

LANGLEY BOTTOM FARM BARN

LONDON ROAD, LANGLEY
HERTFORDSHIRE

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT



2025

CLIVE HERBERT

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Client	Jawbox Harpenden Limited	
Site	Langley Bottom Farm, London Road, Langley, Hertfordshire SG4 7PJ	
Grid Reference	TL 212 231	
Report Reference	8001 - 01 - 2025	
Prepared By	Clive Herbert	14/01/2025
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Amphibian, Reptile & Mammal Conservation Limited were contracted by Jawbox Harpenden Limited, on 7th January 2025, to undertake a standard Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of two barns at Langley Bottom Farm, London Road, Langley, Hertfordshire SG4 7PJ, and situated at approximately National Grid Reference TL 212 231.
- 1.2 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was completed in support of a forthcoming planning application for the demolition of the two barns.
- 1.3 The PRA 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 two barns, from ground level, in order to assess their 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, broken airbricks, ill-fitting soffits, bargeboards or weatherboarding, raised flashings, mortise joints in roof timbers etc., that may act as access routes for bats into the fabric of a 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 10th January 2025 when there was complete 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 two structures.
- 2.3 This work was carried out under *Natural England* Class Survey Licence WML-CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number 2015-13348-CLS-CLS and completed by the report's author, a licensed bat ecologist with over 35 years' experience working in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties.
- 2.4 The assessment was conducted according to the current 'best practice' standards as published in the 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines' (Bat Conservation Trust, 4th edition, 2023) and with due

regard to the Standing Advice to LPAs (Bats: advice for making planning decisions) published by *Natural England* on 28th March 2015 and updated on 14th January 2022.

3. Constraints

- 3.1 It is considered that there are no 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 summer maternity period, as bats regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of the year.
- 3.3 The results presented in section 4 below remain valid for a period of twelve months from the date of the site 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 site is located to the north of the village of Langley and to the south of Rush Green village, within an agricultural landscape comprising large open fields, together with a network of hedgerows and their associated mature trees.

The location is, therefore, one of a good quality, inter-connected landscape of suitable bat foraging habitat.

Barn A

This barn (see photographs 1 - 4 below) is a relatively modern unit, notwithstanding its dilapidated condition, which is currently in use for the storage of sundry materials.

The building has a pitched, corrugated metal roof (see photographs 5 - 6 below), with no loft void. There is no central, internal ridge beam and the ridge is protected externally with a metal covering. The roof is unlined and there is no insulation present.

The rafters are of modern-sawn timbers, commensurate with the recent age of the structure, and lack any gaps, crevices or open joints that could afford potential roosting locations for bats (see photographs 7 - 8 below).

The barn has large double doors on the front elevation and an open, damaged section on one side elevation, giving a draughty and well-lit interior. On the

other side elevation is an extension, running the length of the barn, with a sloping corrugated metal roof.

The walls are largely made of single-skinned chipboard and other wooden sheeting, with no cavity walls present.



Photographs 1 - 4: Barn A - Front, rear & side elevations



Photographs 5 - 6: Barn A - Corrugated iron roof



Photographs 7 - 8: Barn A - Internal void

There are no other features associated with Barn A, such as hanging tiles, which could provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats away from the main 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.

Due to the structure of the building and the construction materials used, no 'potential roost features' that could support bats were identified.

As a result, the barn was classified as being of '**negligible potential**' as a bat roost site.

Barn B

This barn (see photographs 9 - 12 below) is also a relatively modern unit, notwithstanding its derelict and near collapsing condition, which is currently in use for the occasional storage of sundry materials.

The building has a sloping, corrugated metal roof (see photographs 13 - 14 below), with no loft void. There is no central, internal ridge beam and the roof is unlined, with no insulation present.

The rafters are of modern-sawn timbers, commensurate with the recent age of the structure, and lack any gaps, crevices or open joints that could afford potential roosting locations for bats (see photographs 15 - 16 below).

The barn has an open-sided front elevation and a large section of the wall on the rear elevation is damaged and open, giving a draughty and well-lit interior.

The walls are made entirely of single-skin corrugated iron sheeting, with no cavity walls present.



Photographs 9 - 12: Barn B - Front, rear & side elevations



Photographs 13 - 14: Barn B - Corrugated iron roof



Photographs 15 - 16: Barn B - Internal void

There are no other features associated with Barn B, such as hanging tiles, which could provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats away from the main 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.

Due to the structure of the building and the construction materials used, no 'potential roost features' that could support bats were identified.

As a result, the barn was classified as being of '**negligible potential**' as a bat roost site.

4.2 Internal Inspection

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

4.4 Barn Owls

The two barns, together with their immediate vicinity, were searched for any evidence of use by Barn Owls *Tyto alba*.

No birds were recorded and no other evidence of their current or past presence (e.g. prey remains, pellets etc.) were located.

4.5 Habitat & Other Protected Species

The proposed development footprint is comprised principally of the two barns themselves, together with their associated hardstanding for the parking and storage of machinery and other materials.

A new fence has recently been installed to the rear of Barn A and Barn B. There is no natural habitat present surrounding the two barns within this fence (see photographs 17 - 20 below).

The only 'natural' habitat present is a very narrow compartment of improved grassland, together with some ruderal vegetation and bare ground, to the rear of the new fence (see photographs 21 - 22 below).

The field boundary hedgerow along the adjoining field margin has long been lost, leaving only isolated Elder, Apple and Common Hawthorn shrubs remaining.

This linear compartment was determined to have no ecological value, even when assessed at a local (parish) level.

The proposed development footprint has no mature trees present that would be suitable for use by roosting bats or Barn Owls.



Photographs 17 - 20: No natural habitat present surrounding the two barns within the new fence-line



Photographs 21 - 22: Linear compartment to the rear of the new fence

5. Summary & Recommendations

- 5.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessments of the two barns categorised both structures as having a '**negligible potential**' to support a bat roost based on their age, materials, design structure and the complete absence of any 'potential roost features' that bats could utilise.
- 5.2 The internal inspections of the two barns did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy or signs of use by Barn Owls.
- 5.3 The external inspections of the two barns did not locate any evidence of current or past bat occupancy or signs of use by Barn Owls.
- 5.4 The proposed development will have no impact on any mature trees that could be utilised by roosting bats or Barn Owls.
- 5.5 The only 'natural' habitat present within the proposed development footprint was found to be a narrow linear strip of improved grassland, together with associated limited ruderal vegetation and bare ground, and a few isolated shrubs remaining from the original long-lost farm boundary hedgerow.

This compartment was assessed to be of no ecological significance, even at a local or parish level.

- 5.6 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 September) in order to confirm the presence/absence of a roost.

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