

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment



398 Wilbraham Road
21st November 2023



**Tyler
Grange**

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Appendix 1: Legislation and Planning Policy



Summary

- S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd on behalf of Simon James Architect Limited. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) to inform a planning application for proposals at 398 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 82168 94040.
- S.2. The building has been graded as having low bat roosting potential, but given all evidence, including habitat suitability and roost feature aspect, additional survey effort is deemed disproportionate to the scale of development/ refurbishment and not appropriate (see **Section 4** for justifications).
- S.3. Refurbishment to the building and roof can commence without triggering legislation afford to roosting bats. Ideally, all works to the roof should be timed outside of the 'core' bat activity season (May – September inclusive) to avoid any potential of injuring bats using a resting place, although this is considered to be highly unlikely. Should a bat roost be present, works should cease immediately and a Suitable Qualified Ecologist should be contacted. Further survey work and/ or specific mitigation may then be required.
- S.4. In conclusion, should the recommendations described in **Section 4 and 5** be implemented, it is considered that development within the site of the scale proposed would be in conformity with both Local and National legislation and planning policies relating to biodiversity (notwithstanding the outcome of the nocturnal bat survey). Opportunities also exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the installation of a bat box.



Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd on behalf of Simon James Architect Limited. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) to inform a planning application for proposals at 398 Wilbraham Road, Chorlton (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 82168 94040.
- 1.2. The proposals relate to the refurbishment of an existing building at 398 Wilbraham Road. Much of the refurbishment will be internal, however there will be some works which will impact the façade and roof of the building. Proposals relate to the building itself and no naturalised habitats beyond the building, and therefore, this ecological assessment focuses on bats only.
- 1.3. This Report:
 - Uses available background data, results of field surveyors and consultation, to describe and evaluate the ecological features present within the likely 'zone of influence' (ZOI)¹ of the proposed development;
 - Describes the actual or potential ecological issues and opportunities that might arise as a result of the site's development;
 - Where appropriate, makes recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancement, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.4. The assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland'² and 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals'³.

¹ Defined as the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects because of activities associated with a project and associated activities (CIEEM 2018).

² CIEEM, 2019 [Online]: <https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-impact-assessment-ecia/>

³ CIEEM, 2019 [Online]: <https://cieem.net/resource/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea/>



Section 2: Methodology

Scope of Assessment

- 2.1. This report follows the guidance set out in the Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidance on Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, and follows the Bat Survey Guidelines 4th edition⁴ for guidance on preliminary roost assessments on structures.
- 2.2. The extent of potential ecological effects which could arise from the proposed development were determined by undertaking a desk-based assessment of available online records and published sources, together with an initial site survey. With this information, the 'Zone of Influence' (Zoi) of the proposed development was established, together with potential ecological effects, opportunities and any further work, such as detailed surveys, that might be necessary to inform detailed development designs and requirements for mitigation.

Desk Study

- 2.3. Due to the small scale of development, records from the local record centre were not purchased. However, a review of online protected species records within 2km of the site was undertaken. The following sources were used:
 - The data search was conducted by inspecting the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk)⁵.
 - Local Planning policies from the Local Plan⁶ were checked to identify local planning policies which need to be considered as part of the development of the site (see **Appendix 1**).

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 2.4. A preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) of the building on site was conducted on 31st October 2023 by Nick Bell, who holds a Natural England level 1 Class licence (Reference: 2018-37985-CLS-CLS) to survey bats, and Bethany Phythian, who is an experienced bat surveyor and working towards a Level 2 Class Licence.
- 2.5. The survey followed standard methodologies^{4 7} which are described below.
- 2.6. Evidence of the presence of bat roosts in buildings was also sought. These signs include:
 - Gaps and cracks within structural features such as brickwork, fascia boarding, metal sheeting and cladding, soffit boxes and roofing tiles;

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

⁵ MAGIC [Online]: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

⁶ Greater Manchester Combined Authority Local Plan [Online]: <https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/the-plan/>

⁷ (Mitchell-Jones, A.J., 2004; Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P., 2004; Collins, 2016)



- Bat droppings in, around or below a PRF;
- Odour emanating from a PRF;
- Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather; and,
- Visible staining below a PRF.

2.7. An assessment of the immediate surroundings was also undertaken to determine the connectivity of the trees to the surrounding landscape that would offer commuting and foraging habitats.

2.8. The potential of the trees on site to support roosting bats have been categorised against the criteria described in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Categorising Potential Bat Roosts in Structures⁸

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/ suitable shelter at all ground/ underground level.
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 apparent unsuitable features on occasions.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree 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 or tree 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.

⁸ Table 4.1, Page 44: Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust



Limitations

- 2.9. Bats use a variety of roosts, ranging from maternity, mating or swarming and hibernation roosts, containing many individuals, to mating or night-time feeding roosts containing few individuals or single animals. Bats also tend to be nomadic (although are faithful to certain favoured roosting sites), spending variable lengths of time in a variety of roosts. As a result, even with the considerable survey effort it is possible that small transient roosts of bats may have been missed, although these tend to be less important to bats and so this should not affect the evaluation and recommendations made.
- 2.10. The findings of this report are valid at the time of writing. Owing to the dynamic nature of ecological resources, if more than 12 months have elapsed since the report was written, advice should be sought to determine whether update work is required. The findings of the report should not be relied upon without this advice

Evaluation

- 2.11. The evaluation of habitats and species is defined in accordance with published guidance (CIEEM, 2019). The level of importance of specific ecological feature is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, with international being the most important, then national, regional, county, district, local and lastly, within the site boundary only.
- 2.12. Evaluation is based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include siter designations (such as SSSI's), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological feature. In terms of the latter, quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages. In the case of the evaluation of the value of fauna at the Site, an assumed valuation of each ecological feature has been given based on the habitats observed at the Site during the initial survey. Where further surveys are required, the valuation may be subject to variation following the interpretation of survey results.

Quality Control

- 2.13. All ecologist at Tyler Grange Group Ltd are members of CIEEM, or are working towards membership and act under the direction of members, and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.



Section 3: Ecological Features and Evaluation

Site Context

- 3.1. The site comprises the building at 398 Wilbraham Road only. The building is a former veterinary clinic on the ground floor, with apartments on the upper floors. The site is surrounded by residential properties, with small gardens, limited vegetation, with Wilbraham Road immediately adjacent to the south. The wider site context is similar, with residential properties, gardens and communal parks. See Figure 3.1 showing the wider site context.

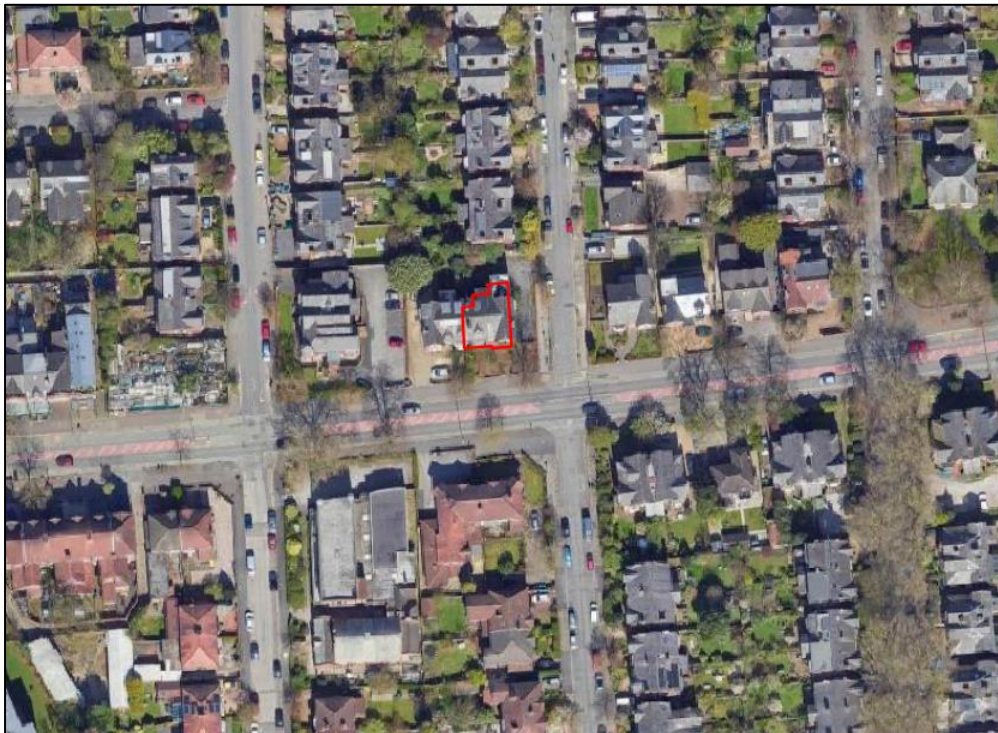


Figure 3.1: Wider site context.

Fauna

Bats

- 3.2. A review of online resources found there to be two granted European protected species licence applications for bats within 2km of the site. The nearest record being approximately 0.6km south-west of the site, comprising a granted licence to allow for the destruction of a brown long-eared *Plecotus auratus* resting place (2015-15443-EPS-MIT-1). The second record is located 1.85km north-east, comprising a granted licence to allow for the damage and destruction of a common and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) resting place.
- 3.3. Although the granted licences are within 2km of the site, both records appear to be located closer to more naturalised habitats, with the closer record being located adjacent to Beech Road Park, and the second record being located within/ adjacent to Alexandra Park.



- 3.4. The property at 398 Wilbraham Road was assessed for its potential to support roosting bats; the results are described in **Table 3.1** below.

Building/ Tree	Description and Roost Category	Photograph
B01	A red brick building with a steep pitched roof. The building has multiple windows around all aspects, set within stone lintels and stone window-sills. There is a large, cube-shaped extension to the rear, with a flat roof, which can be accessed from the upper floor. The building has an accessible basement, with a converted loft space. <i>Internal</i> The loft was fully converted into apartments, meaning there was no loft void. The basement was accessed, and also fully converted, with relatively new insulation boarding. There were no access/ egress points into either of the loft or basement from the outside for which bats would otherwise use. No evidence of bats was observed within the building. <i>External</i> The brickwork was found to be in very good condition with no cracks between bricks through missing and/ or eroded mortar. There appeared to be no cracks or gaps between lintels/ window sills or behind lead flashing on the east facing windows. The building's roof had no visible lifted tiles, or gaps in ridge tiles. There were no gaps in the lead flashing surrounding the chimney. There was a missing barge board on the south-facing gable-end, which exposes the roof tiles, potentially allowing access to underneath the roof tiles. The only feature present, due to the missing barge board comprises a small features which would only be	 <i>External</i>  <i>Internal, converted loft</i>  <i>Internal, converted basement</i>

suitable to small numbers of bats, as it does not provide enough space, shelter, protection and appropriate conditions to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). The surrounding habitat is considered to be largely unsuitable for bats, with the potential roost feature directly facing the busy, well-lit Wilbraham Road.

Considering the unsuitable surrounding habitat the building would be graded as negligible without the presence of the one low suitability Potential Roost Feature; the building has therefore been given a precautionary **low bat roosting potential**.



Missing barge board

- 3.5. The building was found to contain only one suitable bat roosting feature, which was the missing barge board, potentially creating a roosting feature underneath the exposed roof tiles. The building was assessed as providing no potential for roosts of higher value, such as maternity or hibernation. The building was therefore categorised as having a precautionary **low bat roosting potential**. The implication of this is discussed in Section 4.



Section 4: Ecological Impacts and Mitigation

Bats

- 4.1. The building was graded as providing 'Low' bat roosting potential, however, the building only contained one suitable roosting feature which was the missing barge board on the south-facing gable-end.
- 4.2. The missing barge board exposes roof tiles, however, there is no potential for access into the loft void – as this has been converted, meaning that any potential roosting feature created by the missing barge board would only provide enough shelter for individual bats, opportunistically. The aspect of the feature creates an unsuitable habitat for bats, facing the busy Wilbraham Road, which is well-lit with street lights, with the building itself having a security light approximately 4m below the PRF; the surrounding habitats are also considered to be largely unsuitable for bats, with little naturalised habitats for foraging and commuting.
- 4.3. Taking into account the above, it is considered highly unlikely that the feature would be used by bats, even opportunistically. The Bat Survey Guidelines⁴ state that "if the structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats, an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available and the balance of probabilities.... if all areas of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found, then further surveys are not appropriate". It is therefore considered that further nocturnal survey would be disproportionate to the level of development, in consideration of the limited roosting suitability.
- 4.4. In order to enhance the site for bats, it is recommended that a bat box should be installed either within the facades of the new/ refurbished building or mounted on any existing/ retained trees to the rear of the property⁹ where practicable.

⁹ Wildcare Bat Boxes: Integrated and tree mounted: <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/searchanise/result?q=bat%20boxes>



Section 5: Conclusion

- 5.1. Proposals at 398 Wilbraham Road relate to small scale renovations which will impact facades of the building and will require small scale alterations to the roof (new roofing tiles, replacement barge board etc).
- 5.2. The building has been graded as having low bat roosting potential, but given all evidence, including habitat suitability and roost feature aspect, additional survey effort is deemed disproportionate to the scale of development/ refurbishment and not appropriate.
- 5.3. Although considered highly unlikely, the missing barge board does create a roosting feature; therefore it is recommended that all works to the roof should be timed outside of the 'core' bat activity season (May – September inclusive) to avoid any potential of injuring bats using a resting place. It is recommended that a Suitable Qualified Ecologist be present while the works are being undertaken on the section of roof around the barge board, in order to inspect the tiles for bats/ evidence of bats. Further survey work and/ or specific mitigation may then be required should any bats be present.
- 5.4. In conclusion, should the recommendations described in Section 4 and 5 be implemented, it is considered that development within the site of the scale proposed would be in conformity with both Local and National legislation and planning policies relating to biodiversity (notwithstanding the outcome of the nocturnal bat survey). Opportunities also exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the installation of a bat box.



Appendix 1: Legislation and Planning Policy

Legislation

- A1.1. Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA);
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act);
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
 - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- A1.2. The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', provides for the protection of key habitats and species considered of European importance. Annexes II and IV of the Directive list all species considered of community interest. The legal framework to protect the species covered by the Habitats Directive has been enacted under UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- A1.3. In Britain, the WCA 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation protecting habitats and species. SSSIs, representing the best examples of our natural heritage, are notified under the WCA 1981 (as amended) by reason of their flora, fauna, geology or other features. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly destroy or disturb the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants.
- A1.4. The CRoW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- A1.5. The relevant adopted policy at the national level is set out in The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2021), which replaces Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005). The NPPF aims to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. It sets out the key principles of ensuring that development is sustainable and that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered (although the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring



appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined).

A1.6. Outline principles state that planning should:

- Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and
- Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production).

A1.7. Chapter 11, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, sets out a number of planning protocols, as follows:

- The NPPF provides guidance as to the protection of statutorily designated sites, including international sites, National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), as well as non-statutory regional and local sites. The NPPF also addresses development and wildlife issues outside these sites and seeks to ensure that planning policies minimise any adverse effects on wildlife;
- The NPPF places emphasis on local authorities to further the conservation of those habitats of principal importance, or those habitats supporting species of principal importance, which are identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006;
- The NPPF requires that adverse effects of development on species of principal importance should be avoided through planning conditions or obligations and that planning permission should be refused where harm to these species, or their habitats, may result, unless the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm;
- The NPPF requires that opportunities for improving biodiversity within developments should be maximised. It states that development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted and that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged; and
- The NPPF states that by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Local Planning Policy

Stockport Local Plan

A1.8. The Stockport Local Plan is an emerging local plan and has not been adopted.

A1.9. Policies related to wildlife and nature conservation include emerging policies, draft policies and saved policies.

A1.10. Core Strategy Policies (including 'emerging' or 'draft' policies) – Adopted March 2011 include:

- Core Policy CS8 - Safeguarding and Improving the Environment Development Management Policy SIE-1 – Quality Places



- Development Management Policy SIE-3 – Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment.
- Policy E11 relates to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Policy E12 relates to designated nature conservation sites.

A1.11. Saved Local Plan Policies from the Stockport Unitary Development Plan include:

- NE1.1 - sites of special nature conservation importance
- NE1.2 - sites of nature conservation importance
- NE3.1 - protection and enhancement of green chains
- GBA2.1 - protection of agricultural land
- UOS1.3 - protection of local open space

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

A1.12. Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan includes plans for a number of habitats and species.

A1.13. Relevant species plans are published for: Black redstart, Native Black poplar and Bats

A1.14. Relevant habitat plans are published for: Hedgerows and Urban managed greenspace.



The background is a dark blue-grey color. In the center is a large, irregular yellow shape. Surrounding this shape are various geometric elements: a light blue pentagon at the top left, a purple arrow pointing down at the top right, a purple asterisk on the left, a black hand icon with three lines above it at the top center, a black and white striped fan-like shape at the bottom right, and several other triangles and polygons in shades of blue, black, and white.

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