

ROYAL BUILDINGS, MANCHESTER

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

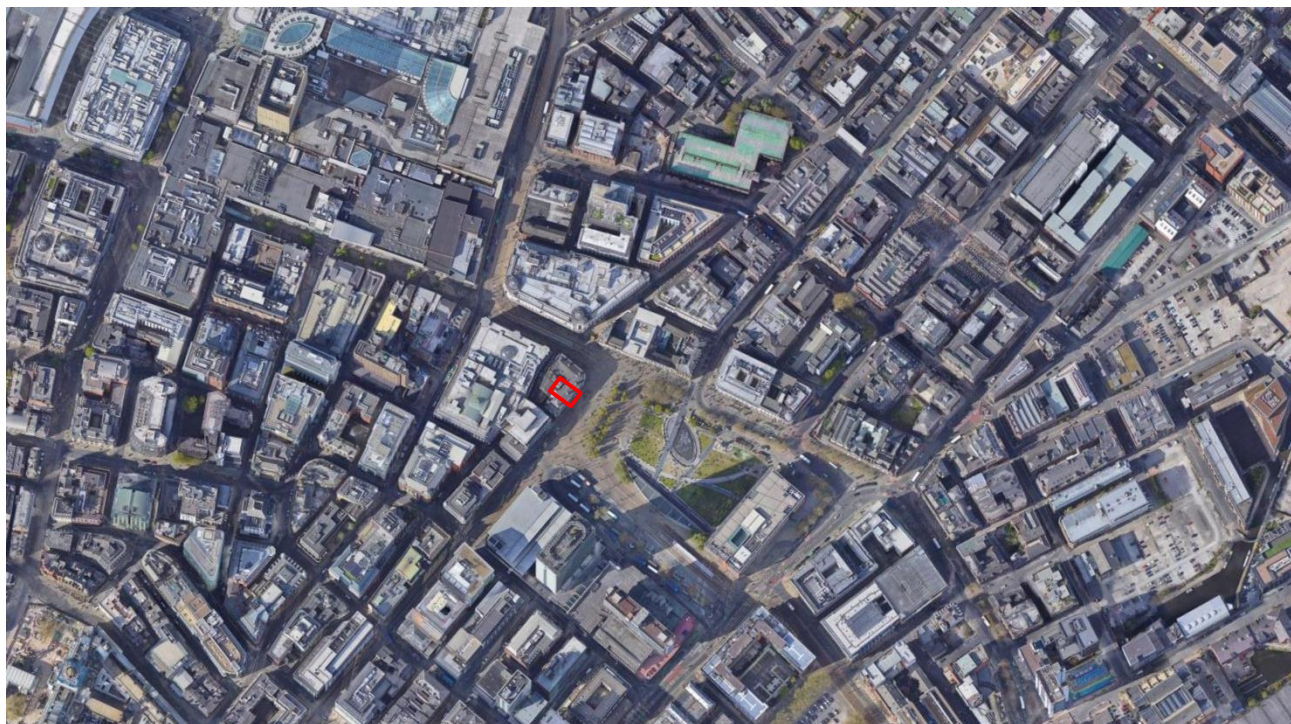
1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Criterion Capital to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and assessment for Nesting Birds at Royal Buildings, Manchester. This report has been produced to inform planning permission for the site to allow for the conversion of the building to a hotel.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Katie Brewer, Assistant Ecologist at Collington Winter and this report has been supervised by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located on Mosley Street in Manchester City Centre, M2 3AN. The site is located in the centre of Manchester located west of Piccadilly Gardens.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the PRA are as follows:

- Identify any areas of bat roosting potential within the building
- Assess the value of the building for roosting bats
- Search for signs of bats
- Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:

- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- Locations of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within 5 km of the site based on consultation with magic.gov.uk.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site was undertaken on 07th June 2023 by Katie Brewer BSc (Hons), and was supervised by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Principal Ecologist who holds a Class II Bat Licence (Reference: 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).

2.2.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2016). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential roosting features (PRFs) and potential access points. A search for field signs of bats (i.e. droppings, urine stains and feeding remains) was also completed. The use of binoculars and torches assisted with the survey.

2.2.3. The building was assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1 Collins (2016) and reproduced in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Bat Roosting Potential	Description
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
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 habitats to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, 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 for longer periods of time.

2.3. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

2.3.1. There were no limitations throughout the survey.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. DESK STUDY

- 3.1.1. The site is located within an urbanised area of Piccadilly, Manchester and is surrounded by retailers. The building was adjoining to high rise buildings on the northern and southern aspect. Piccadilly Gardens is located adjacent to the eastern aspect of the site, this is a busy area and is surrounded by retailers on all aspect, this may be used by local bat populations however, it is of limited value. The River Irwell is located approximately 0.6km north-west from the site boundary which may provide commuting routes for bats. Manchester Piccadilly train station is located approximately 0.9km south-east from the site boundary, this feature may also provide suitable commuting routes for local bat populations.
- 3.1.2. Mayfield Park which opened in 22/09/2022 is located approximately 1km south-west from the site boundary it consists of flora, the River Medlock and a pond. It is anticipated that this new development may provide suitable habitats for bat populations.
- 3.1.3. The following EPSLs were located within 2.5 km of the site based on consultation with Magic.gov.uk:
- 2018-33674-EPS-MIT - located approximately 0.15km south-west from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) between 2018-2040.
 - 2014-490-EPS-MIT- located approximately 0.4km south-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) between 2014-2017.
 - 2020-45213-EPS-MIT - located approximately 0.5km south-west from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2020-2025.
 - 2014-6380-EPS-MIT - located approximately 0.5km north from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle 2015-2020.
 - EPSM2013-5644 - located approximately 0.6km north-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2013-2015.
 - 2016-24504-EPS-MIT - located approximately 0.7km north-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2016-2018.
 - 2014-4219-EPS-MIT- located approximately 0.72km northwest from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2014-2020.
 - 2017-31569-EPS-MIT - located approximately 8km northwest from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2017-2019.
 - 2014-3531-EPS-MIT-2 - located approximately 0.85km northeast from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle on 01/12/2016.
 - EPSM2012-5061 – located approximately 0.85km southwest from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place and breeding site for brown long-eared bat () between 2012-2015.
 - EPSM2013-5575 - located approximately 1km south-west from the site boundary which did not allow for the destruction of a resting place or breeding site between 2013-2016.
 - 2019-38955-EPS-MIT - located approximately 1km south-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2019-2021.
 - 2020-50604-EPS-MIT – located approximately 1.2km south-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2021-2022.
 - 2015-16009-EPS-MIT – located approximately 1.4km west from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2016-2021.
 - 2019-41924-EPS-MIT-1- located approximately 1.4km east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place and breeding site for common pipistrelle between 2020-2031.
 - 2014-3569-EPS-MIT - located approximately 1.45km northwest from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 07/10/2014- 30/11/2014.
 - 2014-4400-EPS-MIT - located approximately 1.6km south-east from the site boundary which allowed for the damage of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2014-2015.
 - 2019-43484-EPS-MIT- located approximately 1.7km north-east from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2019-2020.

- 2015-15766-EPS-MIT - located approximately 2km southeast from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 2015-2016.
- EPSM2010-1888 - located approximately 2.2km northeast from the site boundary which allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle between 2010-2012.

3.1.4. A further eight EPSL's were located within 5km of the site boundary based on consultation with magic.gov.uk.

3.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

3.2.1. A four-storey white brick office building with a slate tile roof. The external brickwork was found to be sealed and in good condition with no gaps or crevices identified throughout the brickwork of the external walls. The walls throughout the dwelling did not provide any PRF's.

3.2.2. All internal rooms throughout the building are currently used as offices or teaching areas, some of these rooms are currently vacant, all rooms are well sealed and rendered throughout. There was an accessible loft space within the building which could be fully inspected throughout the survey. The entrance into the loft space consisted of a small square area surrounded by thermal foil insulation throughout, this was well sealed and did not provide any PRF's.

3.2.3. The remainder of the loft space consisted of roofing felt with supporting wooden beams throughout. A wooden footpath was located throughout the loft which allowed for a full walk through, the remainder of the floor consisted of insulation. The roofing felt was found to be in good condition overall with only some tears occurring throughout the loft. A red brick wall was located on the south-western aspect of the loft, which was mainly sealed with only minimal gaps, these gaps could not support roosting bats and were not considered a PRF. There was a total of two red brick chimneys located within the loft space which were found to be well sealed throughout. A total of three gaps were located adjacent to a redbrick chimney on the north-eastern aspect of the loft. A further gap was located on the north-eastern aspect of the roof adjacent to the second redbrick chimney, it was unknown if these led externally as they were not accessible internally. However, the gaps were not identified on the external inspection. There were no bat droppings or feeding remains identified throughout the loft space.

3.2.4. Externally, the windows and doors throughout the building were well sealed and do not provide any internal access. The roof consisted of slate tiles and was accessible throughout the survey. There were several cracked tiles identified along the roof. A notable slipped tile was located on the eastern aspect of the roof and a notable area of slipped tiles were also located on the southern aspect. There was an area of slightly lifted lead flashing surrounding the north-eastern chimney. There were no other notable features identified along the roof, all ridge tiles were well sealed, and all chimneys were made up of breezeblock which were also sealed, they did not create any PRF's. All eaves at the end of the slate tiles could be closely inspected throughout and they were also well sealed.

3.2.5. A flat roof was identified at the entrance point of the slate tile roof which consisted of roofing felt, this was found to be well sealed and did not provide any PRF's.

3.2.6. Please refer to Table 3.1 for photographs.

Table 3.1 Building Photographs

Feature	Photograph
Front of the elevation.	

<i>External slate tile roof</i>	
<i>Slipped slate tile</i>	
<i>Cracked tiles along the roof.</i>	
<i>Lifted led flashing surrounding chimney.</i>	

Entrance room with foil insulation.



Internal loft space



Internal loft space with gaps in roofing felt circled.



3.3. SUMMARY

3.3.1. The survey identified multiple PRF's throughout the building in relation to the slate tile roof and the tears within the roofing felt. The building was assessed as providing 'low' bat roosting potential due to the identified PRF's.

3.4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.4.1. An inspection of the roof was completed, and no evidence of nesting birds were observed. However, there are suitable platforms for nesting birds such as European herring gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and pigeons (*Columbidae*) relating to the roof structure.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHODS

- 4.1.1. There were PRF's identified along the roof of the building and therefore there is a possibility that an individual bats will roost under the slate tiles that were found to be slipped and cracked. It is considered that the site is located within Manchester City Centre, which is of limited value for bat populations, it is unlikely that bats will utilise this area. A review of the local planning portal identified that a series of nocturnal bat surveys were completed in August 2020 on the Rylands Building on Market Street, this is a nearby similar style building. This survey found no roosting bats and only one common pipistrelle commuting throughout the nocturnal surveys completed at the site, indicating very limited bat presence within this aspect of Manchester (Urban Green, 2020).
- 4.1.2. Under Collins (2016) when a building is assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential, a minimum of one nocturnal bat survey should be completed. However, upon review of the location of PRFs identified, it would not be possible to identify the PRFs from ground level, whilst surveyors would not be able to safely survey the building during dusk. And as stated, previous bat surveys completed in proximity to the site identified very limited bat presence within the area.
- 4.1.3. As stated under Section 5.2.9 of Collins (2016), it states *"If the structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats, an ecologist should make a professional judgement of how to proceed based on all evidence available"*. Given the very low residual risk of bats being present in this instance, it is considered more proportionate and practical for Precautionary Working Methods (PWMs) to be adopted. Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant planning permission, then the agreement and subsequent implementation of PWMs should be conditioned as part of the planning consent.
- 4.1.4. The PWMs would be undertaken under the supervision of a licenced bat ecologist to reduce the risk of killing or injuring any bats that may be affected during proposed works on the roof:
- All contractors working on the site will be briefed with a Toolbox Talk by the licenced ecologist, on the legal protection afforded to bats and their roosts, and on how to proceed if a bat is discovered during the course of the work.
 - The licenced ecologist will undertake a daylight inspection to assess the status of the site for bats prior to works commencing on site.
 - The licenced ecologist will attend site on the day of the scheduled works to undertake a search for bats in relation to the potential roosting features identified during the PRA prior to the works commencing. If any bats are located, all works will cease, and Natural England is to be contacted immediately and a licence to be obtained.
- 4.1.5. Once the selected features have been removed under supervision, works can proceed in the absence of the licenced ecologist, at their discretion. If a bat is discovered at any unsupervised time, work must cease immediately, and a licenced bat handler must be called for advice. This advice will include leaving the bat to disperse of its own accord or wait for the licenced ecologist to move the bat. Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats except in the case of finding a trapped or injured bat. In which case the bat may be moved into a safe and secure place (e.g. a box) and the registered ecologist must be contacted immediately.

4.2. LIGHTING MITIGATION

- 4.2.1. Construction lighting should not be directed towards retained and surrounding habitats. The construction lighting will impact bats which are sensitive to light. Directional lighting will be achieved by angle and orientation of beam, use of a cowl, louvre or other light shield, or a combination of these.

4.3. NESTING BIRD CHECK

- 4.3.1. The works should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1.1. Low bat roost suitability was assigned to this building due to the lack of evidence of PRFs during the PRA. Precautionary working methods have been recommended to ensure no roosting bats are injured during the works, in the unlikely chance they are present.
- 5.1.2. **It is recommended that no works begin until a licenced ecologist has agreed to attend the site on the day of the works commencing, no works should begin until the ecologist is on site. There is a risk of breaching relevant legislation.**

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