

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Alpha House, Wythenshawe
Reference: 81-876-R1
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Wavell Road, Civic Centre, Wythenshawe, M22 5RG
Coordinates	E 382819, N 386976
Site Area	Approximately 0.4 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprised a vacant eight-storey office building with a number of vacant commercial units at ground level.
Proposed Development	Development proposals include the demolition of the pre-existing building.
Results	The building was assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential due to multiple access points leading to multiple crevices on each floor, especially the crevices within the ceilings. The building was deemed as being unsuitable for high-value roosts, such as hibernation and maternity roosts, due to the building experiencing fluctuating temperatures and the lack of suitable habitat within the local area. The building was assessed as having nesting bird value, as feral pigeons are currently occupying most floors.
Conclusions and Recommendations	The building was assessed as having Moderate bat roosting potential. As such, Two Nocturnal Bat Surveys are required on the building between May and September (inclusive), with at least one survey being completed between May and August (inclusive). The surveys will be spaced three weeks apart. If bats are identified roosting within the building, a total of three surveys spaced three weeks apart would be required to characterise the roost and a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) would be required with up-to-date surveys from the survey season prior to the application submission. An EPSL can only be applied for when planning permission has been obtained and all wildlife conditions discharged. The building was assessed as having nesting bird value, as feral pigeons are currently occupying most floors. Due to the number of pigeons occupying the building, it is highly unlikely that there will be an absence of active nests within the building during the nesting season (March to September inclusive). Therefore, it is recommended that demolition of the building be undertaken within the winter months (October to February inclusive). Because of the nature of feral pigeons nesting at any time of the year, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. Should any nests, or nests in construction be located, a suitable stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable standoff and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Alpha House, Wythenshawe, hereafter referred to as “the site”. A site walkover was also undertaken to assess the site for any additional protected species constraints.

This report was produced by Luke Shaw, BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist at E3P. Luke has experience in completing Preliminary Roost Assessments at many sites across the UK and has attended a Level 1 Bat Licence Training Course.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the demolition of the pre-existing building.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within the Wythenshawe district centre boundary, a heavily residential area set to the east of Rowlandsway. Areas of green space are located to the east and west of the site, with a footpath running in a north easterly direction located within the eastern area of open space. A parking area is located to the south of the building with a tram line located approximately 240 m west of the site. 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 objectives of the Ecological Walkover are as follows:

- ✦ Identify the major habitats present.
- ✦ Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- ✦ Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

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 July 2024 to identify EPSL within 1 km of the site boundary. This search area is considered suitable for the size of the development and the surrounding habitat.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 26th June 2024 by Luke Shaw. The weather was dry and overcast.

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

The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars and ladders to access all areas where safe to do so.

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Buildings

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
None	No habitat features on site 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

Due to the height of the building, some potential roost features on the external walls may have been missed during the survey. However, binoculars were utilised during the survey, as such this isn't thought to be a major constraint.



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 (*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

A MAGIC review did not identify any European Protected Species Licence located within the 1 km search area. The closest was located approximately 1.7 km south west of the site. This comprised a series of licences that are associated with Manchester Airport. The licences were active between 2015 to 2020 for the destruction of common pipistrelle, Natterer's bat, soprano pipistrelle, and whiskered bat non-breeding roosts.

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprised a vacant eight-storey office building with a number of vacant commercial units at ground level, within a predominantly urban area. The on-site habitats and habitats within the surrounding area are anticipated to offer little value to local wildlife. Centron House tower block is located directly adjacent to the site, but will not be damaged during the demolition phase.

The surrounding area is heavily residential with associated amenities including schools, churches and playing spaces. The Metrolink tram line is situated approximately 240 m at its closest point. These habitats will also offer little value due to the anthropogenic barriers, though various treelines are present which may allow for commuting opportunities for some species of bats.

Areas of deciduous woodland are present to the east of the site, the closest being Park Wood located approximately 370 m north east from the site. These woodland habitats are anticipated to support a wide range of flora and fauna, particularly for bats by attracting invertebrate prey. A watercourse with associated waterbodies is also present within Park Wood, which may provide value for species that utilise aquatic habitats for foraging and commuting. There is a lack of connectivity between the areas of isolated deciduous woodland and the site boundary due to a lack of habitat corridors within the highly urbanised area.

3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the building on-site. No other buildings, structures or trees were present within the site boundary. Please see Appendix I for the Preliminary Roost Assessment Plan which details the location of the potential roost features.

3.4.1. EXTERIOR

The building comprised an eight-floor commercial unit. The building was vacant at the time of the survey. The building was constructed with concrete with pebble dash cladding and large glass windows on all aspects. The building had a flat roof that was covered in lead cladding and gravel. The concrete and pebble dash cladding covering the building was in good condition providing limited roosting opportunities for local bats. However, many smashed windows were present, some providing access inside the building.



Figure 2 **Showing Building Exterior**



3.4.2. GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor was generally in good condition. However, two broken windows were present within the north east section of the building. Access Point 1 (AP1) and AP2 was a broken window that allowed access into the building. However, during the survey no features with roosting potential were identified within the section of building these access points were identified within. No bat droppings or field signs were identified on the ground floor.

Figure 3 **Showing AP1**





Figure 4 **Showing AP2**



3.4.3. FIRST FLOOR

The first floor was in a state of disrepair with three smashed windows providing access into the building (AP3, AP4 and AP5). Multiple potential bat features were located on the first floor. The ceiling contained many crevices (Potential Roost Feature 1 (PRF1) that could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species, such as common pipistrelle. The crevices had the potential to be used by a small number of bats on a more regular basis. Multiple brickwork crevices were located within the walls on the first floor (PRF2, PRF3 and PRF4) located within close proximity to the access points. These brickwork crevices had the potential to be utilised by opportunistic crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis. No field signs of bats were identified during the survey on this floor. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the first floor.

Figure 5 **Showing AP3**





Figure 6 **Showing AP4**



Figure 7 **Showing AP5**

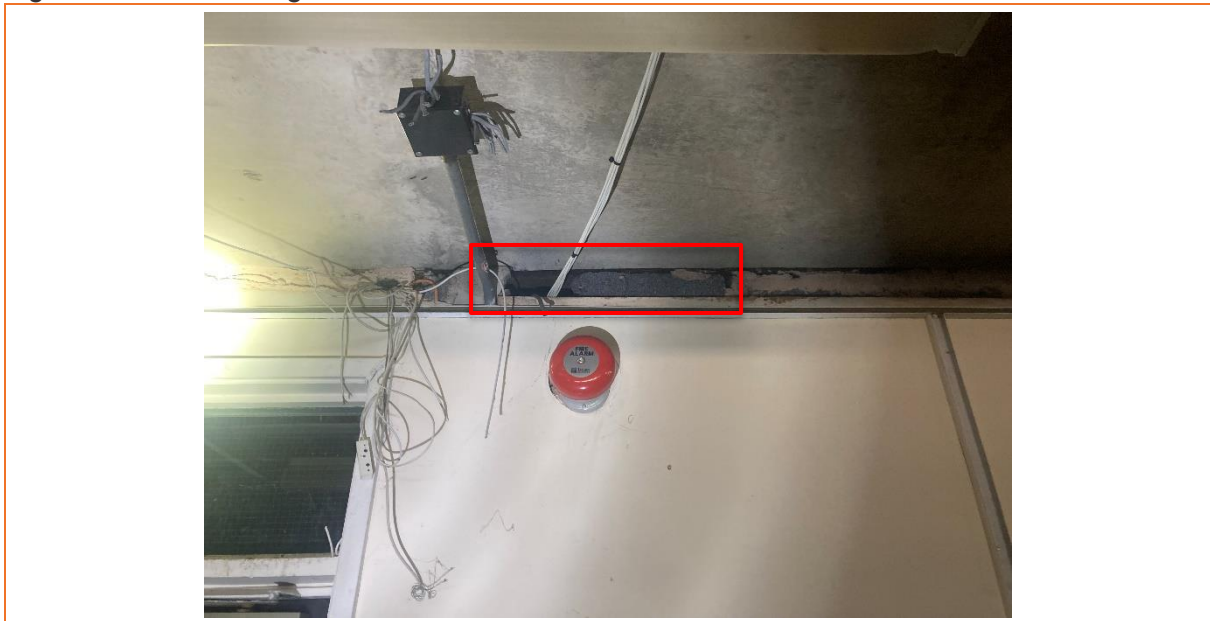




Figure 8 **Showing PRF1**



Figure 9 **Showing PRF 2**



3.4.4. SECOND FLOOR

The second floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons (*Columba livia*). Two access points were identified into the second floor through smashed windows (AP6 and AP7). Multiple crevices were identified within the ceiling of the second floor (PRF5), these crevices were identified throughout the whole floor. The crevices within the ceiling are likely to support a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on a more regular basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the second floor.



Figure 10 **Showing AP6**



Figure 11 **Showing AP7**





Figure 12 **Showing PRF 5**



3.4.5. THIRD FLOOR

The third floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons. One access point was identified on the third floor through a smashed window (AP8). Multiple crevices were identified within the ceiling of the third floor (PRF6), these crevices were identified throughout the whole floor. The crevices within the ceiling are likely to support a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on a more regular basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the third floor.

Figure 13 **Showing AP8**





Figure 14 **Showing PRF6**



3.4.6. FOURTH FLOOR

The fourth floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons. Two access points were identified on the fourth floor through smashed windows (AP9 and AP10). Multiple crevices were identified within the ceiling of the fourth floor (PRF7), these crevices were identified throughout the whole floor. The crevices within the ceiling are likely to support a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on a more regular basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the fourth floor

Figure 15 **Showing AP9 and AP10**

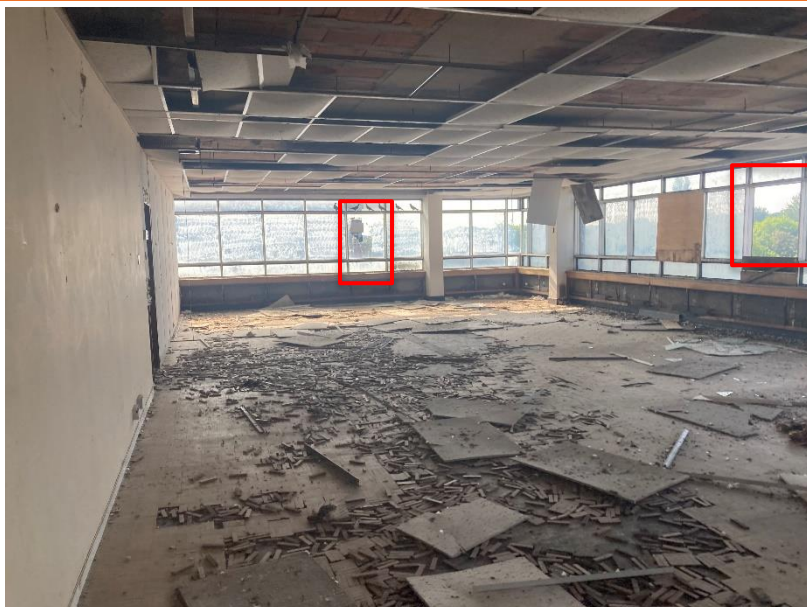




Figure 16 **Showing PRF7**



3.4.7. FIFTH FLOOR

The fifth floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons. One access point was identified on the fifth floor through an open window (AP11). Multiple crevices were identified within the ceiling of the fifth floor (PRF8), these crevices were identified throughout the whole floor. The crevices within the ceiling are likely to support a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on a more regular basis. Crevices were identified within the plasterboard (PRF9), these crevices had the potential to support opportunistic bats on an occasion basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the fifth floor.

Figure 17 **Showing AP11**

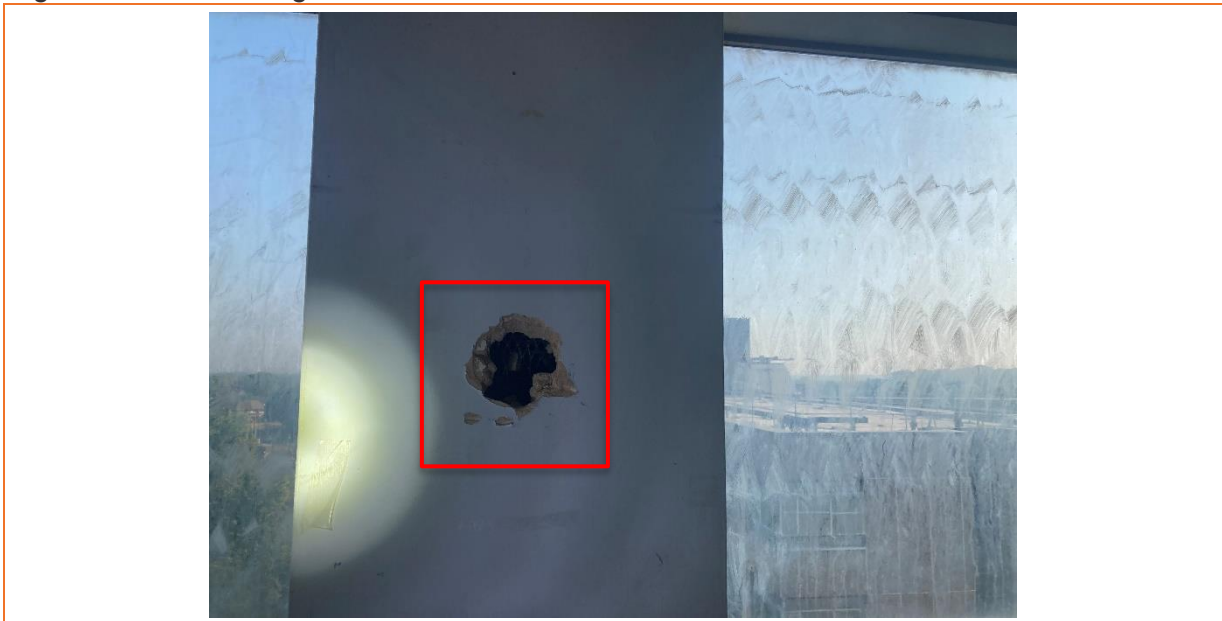




Figure 18 **Showing PRF8**



Figure 19 **Showing PRF9**



3.4.8. SIXTH FLOOR

The sixth floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons. One access point was identified on the sixth floor through a missing window (AP12). Multiple crevices were identified within the ceiling of the sixth floor (PRF10), these crevices were identified throughout the whole floor. The crevices within the ceiling are likely to support a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on a more regular basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the sixth floor.



Figure 20 **Showing AP12**

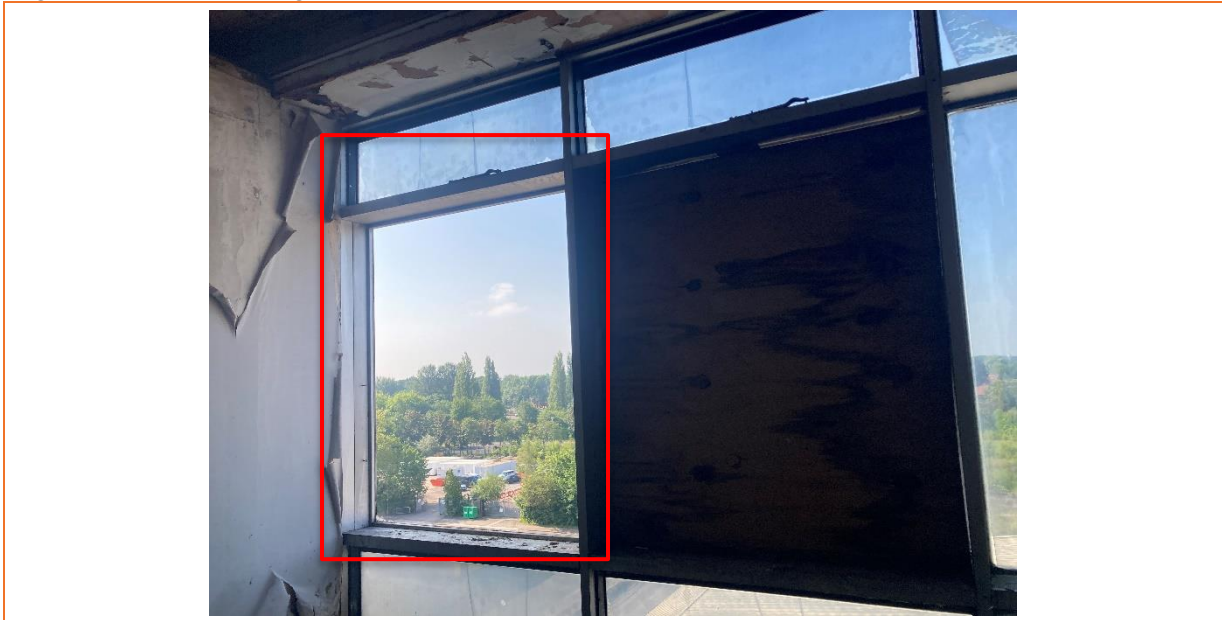


Figure 21 **Showing PRF10**



3.4.9. SEVENTH FLOOR

The seventh floor was in a state of disrepair and was being occupied by feral pigeons. One access point was identified on the sixth floor through a smashed window (AP13). The ceiling on this floor was in good condition and was constructed with concrete. Three crevices within the plasterboard on this floor were identified (PRF11, PRF12 and PRF13). These crevices are likely to provide roosting opportunities to opportunistic crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis. No bat droppings or field signs of bats were identified on the seventh floor .



Figure 22 **Showing AP13**



Figure 23 **Showing PRF 11**



3.4.10. ROOF

The roof was in a good condition, and no potential roost features were present during the survey. An access point was present from an open fire escape (AP14). This access point allowed access into the seventh floor of the building.



Figure 24 **Showing AP14**





4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

Overall, the building was assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential due to multiple access points leading to multiple crevices on each floor, especially the crevices within the ceilings. The building was deemed as being unsuitable for high value roosts, such as hibernation and maternity roosts, due to the building experiencing fluctuating temperatures and the lack of suitable habitat within the local area. Therefore, two Nocturnal Bat Surveys spaced three weeks apart are required between May and September (inclusive) on the building with at least one survey undertaken between May and August (inclusive). If bats are identified roosting within the building, a further survey would be required to characterise the roost and a European Protected Species Licence will be required, with up-to-date surveys from the survey season prior to the application submission.

4.2. NESTING BIRDS

The building was assessed as having nesting bird value, as feral pigeons are currently occupying most floors. Due to the number of pigeons occupying the building, it is highly unlikely that there will be an absence of active nests within the building during the nesting season (March to September inclusive). Therefore, it is recommended that demolition of the building be undertaken within the winter months (October to February inclusive). Because of the nature of feral pigeons nesting at any time of the year, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. Should any nests, or nests in construction be located, a suitable stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable standoff and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.



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END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I

PRELIMINARY ROOST

ASSESSMENT PLAN



Key:

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Potential Roost Features
-  Access Points

Notes

Issue: 1	Revision: 1	Date: 26/07/2024	Drawn: LS	Authorised: CK
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