

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Equitable Building, Manchester
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Equitable Building, St Ann St, Manchester M2 7LG
Coordinates	E 383754, N 398396
Site Area	Approximately 0.08 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprises a disused four-storey building and basement.
Proposed Development	Development proposals include the redevelopment of the building to provide residential apartments at the upper floors.
Results	Externally, the building was in good condition, with no cracks or crevices that could be utilised by roosting bat species. No access points that allow bat species ingress into the building were identified. The building was therefore assessed as having 'negligible' bat roosting potential. The building has the potential to support common birds, including gull and pigeon species.
Conclusions and Recommendations	The on-site building was assessed as having 'negligible' bat roosting potential. As such, no further bat surveys will be required to inform a planning application. The site was assessed as having value for common bird species on the flat roof or any ledges that were not occupied by bird deterrents. As the site is currently undergoing active works, it is not deemed necessary for a nesting bird check to be undertaken. However, if works cease, and there is a period of inactivity, a nesting bird check should be undertaken if works re-commence during the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). A nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. The site will be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain, as the site is exclusively built development with no onsite Priority Habitat or biodiversity value/habitat units. As such, a Biodiversity Net Gain report and associated assessment will not be required.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by PH Property Holdings Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at the Equitable Building, Manchester, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been prepared by Conor Evans BSc (Hons) MRes, Consultant Ecologist at E3P, who has three years of professional experience as an ecological consultant. Conor holds a Qualifying CIEEM membership and has experience in completing Preliminary Roost Assessments at many sites across the UK. Conor also holds a Level 3 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) and a Class 1 Great Crested Newt Natural England licence.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the redevelopment of the building to provide residential apartments at the upper floors.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within the urban area of St Anns Square, north-west Manchester. A series of commercial properties are located directly adjacent to the north of the site. St Ann Street and St Ann Square define the southern and western site boundary respectively. Parsonage Gardens is located approximately 100 m north-west of the site. The River Irwell, the Rochdale Canal and the River Irk are located approximately 170 m north-west, 810 m south-east and 850 m north-west of the site boundary respectively at their closest points.

Please refer to Figure 1 for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 **Approximate Site Location**





1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are as follows:

- ✦ Determine if bats currently, or could potentially, utilise the building for roosting.
- ✦ Determine whether further surveys (e.g. nocturnal bat surveys) and/or further mitigation is necessary for development to proceed.

The survey findings are detailed in this report, as well as any recommendations.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

-  MAGIC – A government web-based interactive mapping system, demonstrating European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and Natural England Licences which have been previously granted within England.
-  Information and species records from South Lancashire Bat Group.

A search via MAGIC was undertaken in August 2024 to identify any EPSLs within 1 km of the site boundary. This search area is considered suitable for the size of the development.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 14th August 2024 by Conor Evans, who has undertaken multiple PRAs on buildings and trees across the UK. The weather was warm, dry and clear.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the building, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023). The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars.

The on-site building was categorised for its bat roosting potential as described in Table 1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Buildings

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
None	No habitat features on site are likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
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.
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. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.



2.3. LIMITATIONS

Visibility was limited on all aspects due to the presence of scaffolding with bird netting. The scaffolding was therefore utilised to inspect the external walls of the building.

The basement could not be accessed at the time of survey. This is not anticipated to be a major constraint, as no potential access points into the basement were identified during the survey.

These have been taken into consideration during the assessment.



3. RESULTS

3.1. LOCAL BAT GROUP RECORDS

Based on information from South Lancashire Bat Group, species present within the local area include Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.2. MAGIC REVIEW

Consultation with MAGIC identified 11 Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences located within the search area. Please refer to Table 2 for details of all granted bat licences within 1 km of the site boundary.

Table 2 **Granted Bat Mitigation Licences Within Search Area**

REFERENCE	SPECIES	YEARS ACTIVE	DESCRIPTION	DISTANCE
2018-33674-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2018 - 2040	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	370 m south-east
2014-4219-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2014 - 2020	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	380 m north
2017-31569-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2017 - 2019	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	400 m north-west
2020-45213-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2020 - 2025	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	470 m south
EPSM2012-5061	Brown Long-Eared	2012 - 2015	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	450 m south-west
EPSM2012-4767	Common pipistrelle	2012 - 2013	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	450 m south-west
2014-6380-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2015 - 2023	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	560 m north-east
2014-490-EPS-MIT	Common, Soprano pipistrelle	2014 - 2017	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	830 m south-east
2014-3569-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2014	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	960 m west
2015-16009-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	2016 - 2021	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	990 m south-west
EPSM2013-5575	Common pipistrelle	2013 - 2016	N/A	1 km south

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprises a single building in St Anns Square, north-west Manchester. No other habitats were located on site. The building is anticipated to provide limited ecological value for local wildlife; however, the building may support roosting bats and nesting bird species, such as feral pigeon (*Columba livia*) and black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), which are known to nest on buildings in central Manchester. Two large trees are located directly adjacent to the building, associated with St Anns Square. These trees are anticipated to offer foraging and commuting resources for local wildlife.

The River Irwell, the Rochdale Canal and the River Irk are located approximately 170 m north-west, 810 m south-east and 850 m north-west of the site boundary respectively at their closest points. These



watercourses are anticipated to offer high-value foraging and commuting habitat for bats, especially those which specialise feeding along watercourses, such as Daubenton's bat. The River Irwell also provides connectivity to high-value habitat in the wider area including broadleaved woodland, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitat, with the closest such area located approximately 1.3 km north-east of the site. These areas of woodland are anticipated to offer several valuable resources for local wildlife, in particular for bats by attracting invertebrate prey.

Multiple areas of open mosaic habitat are located within 1 km of the site boundary. These areas of open mosaic habitat may provide resting and foraging resources for a range of local wildlife, including ground nesting birds and invertebrates. The invertebrates may in turn provide foraging resources for local bat species.

3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the on-site building. No other buildings or trees were present within the site boundary.

The on-site building comprised an inactive four-storey commercial building with a basement. The building was undergoing roof repair works at the time of survey. As such, scaffolding with associated bird netting was present on the western, southern and eastern aspects, covering from the second to the fourth storey. It is understood that the scaffolding was erected in April 2024 prior to repair works commencing. The building could not be assessed for its potential to support roosting bats from ground level on the western, southern and eastern aspects due to reduced visibility caused by the bird netting.

All commercial properties were closed at the time of survey. Access into the basement could not be gained during the survey. No access points for bats which may lead into the basement were identified. As such, hibernation potential for the building was ruled out from further assessment.

Figure 2 Showing Scaffolding and Bird Netting on Southern Aspect



Scaffolding was also present on the northern aspect of the building, however bird netting was not present on this section of the building. As such, a full visual inspection could not be undertaken from ground level. The northern aspect of the building comprised tile walls. The tiles and surrounding grouting were in good condition, with no signs of damage or exposed brickwork that could lead to potential cavities or provide an access point for bats into the building. Multiple casement windows were also present on the northern aspect. The windows were in good condition, with no cracks or crevices present between the window frame and adjacent brickwork/tiles.



Figure 3 Showing Scaffolding on Northern Aspect



A single-storey fire exit was present within the courtyard on the northern aspect of the building. The fire exit comprised red brick with a flat roof. Some damage was noted on the eastern aspect of the fire escape, however it was determined that the damage was superficial, with no gaps or crevices that could be utilised by opportunistic bat species. Additionally, the drop zone below the superficial feature was cluttered with rubbish.

Figure 4 Showing Fire Exit



An external visual inspection of the western, southern and eastern aspects of the building were undertaken via the scaffolding present.



Figure 5 **Showing Scaffolding and Bird Netting**



The western, southern and eastern aspects comprised stone façade. The stone façade on all aspects were in good condition, with no signs of damage identified which could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species. Additionally, no exposed brickwork that could provide potential roost features or access points for bat species into the building were identified.

Figure 7 **Showing Stonework Facade**



Single-glazed casement windows were present on all above ground stories of the western, southern and eastern aspects of the building. As with the stone façade, the windows were in good condition, with no cracks or crevices identified between the window frames and surrounding stone façade. Some gaps between the windows and stone façade were noted; however it was determined that these gaps were too narrow to provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bat species.

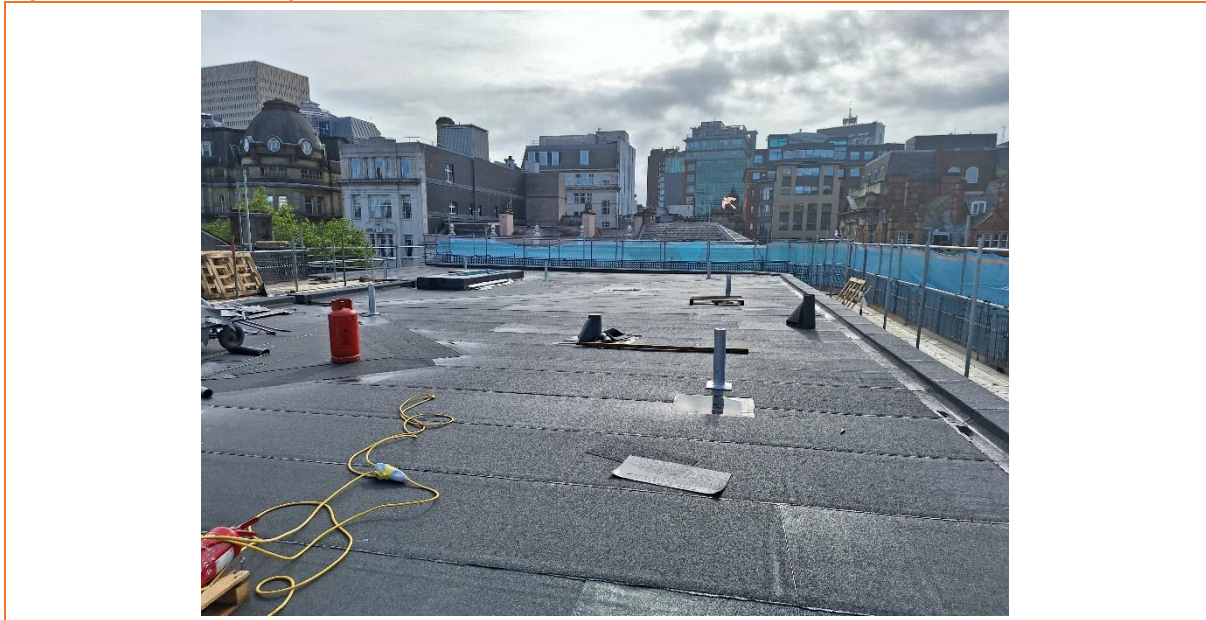


Figure 8 **Showing Window**



An inspection of the flat roof was undertaken during the survey. The roof was actively being repaired at the time of the survey. The flat roof comprised bitumen sheeting, which was being installed during the inspection. Due to the nature of the flat roof and the materials it comprised, it was determined that no suitable bat roost features were present.

Figure 9 **Showing Flat Roof**



The roof is accessible from the third floor via a flat-roofed structure. The flat-roofed structure comprised a single-storey with stone façade on all aspects and a flat roof. The stone façade on all aspects of the flat-roofed structure were in good condition, with no signs of damage identified which could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species. Additionally, no exposed brickwork that could provide potential roost features or access points for bat species into the building were identified. Externally, it appeared that two access points were present on the eastern aspect; however, upon closer inspection it was determined that these features had been filled in and therefore preventing access into the building for bat species.



Figure 10 Showing Flat-Roofed Structure



The flat-roofed structure was currently in use for storage of construction equipment. It is therefore assumed that the door of the flat-roofed structure is closed when not in use to protect the equipment. As such, the flat-roofed structure cannot be utilised as an access points for bats into the building.

Figure 11 Showing Sealed Holes in Brickwork



An internal inspection of the building was undertaken during the survey. Internally, most of the building comprised concrete floors and ceilings with plastered walls and pillars. The concrete and plaster were mostly in good condition, however some signs of damage were noted.



Figure 12 **Showing First Floor Internals**



Internally, the windows were well-sealed. The tops of the window frames and ledges were made of wood. Signs of damage to the top of the window frames were identified across multiple windows, internally. It is assumed that the damage was caused during a search for electrical wiring across the building. The damage within the tops of the window frames could be utilised by void-dwelling bat species; however, no potential access points identified which would allow bat species access into the building.

Figure 13 **Showing Internal Window**



Internally, one section of the building comprised red brick and tiles. This section was in poor condition, with multiple cracks and crevices noted which could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species; however, as no access points into the building for bats were identified, such features would not be able to be utilised, and as such are ruled out of further consideration.



Figure 14 Showing Internal Damaged Brickwork



The building lacks any suitable roosting features externally or access point that would allow bat species ingress into the building. Furthermore, no evidence of roosting bats was identified within the building. As such, the building was assessed as having **'negligible'** bat roosting potential.



3.5. NESTING BIRDS

Gull species (*Larus* sp.) and feral pigeon were identified on the roof of buildings adjacent to the north of the building; however, no bird species were identified utilising the on-site building or roof. Bird droppings were noted internally on the fourth floor of the building. No nearby access point for bird species into the building were identified.

Figure 15 Showing Bird Droppings



Feral pigeon were identified perched on a ledge above the access into the courtyard at the time of the survey.

Figure 16 Showing Ledge



Bird deterrent wire and spikes were identified across multiple ledges on the stone façade on the western, southern and eastern aspects. These deterrents will reduce the suitability of the building to support



nesting birds. Due to a lack of available crevices within the stone façade, it was determined that the building will not support black redstart.

Figure 17 **Showing Bird Deterrent Wire and Spikes**



As such, it was determined that the building may be able to support common bird species on the flat roof or any ledges that were not occupied by bird deterrents.



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

The on-site building was assessed as having '**negligible**' bat roosting potential during the survey. As such, no further bat surveys will be required to inform a planning application. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified during the course of works, construction activities must cease immediately, and an ecologist should be contacted.

4.2. NESTING BIRDS

The site was assessed as having value for common bird species on the flat roof or any ledges that were not occupied by bird deterrents; however, it is considered unlikely that common bird species will utilise these features while works are ongoing due to regular disturbance by workers. As the site is currently undergoing active works, it is not deemed necessary for a nesting bird check to be undertaken. However, if works cease, and there is a period of inactivity, a nesting bird check should be undertaken if works recommence during the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). A nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located then a stand-off distance will be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

4.3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

As per Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, the biodiversity gain planning permission does not apply in relation to planning permission for developments which meet the following conditions:

- 4(2) The development does not impact an onsite priority habitat
- 4(3) The development impacts less than 25 m² of on-site habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero

Since the site is exclusively built development with no onsite Priority Habitat or biodiversity value/habitat units. As such, a Biodiversity Net Gain report and associated assessment will not be required.



5. REFERENCES

- ✿ Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night.
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- ✿ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
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- ✿ Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT