



Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover

261 Wilmslow Road, Rusholme

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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT AND ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

261 Wilmslow Road
Rusholme

Prepared for:
Buzzard Holdings Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	261 Wilmslow Road, Rusholme, M14 5HA
Coordinates	E 385417, N 394995
Site Area	Approximately 0.65 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprised a disused commercial building (B1) and a separate outhouse (B2), with associated hardstanding.
Proposed Development	Development proposals include the demolition of the current building.
Results	B1 was assessed as having Low bat roost potential due to lifted tiles and lead flashing on the outcrop of the south-east facing aspect. Rhododendron, an invasive species, was identified along the south-west boundary of the site.
Conclusions and Recommendations	One Nocturnal Bat Survey is required on B1 between May and August (inclusive). It is recommended that works take place outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hrs before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. Cherry laurel was identified during the site walkover. As such, it is recommended that prior to development this species is eradicated following the most current guidance set out by the Environment Agency, to be carried out by a qualified contractor.



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1. Background	5
1.2. Proposed Development.....	5
1.3. Site Location	5
1.4. Objectives	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1. Desk Study	7
2.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment	7
2.3. Ecological Walkover	8
2.4. Limitations	8
3. RESULTS	9
3.1. Local Bat Group Records	9
3.2. MAGIC Review	9
3.3. Site Context.....	9
3.4. Preliminary Roost Assessment	9
3.4.1. Building 1a.....	9
3.4.2. Building B1b	12
3.4.3. Building B2.....	14
3.5. Ecological Walkover	15
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17
4.1. Bats	17
4.2. Nesting Birds	17
4.3. Invasive Plant Species.....	17
5. REFERENCES	18



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by Buzzard Holdings Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at 261 Wilmslow Road, Rusholme, hereafter referred to as “the site”. A walkover was also undertaken to assess the site for any additional protected species constraints.

This report has been prepared by Conor Evans BSc (Hons) MRes QCIEEM, Graduate Ecologist at E3P, who has two years professional experience as an ecological consultant. Conor has experience in completing Preliminary Roost Assessments at many sites across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the demolition of the B1. B2 is to be retained.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located to the south-east of Manchester, surrounded by residential and commercial properties. Wilmslow Road is directly adjacent to the south-west boundary. An area of broadleaved woodland is located approximately 40 m south-east of the site. A large waterbody is located approximately 490 m south-west of the site. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate site location.



FIGURE 1.1 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 June 2023 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 22nd June 2023 by Conor Evans who has undertaken multiple PRA's on buildings and trees across the UK. The weather was dry and clear.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the trees and buildings, 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, 3rd Edition* (Collins, 2016). Please refer to Figure 2.1 for building locations and references. Building 1 has been split into B1a and B1b to account for the structural and material differences between the different sections of the building.

FIGURE 2.1 BUILDING LOCATIONS AND REFERENCES



The buildings were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 2 in accordance with Collins (2016).

TABLE 2 BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATION OF TREES AND BUILDINGS

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
NEGLECTIBLE	A tree or building with no roosting features present or of an age/species that would not support roosting bats.
LOW	A tree or building with one or more potential roost site. However, the potential roost sites do not provide suitability for large numbers of bats (i.e. for maternity or hibernation) and would only be used on an occasional basis.
MODERATE	A tree or building with one or more potential roosting feature which could support bats but is of a suitability meaning that it would be unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
HIGH	A tree or building with several potential roosting features which would be able to support large number of bats on a regular basis and for longer periods of time. The tree or buildings would have suitability to support maternity or hibernation roosts.

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

2.3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

A site walkover was undertaken by Conor Evans on 22nd June 2023 to assess the site for any protected or notable species.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010). The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including but not limited to Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.4. LIMITATIONS

Access to all areas within 30 m of the site to search for signs of badger (*Meles meles*) was not possible due to residential gardens and private properties bordering the site to the north, east and south. However, these residential areas are anticipated to offer low-value habitat for badger, therefore this is not considered 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 bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.2. MAGIC REVIEW

One European Protected Species Licence was located within the 1 km search area. The licence was active between 2016 and 2021 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprised a disused commercial building and outhouse with associated hardstanding. An area of broadleaved woodland is located directly adjacent to the south-west site boundary. This habitat is expected to offer essential resources for local wildlife, including roosting and foraging opportunities for bats. Gore Brook is located approximately 425 m east of the site. This watercourse is expected to offer essential foraging opportunities for local bat species.

3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A PRA was undertaken on the on-site buildings. No other structures or trees were present within the site boundary. Building 1 (B1) was a disused commercial building located in the centre of the site. The building was split into two sections; a brickwork section (B1a) and a corrugated metal section (B1b), both with flat roofs. An internal inspection of the building was completed during the survey. No loft void was present. Building 2 (B2) was a disused outhouse in the north-east corner of the site. The building was constructed from brick and had a flat roof.

3.4.1. BUILDING 1a

The brickwork was in good condition externally with no cracks or gaps that could support crevice dwelling bat species. The majority of the windows have been damaged/destroyed.



PLATE 1 SHOWING SOUTH WEST FACING ASPECT OF B1a



PLATE 2 SHOWING SOUTH WEST FACING ASPECT OF B1a



An outcrop on the first floor was present on the southern side of B1a. The windows of the outcrop were boarded up, and there was an unidentifiable plant species growing out of the guttering. There was lifted lead flashing on the roof, and gaps on either side of the outcrop just below the roof and several lifted/damaged roof tiles were also present. These features may be used on an occasional basis by crevice-dwelling bats such as common and soprano pipistrelle.



PLATE 3 SHOWING OUTCROP



PLATE 4 SHOWING LIFTED LEAD FLASHING



An internal inspection of B1a was completed, and it was determined that there was no suitability for bats. There was access via the broken windows at the front of the building, however, this would cause a fluctuation in temperature. The ceiling was also made of concrete, and there were no potential roost features within the building that could be utilised by bats.



PLATE 5 SHOWING THE INTERNAL OF BUILDING B1A



Overall, B1a was assessed as having **Low** bat roosting potential due to the lifted lead flashing on the outcrop of the southern side of the building. B1a also has the potential to support nesting birds due to the flat roof.

3.4.2. BUILDING B1b

The north-east facing aspect of the building was completely open and therefore would not be able to support bats due to a lack of suitable roost features, as well as fluctuations in temperature.

PLATE 6 SHOWING NORTH-EAST FACING ASPECT



There was bird netting on the internal ceiling, which would prevent any birds from nesting on the ceiling joints.

PLATE 7 SHOWING INTERNAL BIRD NETTING



One of the shutter doors on the south-east facing aspect of the building was open, which allowed access internally.

PLATE 8 SHOWING OPEN SHUTTER DOOR



There were several units attached to the internal wall which could be utilised by birds for nesting.



PLATE 9 SHOWING UNITS



Overall, B1b was assessed as having **Negligible** potential to support roosting bats due lack of available features and fluctuations in internal temperature. B1b also has the potential to support nesting birds due to the flat roof and internal units.

3.4.3. BUILDING B2

The brickwork was in good condition with no cracks or gaps that could support crevice dwelling bat species. There were no windows present, and the only door into the building was ajar.

PLATE 10 SHOWING SOUTH-WEST FACING ASPECT



There was no evidence of roosting bats within the building. There were also several access points on the north-west and south-east facing walls.

PLATE 11 SHOWING BUILDING INTERNALS



Overall, B2 was assessed as having **Negligible** potential to support roosting bats due lack of available features and fluctuations in internal temperature. B2 has the potential to support nesting birds due to the flat roof.

3.5. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

The habitats on-site comprised hardstanding and a hedgerow on the western border of the site. The habitats are described below.

A large portion of the site was comprised of hardstanding. The hardstanding had been left unmanaged and colonised in large areas by flora comprising broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), sycamore saplings (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), and wood avens (*Geum urbanum*).



PLATE 12 SHOWING HARDSTANDING



A hedgerow was present on the western border of the site boundary. Species comprised cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), sycamore, and butterfly-bush. Cherry laurel is an invasive non-native species.

PLATE 13 SHOWING HEDGEROW



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

B1 was assessed as having **Low** bat roosting potential. As such, one Nocturnal Bat Survey is required on the building between May and August (inclusive). If bats are identified roosting within the building, two more surveys would be required to characterise the roost, a European Protected Species Licence would also be required and would require up to date surveys from the survey season prior to the application submission.

4.2. NESTING BIRDS

It is recommended that any demolition works or vegetation removal take place outside of the breeding bird season (March–September inclusive). However, if this is not possible, then a suitably qualified ecologist should inspect the area no more than 24 hours for nesting birds prior to works or vegetation removal. 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 stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

4.3. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Cherry laurel was identified during the site walkover. As such, it is recommended that prior to development this species is eradicated following the most current guidance set out by the Environment Agency, to be carried out by a qualified contractor.



5. REFERENCES

- ✿ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- ✿ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- ✿ Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023). Biodiversity Net Gain Exemptions.
- ✿ JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit. English Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council.
- ✿ Stace, C. A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- ✿ Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT

