

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report

1-3 York St, Manchester

JTS Partnership

July 2025

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Summary

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats was commissioned by JTS Partnership in June 2025 of a building at 1-3 York St. Manchester. The building currently houses Browns Restaurant to the ground-floor and the mid-levels comprise of accommodation with the upper level currently disused. The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for the proposed re-development of upper three floors of the building to a hotel.

In view of the results of the preliminary roost assessment the building on site is considered to currently have 'negligible - low potential' to support bat roosts. Foraging and commuting habitat on site and in the wider area was considered to be of 'negligible-low' value for bats in the local context (Reason & Wray, 2023).

This classification is supported by the location of the building, within a highly urbanised and well-lit area, the lack of optimal foraging and commuting opportunities in the wider area and the quantity and structure of the potential roost features recorded which could only be utilised by small numbers of crevice dwelling species commonly found in urban environments (e.g. Common Pipistrelle).

In view of the assessment of 'negligible - low potential' for supporting bat roosts and taking into account the extent of works associated with potential roost features, it is not considered that further survey is necessary with regards to bats.

It is recommended that for any works affecting the slate roofing areas or any discreet areas of lead flashing, that precautionary working measures are adopted and works are undertaken under the term of a non-licenced method statement and supervised by a licenced ecologist as considered necessary.

Regardless of the above, in order to enhance the biodiversity value of the site, it is recommended that provision of bat roost features is incorporated into the development. This should include a single bat box either integrating into the building or mounted upon the building, and that will be protected and remain free from artificial illumination and will be retained for the long-term.

1. INTRODUCTION

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats was commissioned by JTS Partnership in June 2025 of a building at 1-3 York St. Manchester. The building currently houses Browns Restaurant to the ground-floor and the mid-levels comprise of accommodation with the upper level currently disused. The survey was commissioned to support a planning application for the proposed re-development of upper three floors of the building to a hotel.

1.1. Site Description

The site is located on York Street, in Manchester city centre (Grid Reference: SJ 84082 98298) and comprised a three-storey building. The site is currently managed as a bar and restaurant which operates on the ground floor. The middle two floors currently support short-term accommodation, and the upper floor is disused. The site is in a highly urbanised area of the city, bounded by commercial and residential properties and roads with only very limited scattered 'green space' in the form of small areas of tree cover and grassland associated with amenity areas in the vicinity. The River Irwell is located approximately 517m west of the site.

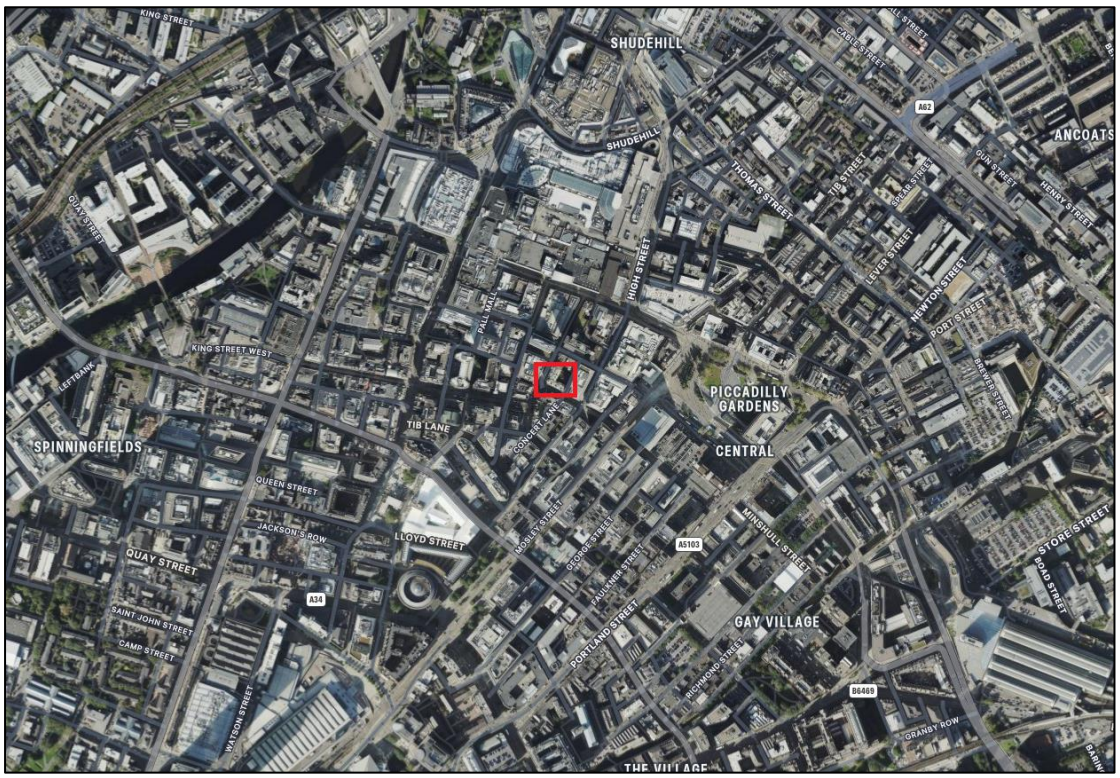


Figure 1. Site (redline) and surrounding landscape character.

1.2. Proposed Works

It is understood that the proposals are for redevelopment of the site which comprises conversion of the upper three floors of the property (those above the existing Browns Bar & Restaurant) into a hotel.

1.3. Personnel & Quality Assurance

Rob Nicholson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM is a Class 2 Bat licence holder (Natural England), has over 17 years' relevant experience as an ecologist and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Rob has been 'named ecologist' on numerous European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats for a range of species and roost types in both England and Wales.

All field work and assessment was undertaken in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

2. LEGAL STATUS

Bats

In England, all British bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites, making it an offence to:

- *Deliberately or intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;*
- *Damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not);*
- *Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.*

3. METHODOLOGY

The bat scoping survey (PRA) and desk-based assessment were conducted on the 20th June 2025.

3.1. Desk Study

To inform the survey, a desk study was conducted using available online ecological information relating to bats for the area surrounding the site. Online resources, including Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC), were consulted in relation to the presence of sites and habitats of importance for bats in the wider context.

3.2. Pre-development Bat Survey

3.2.1. Habitat Survey

A broad habitat survey was conducted of the site to inform the assessment of the suitability of the site for bats. Broad habitat descriptions were assigned and their values with respect to bats at site level and in the wider context assessed.

3.2.2. Bat Scoping Survey

The bat scoping survey comprises of a building inspection which was limited to the building subject of the planning application. The building was inspected using close-focusing binoculars (Pentax Papilio 8.5 x 21) to determine possible access points such as cavities in brickwork and roof structures. An internal inspection of all relevant rooms within the building was conducted where accessible. Using ladders, all accessible features were closely inspected using *Lenser H14* and X21 cool light torches. Where possible, any cracks, crevices and likely access points or potential roost features were checked for signs of use by bats e.g. droppings, scratch marks and staining. An endoscope was used to inspect cavities that could be accessed safely via ladders.

3.3. Evaluation Methods

The 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (4th edition) (Collins, 2023) are used as a basis to evaluate the value of features for their potential to support bats. In addition, the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2024) was referred to. The potential impacts on bats, bat habitat or their roosts as a result of the proposals are assessed within this report using the above criteria, together with an ecological judgement by an experienced bat surveyor.

4. CONSTRAINTS

Some features with potential for supporting bat roosts (e.g. roof tiles) could not be accessed for full physical inspection due to the height and position at which they are located. As such, these features were limited to visual inspection from ground level using

close-focussing binoculars and torchlight to inspect for field signs of bats, though this is not considered a significant constraint to the overall assessment.

External field signs of bats can be lost over time due to weathering and damp conditions. Droppings and other field signs are not always visible through routine, non-invasive inspection surveys as bat species associated with buildings roost in crevices that may not be fully accessible to survey. This survey does not cover every month of the active and hibernation seasons.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Desk Study

Online Resources

According to the Natural England online mapping resource MAGIC there are no statutory designated sites for which bats are a qualifying feature within 5 km of the site.

According to the Natural England online mapping resource MAGIC there are 25 granted European Protected Species Licences relating to bats within 2 km of the site since 2014.

The closest of which (2018-33674-EPS-MIT) was located within ~100 m of the site (MAGIC does not provide a specific site location/address) and associated with the destruction of a resting place of Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

Aerial imagery indicates that potential commuting routes and foraging habitats in the wider area are sparse and limited to scattered areas of amenity grassland and scattered trees which are characteristic of a city centre.

Examples of this include Piccadilly Gardens located 220 m east of the site. The River Irwell is located 520m west of the site, which provides foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.

5.2. Field Survey

5.2.1. Broad Habitat Survey

The site is situated in Manchester city centre and largely provides poor – negligible quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. In addition, the site was heavily influenced by artificial lighting from street lighting, cars and additional building lighting.

Significant expanses of good quality foraging habitat are limited to the River Irwell which is located >500m west of the site via a heavily urbanised environment.

5.2.2. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

The building within the site was subject of an internal and external inspection and assessment for the potential of the building to support bat roosts, and any evidence thereof. Photographs are provided in Appendix 2.

External Inspection

The building comprised four-stories and a single floored, two storey-covered courtyard area to the rear. The main building was constructed of sandstone with a flat main roof with slate pitched sides to the front and rear interspersed with Dorma-windows to the south, and western (front) elevations only (see photos.1 & 2). There is a large architectural dome to the south-western corner of the building with copper cladding which appears intact.



Photo 1 (left). Southern elevation with slate elements of roof visible (stone capped to eaves level). Photo 2 (right). Western elevation with the same features visible.

To the eastern elevation is a solid sandstone gable end wall with parapet wall to the top. To the north of this is a courtyard area which houses a covered courtyard/internal space associated with the ground floor restaurant. The courtyard area has a slate covered pitched roof which appears entirely intact and adjoins the main building to the south and west and has parapet walls to the north and east.




Photo 3 (left). Eastern elevation with parapet walls (all stone-work intact)). Photo 4 (right). Covered courtyard area to rear of main building (roof fully intact with parapet walls to edges)

The rear of the main building is of brick and sandstone block construction with parapet walls and sandstone coping stones to the eaves level. To the northern aspect the covered courtyard ends as a sheer brick wall facing onto a loading access road.




Photo 5 (left). Northern elevation of main building (upper floors) with parapet walls and slate roof (all intact). Photo 6 (right). The northern elevation of the covered courtyard area to rear of main building (brickwork intact).

The roof of the main building is flat to the top with a sealed covering, leading to previously described discreet areas of slate to the roof sides to the front and rear of building roof.(See photos 7 and 8). The majority of slates to the rear roofing appear intact with no notable gaps.




Photo 7 (left). western roof area of main building. Photo 8 (right) The southern roof of main building (small edge areas of slate visible).

There is a large architectural dome to the south-western corner of the building. The dome is of sandstone construction with a copper covering to the dome itself. There is glazing to all aspects with broken windows allowing Pigeons (*Columba livia*) access to the interior. See photos 9 and 10 below.




Photo 9 (left). South western aspect of dome from street level. Photo 10 (right) The north eastern aspect of dome from roof level (all copper covering intact).

To the interior of the building, the ground floor and covered courtyard area to the rear is occupied by Browns Restaurant and outside of the scope of the proposed works.

The first, second and third floors are utilised as short-term accommodation (bedsits) currently. The fourth floor is currently unoccupied but appears previously to have been residential. None of these areas offer any suitability internally for roosting bats. See Photos 11 and 12.

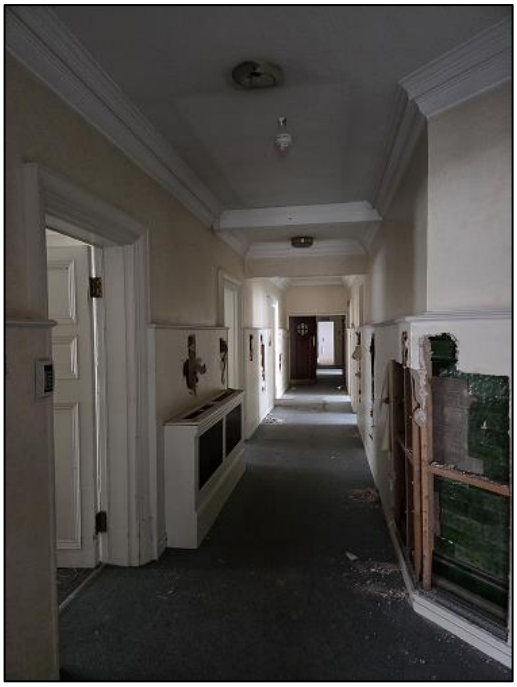



Photo 11 (left). Example interior of fourth floor. Photo 12 (right) Additional example of fourth floor interior.

The roof void is a fully accessible but relatively shallow roof void. The interior walls are brick and the roof structure is largely timber-framed and is underlined with timber sarking (limiting any potential access to the interior roof void for bats).

The interior of the dome area is lit from the exterior with significant pigeon faeces present. There do not appear to be any suitable internal roost features within the dome structure.




Photo 13 (left). Example interior roof void with timber sarking. Photo 14 (right) Additional example of interior roof void.

Potential roost features for bats recorded during the external assessment was limited to the very few areas of slate roof and one section of lead flashing to the western aspect of the main roof. No other potential roost features were identified. Access to the internal roof void appears to be restricted entirely by due to the presence of parapet walls and timber sarking minimising any potential access points.

No evidence of the presence of bats was identified throughout the interior of the roof void.

Any potential for roost features is heavily influenced by the significant presence of artificial lighting which reduces their suitability to support roosting bats, particularly to the south and west (Marble Street and York Street).

Assessment

In light of the location of the building, the impacts of artificial lighting and the paucity of potential roost features recorded during the survey which comprised limited external features associated with discreet area of roof tiles, and taking into account the presence of nearby granted EPSLs for bats, the building was assigned negligible – low bat roost potential.

5.3. Roosts and Habitat

Following the scoping survey, no evidence to suggest the presence of bat roosts was identified in association with the building. However, the structure was assessed to be of 'negligible - low potential' for supporting bat roosts overall due to the presence limited and scattered external potential roost features (PRFs), largely associated with the discreet areas of roof slates to the sides of the main roof.

5.4. The Value of the Site for Bats

In view of the results of the preliminary roost assessment the building on site is considered to currently have 'negligible - low potential' to support bat roosts. Foraging and commuting habitat on site and in the wider area was considered to be of 'negligible-low' value for bats in the local context (Reason & Wray, 2023).

This classification is supported by the location of the building, within a highly urbanised and well-lit area, the lack of optimal foraging and commuting opportunities in the wider area and the quantity and structure of the potential roost features recorded which could only be utilised by small numbers of crevice dwelling species commonly found in urban environments (e.g. Common Pipistrelle).

6. IMPACTS

The proposed development consists of redevelopment of the upper three floors of the main building, which will not include full roof replacement but may involve some works that affect the roof areas such as:

- Erection of a new vented gable section for central extraction exhaust air
- New central input/extract air system ductwork in the existing roof void
- Installation of numerous vent tile for upper floor bathroom direct extract/input air
- Installation of venting slates at the head of drain runs
- Upgraded insulation (loose laid mineral wool insulation at ceiling level).

In view of the assessment of "negligible - low potential" to support bat roosts in relation to the building, and taking into account the extent of work proposed, the scale of impact upon the conservation status of the species in relation to the proposed works has limited potential to be 'high' at site level, where a bat roost is present, but the likelihood is considered to be very low and could be proportionately managed through precautionary working methods.

7. ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is advised that bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is advised that it is illegal to deliberately/intentionally or recklessly: kill, injure or take a bat; damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not); and disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

7.1. Further Survey, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Further Survey

In view of the assessment of 'negligible - low potential' for supporting bat roosts and taking into account the extent of works associated with potential roost features, it is not considered that further survey is necessary with regards to bats.

Mitigation Measures

It is recommended that for any works affecting the slate roofing areas or any discreet areas of lead flashing, that precautionary working measures are adopted and works are undertaken under the term of a non-licenced method statement and supervised by a licenced ecologist as considered necessary.

Enhancement

Regardless of the above, in order to enhance the biodiversity value of the site, it is recommended that provision of bat roost features is incorporated into the development. This should include a single bat box either integrating into the building or mounted upon the building, and that will be protected and remain free from artificial illumination and will be retained for the long-term.

It is recommended that at least one box is installed with consideration given to WoodStone Beaumaris Bat Box Midi or a Habibat 001 integrated box for where integration into a building is possible. See Appendix 3 for details.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above, the building surveyed is considered to be of 'negligible – low potential' for supporting bat roosts and no further survey is required in order to complete the assessment and but as a precaution, works should be undertaken under the terms of a non-licenced method statement and supervised by a suitably licenced ecologist as necessary.

Where the above recommendations are followed, it is considered the appropriate level of assessment will have been completed (as per Collins, 2023), roost opportunities for bat will be maintained at site level in the long-term and the conservation status of bats will not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

9. REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2000). *Distribution atlas of bats in Britain and Ireland 1980-1999.* Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bat Conservation Trust website: http://www.bats.org.uk/.

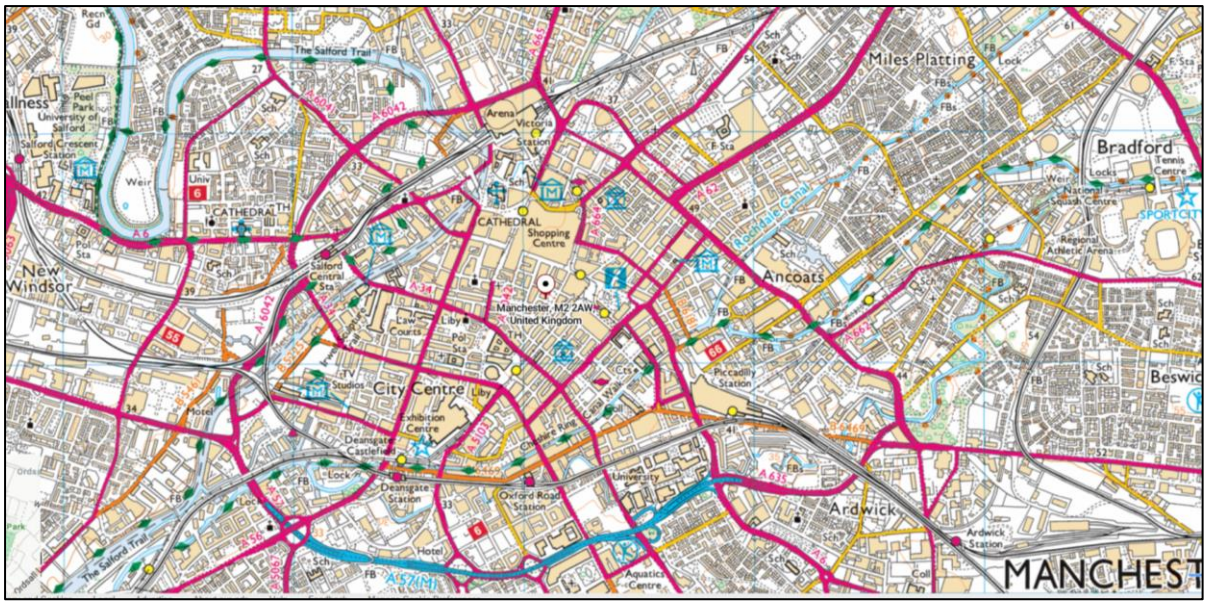
Collins (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP & BCT (2023) Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night

Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre: http://magic.defra.gov.uk/

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE LOCATION



APPENDIX 2 – Additional Photographs



Photograph 1: View of the building from junction of Marble St and York St.



Photograph 2: View of the building from Milk St, facing to toward York St.



Photograph 3: View of building from York St.



Photograph 4: View of wall to rear of covered courtyard from Milk St.



Photograph 5: Example of discreet areas of slate tiles between Dorma-windows (no eaves access) at Marble St elevation.



Photograph 6: Limited gaps under tiles and flashing from Mable St, which is subject to artificial illumination.

Appendix 3 – BAT BOXES



WoodStone Beaumaris Bat Box Midi.

This bat box is suitable for crevice roosting bats and has a rough interior to provide lots of grip. Bats need to increase their body temperature before flight so prefer warm roosting spots, which is why many of our bat boxes have a black exterior to absorb heat from the sun. WoodStone isn't just strong, it also has good thermal insulation, reducing temperature fluctuations inside the box and helping to make this an ideal roost site. The Beaumaris Bat Box is made from 100% WoodStone which is very durable, so this product has a 10-year warranty. *Approx. weight: 6kg*



Habibat 001 Integrated Box

The Habibat Bat Box is a large, solid box made of insulating concrete with an internal roost space, which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated. A variety of facings can be fitted to suit any existing brick, wood, stonework or rendered finish, rendering the box unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing. The Habibat box is suitable for species which are most commonly found roosting in buildings in the UK, such as Pipistrelle, Natterer's, Whiskered, and Brandt's bats.

All boxes in the Habibat Bat Range, are available in the following finishes:

- Unfaced for use with Render or Cladding Systems
- Standard Smooth Red, Blue, Buff
- Bespoke, to suit the product you are using on site.
- As a Bat Maternity Box
- Coursed to suit existing brick or blockwork. This includes, English, Flemish, Stack or Stretcher.