



Preliminary Roost Assessment for Bats

Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester

May 2025

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Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester

A report for

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A report by



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in March 2025 by Charles Fleig, Development Project Officer Apprentice, One Manchester, Lovel House, 6 Archway, Hulme, Manchester M15 5RN to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of residential properties within the Grey Mare Lane estate in Beswick, Manchester. The properties to be surveyed are shown in Figures 1 - 4 below. Each set of properties had been assigned a Plot Number by One Manchester, these are as follows;

- Plot C – Pratt and Randall Walk
- Plot D – Newcombe Close
- Plot I – Sledmere Close
- Plots G and H.

The PRA survey, desk-based searches and subsequent report are required to support a Planning Application that will see the demolition of these buildings. Further plans for the plots are yet to be finalised.

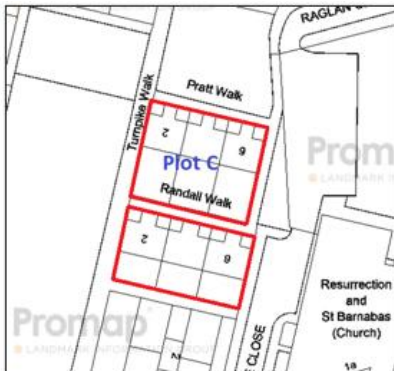


Figure 1 – Plot C



Figure 2 – Plot D



Figure 3 – Plot I



Figure 4: Plots G and H

1.2 Report Structure

The study includes the following elements:

- A desk-based search of freely available online ecological information (e.g., Defra's MAGIC mapping tool, Google Earth, Ordnance Survey mapping etc.).
- A Preliminary Roost Assessment survey and evaluation of the building to support roosting bats.
- A full evaluation of the ecological significance of the desk based and PRA results
- Conclusions and recommendations for further survey or study if required and/or precautions when and where appropriate.

1.3 Site Location

Plots C, D, I, G and H form part of the larger housing estate to the east and west of Grey Mare Lane. Manchester City's football stadium 'the Etihad' is to the north of the Plots. To the east there are training facilities, sports pitches, smaller stadiums, car parking etc. The housing is bounded by Ashton Old Road to the south, Alan Turing Way to the east, and Ashton New Road to the north.

The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference¹ for the three plots are as follows;

- Plot C – Pratt and Randall Walk; SJ 86957 98083.
- Plot D – Newcombe Close; SJ 86941 98223.
- Plot I – Sledmere Close; SJ 87101 98120.
- Plot G – SJ 87031 98214
- Plot H – SJ 87043 98167

¹ Ordnance Survey National Grid reference used throughout the report.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BATS

2.1 Background Information on Bats

- Summary of Legislation and Planning Policy

In England, the main pieces of legislation pertaining to the protection of bats are The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015.

For further information and direction to further legislation relevant to bats please refer to Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust and the *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Reason and Wray, 2023).

When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 15 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Paragraph 193 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in December 2024) (NPPF, 2024) states:

193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure

measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

- Use of Buildings, Structures and/or Trees by Bats

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance (all British bats are insectivorous). Climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage.

Definitions of the bat roosts most likely to be encountered during the PRA of buildings, structures and/or trees are summarised below (for further details refer to Collins (2023²)).

- a) Day roost; a place where individual bats, or a small groups, rest or shelter during the summer.
- b) Night roost; a place where bats rest or shelter in the night but are not found in the day. May be used by a single individual on occasion or it could be used regularly by the whole colony.
- c) Feeding roost; a place where individual bats, or a few individuals, rest or feed for short periods during the night but are not present during the day.
- d) Transitional roost; a place used by a few individuals or occasionally small groups for generally short periods of time on waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation.
- e) Maternity roost; a place where female bats give birth and raise their young to independence. In some species males may also be present in the maternity roost.
- f) Hibernation roost; a place where bats may be found individually or together during winter. They have a constant cool temperature and high humidity.
- g) Satellite roost; An alternative roost found in close proximity to the main nursery colony used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding females throughout the breeding season.

The bats of Greater Manchester, as across much of the UK use built structures e.g., residential properties, bridges and culverts etc. as well as features in trees e.g., knot holes, woodpecker holes, peeling bark and torn limbs to roost in and also forage amongst.

The most frequently encountered species are the common and soprano pipistrelle bats; their abundant status in this region is reflected throughout the UK.

² Collins, J. (ed.) 2023. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) The Bat Conservation Trust, London

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies relating to desk-based searches and PRA undertaken in March and April 2025 are outlined below.

3.1 Desk-Based Study

3.1.1 Local Records Centre Ecological Data

A request for ecological data to the local records centre was not undertaken for this study due to the relatively small-scale of the proposals and poor habitat that surrounds each of the properties.

Should the data be requested by the Local Planning Authority, then a retrospective request can be made and the data be included within this report and any necessary ecological evaluations be made.

3.1.2 MAGIC Database

Using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) web site (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) searches for statutory designated sites within 2km and European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) within 1km were undertaken.

Only those statutory protected sites where bats are included as a Reason for Designation, a notable feature or are of particular interest to the site will be included within this report. It is accepted that most statutory sites will comprise habitats that are likely to be support bat roosts, foraging and or commuting habitats etc. however, unless the proposals are such that the statutory is to be detrimentally or adversely impacted on by the proposals (of which an assessment will therefore be undertaken) then further consideration is not deemed necessary within this report.

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) Methodology

A daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment survey was conducted on 25th March 2025. Weather conditions were as follows; 12°C, overcast, calm with no precipitation.

As per the 4th Edition of the 2023 *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023) the PRA involved a external inspection of the structure to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/exit points; potential and actual bat roosting locations i.e., Potential Roost Features (PRFs), any evidence of bats found and the number of ecologists that will be required for any subsequent surveys should they be required.

Due to the large numbers of properties and types of building an internal inspection was not undertaken. As will be described later within the report, the buildings were generally in excellent condition with no obvious gaps that would allow ingress/egress by bats in to and from the building. The buildings were well maintained being social housing. Any recommendations will be account for the lack of internal inspection.

A PRA is designed to answer specific questions as listed below (taken from Collins, 2023). It should be noted that often all of the questions below cannot be fully answered but by attempting to do so it will improve the assessment of the structure's (or tree's) suitability to support a roost.

- Are actual or potential bat roosts present (and if so, where)?
- Which bat species use the site for roosting?
- How many bats do these roosts support?
- Where are the bat roost access points?
- Where are the bat roosts and how do the bats get to them from the access points (although this is not always possible to establish if the roosts are inaccessible for humans)?
- What is the current arrangement of vegetation and lighting in relation access points?
- At what times of the year are bats present? How does use change seasonally?

Evidence searched for during both the internal and external inspection included the following:

- Evidence of live or dead bats.
- Bat droppings.
- Urine splashes.
- Fur-oil staining.
- Squeaking noises (from live bats).

It should be noted that evidence of bats externally is often not detected, particularly bat droppings which are washed or blown away as a result of rain and/or wind. Depending on the building's use, evidence of bats internally may also be absent due to the bats using cracks and crevices not accessible by the ecologist and/or presence of livestock, general upkeep leading to floors being swept regularly and in doing so removing any evidence, etc.

All elevations were visually accessible and was undertaken with the use of 10x42 magnification binoculars, a Clulite CB2 model 1 million candle power torch, Ridgid CA-350 endoscope and ladders where necessary.

3.3 Habitat Assessment

Bats will forage in a numerous habitats including waterways, woodlands (coniferous and deciduous), along hedgerows, grasslands, pastoral and arable farmland, as well as urban environments and moorlands. A wide variety of habitats is also likely to support an abundance of prey items throughout the year (Collins, 2023).

There are a few key characteristics that make good bat foraging habitats (JNCC, 2001):

- Suitable habitat structure; This varies for different bat species and needs to match the particular flight capabilities and echolocation calls they use;
- High densities of insects; Different groups of insects are important to different types of bats; and
- Habitat corridor; These provide both foraging areas and routes that allow bats to move freely between their roosts and feeding areas.

Given the importance attributed to the types of habitats used by bats, during the survey the surrounding habitat was also evaluated as roost selection is often closely correlated with the surrounding landscape.

3.4 Surveyor Credentials

The PRA survey was undertaken by Stuart Macpherson, who is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 14 years' experience in land management, ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following:

- Licensed bat surveyor (2021-10079-CL18-BAT) and Named Ecologist / Accredited Agent on numerous EPSML.
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey / UKHabs Survey on both small planning applications and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- Licensed barn owl surveyor (CL29/0477).
- Licensed great crested newt surveyor (2015-16213-CLS-CLS).
- NPTC qualified tree climber (Units 206 and 306 Tree climbing and Aerial Rescue).
- Proficient field botanist.
- Breeding and wintering bird surveyor on a range of habitats including coastal, farmland and moorland habitats.
- Mammal surveys including badger.
- Riparian corridor and mammal surveys.
- Ecological Evaluation and Impact Assessments in association with large scale infrastructure projects.

3.5 Survey Constraints

As has been described above, internal inspections were not undertaken, however, as the buildings lacked any notable PRFs this is not deemed to be a significant constraint to the survey results or recommendations.

4. RESULTS

The results of the desk-based searches and PRA survey are outlined below.

4.1 Desk-Based Searches

4.1.1 Local Records Centre Ecological Data

A request for ecological data to the local records centre was not made as previously stated within this report.

4.1.2 MAGIC Database

(a) Statutory Designated Sites

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the property whereby bats are a Reason for Designation or a species of note/interest within the site's citation.

(b) Granted European Protected Species Licence Applications

There are no granted EPSML for bats within 1km of the site.

4.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

(a) Buildings

Each of the three Plots will be described separately from one another, however, there is repetition in each of the descriptions, but this is simply due to each of the Plots being constructed in an almost identical fashion.

Plot C – Pratt and Randall Walk

Plot C comprised two separate buildings, with three terraced houses on both Pratt Walk and Randall Walk (six houses in total). Each measured approx. 24m x 7m and 8m tall. All buildings were empty/disused at the time of survey. The vast majority of the UPVC double glazed windows had been boarded up with high security metal coverings, as had the doors.

Each of the two terraced houses were two storeys with a single pitched roof. The lower half of the buildings were constructed with red brick with upper half being pebble dash rendered. The exterior of the buildings were in very good condition with no missing brickwork or mortar, although there was superficial 'tiredness' of the buildings, no PRFs were identified. Wooden fascias, has presumably dried and split in places with paintwork peeling off but only superficially with no obvious PRFs recorded. The roof was constructed of interlocking concrete tiles which were in excellent condition with no missing or slipped tiles being

recorded. The mortar on each of the four gable ends was in-situ thus no PRFs were recorded.

Buildings within Plot C were of negligible suitability to support a bat roost.

Plot D – Newcombe Close

Newcombe Close comprised two buildings, each measuring approx. 35m x 10m and 12m tall. The residential buildings were across three floors with a single pitched roof. These properties appeared to be lived in, or at least the windows/doors had not been boarded over. A walkway above the first floor on the building's south eastern aspect appeared to how the properties were accessed. It was unsure whether the ground floor were included within each property or a separate ground floor living space.

As for Plot C, the lower portion of the two buildings was constructed of red brick with the upper portion, up to the fascia/eaves was pebble dash render. Both were in excellent condition. The wooden fascias were again superficially in a poor state of repair with minor splitting recorded and the peeling of paint but no obvious PRFs were recorded. The roof and ridge tiles were constructed of interlocking concrete. The roof was in excellent condition with no obvious PRFs recorded. No missing mortar was recorded beneath the ridge tiles. The mortar on each of the four gable ends was in-situ thus no PRFs were recorded.

Buildings within Plot D were of negligible suitability to support a bat roost.

Plot I – Sledmere Close

There were three groups of buildings within Plot I, comprising 12 houses/flats. As for Plot C, each building was two storeys with a pitched roof. The lower portion being constructed of red brick and the upper portion up to the fascias/eaves being pebble dash rendered. The roof and ridge tiles were in excellent condition with no obvious gaps being recorded. All mortar on the numerous gable ends was all in-situ with no PRFs being recorded.

Plots G and H

In plots G and H, the U-shaped buildings were three storeys with a single pitched roof. The lower half of the buildings were constructed with red brick with upper half being pebble dash rendered. The exterior of the buildings were in very good condition with no missing brickwork or mortar, although there was superficial 'tiredness' of the buildings, no PRFs were identified. Wooden fascias, has presumably dried and split in places with paintwork peeling off but only superficially with no obvious PRFs recorded. The roof was constructed of interlocking concrete tiles which were in excellent condition with no missing or slipped tiles being recorded. The mortar on each of the four gable ends was in-situ thus no PRFs were recorded.

Buildings within the two plots (G and H) were of negligible suitability to support a bat roost.

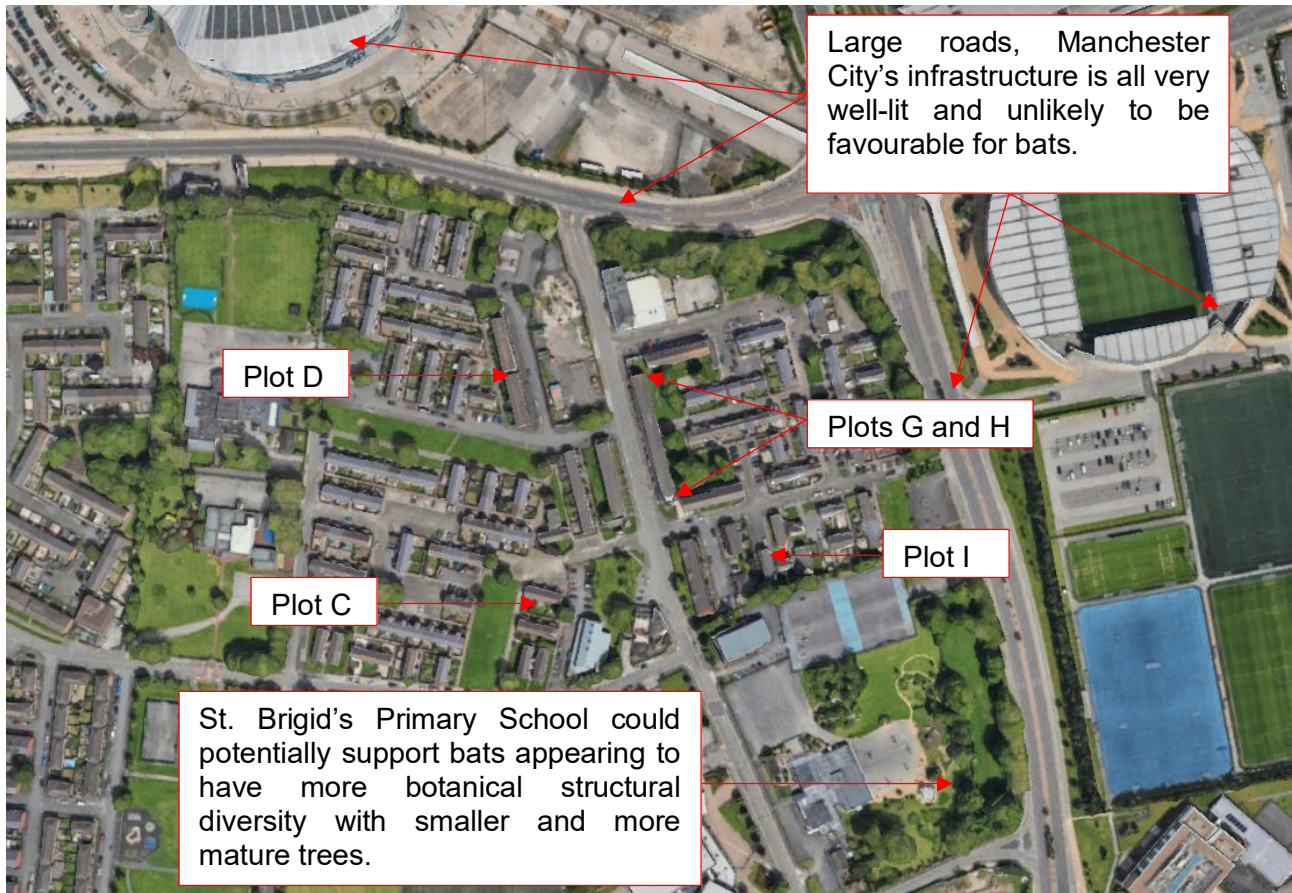
(b) Trees

All trees recorded on site were of negligible suitability to support a bat roost. They were all in very good condition with some evidence of management which isn't unexpected due to their proximity to areas used by the public.

4.3 Habitat Assessment

The habitat is generally unfavourable for bats with the site being dominated by housing and roads all of which are very well lit by street lighting. To the north and east of the site are the Etihad Stadium and training facilities (and other smaller stadiums) for Manchester City football club, these too will be very well lit around the hours of dusk and thereafter.

The site does comprise areas of 'greenery', however, these are generally amenity grassland that are well maintained so don't offer the structural diversity that is likely to support invertebrates that bats are likely to prey upon. There are individual and lines of trees but these are generally located along the busy, well lit roads of Alan Turing Way and Ashton New Road both of which border Manchester City's facilities as previously described. The grounds of St. Brigid's Primary School could potentially support bats throughout an evening as appears to have more structural diversity with smaller and more mature trees appearing to be present, again though, this habitat may well be very well lit by the adjacent roads and infrastructure.



5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Where relevant, this section evaluates the site in relation to statutory sites, and protected habitats/species listed in national and local legislation and policy.

5.1 Statutory Designated Sites

(i) Evaluation

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site where bats are included as a Reason for Designation or a notable species.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations.

5.2 Bats

(i) Evaluation

In England, the main pieces of legislation pertaining to the protection of bats in the UK are The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015. For further information and direction to further legislation relevant to bats please refer to Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust.

All buildings and trees were of negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

(ii) Recommendations

There is no requirement for any further surveys or assessments regarding bats. As the plans are simply for demolition at this stage, the only recommendations would be that if bats are found during any works, then works must stop on the building in question and a suitably qualified ecologist be contacted. If bats are found, then potentially further survey work will be required in order to determine the roost type within the building where bats are found.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust.

NPPF (2023). National Planning Policy Framework,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Online References

Natural England – MAGIC. Accessed various dates. Latest access April 2025
<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access April 2025.

Appendix A: Site Photographs 25th of March 2025



Photograph 1: Plot C.



Photograph 2: Plot C.



Photograph 3: Plot C.



Photograph 4: Plot C.

*Preliminary Roost Assessment
- Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester -*



Photograph 5: Plot D.



Photograph 6: Plot D.



Photograph 7: Plot D.



Photograph 8: Plot D.

Preliminary Roost Assessment
- Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester -



Photograph 9: Plot I.



Photograph 10: Plot I.



Photograph 11: Plot I.



Photograph 12: Plot I.

*Preliminary Roost Assessment
- Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester -*



Photograph 13: Northern aspect of Plot H.



Photograph 14: Eastern aspect of G and H.



Photograph 15: Southern aspect of F.



Photograph 16: Western aspect of F and G.