

Bat Roost Assessment

BE-1140.1a

Moldgreen Working Men's Club, 15 Church
Street, Moldgreen, Huddersfield, HD5 9DL



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Executive Summary

Bagshaw Ecology Ltd have been requested by Acumen designers & architects to undertake a Bat Roost Assessment of Moldgreen Working Mens Club, 15 Church Street, Moldgreen, Huddersfield, HD5 9DL. The development proposals are to demolish the building and construct 12 apartments within the existing buildings footprint.

A desk-based study found the surrounding area to provide suitable habitat for bats, although terrestrial connectivity was constrained to the south and east by roads and built up areas.

A previous report produced by Eric Bennett Consultancy Ltd in 2009 concluded that there was no evidence of roosting bats within the building and limited features with potential for roosting bats.

An inspection of the building found no major changes to the condition or structure since the survey in 2009 and did not identify any bats or signs of bats within the building. Small gaps were observed beneath the wooden fascias on a single-storey extension to the east and under the eaves of the extension to the west, however close inspection of both did not identify any signs of use by roosting bats.

It is concluded that the building has negligible potential for roosting bats, and therefore it is recommended that works commence without the requirement for further survey effort or mitigation.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is recommended that the ecological value of the site is enhanced through the incorporation of two bird boxes into the development proposals.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Bagshaw Ecology Ltd have been requested by Acumen designers & architects to undertake a Bat Roost Assessment of Moldgreen Working Mens Club, 15 Church Street, Moldgreen, Huddersfield, HD5 9DL, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

A previous Bat Survey report was produced by Eric Bennett Consultancy Ltd (Bennett, 2009) in February 2009. This report concluded that there was no evidence of any bat roosts within the building and that the building presented few opportunities for roosting bats.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update to the previous report.
- Determine if bats are present or absent in the buildings on the site.
- If bats are found to be present, to estimate the size and status of the roost.
- Where necessary, to identify the requirement for further surveys, for mitigation and/or ecological enhancement measures.

1.2. Site Details

The site located at grid reference SE 15640 16481 and is accessed off the west of Church Street. The site is bordered by residential properties to the north south and west and by Church Street to the east.

The site comprises a working men's club and residential accommodation with associated parking area.



Figure 1.1 Aerial imagery of site and surrounding area (Google Earth Pro, 2019)

1.3. Development Proposals

The development proposals are to demolish the building and construct 12 apartments within the existing buildings footprint.

2. Legislative Context

2.1. Legislation

All bat species are protected under Schedule II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations makes it an offence to kill, capture or damage a bat, or to destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat. Any development which compromises the protection afforded to bats under the regulations will require a European Protected Species License from Natural England.

All British bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, extended by the Rights of Way Act (2000), making an offence to deliberately or recklessly:

- Injure, kill or capture a bat.
- Disturb a bat (whether in a roost or not).
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen of a bat.
- Destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for protection by a bat species.
- Sell, barter or exchange a bat.

2.2. Policy

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes a list of 943 national priority species and 56 habitats of principal importance, with all species and habitats having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Although the UKBAP has since been superseded by the UK-Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework and a focus on County Biodiversity Plans, it remains a useful point of reference.

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 required that any public bodies take into consideration any species and habitats listed in the UKBAP when implementing their duty and exercising any normal functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should aim to protect or enhance biodiversity and conservation interests, and where possible any development should aim to increase net gains in biodiversity.

3. Methods

3.1. Ecological Data Search

Aerial imagery and other online sources were consulted in order to give an appraisal of the surrounding landscape regarding its suitability for bats.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Magic Maps website and the Natural website were consulted as to any land-based designations and protected/notable species within 1km of the site.

3.2. Scoping Survey

The habitat survey and mapping exercise was carried out in suitable weather conditions on the 3rd of September 2019.

The survey was undertaken by Amy Reddick BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, an ecologist and licensed bat surveyor (2018-37680-CLS-CLS) with experience in carrying out building inspections for bats.

The survey was based upon methodologies prescribed by Collins (2016), Mitchell-Jones (2004) and Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004). This involved an inspection of the exterior and interior of the building. Any structural features with potential for use by roosting bats were recorded and any suitable access points were identified. Any direct evidence of bats, such as scratch marks, oil stains, droppings and feeding remains were also identified.

Taking account of the structural features of the building, the surrounding habitat, buildings were assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Bat roost suitability

Bat Roost Suitability Class	Description
Confirmed presence	Bat presence confirmed during the scoping survey
High	Buildings that have many areas suitable for roosting which are obviously suitable for use by a larger number of bats including maternity colonies.
Moderate	Buildings with a smaller number of areas suitable for roosting, but still supporting feature that could be attractive to bats and potentially support maternity colonies.
Low	Buildings with limited roosting opportunities but which could be used on a sporadic or occasional basis by a low number of bats, but which are unsuitable for maternity roosts.
Negligible	Buildings which appear unsuitable for roosting bats due to a clear lack of roosting spaces such as voids and/or absence of suitable access points.

4. Results

4.1. Data Search

The surrounding land use was predominantly suburban with areas of recreational green space and woodland. Tree cover in the immediate surrounding area is intermediate with several linear woodlands nearby providing suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats. Connectivity to these habitats was limited to the north and east due to constraining roads and built up areas. There was connectivity to a linear belt of woodland to the west via a corridor of residential gardens and small trees located to the north west of the site however, due to light spillage from the adjacent apartment blocks and residential houses, it is anticipated that this would only be utilised by generalist light-tolerant species.

DEFRA (2019) hold records of one ancient woodland, Benholmley Wood and 18 deciduous woodland priority habitats within 1km of the site, the closest of which is located 80m to the southwest of the site.

DEFRA (2019) holds three records of granted European Protected Species Licences within 1km of the site. All of the locations the licences applied to were located at least 680m to the southeast of the site across the A629 and consisted of the following:

- 2014-856-EPS-MIT, which allowed the destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place. The licence start date was 13/10/2014 and the licence end date was 13/10/2014.
- EPSM2010-1750, which allowed the destruction of a common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared resting place. The licence start date was 25/02/2010 and the licence end date was 01/02/2014.
- EPSM2011-3176, which allowed the destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place. The licence start date was 15/08/2011 and the licence end date was 31/08/2013.

Ten species of bat have been recorded in West Yorkshire, including Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, Leisler's Bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* (Harris and Yalden, 2008).

Seven of the 10 species recorded in West Yorkshire, including whiskered bat, Brandt's bat, Natterer's bat, Leisler's bat, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat are known to roost in buildings at some point throughout the seasonal year (Harris and Yalden, 2008; Dietz *et al*, 2011; Collins, 2016).

4.2. Scoping survey

No significant changes to the building since the survey in 2019 were noted. The building consisted of a two-storey stone building with a hipped concrete tile roof, an extension had been adjoined to the west, with a half pitched tying in with the original hipped roof. Several single-storey extensions were located to the south and west, these also had interlocking concrete roof tiles. The roof tiles and ridge tile were in good condition with no gaps or lifted tiles observed. The exterior of the building was in good condition with no cracks observed in the stonework or pointing. Some small gaps were observed beneath the fascias on the extension to the south which were inspected with a high-powered torch and found to be covered by dense cobwebs with no evidence of roosting bats observed. The main roof had no soffits or fascias and was well-sealed.

The interior of the main roof had two small low roof voids. These were both lined with bitumen roofing felt, with modern wooden roof beams. Both were well-sealed with extensive cobwebs observed throughout. A large portion of the roof had been converted into living space with skylights in the roof, this area was open and well-lit with no suitability for roosting bats. A large void was located to the rear of the building, above the previously flat roofed extension. This was of king post construction with a bitumen roof lining. Gaps were observed under the eaves within the hipped section of the roof to the west. No evidence that these had been utilised by roosting bats or nesting birds was observed. Extensive cobwebs were observed throughout the roof void. No signs of bats, including droppings, feeding remains, oil stains or scratch marks were identified within any part of the building.

5. Impact Assessment

The surrounding area provides suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats due to the presence of woodland and semi-natural habitat within 1km of the site although connectivity to the south and east is constrained by roads and built up areas.

As the building remained unchanged from the survey conducted in 2009 and taking account of the absence of any signs of bats, and the limited access points and potential roost features within the building, the building is considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no impacts to bats are anticipated due to the development.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The building is considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats, therefore no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

In the unlikely event any bats are encountered during work, all work should cease immediately, and a licenced bat worker should be consulted.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is recommended that the ecological value of the site is enhanced through the incorporation of two bird boxes into the proposed development. These should be of type Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terraces (or similar alternative) and should be integrated into the walls of the new apartment block at a height of at least 2m with clear flight paths to the entrances. The sparrow terraces should be positioned on the north or east aspects, not directly above any windows.

7. References

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- Harris, S., Yalden, D. (eds.) (2008). *Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook 4th Edition*. The Mammal Society, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J., McLeish, A.P. (2004). *Bat Workers Manual*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Photographs



Plate 1 East aspect of the building



Plate 2 South aspect of the building



Plate 3 Detail of east extension roof



Plate 4 Detail of south extension roof



Plate 5 Detail of fascias on east extension



Plate 6 Northeast aspect of building



Plate 7 Northwest aspect of building



Plate 8 Interior of main roof void



Plate 9 Interior of main roof void



Plate 10 Interior of main roof void



Plate 11 Interior of main roof void



Plate 12 Void above previously flat roof



Plate 13 Void above previously flat roof



Plate 14 Void above previously flat roof