



Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report Ref. ER-8918-01

26/11/2025

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.

Summary Statement

Thurnscoe Library has been assessed as having negligible bat roost suitability; further survey in relation to bats is not considered necessary.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Thurnscoe Library (grid reference SE4573905597).
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises a public library building.
3. Proposals are to refurbish the building, which will include stripping off existing roof coverings and introducing mechanical units which will be fixed to the western wall.

Figure 1 The Site boundary (red line).



Method

4. A thorough daytime inspection of the Site was made in November 2025 to look for evidence of bats and assess suitability for roosting. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, stains on masonry or timber from the oils in bats' fur and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.
5. Bat roosting potential of the building was classified according to the following criteria set out in Table 1, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings.

Suitability	Criteria
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
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 (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating 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 (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation - the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
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 site.

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Records

6. The local records provider, in this case Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council was asked to provide all records from within a 2km radius of the Site.
7. Twenty-two records of bats were returned within the search area pertaining to common pipistrelle, noctule, whiskered and indeterminate vesper species. Of these 11 relate to confirmed roosts.
8. The most recent was a day roost of common pipistrelle bats, recorded in 2016 and located 1.6km southeast of the Site. The closest was a roost with over a 100 indeterminate vesper species, recorded in 1993 and located 500m south of the Site.

National, regional, and local Status

9. The application Site lies within the natural range of 11 species of bat. These are summarised in Table 2 opposite, together with a note on each species' national status, relative abundance, and status within the 1km search area.

EPSM Licences

10. There are no European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences returned within 1km of the Site.

Table 2 List of bat species known to occur in South Yorkshire, ordered in increasing level of significance to their national population.

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Natterer's <i>M. nattereri</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered <i>M. mystacinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	-
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	-
Brandt's <i>M. brandtii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Leisler's <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Uncommon and trend unknown	-	-
Nathusius' Pipistrelle <i>P. nathusii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-

Site Context

11. The Site is located within Thurnscoe, some 11km east of Barnsley and 11km northwest of Doncaster.
12. Swinton & Knottingley Railway line comprises the closest linear feature to the Site, found 160m east of the Site. Thurnscoe dike runs just over 1km west of the Site, neither feature has strong links to the Site but are both within close proximity.
13. The landscape comprises mainly residential development with arable land making up the wider landscape, proving limited foraging habitat. Woodland blocks are found to the northeast and south of the Site.

Figure 2 Site context.



Survey Results

14. The library is a single storey building with a slightly elevated western half, constructed from brick and mortar with some stone pillars and a flat roof.

Figure 3 Location of the building on-Site.



15. The doors and windows are wooden with wooden window sills and metal shutters. These are all well sealed. The walls are constructed from brick and mortar with some stone pillars. There are a few areas where the mortar is missing from the stone creating a few gaps however, further inspection of these with a clue light and binoculars show that they are shallow, do not lead to any features suitable for bats.

Figure 4 View of gaps in the stone pillar.



16. There is a soffit box around the whole of the building. There are areas where the paint has come away and small gaps have been formed however, with further inspection these gaps are either too small for bats or do not lead to any features suitable for bats.

Figure 5 View of gap in soffit box.



17. The roof is flat and constructed from bitumen felt, this is well sealed and does not have any suitable bat roosting features.

Figure 6 View of the roof from the south over the road.



Conclusions

18. Based on the features present, and the value of surrounding habitat, the building has been assessed as having negligible suitability for supporting roosts.
19. Features within the building include gaps in the stone pillar and a couple of small gaps in the soffit box. Through further inspection with a clue light and binoculars, these features do not lead to any features suitable for bats.
20. The surrounding area is bound by residential development and main roads, with no wildlife corridors connecting the Site, providing limited foraging habitat.

Recommendations

21. No further survey work is recommended in support of this conclusion.

Standard precaution

22. Although no evidence of roosting has been found and likely absence of roosting has been concluded, it must be noted that bats frequently move between roost sites, can be very casual in their choice of roosting location, and can turn up unexpectedly at any time. On this basis the developer should always be mindful of bats as a potential constraint and have a protocol in place should any bats be seen or suspected during works: works should stop, a suitably licensed ecologist consulted, and their advice followed.

Figure 7 Showing bat roost suitability of on-Site building.



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