Preliminary Roost Assessment

119 Withington Road

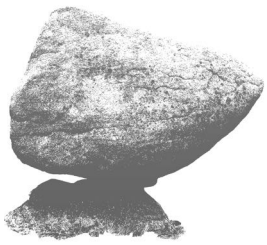
Whalley Range

Manchester

M16 8EB

For

Range Pharmacy Ltd



Gritstone Ecology

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Range Pharmacy Ltd. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 119 Withington Road, Whalley Range, on 14th April 2026. The survey was completed to inform a planning application at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2025-85716-CL18-BAT. He has more than 15 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the renovation and extension of the property, for mixed use; with a new pharmacy on the ground floor, and residential accommodation above. The works will include works to the roof, a full height side extension, general repair and renovation works, and changes to the internal layout.

1.5. Site context

The building is located on Withington Road, Whalley Range, M16 8EB, GR SJ 83025 95192, approximately 2km south of Manchester City Centre. The building is in on a busy main road, in a busy urban area, close to the city centre, and is surrounded by commercial properties, and dense urban housing.

The site includes an pre-1950's built commercial premises, which is currently unused and has been empty for more than 5 years, and areas of hard landscaping to the rear.

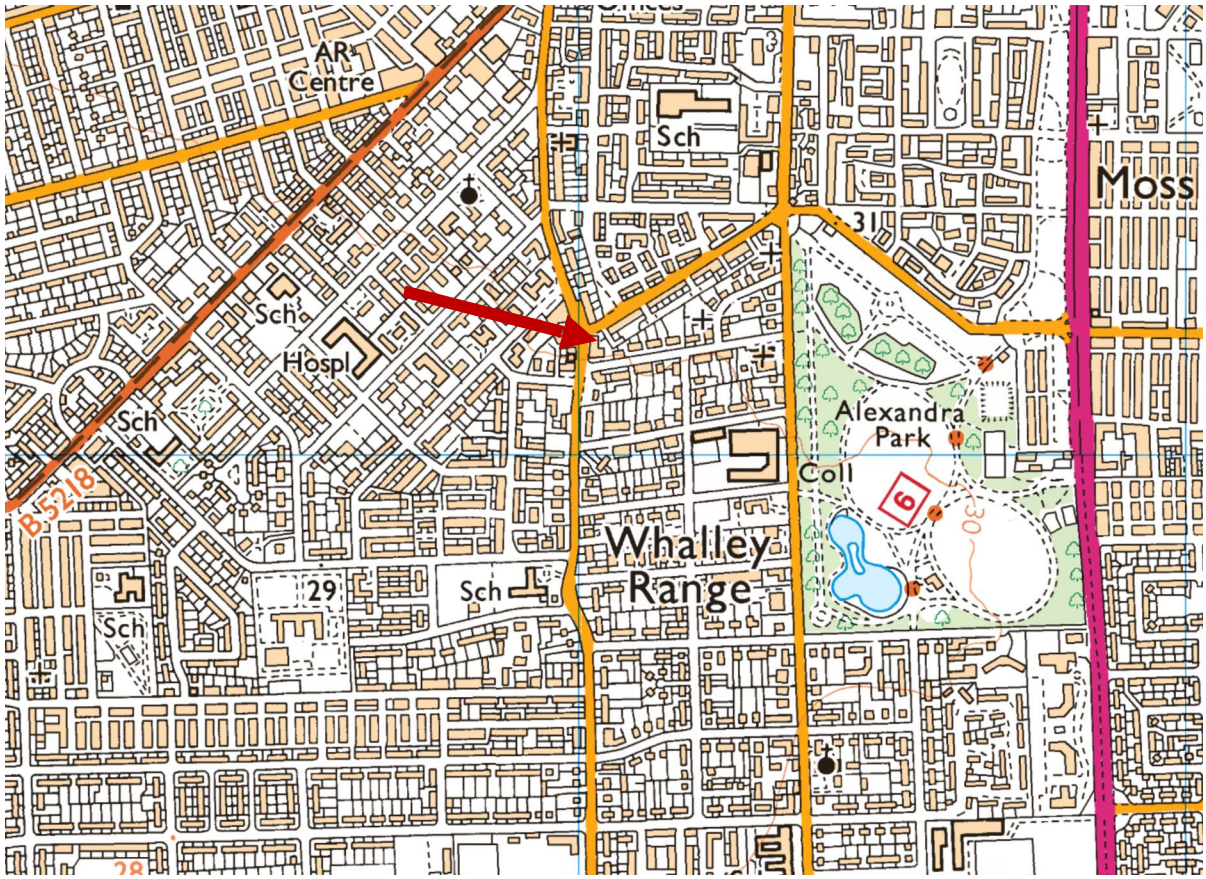
Habitat within 50m of the building includes; commercial buildings, road-side trees, and busy well-lit roads.

Habitat within 500m includes, commercial properties, housing and busy well-lit roads, linked back gardens, small areas of open green-space, ponds, and mature trees.

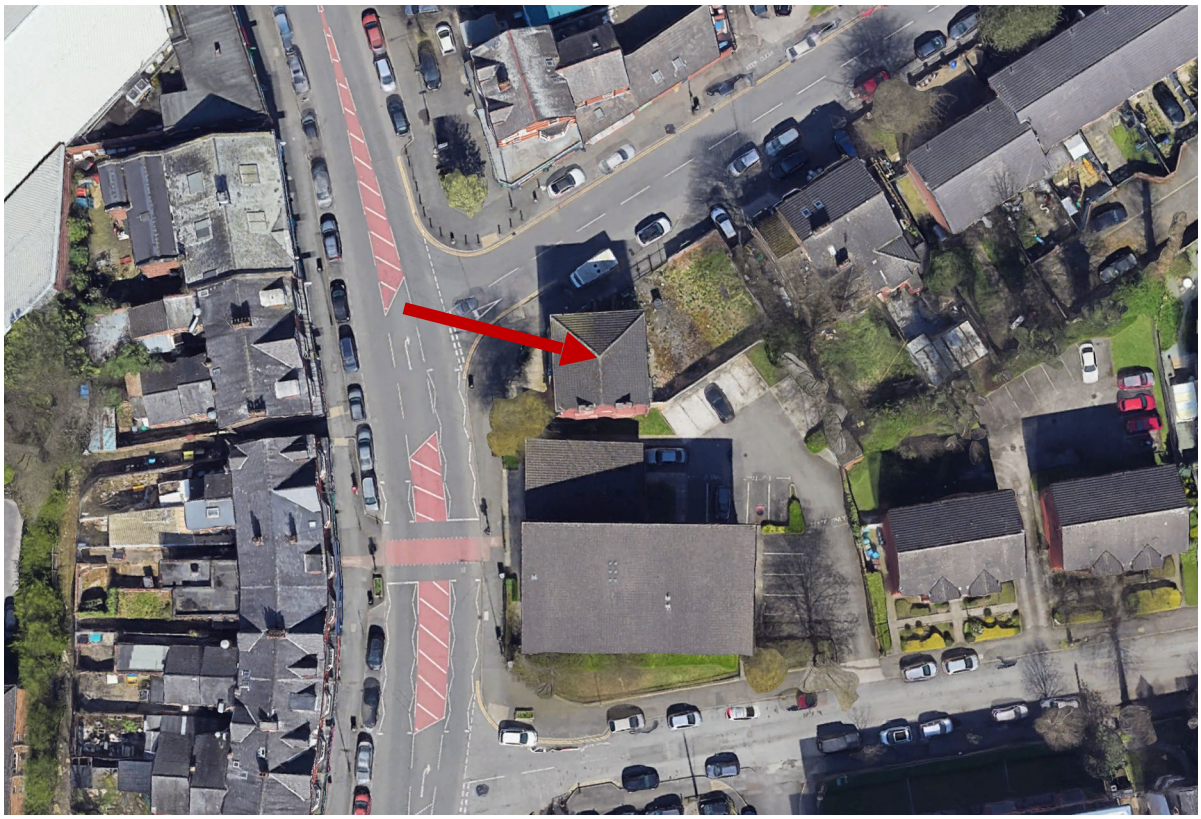
Parks and other isolated areas of open green-space locally, and linked back gardens, potentially provide foraging opportunities for bats. However, the area in general is heavily fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

The site and immediate surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats.

1.6. Site location



1.6a – 119 Withington Road – site location.



1.6b – 119 Withington Road – aerial photograph.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 14th April 2026. Weather conditions during the survey were overcast, mild, and dry, with a temperature of 12°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.

Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

Additionally a camera drone was used to inspect the roof in detail.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were inspected in detail. The building inspection was completed in April, when bats are becoming active, but external signs of use, such as droppings, are less likely to be present.

3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – The front of the building from Withington Road.

Nº119 Withington Road, Whalley Range, is a pre-1950's built commercial property, which is currently unoccupied, and has been empty for more than 5 years. It has a pitched, hipped, roof, covered with concrete roof and ridge tiles. A small side extension, and former shopfront have flat felt-covered roofs.

Roof pitches face north, east, and west; the gable end faves south. No lead flashing is fitted. The base of chimneys is sealed with adhesive flash banding. Wooden boarded soffits are fitted at the eaves.

Walls are solid brick with no insulating cavity, lintels are arched brickwork, sills are UPVC; window and door frames are wooden & UPVC, all glass is intact. Steel roller-shutter doors are fitted at the front of the building.

The building is in declining condition and in need of some repairs. The roof is in relatively good condition. Ridge tiles are fixed tightly, there are no damaged or missing ridge tiles. There are no damaged, slipped, or missing roof tiles. Roof tiles are tightly fitted, with no gaps between tiles. Boarded soffits are fitted tightly against brickwork. Cement at the gable end verges has perished in some areas and could allow access between tiles and brickwork. Walls are in generally good condition, although there are some areas of missing mortar, which are superficial, and do not provide roosting opportunities.

There are features externally which are could allow access to the inside of the building for roosting bats, although no evidence of use by bats was present externally during the building inspection.

3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – Inside the building.

Internally the walls have been stripped back to brickwork on the ground floor, and to plaster on the floor above. The building has a single roof void, which is not used for storage, and has only been accessed infrequently for essential maintenance work.

The roof has a timber rafter and purlin structure, lined with bitumen felt, and insulated with mineral wool between the ceiling joists. The roof lining is in reasonable condition with no obvious tears, or gaps. Roof timbers and the roof void as a whole are covered in dusty cobwebs.

The wall plate and eaves were inspected using an endoscope. The gaps between roof tiles, timbers, and brickwork at the gable end were inspected using a torch and endoscope. Gaps at the verges, could give crawled access to the roof void from the outside. However these areas were covered in dust and cobwebs, and showed no indications of use.

There is no access to the cellar from outside, and there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the building inspection, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The building has low suitability for use by roosting bats. This is as the building has a number of features which could allow bats into the building, but is located in poor quality habitat, and shows no signs of use.

4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats.

Small areas of open green-space and linked back gardens locally potentially provide pockets of foraging habitat for bats, in an area which is heavily fragmented by light and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. There is no high quality habitat in the immediate area.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is in reasonable condition. There are a number features externally which could give access to roosting bats. However, no bat droppings or other indications of use were found during the inspection. And the roof void had been undisturbed for a number of years prior to inspection.

The lack of any indications of use inside the roof void, such as bat droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the roof void, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition; ridge tiles are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

Walls are solid brick with no insulating cavity. Walls are in generally good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities. There are no gaps between windows and brickwork which are likely to be used by posting bats.

Boarded soffits at the eaves are fixed tightly against brickwork, with no suitable gaps; wall cavities and boxed soffits open into the roof void, and were inspected from above.

The small gaps between brickwork, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using a torch and endoscope. No droppings were found, and these areas were filled with dusty cobwebs, and showed no signs of use.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **low suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat

2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats were roosting in the building, the proposed works would likely impact bats or bat roosts.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the renovation and extension of the property, for mixed use; with a new pharmacy on the ground floor, and residential accommodation above. The works will include works to the roof, a full height side extension, general repair and renovation works, and changes to the internal layout.

The building has no features which are likely to be used by roosting bats and has low suitability for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **low suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.

This is as the building is situated in poor quality habitat, which is heavily disturbed by light and noise, no signs of the previous use of the building were present during the inspection, and although the building has features which could be used by roosting bats, it is unlikely to be used.

7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC

8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the building.



2 – The rear of the building.



3 – Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition with no suitable gaps under ridge tiles.



4 – Soffits at the eaves are boarded.



5 – Chimneys are sealed against roof tiles with adhesive flash banding.



6 – Brickwork and mortar are in reasonable condition with no suitable gaps.



7 – Window and door frames are sealed into brickwork with no suitable gaps.



8 – Cement at the gable end verges is missing, with wide gaps between brickwork & tiles.



9 – The building has a single roof void.



10 – Roof lining and timbers are covered with cobwebs.