



BAT DEROGATION LICENCE APPLICATION – MAAM COURTHOUSE

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Introduction

MKO have been commissioned by Galway County Council to carry out ecological surveys for conservation repair works at Maam Courthouse (RPS No. 554), located in Moneenmore, County Galway. The structure is a protected 19th century courthouse building requiring urgent essential maintenance to stabilise its condition and prevent further deterioration. No stabilisation works were undertaken in 2025 under the previous derogation licence and therefore an extension of the derogation licence is being requested.

Bat surveys were undertaken at Maam Courthouse in 2025 to inform proposed essential maintenance repair works. These surveys included a preliminary roost assessment and a dusk emergence survey conducted on the 15th of May 2025.

A small number of lesser horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) were observed emerging during the dusk survey. The proposed works have been carefully designed to avoid direct disturbance to roosting bats and minimise any potential impacts, in accordance with best practice and licensing requirements. The structure provides suitable roosting features within the attic space, and the wider area offers good quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

This briefing note includes a brief description of the proposed maintenance repair works; the survey works that have been undertaken by MKO and the proposed mitigation that is designed to ensure that there will be no adverse effects on protected fauna.



Statement of Authority

MKO employs a dedicated bat unit within its Ecology team, experienced in scoping, carrying out, and reporting on bat surveys, as well as producing impact assessments in relation to bats. MKO ecologists have relevant academic qualifications, licences and are qualified in undertaking surveys to the levels required. The daytime inspection and dusk emergence survey was carried out by licenced Bat Ecologist Ryan Connors (BSc., MSc.) (DER-BAT-2025-119) assisted by MKO ecologist Kate Leahy (BSc.).

Background

Proposed Activity

The proposed maintenance repair works at Maam Courthouse aim to address ongoing deterioration of the building fabric and to ensure the long-term stability, safety, and preservation of this protected historic structure. The works are limited in scope and will not in any way impact on the architectural character of the courthouse while also avoiding disturbance to protected species identified on site.

Key elements of the works will include the refurbishment of external joinery (doors and windows), clearing of overgrown vegetation from the building and surrounding area, cleaning and treatment of the external façade, repainting of plastered sections, and the reconstruction of the chimney capping. Rainwater goods will be cleaned, repaired, and repainted, and localised improvements will be made to ensure the building is weatherproof, including addressing gaps and defects contributing to water ingress.

These interventions are intended to stabilise and maintain the structure, prevent further deterioration from water damage or vegetation growth, and reduce safety risks associated with the building's current condition.

Location

The site of the proposed works area is Maam Courthouse, Moneenmore, County Galway, located along the R345 regional road (IG Ref: L 96751 52768).

Ownership

Maam Courthouse and the lands in the immediate vicinity are owned by Galway County Council. The building is currently unused and not open to the public but holds local historical significance.

Reason for Activity

Maam Courthouse is a small, detached, late 19th century courthouse building with a distinctive classical façade, including a distyle in-antis portico with square ashlar piers. The structure is listed as a Protected Structure under the Galway County Council Record of Protected Structures (RPS No. 554). Although much of the building's original fabric remains intact, recent inspections have revealed several maintenance issues requiring urgent attention. These include damaged and fallen chimney capping, degraded gutters and downpipes, overgrown vegetation affecting the stone boundary walls, missing or damaged joinery, and evidence of internal damp (Plates 1-6).

The aim of the proposed works is:

- To address structural and fabric deterioration within the courthouse.
- To reduce potential safety hazards, including those posed by unstable chimney elements and unmanaged vegetation.



- To improve the overall condition of the building envelope, including the chimney, gutters, and external joinery.
- To ensure the building remains secure, weather-resistant, and protected for the future, with the potential for adaptive reuse.
- To carry out all works in a way that avoids or minimises impacts on protected fauna known to be present on site.

Planning History

No formal planning history is currently available for Maam Courthouse. The structure is currently disused and is not in public use. However, given the remoteness of its location it is difficult to prevent public access without significant boundary treatment that would have a negative visual impact on the property.

Proposed Works

As described in the accompanying Works Description Document (Appendix 1), the proposed works at Maam Courthouse comprise a range of essential maintenance repairs aimed at stabilising the building fabric, improving its condition, and reducing safety risks associated with deterioration. The proposed works include:

Entrance and Access Path:

- Existing gate will be removed, treated, and rehinged to open inwards only.
- A coded padlock will be installed to control access.
- Vegetation along the access path and within the courtyard will be cleared.
- A section of exposed ½” water mains pipe will be relocated to remove a trip hazard.
- Grass verges along the front boundary will be removed to tidy the setting of the building.

Vegetation and Tree Management:

- All vegetation growing on or around the building and along the external stone boundary walls will be fully removed.
- Trees on site will be felled and removed off-site.
- Tree material under 125 mm in diameter will be chipped and left on-site.

Front Doors and Windows:

- Large timber double front doors will be retained and refurbished:
 - All hinges and locks will be replaced.
 - Doors will be sanded, primed, and painted with two coats of paint.
- Three external timber windows will be restored:
 - Existing ironmongery will be replaced.
 - One broken pane of glass will be replaced.
 - Frames will be sanded, primed, and painted with two coats of weatherproof paint.

Façade and Roof Cleaning:

- Entire external façade will be treated with algae remover and power washed after an appropriate interval.
- Power washing will include the roof and all rainwater goods.

Soffits and External Walls:

- Timber soffits will be treated and checked for any loose or damaged elements.
- Repairs or replacements will be carried out as needed.
- All soffits will be repainted.
- External plastered walls will be repainted where applicable (excluding areas of exposed stonework).



2

Rear Door Works:

- Existing timber door to the rear will be sanded and sealed.
- All ironmongery, including locks, will be replaced.

2

Chimney and Rainwater Goods:

- Chimney repairs will include:
 - Removal and replacement of the existing limestone capping (partially fallen).
 - Installation of new galvanised steel cowls into chimney pots.
- All rainwater gutters and downpipes will be:
 - Cleaned.
 - Steel components sanded, primed, and repainted, along with all associated fittings.

2

Internal Clearance:

- A 6 cubic metre skip will be provided to remove unwanted material from inside the building (Plate 7).

The works are proposed to commence from October 1st 2025, following the granting of the appropriate derogation licence and the completion of a pre-commencement survey. This timing ensures that works take place outside the main bat activity season (May–September). The duration of the works is expected to be approximately 3–4 weeks. To comply with funding requirements, all works must be completed by 31st December 2025.

Ecological Surveys and Site Assessment

Existing Information

National Biodiversity Data Centre

A review of the National Bat Database of Ireland on the 16th July 2025 yielded results of bats within a 10km hectad of the proposed works. The search yielded 6 bat species within 10km. Table 1 lists the bat species recorded within the hectad which pertains to the proposed works site (L95).

A review of the NBDC bat landscape map provided a habitat suitability index of 22.44 (yellow). This indicates that the proposed works area has moderate habitat suitability for bat species.

Table 1 NBDC Bat Records

Hectad	Species	Date	Database	Status
L95	<i>Brown Long-eared Bat (Plecotus auritus)</i>	30/08/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
L95	<i>Common Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto)</i>	30/08/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
L95	<i>Daubenton's Bat (Myotis daubentonii)</i>	30/08/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
L95	<i>Leisler's bat (Nyctalus leisleri)</i>	30/08/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
L95	<i>Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros)</i>	22/01/2015	National Lesser Horseshoe Bat Database	Annex II & IV
L95	<i>Soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)</i>	30/08/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV



Designated Sites

Within Ireland, the Lesser horseshoe bat is the only bat species requiring the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Maam courthouse is situated within the current known range for this species and two SACs designated for its protection are located within 10 km of the proposed works area.

The Lough Corrib SAC lies approximately 1.3 km from the proposed works area; however, the specific lesser horseshoe bat roost associated with this SAC is located approximately 12 km from the site, well beyond the species' typical core foraging range of 2.5km (NPWS, 2019).

The Lough Carna/Mask Complex SAC is located 4.7km from the proposed works area, however the nearest roost for which the SAC is designated is approximately 14.3km from the proposed works area, also outside the core foraging range of the species.

No Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), or proposed NHAs, designated for the protection of bats were identified within 10km of the proposed works area.

Status of species in local/regional area

Table 2 Irish Bat Species Conservation Status and Threats (NPWS, 2019). Pressures and Threats are ranked from medium importance (M) to high importance (H) in the 2019 Article 17 report

Bat Species	Conservation Status	Principal Threats
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Favourable	A05 Removal of small landscape features for agricultural land parcel consolidation (M)
Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Favourable	A14 Livestock farming (without grazing) [impact of anti-helminthic dosing on dung fauna] (M)
Nathusius' pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Unknown	B09 Clear---cutting, removal of all trees (M)
Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Favourable	F01 Conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (M)
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Favourable	F02 Construction or modification (e.g. of housing and settlements) in existing urban or recreational areas (M)
Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Favourable	F24 Residential or recreational activities and structures generating noise, light, heat or other forms of pollution (M)
Whiskered bat <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	Favourable	H08 Other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (Dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g. caving) (M)
Brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Favourable	L06 Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens) (M)
Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Inadequate	M08 Flooding (natural processes) D01 Wind, wave and tidal power, including infrastructure (M)

Survey Objective(s)

The main objective of the surveys was to gather information on roosting, commuting, and foraging bats using the site and to identify any important features for bats. The surveys were designed to determine the nature, scale, and locations of potential bat activity in the courthouse and to assess the need for further surveys or recommendations to safeguard bats.

Description of Survey Area

As illustrated in the Location Map (Appendix 2), the survey area comprises Maam courthouse and its immediate surroundings, located in the rural townland of Moneenmore in County Galway. The courthouse is a late nineteenth-century protected structure (RPS No. 554) set within a modest plot at the



roadside, bounded by traditional stone walls and framed by a backdrop of mountainous uplands typical of the Maam Valley landscape.

The courthouse is a small, detached, temple-fronted building with a distyle in-antis portico supported by square ashlar piers. The structure is roughly rectangular in plan and features a pitched slate roof with masonry chimneys. The external walls are rendered, with stonework detailing on architectural elements such as the portico. A timber double-door forms the main entrance, and several original sash and casement windows remain in place, though some show signs of damage and wear.

To the rear and sides of the building, areas of overgrown vegetation are present, including unmanaged shrubs, small trees, and a grassed verge along the front boundary. These features have contributed to blocked rainwater goods and general deterioration of the external façade. A stone boundary wall encloses much of the site, and a gated entrance allows pedestrian access from the adjacent regional road.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by open pasture, scattered scrub, and patches of broadleaved woodland and hedgerow. This, combined with the relative lack of disturbance and low ambient light levels in the area, provides suitable conditions for commuting and foraging bats.







Survey Methodology

A daytime inspection of Maam Courthouse was undertaken on the 15th May 2025 by licensed MKO bat ecologist Ryan Connors, assisted by ecologist Kate Leahy to assess the structure and surrounding environment for its potential to support roosting bats. This was followed by a dusk emergence survey later that same evening. Access was granted to the courthouse interior and to the immediate external area surrounding the courthouse. A small opening in the ground floor ceiling allowed for a restricted view into the attic space; however, full access to the attic was not possible.

The internal inspection focused on identifying signs of current or historic bat use, such as droppings, urine staining, feeding remains, fur oil marks, or live bats. The external inspection assessed the building for potential roost features and access points, including gaps in the roof, broken windows, and missing or damaged masonry. Trees were examined for features commonly associated with bat roosts, such as cracks, cavities, and loose bark (Bat Tree Habitat Key, 2018). Equipment used during the inspection included torches, an endoscope, and a thermal camera.

During the dusk emergence survey, surveyors were positioned on opposite sides of the courthouse to ensure full coverage. One surveyor monitored the northern elevation, including the rear entrance and damaged roof area, while the second was positioned on the southern side monitoring the main entrance to the courthouse. The survey began 15 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 1.5 hours after sunset. Observations focused on bat emergence locations, flight paths, species identification, and estimated numbers. A thermal imaging camera and full-spectrum bat detectors were used to support visual and acoustic detection.

The survey effort and results are summarised in Table 3 and accompanying Figure 1.

Table 3 Bat Activity survey effort

Date	Surveyors	Survey Type	Sunrise/Sunset	Start	End	Weather
15/05/2025	Ryan Connors & Kate Leahy	Dusk Emergence	21:31	21:16	23:01	22-20°C, Dry, Calm, Moon not visible, 10% cloud cover







Survey Results

The trees in the immediate vicinity of the courthouse comprise semi-mature specimens of willow, holly and sycamore. None of these trees were of a size or condition likely to support roosting bats and did not exhibit features typically associated with bat roosting (e.g. cracks, cavities, or peeling bark). All trees were assessed as having *No* roosting potential, in accordance with criteria outlined in Table 4.2 of Collins (2023).

During the internal inspection of the courthouse on 15th May 2025, small accumulations of bat droppings were recorded on the ground floor within the main courtroom (Plate 8), indicating use of the building by roosting bats. No live bats or feeding remains were identified internally at the time of inspection, and access to the attic space was limited due to structural constraints (i.e. small cavity). However, visual inspection through a broken ceiling panel (Plate 10) and external observations, including a visible gap in the slate roof (Plate 11), confirmed that multiple potential bat access points are present.

The dusk emergence survey carried out later that evening confirmed roosting activity by lesser horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), with five individuals observed emerging from the open rear (northern) doorway of the courthouse. These emergences were corroborated by the night vision aid. In addition to emergence activity, the survey recorded frequent commuting and foraging activity by other bat species in the vicinity of the courthouse. These included soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), and Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), primarily along the vegetated boundaries and in areas of woodland and scrub surrounding the site.

Vegetation removal is proposed as part of the works to clear overgrowth on and around the courthouse structure. However, this will not impact bat commuting corridors. The retained vegetation will ensure continued connectivity between the roost and surrounding foraging habitats, with vegetation gaps maintained at less than 5 metres. These conditions will continue to support movement of lesser horseshoe bats from the roost to nearby woodland and scrub habitats.

No evidence of a maternity roost or significant aggregation was observed during the survey. However, the presence of droppings internally, direct emergence by *R. hipposideros*, and the confirmed use of the building for roosting and foraging support the conclusion that Maam Courthouse is used as a roost by lesser horseshoe bats, likely for day or night roosting.

Although no evidence of a maternity roost or large aggregation was recorded during the survey, the building exhibits features with the potential to support occasional or opportunistic use by bats for day or night roosting, particularly within areas of the roof. Small accumulations of droppings were noted internally, indicating low-level or intermittent usage. Given the confirmed presence of lesser horseshoe bats, and in line with the guidance provided by the Heritage Council Bat Expert Panel (2003) and NRA (2006), the site is considered to be of at least **Local** to **Regional** importance, as the presence of this species alone warrants a higher level of ecological consideration. The wider demesne also offers suitable foraging and commuting habitat for other bat species, including common and soprano pipistrelles and Leisler's bat.





Plate 1 Archival image of Maam Courthouse from the Galway Record of Protected Structures (RPS No. 554), showing the building prior to significant vegetation encroachment.



Plate 2 Current view from the same location, illustrating the extent of vegetation overgrowth around the courthouse.



Plate 3 View of the courthouse, now heavily obscured by overgrown willow vegetation.



Plate 4 Surrounding willow-dominated scrub encroaching on the courthouse.

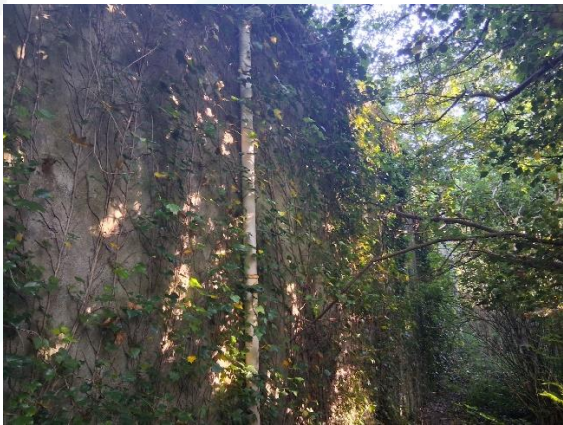


Plate 5 Vegetation overgrowth on boundary walls, gutters, and downpipes contributing to water ingress and deterioration



Plate 6 Fallen chimney capping at rear of courthouse.





Plate 7 Interior of the courthouse showing miscellaneous debris to be removed as part of the proposed works.



Plate 8 Small accumulation of bat droppings recorded within the main courtroom



Plate 9 Open door at rear of structure providing access for bats.



Plate 10 Broken ceiling panel allowing limited visual access into the attic space, as well as a potential access point for bats.

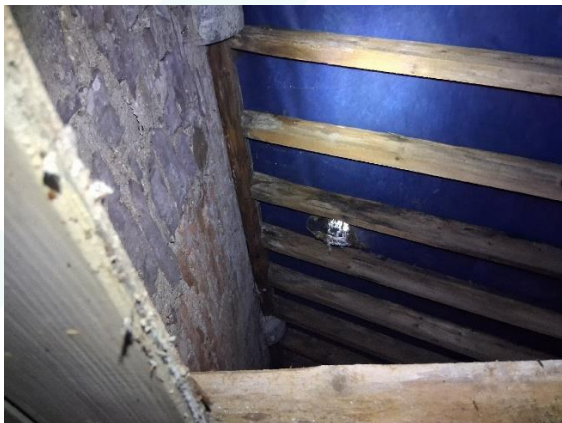


Plate 11 Gap in the slate roof providing access for bats.

Population size and class assessment

Surveys carried out in 2025 confirmed the presence of a lesser horseshoe bat roost within the attic space of Maam Courthouse. A total of five individuals were observed emerging from the rear (north-facing) doorway during a dusk emergence survey conducted on 18th March 2025. No other bat species were observed emerging from the structure.



Although the observed number of individuals was low, all roosts of lesser horseshoe bats are considered to be of ecological significance due to the species' conservation status and limited distribution in Ireland. The roost is consistent with a day or night roost used by a small number of individuals. No evidence of maternity behaviour or large aggregations was recorded at the time of survey.

Lesser horseshoe bats are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive and are a qualifying feature for a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Ireland. Therefore, even small roosts are regarded as significant under current guidance (NRA, 2006) and must be treated with appropriate caution.

As a legally protected species, the roost must be fully considered in the design, timing, and implementation of any proposed works. All activities will be carried out under derogation licence and in accordance with best practice mitigation to avoid disturbance to the bats or degradation of the roost.

Evidence to support the Derogation Tests

The NPWS document, *Guidance on the Strict Protection of Certain Animal and Plant Species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland* - National Parks and Wildlife Service Guidance Series 1 (2021), was reviewed before undertaking this derogation application.

Article 16 of the Habitats Directive sets out three pre-conditions, all of which must be met before a derogation from the requirements of Article 12 or Article 13 of the Directive can be granted. These preconditions are also set out in Regulation 54 of the Regulations.

The preconditions are:

1. A reason(s) listed in Regulation 54 (a)-(e) applies
2. No satisfactory alternatives exist
3. Derogation would not be detrimental to the maintenance of a population(s) at a favourable conservation status.

It is believed that the pre-conditions for granting a derogation licence have been met, as follows:

Test 1 – Reasons for Seeking Derogation

Regulation 54(2) (a)–(e) states that a derogation licence may be granted for any of the reasons listed (a) to (e). We are of the opinion that the following reasons apply:

(c) In the interest of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

The proposed works involve essential maintenance repairs to Maam Courthouse, a protected structure (RPS No. 554) of historical and architectural significance. The building has experienced ongoing fabric deterioration, including partial collapse of chimney capping and damage to rainwater drainage systems and external joinery, which pose both structural and public safety risks.

A structural assessment has identified these issues as urgent and requiring minor maintenance and repairs to ensure the long-term stability of the courthouse. Without intervention, further decline could compromise the building's integrity, increase safety hazards due to falling masonry or unstable elements, and threaten the roosting habitat of lesser horseshoe bats confirmed within the attic space.

The proposed works are necessary for the conservation of this protected heritage asset and to mitigate risks to the local community arising from the building's current condition. Additionally, historic built fabric, archaeology and natural heritage are given protection under the following legislation:

- Planning & Development Acts



- National Monuments Acts, 1930–2004, and the Record of Monuments & Places, established under Section 12 of the 1994 Act.
- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)

All proposed works will be carried out externally, with the exception of minor internal clearance (removal of miscellaneous items), and will take place outside the main bat activity period (May–September). No works are planned within the attic space where the lesser horseshoe bat roost is located. All repairs will adhere to best conservation practice and be undertaken under licence, with appropriate mitigation measures in place. The derogation licence is being sought on a precautionary basis to ensure full legal compliance while allowing essential maintenance and repair works to proceed.

No viable alternative solutions exist that would address the structural deterioration without risking greater harm to either the building or the bats. Deferral of the repairs would likely exacerbate structural decline and safety risks, potentially necessitating more invasive and disruptive interventions in the future.

Test 2 – There is no Satisfactory Alternative

There are no satisfactory alternatives to the essential maintenance repairs proposed for Maam Courthouse. The works have been carefully designed to stabilise and preserve the building’s fabric while respecting its historical significance and ecological sensitivities. The primary objective is to ensure the building remains structurally sound, safe, and more resilient to water ingress, thereby preventing further deterioration that could threaten both the heritage asset and the lesser horseshoe bat roost located within the attic space.

Delaying or avoiding these works would lead to ongoing structural decline, particularly of critical features such as the chimney capping and roof coverings, which have already shown signs of damage. Continued degradation risks further compromising the building’s integrity and safety, as well as increasing the likelihood of damage to the bat roost through exposure or collapse of roof elements.

To minimise disturbance to the bats, all external works are scheduled to avoid sensitive periods of bat activity, including the main bat activity season (May to September). No works are proposed within the attic where the roost is located. However, to meet funding timelines and to prevent further structural risk during harsher weather conditions, the works must proceed before the end of the year. Therefore, deferring repairs is not a viable option.

The “do nothing” scenario would result in accelerated damage to both the structure and the roosting habitat, reducing the ecological value of the site and increasing future conservation challenges and costs. Given these considerations, the proposed repair works represent the only feasible and responsible course of action to safeguard Maam Courthouse and the protected bat population it supports.

Test 3 – Favourable Conservation Status

Annex IV species must be maintained at Favourable Conservation Status or restored to favourable status if this is not the case at present. The net result of granting a derogation licence must be neutral or positive for the species in question.

Surveys carried out in May 2025 confirmed the presence of a small roost of lesser horseshoe bats within the attic of Maam Courthouse, with five individuals observed emerging during the dusk emergence survey. Commuting and foraging activity by other bat species, including common and soprano pipistrelles and Leisler’s bats, was also recorded around the site.

No works are proposed within the attic space where lesser horseshoe bats are confirmed roosting, and the derogation licence is being sought on a precautionary basis to allow for essential external structural



repairs while ensuring legal compliance. A pre-commencement survey will be carried out prior to works to verify that baseline conditions remain unchanged.

All works will be carried out outside the main bat activity season (May to September) and will follow strict mitigation protocols to avoid any disturbance to bats. These include the use of hand tools at sensitive areas, retention or like-for-like replacement of soffits, and the removal of vegetation in a controlled manner. Crucially, the roost itself and its key access point via the open rear doorway and internal ceiling opening into the attic, will be retained in full. No works are planned that would obstruct or alter these access routes.

All works will be carried out under a derogation licence and in accordance with best conservation practice, with oversight from a qualified bat ecologist. With these measures in place, the works are not expected to result in the loss or degradation of roosting opportunities.

Accordingly, the proposed works are not anticipated to have any negative impact on the local population of lesser horseshoe bats or other Annex IV species, and their favourable conservation status will be maintained.

Monitoring the impacts of the derogations

The following measures will be undertaken to ensure that any bat species, particularly lesser horseshoe bats, present within Maam Courthouse are adequately protected during the proposed works:

- › As lesser horseshoe bats were observed emerging from the structure, a bat derogation licence will be obtained from the NPWS prior to the commencement of any works.
- › All works will be undertaken outside the main bat activity period (May to September). The repairs are scheduled between October and December 2025, minimising potential disturbance.
- › No direct works will take place within the attic space where the roost is located, and no interventions are proposed that have the potential to disturb internal roosting features. The licence is sought on a precautionary basis in the event of incidental disturbance during external repairs.
- › Prior to works, a pre-commencement check will be carried out by a qualified bat ecologist to assess any changes to baseline conditions since the original survey. This will involve internal and external inspection of the building, including known roost access points and attic space.
- › A toolbox talk will be delivered by the ecologist to all staff prior to site works. This will outline legal protections for bats, the presence of a known lesser horseshoe roost, and the specific working methods required near sensitive areas.
- › Scaffolding must not obstruct roost entrances. Any scaffolding erected near known or suspected access points must maintain a minimum 1m clearance where viable, and must not be fully sheeted, to preserve natural light conditions and flight access. This includes around the hole in the roof and at the rear door entrance.
- › No artificial lighting is proposed as part of the works.
- › On a precautionary basis, all works near potential roost features, including slates, soffits, and fascia boards, should be carried out using hand tools where practical to reduce noise and vibration and minimise the risk of accidental injury to roosting bats.
- › If any timber treatment is required, only bat-safe, pre-treated, and fully dried timber will be used.
- › Access for bats will be retained through the existing open rear doorway and broken ceiling panel, as well as the hole in the roof, ensuring continued availability of the roost throughout the works. Should future sealing of the building be required, an



alternative access point will be designed in consultation with the Galway County Council Conservation Officer and its specifications agreed with the NPWS.

- › A licensed bat ecologist will remain on call during key construction phases, particularly during chimney, soffit, or wall repairs, and may attend the site during sensitive periods to guide work methods and oversee roost access retention.

All mitigation measures outlined above follow current best practice guidance (e.g. Marnell *et al.*, 2022; Collins, 2023; NRA Guidelines, 2006), and are designed to avoid disturbance, retain roost access, and enhance long-term roosting potential on site. Provided that the works are carried out in accordance with these recommendations and under licence, no significant negative impacts are anticipated, and the favourable conservation status of lesser horseshoe bats and other Annex IV species present at the site will be maintained.

