



BOTLEY MILL, MILL HILL, BOTLEY, SO30 2GB

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

June 2026

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Southern Planning Practice Ltd is instructed to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment in support of application F/26/101113 for the Installation of replacement roof sheeting and solar PV panels at Botley Mill, Mill Hill, Botley, SO30 2GB (the site).

Note: The findings of this report are valid for 18 months and should works not be undertaken within this timeframe the report may need updating.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- I.2 The building is part of a complex of buildings which form Botley Mills (centred on OS grid reference SU 5160 1307). The wider site is a historic mill complex located on the western edge of Botley village and adjacent to the River Hamble. Historically used for milling, the use of the site now comprises a mix of commercial, retail, heritage, and community use.
- I.3 Botley village extends to the north of the site whilst much of the wider landscape comprises arable farmland, pasture, hedgerows, scattered woodland, the River Hamble and its network of watercourses and floodplain habitats.
- I.4. The building subject to this application is a five-storey brick and asbestos roofed structure currently occupied at ground floor only. Internally there have been new floorboards installed in the last 2-3 years.

Figure I. Site location in the wider landscape



Note. From MAGIC (04/06/2026)

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- I.5 The development proposed comprises the replacement of the existing asbestos-sheet with profiled metal roof sheeting, and to install a solar panel array on the new roof of the east elevation (figure 2). The works will require the installation of scaffolding.

SECTION 2 – LEGISLATION

2.1 The legislation and planning policy detailed in this section is intended to be a summary only. The relevant pieces of legislation and planning policy should be referred to for full information. Legislation and planning policy pertaining to protected habitats and species can be found at the following websites:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended):
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents>
- Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

BATS

2.2 In Britain all bat species and their roosts are fully legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation. This means that it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

2.3 In England and Wales, the relevant pieces of legislation are the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended); the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017; the

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006.

- 2.4 People convicted of committing bat crimes can face six months imprisonment and/or unlimited fines.
- 2.5 In order to undertake any activity which would otherwise result in any of the above offences being committed, it may be necessary to obtain a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from the relevant statutory body (Natural England). Activities that may require a licence involve works to buildings, other structures and trees.
- 2.6 As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement of Bats in Europe), the UK is also required to protect their habitats, requiring the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas, for example by loss of habitat or inappropriate lighting. The UK is also a signatory to the Bern Convention designed to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats. All species of UK bats are listed in Appendix II of both the Bonn and Bern Conventions.
- 2.7 Some species of bats are also species of principal importance, as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

SECTION 3 – METHODOLOGY

DESK STUDY

- 3.1 A search for protected habitats and European Protected Species Licences within 2km of the site was undertaken using DEFRA's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas was also interrogated for records of bats within 2k of the site. All searches were limited to within the last 10 years.
- 3.2 Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images were assessed to check for other relevant data on notable habitats and species nearby including ponds and wildlife corridors where the site connects into the surrounding area.

FIELD SURVEY

- 3.3 The site was surveyed at 9am on the 4th of June 2026 by Nichola Windebank MSc, BSc, FSc. (CIEEM Qualifying membership) who has 5 years of experience undertaking professional bat surveys and impact assessments. Competent in conducting PRAs and leading dusk/dawn emergence surveys to current best practice guideline outlined within *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition* (Collins (ed) 2023) s.
- 3.4 A ground-level external inspection was carried out using binoculars to examine elevated and inaccessible areas, including rooflines, eaves, soffits, flashing, and other potential access points for bats. Where safe and accessible, internal areas were systematically searched to identify any evidence of bat presence, including droppings, staining, feeding remains, urine splashes, or roosting individuals. Roosting potential was determined based on the Guidelines and detailed in table I.

Table 1. Potential roost suitability (structures)

Potential suitability	Roosting habitats in structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
Negligible	No obvious 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.
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.
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. With potential to support high conservation status roost.

LIMITATIONS

- 3.6 All areas were accessible for inspection. Where items were stored as far as practically possible these were examined without moving them. There were items on a mezzanine and within the building which offered limited potential for inspection without causing potential disturbance.

SECTION 4 – RESULTS

DESK STUDY

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1 The site is situated adjacent to the River Hamble, an area of international and national ecological importance. Internationally designated sites associated with the Hamble Estuary, include the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar Site, together with the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI, approximately 0.65 km to the south of the site. The wider area (2km radius) also contains a network of non-statutory ecological designations, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), ancient woodland and Local Nature Reserves, notably Sherecroft Farm Meadow SINC approximately 150m to the north of the site which has been impacted by recent local developments. All these areas would provide excellent roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for a variety of bat species. (Appendix A).

Protected Species

- 4.2 MAGIC indicates 4 EPS license have been granted by Natural England within 2km of the site for works within the last 10 years with species identified as Brown Long Eared, Natterers, Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle.
- 4.3 NBN Atlas has 5 verified records of bats within 2km of the site within the last 10 years (no. records in brackets);
- Common pipistrelle (1)
 - Soprano pipistrelle (1)
 - Serotine (1)
 - Brown Long Eared (1)
 - Daubenton's bat (1)
- 4.4 The recent transect survey at the site indicates high levels of bat activity along the river corridor directly adjacent to the site with species noted including Daubenton's, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle and Common Pipistrelle.

SITE ASSESSMENT

- 4.5 Externally the whole building has been assessed with emphasis on the roof and top floor. However, as the works will require scaffolding it is necessary to identify any potential access features across the building which could be impacted during construction.
- 4.6 Potential access features were also assessed in the context of the wider building, recognising that bats may enter a building through one feature and utilise interconnected internal spaces to access suitable roosting locations elsewhere within the building.

EXTERNAL

Figure 3. Building in context of the adjoining properties



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.7 In the main the front elevation of the building does not offer many Potential Roost Features (PRF's). The windows are well sealed with no gaps around and the brickwork appears sound. However, there is a gap beneath the 1086 signage and it was unclear if the 'BOTLEY MILL FLOUR & FEED' lettering was sealed to the building.
- 4.8 The roof is constructed of corrugated asbestos and is not sealed where it meets the wall face on the front and side elevations. The fascia boards on the front gable leave a gap which allows access into the building and internally air can be seen draughting in through the spaces.

Figure 4. Image showing a wide gap beneath the fascia on the front elevation



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.9 To the rear elevation the fascias are flush to the building however there are some smaller gaps which could be utilised by crevice roosting species, particularly around the apex of the gable. Some small holes are also visible in the elevation

Figure 5. Rear elevation PRF's



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.10 As noted at the top floor to the x elevation the corrugated roofing can be seen to overlap the wall. There is also a hole which opens into the building, and there is also some gapping above the top of the window frame.

Figure 6. Image showing PRFs in the x elevation



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

INTERNAL

- 4.11 At the ground floor the space is in part occupied by I086 and to the rear the space is utilised in association with site operations (unspecified). These areas are well used and well lit and would not provide appropriate roost opportunities. However, the upper 4 floors are all unoccupied and do have some roosting potential as detailed below.
- 4.12 The very top floor of the building is highly unlikely to be being utilised by roosting bats. Although there is various access point the top floor is very well lit by the numerous windows. The asbestos roof is not lined and does not gap where it overlaps. The gaps behind the beams are visible and there are no bats in these locations. There are some limited areas such as beyond the now blocked door frame and in some very small gaps in the wall and where the roof meets the wall. In these locations the areas are very draughty

and unlikely to be thermally stable enough for bat roosting. The area was searched for dropping, feeding remains or staining and none was found.

Figure 7. Image of the top floor



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.13 Although there is no evidence of bats utilising the top floor there are several large holes in the floor which lead into the two floors below. It is possible that any bats accessing from the roof could then be roosting in the floors below.

Figure 8. Images of the holes through to the floor below.



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.14 The floor below is still relatively light by virtue of the windows in the front elevation and light from above. There are some slightly darker areas and some gaps beneath the large ceiling beams which may offer limited roosting opportunities. The area was searched for dropping, feeding remains or staining and none was found.

Figure 9. Images of the holes through to the floor below



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

- 4.15 The next floor down is significantly darker, and the only light is from the upper and lower floors. The large ceiling beams have some small gaps and there are some limited gaps in the brickwork. This floor contains several pieces of historical paraphernalia relevant to the Mill which have been placed here some time ago. The area was searched for dropping, feeding remains or staining and none was found.

Figure 10. Internally lit from upper and lower floors.



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026.

- 4.16 The next floor down is split into two sections, front and rear which are all open and again all accessible through the building from the roof. There are windows in the front section. Both of these areas are being used for ancillary storage purpose and again the paraphernalia and been in situ for some time. Whilst every effort was made to search these areas this was not entirely possible as it may have result in undue disturbance. These areas were searched for dropping, feeding remains or staining and none was found.

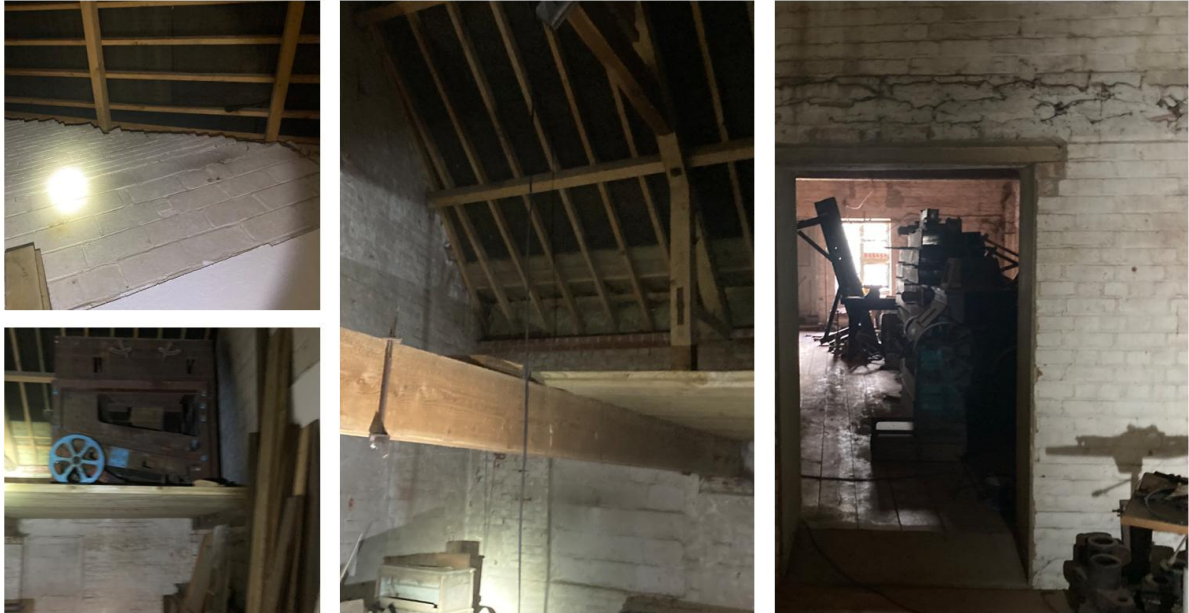
Figure 11. Front section.



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026.

- 4.17 The rear section has no windows and is relatively dark. There is a vaulted ceiling which appears to have been recently re-felted. This area has a small inaccessible mezzanine.

Figure 12. Rear section.



Note: Authors own taken 04/06/2026

SECTION 5 – DISCUSSION \ RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As detailed in section 4 the wider area would provide excellent roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for a variety of bat species. Furthermore, the recent transect survey highlighted a high level of bat activity within the wider site area. The building has several potential access points bats for both crevice and larger void dwelling bats, although there was a notably absence of evidence of void dwelling bats within the building and few areas could not be viewed, although at the lower floors there were some limited inaccessible spaces.
- 5.2 Given the lack of physical evidence within the building and the lack of spaces where bats could reasonably be without being visible during the survey search it is highly unlikely that the site is being used by large numbers of bats for hibernation or maternity purpose.
- 5.3 In light of the above the building has been assessed as having **moderate suitability** for roosting bats due to the presence of features that could provide suitable access points and roosting opportunities. No evidence of bat occupation was identified during the Preliminary Roost Assessment; however, the absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of bats.
- 5.4 In accordance with current best practice guidance, further presence/absence surveys are recommended prior to the commencement of any works that may affect the identified potential roost features. These surveys should comprise **two dusk emergence surveys** undertaken between May and September. Should rare or significant numbers of bats emerge during these surveys additional survey effort may be required.
- 5.5 The findings of the emergence surveys will inform any subsequent mitigation, licensing, or compensation requirements should bats be found to be present.
- 5.6 No works that may affect potential roost features should commence until the recommended surveys have been completed and their findings considered.

REFERENCES

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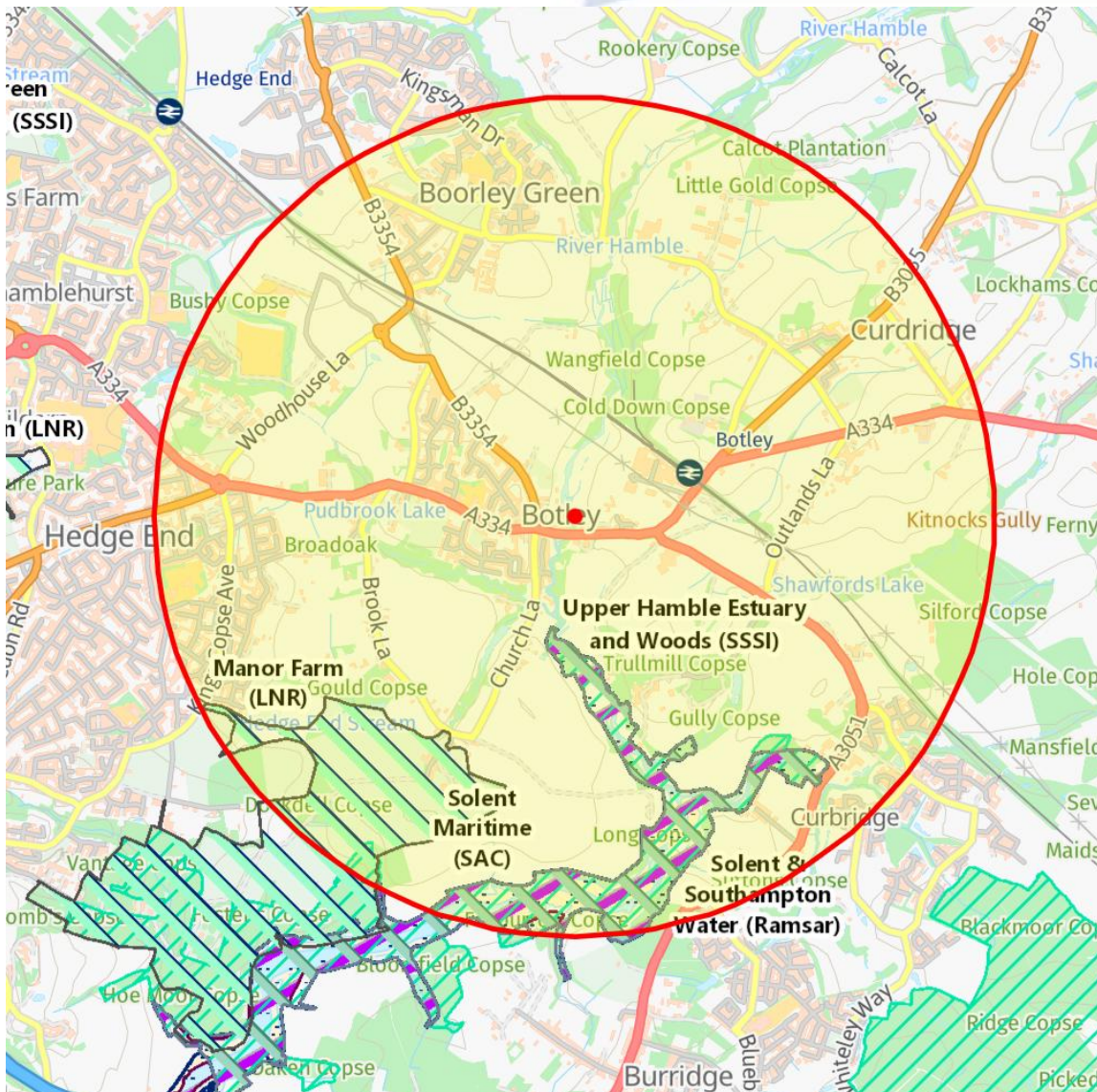
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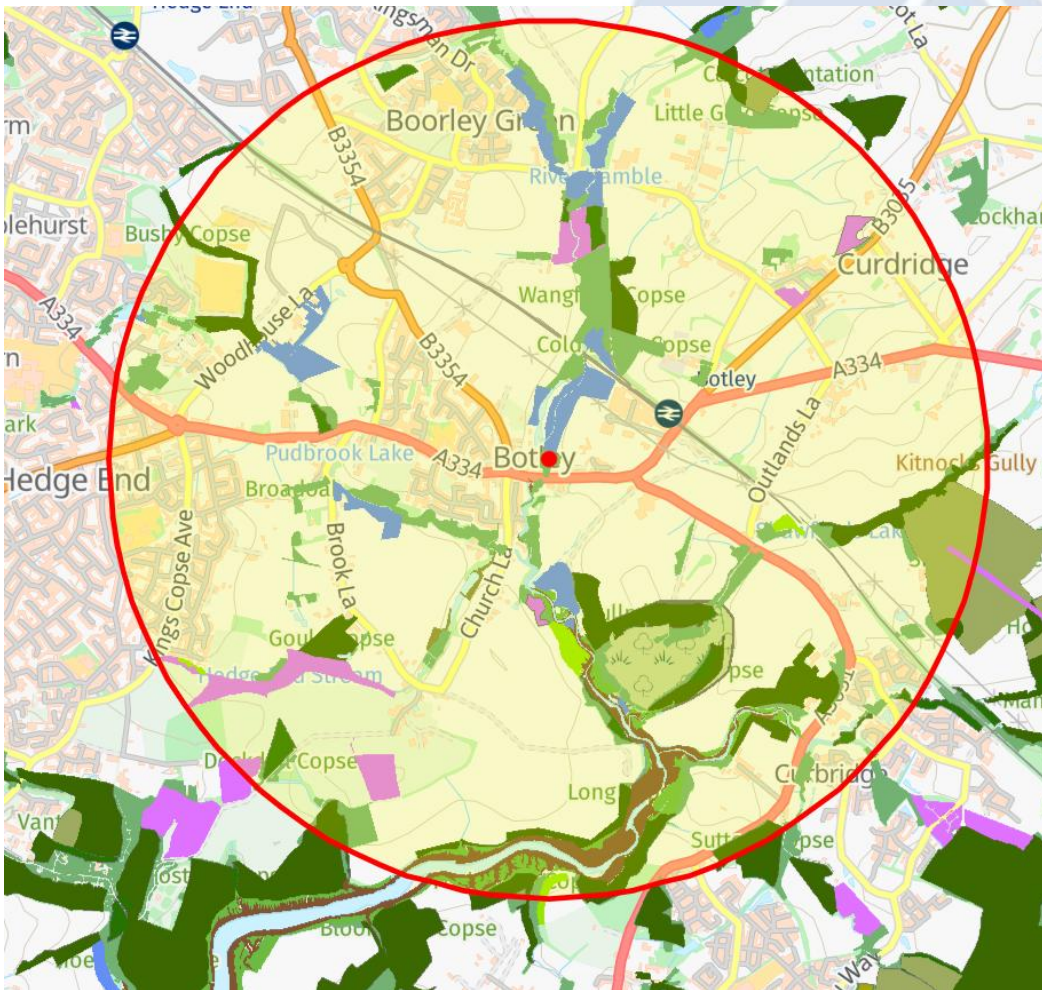
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APPENDIX A

Statutory designations within 2km of the site



Non-Statutory designations within 2km of the site



Magic

Habitats and Species

Habitats

Coastal

Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal Saltmarsh (England)



Priority Habitat Inventory - Mudflats (England)



Grassland

Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)



Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England)



Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland (England)



Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (England)



Woodland

Ancient Woodland (England)



Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland



Ancient Replanted Woodland



Ancient Wood Pasture

Ancient Woodland - Revised COMPLETED COUNTIES (England)



Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland



Ancient Replanted Woodland



Ancient Wood Pasture



Infilled Ancient Wood Pasture

Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)



Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat (England)



SINCS from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire.

