



Land off Leeds Road, Huddersfield



Bat Roost Suitability Assessment

27/03/2023

Reality Income Limited



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Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.



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Summary Statement

Based on the features present, the two retail units at land off Leeds Road, Huddersfield are both assessed as providing negligible bat roost suitability.

No further survey work is recommended in support of this conclusion.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Reality Income Limited to carry out a bat roost suitability assessment at Land off Leeds Road, Huddersfield, HD1 6PF (grid reference SE 1546 1786).
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises two retail units with adjacent car parking and service yard.
3. Proposals are for external renovations across the two properties, concentrated along the northern elevation fronting onto the car park, with minor works to the south.

Figure 1 The Site boundary (red line) and surveyed building (black hatch).



Method

4. A thorough daytime inspection of the Site was made in March 2023 to look for evidence of bats and assess suitability for roosting. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, stains on masonry or timber from the oils in bats' fur and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.
5. Bat roosting potential of the building was classified according to the following criteria set out in Table 1, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings and Trees.

Suitability	Criteria
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
<i>Low</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions, and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only - the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
<i>High</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protections, conditions and surrounding habitats.

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Records

6. The local records provider, in this case West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG), was asked to provide all records from within a 1km radius of the site.
7. Seven records have been returned for the search area, four of which relate to roosts of pipistrelle and unidentified vesper species of bat, all recorded between 2003 and 2007. Most notable is that of pipistrelle species roost of unspecified size, located in the Timothy Wood Unit c.100m south adjacent the River Colne, 2007.

National, regional and local Status

8. The application Site lies within the natural range of 10 species of bat. These are summarised in the table below, together with a note on each species national status, relative abundance and status within the 1km search area.

Table 2 List of bat species known to occur in West Yorkshire, ordered in increasing level of significance to their national proportion.

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelles <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common and increasing	Possibly	Possibly
Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Common and stable	Possibly	Possibly
Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Natterer's <i>M. nattereri</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered <i>M. mystacinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Brandt's <i>M. brandtii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Leisler's <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Uncommon and trend unknown	-	-
Nathusius' Pipistrelle <i>P. nathusii</i>	Uncommon but stable	Possibly	Possibly

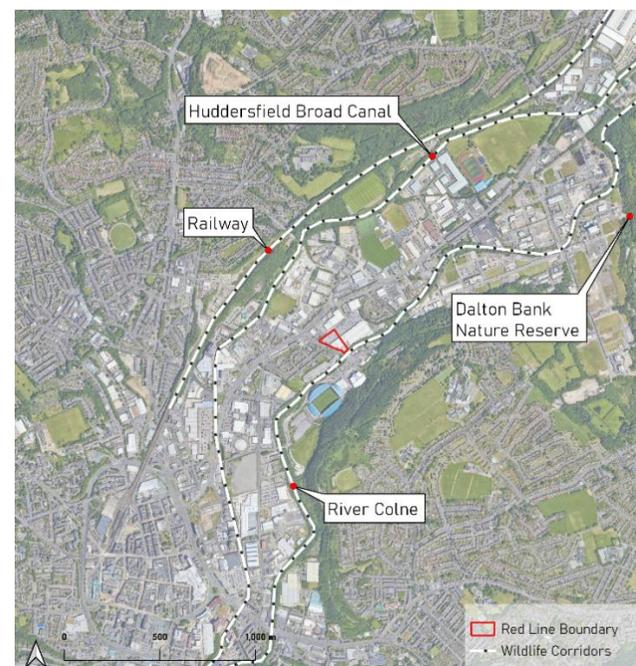
EPSM Licences

9. A search was made for granted EPSM (European Protected Species Mitigation) licences within 1km of the Site. None were found.

Site Context

10. The Site is located within a large retail park, c.1km northeast of Huddersfield town centre.
11. It is bound to the north and east by commercial development, by residential to the west and by the River Colne to the south, which constitutes the most notable linear feature locally and provides a wildlife corridor to better structured bat foraging habitat in close proximity, downstream to the east.
12. A railway line and the Huddersfield Broad Canal provide notable wildlife corridors within the wider landscape, though largely isolated from the Site by development.

Figure 2 Wildlife corridors in relation to Site.



Survey Results

14. The Site consists of two adjacent units, set within a busy retail park. Flood lighting is present across the car park to the north and service yard to the south, with the Site being well-lit throughout the night. Both units were vacant at the time of survey.

Figure 3 Showing typical view of northern (left) and southern (right) elevations.



15. Units are of a similar structural design, both being a typical two-storeys in height and having a flat roof, capped along its perimeter by well-sealed metal trim. No points of ingress for bats were noted across the roof.
16. Walls across the property consist of a redbrick base with piers running the height of the building every c.5m. Brickwork is in good condition with mortar well-sealed.
17. The upper section consists of metal panel cladding (curtain walls) which terminate at a large metal boxed soffit. Cladding is in largely fine condition, being well sealed against the brickwork beneath, with the few gaps noted deemed too small to support roosting bats.

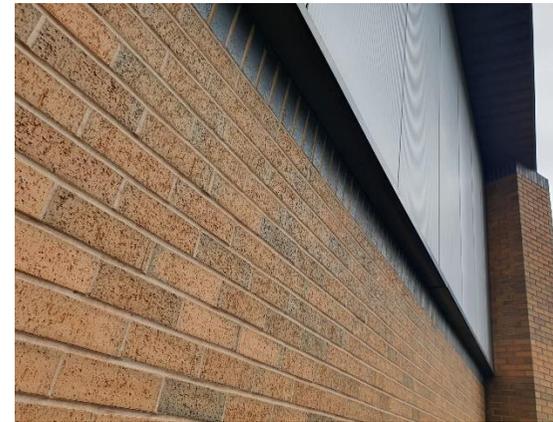


Figure 4 Showing typical condition of metal cladding.

18. The frontages of the two units differ, the western being of a consistent design with the rest of the property with a metal shutter entrance, and the eastern having large windows running the height of the building. Metal window and door frames sit flush within surrounding masonry, with no potential roost features (PRFs) noted.
19. Signage mounts are fitted above the two entrances, none of which possess any features suitable for roosting bats.

Figure 5 Showing the two differing frontages.



20. A large metal box soffit runs along the perimeter of the property. For the most part this is well-sealed. However, a single exception is noted along the northern elevation where a gap is evident with the adjacent brick pier.
21. The suitability of this feature to support roosting bats is deemed negligible, given its location within a well-lit car park and the poor insulating qualities of the metal soffit, leading to fluctuating temperatures internally. There is no evidence of its use by bats.

Figure 6 Showing small gap to metal soffit (left) and single larger gap (right).



Conclusions & Recommendations

22. Based on the features present, the two retail units at land off Leeds Road, Huddersfield are both assessed as providing negligible bat roost suitability.
23. No further survey work is recommended in support of this conclusion.

Standard precaution

24. Although no evidence or roosting has been found and likely absence of roosting has been concluded, it must be noted that bats frequently move between roost sites, can be very casual in their choice of roosting location and can turn up unexpectedly at any time.
25. On this basis the developer should always be mindful of bats as a potential constraint and have a protocol in place should any bats be seen or suspected during works: works should stop, a suitably licensed ecologist consulted, and their advice followed.

References

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