

St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, New Moston

Bat Survey Report

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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, New Moston was commissioned by Tian Isidore, on behalf of Bradbury Consulting on 14th April 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of a dining hall and kitchen attached to the main school building via a link corridor.
- 1.1.2 The site was located on the northern edge of New Moston, just to the south of the M60 Motorway.
- 1.1.3 The preliminary roost assessment was conducted on 18th April 2023 a follow up nocturnal survey was undertaken on 18th May 2023.
- 1.1.4 The building was a purpose built school dining hall and kitchen. It appeared to have been built in the 1950s. The single-storey building was constructed from a single skin of concrete blocks with concrete pillars. The hall and the kitchen had separate pitched roofs covered with sheet metal.
- 1.1.5 Potential roost features were present behind/above metal cladding and within the roof/wall top. The building was assessed as having low suitability to support roosting bats.
- 1.1.1 No bat roosts or signs of bats were recorded within the building during the surveys. It is considered that the survey work undertaken has demonstrated the probable absence of roosting bats from the building.
- 1.1.2 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 1.1.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24 months from the survey date. If works are to commence after this date, or significant changes are made to the buildings, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, New Moston was commissioned by Tian Isidore, on behalf of Bradbury Consulting on 14th April 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of a canteen and dining hall attached to the main school building via a link corridor.
- 2.1.2 The site was located on the northern edge of New Moston, just to the south of the M60 Motorway.
- 2.1.3 The preliminary roost assessment was conducted on 18th April 2023 with a nocturnal emergence survey undertaken on 18th May 2023. The surveys aimed to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and, if present, the roost locations, potential access points, species present, and the level of use.
- 2.1.4 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, New Moston, M40 0JE			
OS Grid Ref. SD 88734 03323		Altitude. 106 m	
Local Planning Authority: Manchester District Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Other school buildings, a church and houses.
Watercourse bordered by trees			None shown nearby.
Standing water			None shown nearby.
Bridges tunnels and culverts			A bridge taking the M60 over the rail line was present approximately 90 m northeast of the site.
Trees		✓	Mature trees were present within blue line land ownership boundary.
Woodland		✓	A belt of woodland ran along the adjacent railway and along the M60 motorway.
Grassland		✓	A lawned area was present to the south of the school and additional lawns were present in nearby gardens.

- 3.1.2 The surrounding area comprised residential properties and gardens to the south and west, a rail line to the east and the M60 motorway to the north. The railway embankment and the motorway verge were wooded. The habitat was considered to be of moderate quality, the houses, gardens, and woodland being suitable for use by

foraging and commuting bats, but the presence of the motorway and other busy roads in the surrounding area considered very likely to significantly reduce the areas suitability for bats. As a result, only common (light and noise tolerant) bat species were anticipated to be present within the survey area but with a moderate abundance.

Figure 1. Site location, outlined red, the landownership boundary is outlined in blue



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the structure.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 Bat records were requested from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) for locations within a 2 km radius of the site. A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

- 4.2.1 The survey was conducted on 18th April 2023 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS).
- 4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the surveys in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016):
- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats within and surrounding the site to identify any buildings, trees, or structures with some suitability to support roosting bats.
 - An extensive examination of all parts of any buildings or structures present, and an inspection of any trees present from the ground (no climb and inspect survey of trees was undertaken). This was done to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
 - Any signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
 - An assessment of the buildings' bat roost suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

- 4.2.3 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:

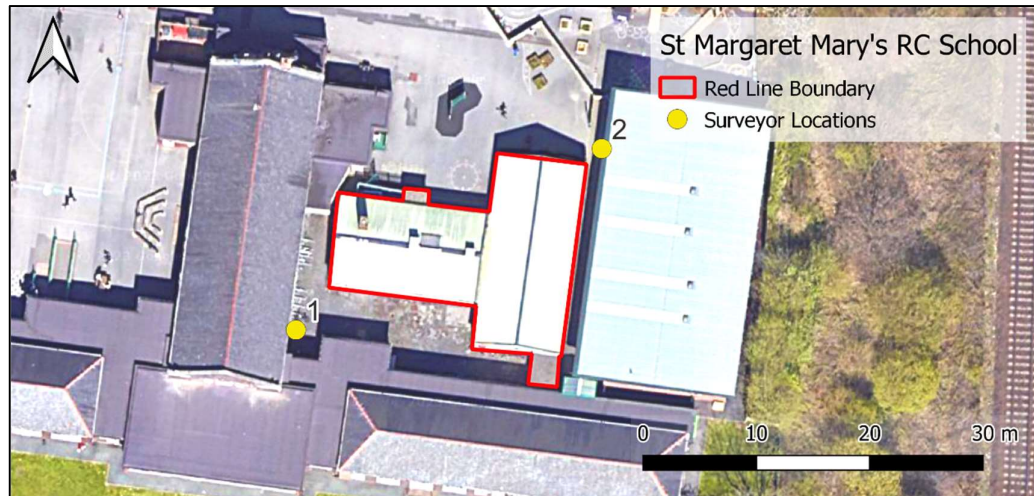
- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

Nocturnal Survey

- 4.2.4 The nocturnal bat survey comprised a dusk emergence survey completed on 18th May 2023. The survey was conducted by Greg Slack and John Pearse. The surveyors were each equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and tablet recorders, as well as infrared (IR) camera and IR lighting systems¹. The surveyor positions are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2.5 The nocturnal surveys were carried out in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016). The surveys continued from 15 minutes before sunset until 1.5 hours after sunset.

¹ The cameras used were Cannon XA 10s. Each camera location was accompanied by at least one additional IR floodlight. Cameras and lights were mounted on separate tripods.

Figure 2. Site layout and surveyor positions



4.2.6 The camera footage was reviewed as required to check and confirm the observations made by the surveyors.

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No limitations were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 A total of 75 bat records were supplied by GMEU. At least five bat species were positively identified in these records, namely: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, and Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*. Records of unidentified *Pipistrellus*, *Nyctalus*, and unidentified bat species were also included.

5.1.2 None of the records received related to the site itself. The closest record was a record of an injured common pipistrelle located approximately 270 m south-southwest of the site. The record dated from 2018.

5.1.3 Five bat EPS mitigation licences had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licences are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Common pipistrelle	27/04/2017	30/11/2017	Destruction of a resting place	1590	East
Common pipistrelle	01/03/2018	31/05/2019	Destruction of a resting place	1160	Southeast

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Common pipistrelle	13/04/2018	31/07/2019	Destruction of a resting place	1160	Southeast
Common pipistrelle	09/10/2019	30/09/2023	Destruction of a breeding site and a resting place.	1310	Northeast
Common pipistrelle	25/08/2014	25/09/2014	Damage and destruction of a breeding site.	1580	Northwest

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

5.2.1 The building was a purpose built school dining hall and kitchen. It appeared to have been built in the 1950s. Potential roost features were present behind/above metal cladding and within the roof/wall top.

5.2.2 The building was assessed as having low suitability to support roosting bats.

Building description

5.2.3 The building was 'T-shaped' with a north-south oriented hall, and an offshoot kitchen oriented east-west (Figure 2).

5.2.4 The single-storey building was constructed from a single skin of concrete blocks with concrete pillars. The hall and the kitchen had separate pitched roofs covered with sheet metal. The top half of the four gable ends were also clad with sheet metal (Plate 1). At the southern end the building was linked to the rest of the school via a brick-built corridor with a flat roof (Plate 2). Some of the original wooden framed windows were present (on the eastern aspect), others had been replaced with UPVC framed windows.

Plate 1. The north aspect of the building (adjacent buildings greyed out)



Plate 2. The intersection of the kitchen and hall with the flat roof brick link corridor on the right



Plate 3. The southern aspect of the kitchen area with the hall on the right



External inspection – Building 1

- 5.2.5 A potential roost feature (PRF) was noted behind the metal trim at the bottom of the cladding on the western gable end (PRF-A, Plate 4). A second potential bat roost feature was present at the wall top on the eastern aspect of the building (Plate 5). One of the two access points to this location was located above one of the wooden framed windows (Plate 6). The locations of the PRFs identified are shown in Figure 3.

Plate 4. Location of PRF-A circled red on the western gable end



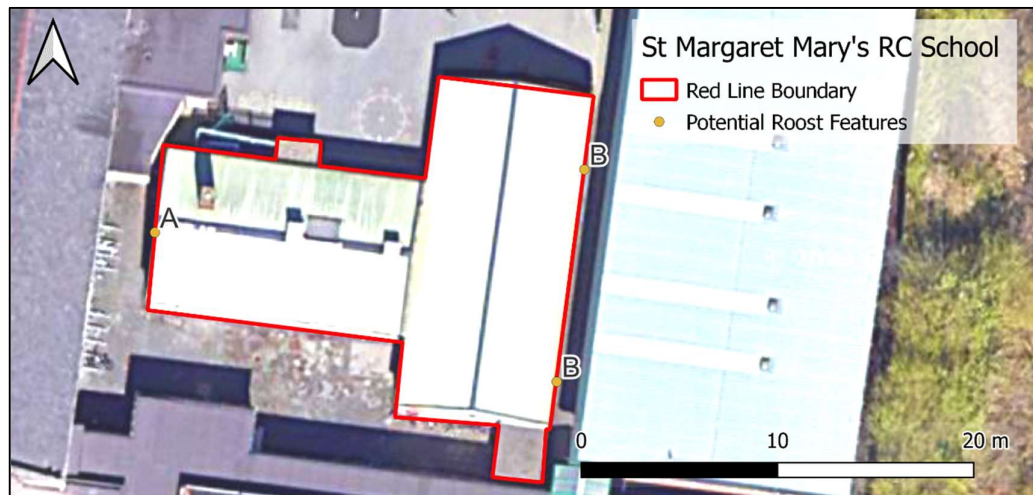
Plate 5. Potential bat roost feature access points (PRF-B) circled red on the eastern aspect of the building



Plate 6. Access point onto the wall top above the wooden window



Figure 3. Location of potential roost features recorded



- 5.2.6 The PRFs were inspected with a high-powered torch and endoscope but were too large to be exhaustively checked. No bats or signs of bats were present. It is expected that signs of bat use would have been present internally near the openings if they were historically well used as bat roosts.

Internal inspection

- 5.2.7 The building was divided into two main areas, the dining hall (Plate 7) in the north-south oriented section and the kitchen (Plate 8) in the east-west section. The kitchen area also contained a boiler room, WC, and a room used as an office and store (Plate 9). A small loft space/ water tank cupboard (Plate 10) was located in the ceiling of a corridor between the store and the boiler room. The internal layout is shown in Figure 4.

Plate 7. The dining hall



Plate 8. The kitchen



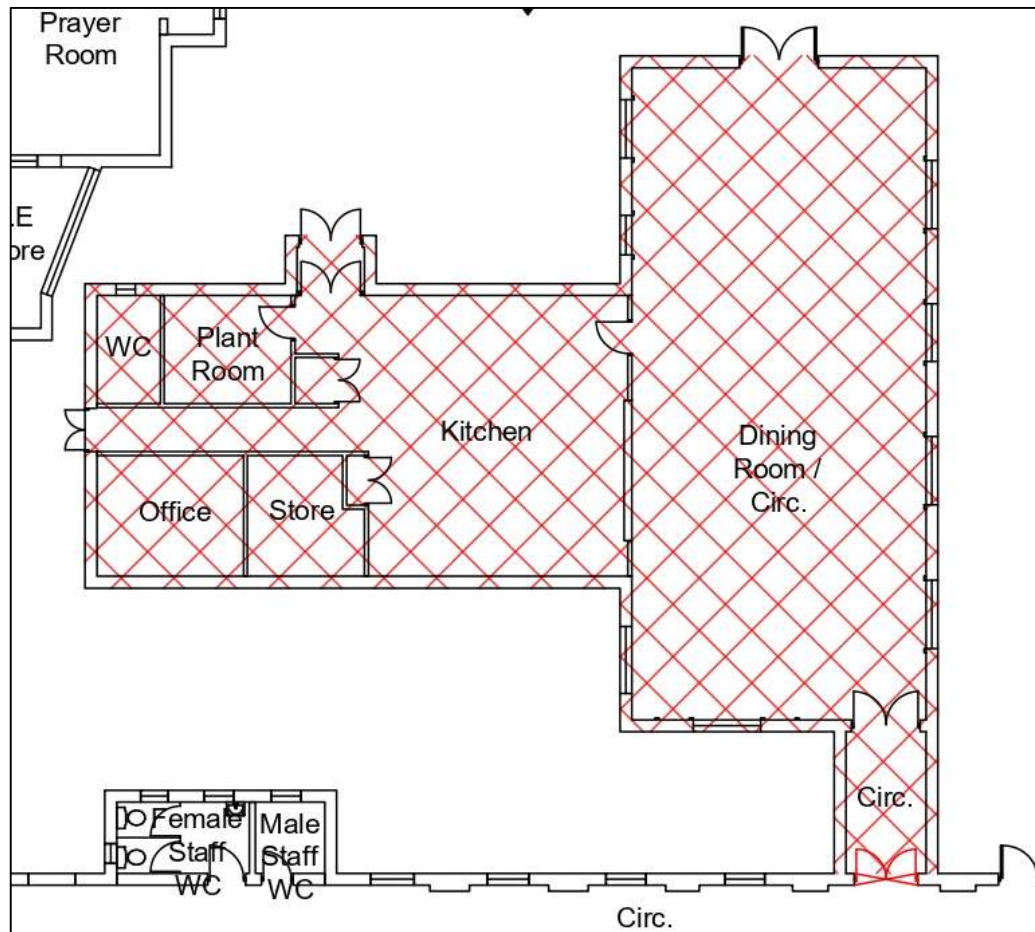
Plate 9. The office and store



Plate 10. Water tank cupboard / loft space



Figure 4. Internal layout (the red hatching indicates the areas for demolition)



5.2.8 The metal sheet roof was backed by insulated boarding above purlins which were, in turn, supported by rafters. The roof was vaulted but a suspended ceiling followed the pitch of the roof (Plates 7 and 8). The space between the suspended ceiling and the roof is shown in Plate 11.

Plate 11. Space between the suspended ceiling and the insulated board under the sheet metal roof



5.2.9 No signs of bats were present within any of the internal spaces or voids.

Nocturnal Survey

18th May 2023 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.10 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 13°C, with no wind or rain, and full cloud cover. The temperature dropped to 10°C by the end of the survey, the other weather conditions remained the same. Sunset was at 21:08.

5.2.11 No bats were recorded emerging from, or returning to roost in the building. The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle at 21:36 (28 minutes after sunset). The bat was recorded commuting around the western end of the building. Very faint common pipistrelle passes were recorded very rarely across the remainder of the survey but no other bats were seen by either surveyor.

5.2.12 No other bat species were recorded.

6. Assessment

Bats

6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the building during the surveys and there were no signs of bat occupation and very low levels of bat activity. The building was considered to have low suitability to be used by roosting bats and the nocturnal survey indicated the absence of a roost within the building.

6.2 Recommendations

Bats

6.2.1 No further bat survey is considered necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey works to be undertaken.

6.3 Conclusion

- 6.3.1 No evidence of bat presence was recorded in association with the surveyed buildings during either the desk-based survey or the visual inspection. It is considered that the survey work undertaken has demonstrated the probable absence of roosting bats from the building to be demolished.
- 6.3.2 No further survey effort is necessary, providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works are to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.
- 6.3.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 6.3.4 Building demolition works should commence either outside the bird nesting period (March to August inclusive), or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, “to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. It notes that “conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat”. Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats, the site must either be registered on the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should ‘promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’.

National Planning Policy Framework

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gains for biodiversity’.

Appendix 2. Bat Records

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below. House names/numbers are not given out by record holding organisations except under very particular circumstances. Please let us know if you object to the distribution of these records.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
18/05/2023	Common pipistrelle	St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School, Moston	SD 88734 03323	Commuting bat