



Preliminary Roost Assessment

Egertons Recovery Group, Paston Road, Sharston Ind Est, Manchester, M22 4TF

Status	Issue	Name	Date
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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Egertons Recovery Group, Paston Road, Sharston Ind Est, Manchester, M22 4TF (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of a building (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”).

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information is outlined in Table 4 of this report.

Feature	Survey conclusions (with justification)	Recommendations <i>Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.</i>
Roosting bats	The building has low value for roosting bats due to the presence of raised areas of bitumen felt along the edges of the roof of the garages. A close inspection of the areas of raised bitumen has confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats due to their shallow nature, heavy cobwebbing and lack of bat evidence.	The PRA has been sufficient to conclude a likely absence of bats and therefore further surveys are considered unnecessary. A precautionary working method is outlined in Table 4 of this report.
Nesting birds	No evidence of nesting birds were noted but pigeons have used the building and there are internal areas which this species could access and use for nesting in future.	The demolition should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Egertons Recovery Group, Paston Road, Sharston Ind Est, Manchester, M22 4TF (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of a building (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”).

The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting. This has been undertaken with due consideration to the “Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines” publication (Collins, 2016).

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Context

The building is located at National Grid Reference SJ 82807 89337, to the northwest of Paston Road within Sharston Industrial Area in Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester. A site plan is provided in Appendix 1.

1.3 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all features suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on possible constraints to the proposed development as a result of bats and summarises the requirements for any further surveys to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.
- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external survey and internal inspection of the building, to determine the presence or the suitability of any features which bats could use for roosting and to assess the suitability of the site’s bat foraging and commuting habitat.
- An outline of potential impacts on any confirmed or unidentified roosts has been provided, based on the proposed development.
- Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made, along with advice on the requirements for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) application if appropriate.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for roosting, foraging and commuting bats have been set out.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study included a 2km radius review of statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests and granted EPSL records for bats held on magic.gov.uk database. An assessment of the surrounding landscape structure was also completed using aerial images from Google Earth and OS maps.

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken by Principal Ecologist Lizi Pimlott BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB (Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22843-CLS-CLS.) on 15th September 2022.

The PRA focussed on one building which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat.

A non-intrusive visual appraisal was undertaken from the ground, using binoculars to inspect the external features of the building for features which bats could use for roosting, including access or egress points and for signs of bat use including droppings, scratch marks, insect remains and urine smear marks. An internal inspection of the building was also made using a torch and ladders. An endoscope was used to complete a close-up inspection of any accessible features, where appropriate.

2.3 Breeding Birds and Other Incidental Observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for barn owls *Tyto alba*.

2.4 Suitability Assessment

The building was categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present and the types of roost that the identified features could support. This is summarised in Table 1 below. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats

Classification	Feature of building and its context
Moderate to high	Buildings or structures with features of particular significance for larger numbers of roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data). Buildings with high suitability could support roosts of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.

Low	A small number of possible roost sites or features, used sporadically by individual or small numbers of bats. Potential roost features may be suboptimal for reasons such as shallow depth, poor thermal qualities or upwards orientation with exposure to inclement weather or predators. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.
Negligible	Unsuitable for use by bats.

2.5 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study. Bats are highly mobile creatures that switch roosts regularly and therefore the usage of a site by bats can change over a short period of time.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

These limitations have been taken into account during the evaluation of the site and requirement for further surveys and mitigation.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results is provided below.

3.2 Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests were identified within 2km of the site.

3.3 Historical Records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. EPSL records for bats are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Granted EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Impacts allowed by licence
2017-30722-EPS-MIT	Common and soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
EPSM2010-2098	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place

3.4 Field Survey Results

The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Weather conditions during the survey

Date: 15/09/2022	
Temperature	14°C
Humidity	72%
Cloud Cover	60%
Wind	5mph
Rain	None

The surveyed building comprises a long rectangular building with a three-storey office space on the south eastern end and mechanics garages to the northwest.

The offices have been vacant for several years and this section of the building is in significant disrepair. This area is constructed of brick with a flat roof covered in bitumen felt. The windows and door are wooden framed and there are a number of smashed windowpanes. Internally the ceiling has begun to collapse in several places and there

are large areas of water damage and mould. No external roost features were identified, and the interior is unsuitable for roosting bats due to a lack of roof voids and the well lit internal rooms.

The garages are single storey and were in use at the time of the survey. These were formed of a steel and concrete structure with a curved bitumen covered roof. Windows were steel framed with several smashed windowpanes noted. The concrete had deteriorated in places, exposing the underlying steel work and creating cracks in the walls. These were shallow and did not form roost features. The bitumen felt was raised in places along the edges of the roof. The resultant gaps were inspected with a torch and binoculars and were found to be shallow and heavily cobwebbed, indicating a lack of recent disturbance. No bats or evidence of bats was found. The interior is easily accessible to bats due to gaps around doors and windows but is well lit and subject to high levels of daytime noise, lighting and vibration disturbance due to mechanics activity. Furthermore, the underside of the roof did not present any crevices or dark corners which could form a suitable perch for roosting bats to use.

The site is located within a busy industrial area with artificial lighting and main roads. This is likely to deter bat activity. The only vegetated area is a line of trees to the northwest of the surveyed building which connects to the railway to the south.

Based on the gaps under the bitumen felt, the building has “low” value for roosting bats with the size and shallow nature of these features being suboptimal and being suitable only for occasional use by small numbers of crevice dwelling bat species that are tolerant of urban environments, such as common pipistrelle. However, the daytime inspection of these features has concluded a likely absence of bats in these areas and the likelihood of bat presence is further reduced by the limited foraging and commuting habitat available locally as well as regular noise, vibration and lighting disturbance within and surrounding the site.

A dead pigeon was found inside the office block during the survey. No evidence of nesting activity was noted though there are access points into the building and areas which birds could nest internally.



Southeast elevation of office block



Southwest elevation of office block



Southeast and northeast elevation of office block



Inside office block



Inside office block



Underside of roof in office block



Southwest elevation of garages



Southwest elevation of garages



Northeast elevation of garages



Example of lifted felt at edge of roof of garages. Close inspection found these areas to be shallow and heavily cobwebbed indicating a lack of recent bat activity



Inside one of the garages



Line of trees to the northwest of the building

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

4.1 Informative Guidelines

A summary of the relevant legislation and planning policies is provided in Appendix 2.

Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

There are three possible outcomes of this survey, each with specific recommendations. These are outlined below:

Confirmed bat roost

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommend additional surveys for confirmed roosts. Three further surveys are required to characterise the bat roost present including species, roost type and access points to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). At least two of the surveys should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey.

Low, moderate or high likelihood of a bat roost present

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommend additional surveys for features assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats. One, two or three further surveys are required to confirm presence or likely absence of a bat roost, based on a low, medium or high roost likelihood evaluation. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). If more than one survey is recommended, at least one of them should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey. If two or one further survey is recommended these surveys must be completed during the optimal survey period (mid-May to August). For low and moderate roost likelihood evaluation the survey effort recommended at this stage is iterative and if bats roosts are confirmed in the building, a further survey will be required to provide sufficient information to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.

Negligible likelihood of a bat roost present

Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. However, if bats are found during any stage of the development, work should stop immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for further advice.

Birds

Legislation protects all wild birds whilst they are breeding, and prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of any wild bird or their nests and eggs. Certain species of bird, including the barn owl, are subject to special provisions; it is an offence to disturb any bird or their young during the breeding season.

4.2 Evaluation

Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, Table 4 presents an evaluation of the value of the site for bats and also details any other ecological constraints identified such as nesting birds in relation to the proposed development which will comprise the demolition of the surveyed building.

Table 4: Evaluation of the site for bats and any other ecological constraints

Feature	Survey conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations <i>Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.</i>
Roosting bats	The building has low value for roosting bats due to the presence of raised areas of bitumen felt along the edges of the roof of the garages. However, these areas are suboptimal due to their shallow nature and suitable only for occasional use by small numbers of bats. The surrounding landscape is very urbanised with limited foraging and commuting habitat and this reduces the suitability of the site to only the most urban tolerant of species such as common pipistrelle. A close inspection of the areas of raised bitumen has confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats due to their shallow nature, heavy cobwebbing and lack of bat evidence.	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats as a result of its demolition. However, a precautionary working method is proposed to further minimise the possibility of impacting roosting bats.	The PRA has been sufficient to conclude a likely absence of bats and therefore further surveys are considered unnecessary. The demolition of the building will be undertaken during the winter months (November to March) when bats are least likely to be present, insofar as possible. An inspection of the lifted areas of bitumen will be undertaken prior to demolition works commencing. In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.
Nesting birds	No evidence of nesting birds were noted but pigeons have used the building and there are internal areas which this species could access and use for nesting in future.	The demolition could result in the destruction of active bird nests.	The demolition should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

5.0 Bibliography

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
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Appendix 2: Legislation and Planning Policy Related to Bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under ***The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*** (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 43: Protection of certain wild animals - offences

(1) A person is guilty of an offence if they:

- (a) Deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) Deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) Deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) Damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- (a) To impair their ability:
 - (i) To survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - (ii) In the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Bats are also protected under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*** (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by Natural England will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored. The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008).

There are 17 species of bat breeding in England and Natural England issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

Licences are issued for specific purposes stated in the Regulations, if the following three tests are met:

- The purpose of the work meets one of those listed in the Habitats Regulations (see below);
- That there is no satisfactory alternative;
- That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range

The Habitats Regulations permits licences to be issued for a specific set of purposes including:

1. include preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
2. scientific and educational purposes;
3. ringing or marking; and,

4. conserving wild animals.

Development works fall under the first purpose and Natural England issues bat mitigation licences for developments.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

- Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;
- Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;
- Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,
- Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.