

MAIN BARN
HALL FARM
ASHWELL ROAD, NEWNHAM
HERTFORDSHIRE

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT



2026

CLIVE HERBERT

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Species protection and habitat conservation specialists

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Client	AE & WA Farr Limited	
Site	Main Barn Ashwell Road Newnham Baldock Hertfordshire	
Grid Reference	TL 2473 3765	
Report Reference	3188 - 02 - 2026	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Amphibian, Reptile & Mammal Conservation Limited were contracted by AE & WA Farr Limited, via Peter George Town Planning, on 6th May 2026, to undertake a standard Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the front section of the Main Barn at Hall Farm, Ashwell Road, Newnham, Baldock, Hertfordshire AL10 0BS, and situated at approximately National Grid Reference TL 2473 3765.
- 1.2 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was completed in support of a forthcoming planning application for the conversion of the structure for new use.
- 1.3 The assessment seeks to determine the potential for bats to occur within the proposed development footprint and to identify if any further bat survey work or mitigation/avoidance measures are required.
- 1.4 There are, however, no historical records of any bats roosting within the proposed development footprint and this assessment was therefore undertaken as a precautionary measure in order to inform the future planning process.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The objective of the daytime PRA was to view the existing site layout and to inspect the exterior and interior of the building (see cover photograph) from ground level in order to assess its suitability to act as a bat roost site(s) by identifying the presence of any 'potential roost features' that bats could utilise.

These may typically include, but are not limited to, missing or damaged tiles/slates, broken airbricks, ill-fitting bargeboards, weatherboarding or soffits, raised flashings etc., that may act as access routes for bats into the fabric of the building.

Detailed internal and external searches for any direct evidence of past or current bat occupancy, such as droppings, staining on walls, rafters, windows etc., were also conducted.

- 2.2 The assessment visit was undertaken on 11th May 2026 when there was full access to all parts of the proposed development footprint and standard 10 x 40 binoculars, together with ladders, torches, mirrors and an endoscope were available, where required, to inspect the exterior and interior of the building.
- 2.3 This work was carried out under *Natural England* Class Survey Licence (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number 2025-85818-CL18-BAT and completed by the report's author, a bat ecologist with over 35 years' experience working in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties.
- 2.4 The PRA was conducted according to the current 'best practice' as published in the 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines' (Bat Conservation Trust, 4th edition, 2023).

The Standing Advice to LPAs (Bats: advice for making planning decisions), published by *Natural England* in March 2015 and updated in January 2022, has since been amended. Natural England removed the specific 'Bat Survey Guidelines' from its Standing Advice for protected species and development, as announced in May 2025.

3. Constraints

- 3.1 At the time of the survey visit, extensive works were being undertaken to the roof and frontage of the barn. Although there was full access to the building, these activities could theoretically have eliminated evidence of current or past bat presence.

The works were not, however, considered to have adversely affected the survey results due to the overall condition of the barn, the unsuitable construction materials used and the complete lack of any 'potential roost features' present within this modern structure (see section 4.1 below).

It is considered that there are no other specific constraints operating on the assessment results presented in section 4 below.

- 3.2 The absence of a bat roost in any one season can, however, never completely prove the absence of a roost at another season, such as during the winter hibernation period, as bats regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of the year.

Any survey is, in effect, only a 'snapshot' of the natural environment and conditions present at the time of the visit.

- 3.3 The results presented in section 4 below remain valid for a period of twelve months from the date of the visit, after which time they should not be relied upon and further advice should be sought regarding updating the assessment.

4. Results

- 4.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The proposed development footprint is situated adjacent to the Ashwell Road and is located just outside of the village of Newnham within a highly rural area that is dominated by arable agriculture. The site is, therefore, in an area of good quality bat foraging habitat, with numerous trees and hedgerows providing a well-connected landscape for bat movement.

The building comprises a large single-storey, modern barn (see photographs 1 - 3 below) that is currently unoccupied and undergoing works to the front elevation. It is in three parallel sections that are largely identical.

The walls are of metal construction, with open sections, giving a draughty and well-lit interior (see photographs 8 - 9 below).

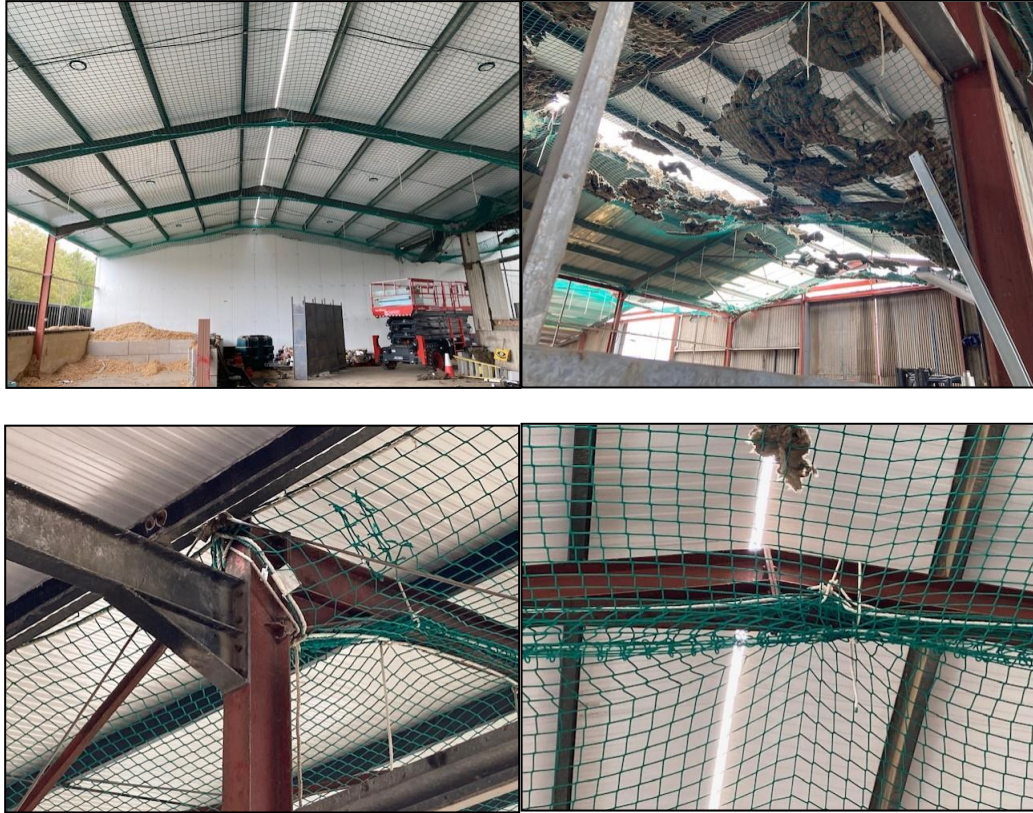
The roof of the building (see photographs 4 - 7 below) is comprised of pitched corrugated metal sheeting, in excellent condition, that affords no 'potential roost features' that bats could utilise.

There are no chimneys present and there is no loft void present. The roof is partially covered with 'pigeon netting' but is otherwise unlined and completely uninsulated.

It is supported by modern metal rafters that lack any open joints that bats could utilise as roost sites. There are also no central ridge beams present that could afford roosting opportunities for bats.



Photographs 1 - 3: Front & side elevations



Photographs 4 - 7: Corrugated metal roof



Photographs 8 - 9: Internal view

There are no other features associated with the building, such as weatherboarding or hanging tiles, which could provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats away from the roof.

There are also no underground structures (cellars, air raid shelters, ice houses etc.) present within the proposed development footprint that would be suitable as potential hibernation sites for bats in the winter.

As a result of the structure of the barn and its overall condition/construction materials used, with no 'potential roost features' identified, the building was assessed to be of '**negligible potential**' as a roost site for bats.

4.2 Internal Inspection

Notwithstanding an intensive search of the interior of the building, no past or current evidence of bat occupancy was detected, thereby supporting the 'negligible potential' assessment result as detailed in section 4.1 above.

4.3 External Inspection

No evidence of any past or current bat occupancy was found during the detailed external inspection of the building, further supporting the 'negligible potential' assessment result as detailed in section 4.1 above.

5. Summary & Recommendations

5.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment of the barn categorised it as having a '**negligible potential**' to support a bat roost due to its design and the unsuitable construction materials used, the good condition of the roof covering and a complete lack of any 'potential roost features'.

5.2 The internal inspection of the structure did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy.

5.3 The external inspection of the structure also did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy.

5.4 In accordance with the nationally published guidance for buildings assessed to be of 'negligible potential', it is now **recommended** that **no dusk emergence surveys are required** to be completed during the bats' active season (May to August/September) in order to confirm the presence/absence of a roost.

In our opinion, therefore, any forthcoming planning application can be determined without further reference to the presence of roosting bats, subject to being within the time constraints noted in section 3.3 above.