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FAO: Jon Rowlands

17th September 2025

**Preliminary Roost Assessment:
Swallows Nest, Riverhead House, Redbourne**

Dear Jon,

This report has been prepared for the purpose of providing evidence relating to a retrospective Preliminary (bat) Roost Assessment (PRA) which was completed at the above premises by Archer Ecology Ltd on 1st September 2025. The purpose of this report is to determine any potential interactions between activities associated with the development proposals and ecological receptors, specifically roosting bats, and to advise proportionate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any potential adverse impacts to an acceptable level. This is to ensure compliance with mechanisms which protect native wildlife, including UK and European legislation which protect bats and their places of rest (roost sites). Where necessary, this report also recommends further survey works to enable a full assessment of impacts.

It is understood that retrospective planning permission is being sought in connection with the proposed change of use of the property at the above premises and that these works have already been completed. A single property is included in the development proposals which comprise the conversion of the former office building into a holiday let. The location of the application site is shown in Figure 1, overleaf.



Figure 1 Location of the application site and building proposed for development

Legislation

Roosting bats

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bats are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended); in England and Wales this legislation has been amended and strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Bats are also protected by European legislation; the EC Habitats Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit. Taken together, all this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat;
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat;

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; and
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats.

A roost is defined as being _____, and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Methodology

Preliminary Roost Assessment

A detailed internal and external inspection of the building proposed for development was carried out by Associate Ecologist and Level 1 Bat Licence holder (2019-39334-CLS-CLS) Robert Coles, PhD of Archer Ecology Ltd on 1st September 2025; site photographs captured during the survey are presented in Appendix I.

The PRA was undertaken in line with current methodologies contained within survey guidelines issued by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) (Collins, 2023)¹ and involved identifying potential bat roosting features associated with the building, including any loft spaces, wall cavities, soffit boxes, fascias, barge boards, tiles (etc) and structural defects, together with any evidence of roosting bats, including urine staining, guano, feeding remains and/or live and dead bats. In line with guidelines issued by the BCT, the assessment was based upon the availability of inherent potential roosting features (PRFs) and the building was assigned a potential roosting classification from the categories 'negligible roosting potential', 'confir-

The ecologist was equipped with extendable, telescopic ladders, a Cluson Clulite torch and Ridgid Seesnake endoscope.

Results

On the premises of Riverhead House there is one building that is proposed for assessment (swallows nest). This property is to the west of the remaining buildings and is currently used as a holiday let, having been recently converted from its previous use as an office.

¹ Collins (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust.

The building comprises a combined red brick and stone brick-built property with a single-pitched and hipped roof overlain with pantiles. A wooden door and large wooden framed windows are located on the eastern-facing elevation, while four Velux style windows are present within the roof (Appendix I, see Photographs 1 and 2).

Internally, the majority of the roof space has been converted and there no longer exists a roof void. Only three very small roof voids remain although these are entirely enclosed and were appraised to be of insufficient dimension to sustain loft-dwelling species of bats. No features were found during the external assessment that could allow any of the small roof spaces to be accessed by individual bats from the outside of the property. The roof structure along the outside of these loft spaces was also observed to be consistently intact throughout. Furthermore, due to the high level of exposure to artificial lighting inside the holiday let, and natural light ingress through windows (particularly from the large windows along the eastern elevation), bat activity inside the property is expected to be deterred.

Potential roost features were identified during the external assessment, with gaps recorded between the stone bricks and mortar (Appendix I, see Photographs 3 and 4). Therefore, the property is appraised as having 'low potential to support bat roosts in line with current BCT guidelines. However, no evidence of roosting activity, such as droppings or urine staining was found to be associated with these features.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is understood that no subsequent works are proposed to be undertaken at the property. Subsequently, the PRFs identified during the PRA will not be affected and potential impacts to bats are considered to be negligible; Therefore, there are no further constraints pertaining to roosting bats.

However, as an optional enhancement, it is recommended that a single bat box is installed on the exterior of the property to enhance the site for local populations of bat by providing an additional roosting feature. The Schwegler 2F bat box is recommended as an industry standard. This should be installed underneath the eaves of the southern elevation, at a minimum height of 3–4 metres, where there is a clear horizontal approach provided for bats to easily access and exit the box.

Should you wish to discuss your requirements further, please don't hesitate to

Yours sincerely,

Robert Coles

Robert Coles PhD - Associate Ecologist

Appendix I – Photographs



Photograph 1: The property at Swallows Nest, eastern elevation



Photograph 2: View of the lounge inside the property



Photograph 3: A potential roost feature within the stonework on the northern elevation of the property (circled in red)



Photograph 4: A potential roost feature within the stonework on the northern elevation of the property (close up)