likely bat roosting sites were identified on the outside, the unlined corrugated sheet cladding and roof did not appear to offer bats with suitable sheltered cavities in which to roost.

No evidence of bats was found anywhere on the outside of the building.

During a thorough inspection inside the barn, no bats were found, and no evidence of bats or their roosting sites was identified.

No likely potential bat roosting sites were identified – the building was largely open and lacked suitable sheltered cavities in which bats may roost.

Southern barn

With the metal doors at the west end closed, no obvious potential bat access points were noted although it was considered likely that any gaps at the top of the west gable end would allow bats access.

No evidence of bats was found anywhere on the outside of the building.

On the inside of the barn a large opening in the north wall of the building was noted (seen on the left in Photo 7.) – this leads directly into the adjacent northern barn and provides bats easy access directly from the interior of the northern barn.

During a thorough inspection inside the barn, no bats were found, and no evidence of bats or their roosting sites was identified.

A small hole / cavity within a block wall within the north wall of the building was considered a potential bat roosting site but on close examination no evidence of bats was present and its use by bats was considered unlikely.

No other likely potential bat roosting sites were identified – the building was largely open and lacked suitable sheltered cavities in which bats may roost.

Trees

Trees within the site, the small number growing close to the buildings, were of small size and lacked any potential roost features which could be used by bats.

An all round view of trees at the site edges was not made but none looked likely to offer bats with any roosting potential.

Nesting birds

No evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey but shrubs and trees growing on / immediately adjacent to the buildings, particularly ivy growing on the northern side of the northern barn, as well as shrubs and trees along the site edges were noted as nesting habitat for a variety of bird species.

7. Conclusions / discussion

- 7.1** The Porter's End Farm site is within an area known to be used by bats; at least six species have been recorded in the local and surrounding areas. However, the site is largely surrounded by large areas of arable farmland with relatively limited suitable bat foraging habitat close by.
- 7.2** From the lack of any evidence of bats, bat roosting sites or any likely potential bat roosting sites found anywhere on the outside or inside the buildings, it is concluded that the barns are unlikely to be used as a roosting site by bats. Bats are likely to be absent.
- 7.3** The barns surveyed at Porter's End Farm, Porter's End Lane, Kimpton, Hertfordshire, are considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 7.4** From the lack of any potential roost features which could be used by bats within the small number of trees growing close to the buildings, it is concluded that these are unlikely to be used by bats as roosting sites.
- 7.5** The proposed demolition of the barns is unlikely to result in the disturbance of bats and unlikely to adversely affect bat populations in the local area.
- 7.6** Although no evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey, shrubs and trees growing on / immediately adjacent to the buildings and along the site edges, particularly ivy growing on the northern barn, were noted as suitable bird nesting habitat. A variety of bird species are likely to use the shrubs and trees for nesting during the bird nesting season, March to August (inclusive) and should not be disturbed.
- 7.7** Any cutting or removal of the nearby shrubs and small trees, including the ivy growing on one of the barns, may disturb nesting birds if they are present when any such works are carried out. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is normally an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built and to intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** As the barns are unlikely to be used as a roosting site by bats, bats are likely to be absent and the proposed demolition of the buildings unlikely to result in the disturbance of bats or the loss of any bat roosting sites or adversely affect bat populations in the local area, it is recommended that the proposed demolition of the two barns is carried out as planned.
- 8.2** If, in the unlikely event, bats are encountered or thought to be present at any time during the demolition of the buildings, work must stop immediately and further advice sought on how to proceed from a licensed bat ecologist.
- 8.3** Shrubs and trees growing on / immediately adjacent to the buildings and along the site edges, particularly ivy growing on the northern barn, were noted as suitable bird nesting habitat; birds may use this habitat for nesting during the bird nesting season, March to August (inclusive). To avoid the disturbance of nesting birds it is recommended to carry out any cutting or removal of any shrubs and trees, outside of the bird nesting season - between September and February (inclusive).
- 8.4** Should any cutting or removal of nearby shrubs and trees, including the ivy growing on the northern barn, be carried out during the bird nesting season, prior to any such works a thorough check must be made, by an ecologist, for the presence of nesting birds. Works should then only commence in the absence of nesting birds. It may be necessary to restrict certain works between the months of March and August (inclusive) if nesting birds are found to be present.