Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover

Folly Hall, Huddersfield
Reference: 81-859
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e3p

E3P

Taylor Road
Trafford Park
Urmston
Manchester
M41 7JQ

+ 44 (0) 161 707 9612
https://e3p.co.uk

Registered in England
CRN: 08725262

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WRITTEN BY	QUALIFICATIONS	POSITION
Luke Shaw	BSc (Hons)	Graduate Ecologist

REVIEWED BY	QUALIFICATIONS	POSITION
Ciara Bass	BSc (Hons)	Consultant Ecologist

AUTHORISED BY	QUALIFICATIONS	POSITION
Celia Kenyon	BSc (Hons), MSc, MIEnvSc, CEnv, MCIEEM	Associate Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Folly Hall, Huddersfield, HD1 3PA
Coordinates	E 414236, N 415900
Site Area	Approximately 0.02 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprised a three-storey commercial building. The building is no longer in use and has been extensively damaged by a fire.
Proposed Development	Development proposals include the renovation of the building to include a series of apartments. Part of the ground floor will be retained for commercial use.
Results	The building was assessed as having **moderate** bat roosting potential as features that are capable of supporting a small number of bats on a more regular basis were identified on the exterior of the building. An internal survey was unable to be conducted due to the being deemed unsafe because of the fire damage. Multiple access points into the building were identified during the survey, because of this, the presence of potential roost features that could support a small number of bats on a regular basis inside the building cannot be discounted. Crevices, vents and missing brickwork were also identified on the external walls of the building that would provide roosting opportunities to a small number of bats on an occasional basis. The loft void and the cellar were deemed unable to support maternity or hibernation roosts due to the fire damage exposing them to the weather, creating fluctuating temperature. The building was determined to be suitable for nesting birds. The habitats present on-site comprised 'developed land; sealed surface' which included the building and paved area that were well-sealed throughout. No natural habitats were identified within the site boundary.
Conclusions and Recommendations	The building was assessed as having **moderate** bat roosting potential. As such, Two Nocturnal Bat Surveys are required on the building between May and September (inclusive), with at least one survey being completed between May and August (inclusive). The surveys will be spaced three weeks apart. If bats are identified roosting within the building, a total of three surveys spaced three weeks apart would be required to characterise the roost and a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) would be required with up-to-date surveys from the survey season prior to the application submission. An EPSL can only be applied for when planning permission has been obtained and all wildlife conditions discharged. The building was assessed as having nesting bird value. The works should be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. Should any nests, or nests in construction be located, a suitable stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable standoff and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications. It is recommended that bat and bird boxes are incorporated into the development.

In line with the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, any sites with less than 25 m^2 of on-site habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero are exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. Since the site exclusively comprised developed land including the building and hardstanding with no biodiversity value/habitat units, a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment will not be required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by C49 Architecture to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Folly Hall, Huddersfield, hereafter referred to as "the site". A site walkover was also undertaken to assess the site for any additional protected species constraints.

The report was produced by Graduate Ecologist, Luke Shaw BSc (Hons), a qualifying member of CIEEM, who has experience in completing PRAs and nocturnal bat surveys at many sites across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the renovation of the building to include a series of apartments, with part of the ground floor being retained for commercial use.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within Folly Hall on the outskirts of Huddersfield City Centre, within a predominantly commercial area. A series of commercial units are situated on all aspects of the site. The A616 runs adjacent to the west of the site boundary. The River Holme is located at approximately 40 m east of the site boundary with the River Colne located approximately 45 m north. Huddersfield Train Station is located approximately 990 m north of the site boundary. Please refer to Figure 1 for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 Approximate Site Location

1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are as follows:

- Determine if bats currently, or could potentially, utilise the building for roosting.
- Determine whether further surveys (e.g., nocturnal bat surveys) and/or further mitigation is necessary for development to proceed.

The objectives of the Ecological Walkover are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present.
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The survey findings are detailed in this report, as well as any recommendations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- MAGIC – A government web-based interactive mapping system, demonstrating European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and Natural England Licences which have been previously granted within England.
- Information and species records from West Yorkshire Bat Group.

A search via MAGIC was undertaken in May 2024 to identify any EPSLs within 1 km of the site boundary. This search area is considered suitable for the size of the development and the urban built-up nature of the surrounding area.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 12th May 2024 by Luke Shaw. The weather was dry and overcast.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the building, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023).

The building was categorised for its bat roosting potential as described in Table 1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars to view potential features high up on the building.

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Buildings

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. 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 larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure 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, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

2.3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

A site walkover was undertaken by Luke Shaw on 12th May 2024 to assess the site for any protected or notable species.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab, 2023). The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including but not limited to Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.4. LIMITATIONS

On the eastern aspect, the visibility was limited in areas due to the adjoining properties. This has been considered during the assessment.

Access into the building was restricted due to the building being deemed unsafe. This was due to the extensive fire damage to the building. This has been taken into consideration through the report.

Access to all areas around the was not possible due to the private properties bordering the site to the east and west, however, due to the urban nature of the site and surrounding habitats, this is not considered to be a major constraint.

3. RESULTS

3.1. LOCAL BAT GROUP RECORDS

Based on information from West Yorkshire Bat Group, species present within the local area include Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Leisler's bat(*Nyctalus leisleri*) soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.2. MAGIC REVIEW

A MAGIC review found two European Protected Species Licence located within the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 570 m north east of the site boundary. The licence was active between 2011 and 2013 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

The second licence was located approximately 750 m north east of the site. The licence was active in October 2014 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprised a single building, within a predominantly urban area in Huddersfield. The on-site habitats and habitats within the surrounding are anticipated to offer value to local wildlife

The River Holme is located approximately 45 m east of the site boundary, with the River Colne located approximately 50 m north. These watercourses are anticipated to offer high-value foraging and commuting habitat for bats, especially those which specialise feeding along watercourses such as Daubenton's bat. These watercourses also provide connectivity to high-value habitats in the wider area including deciduous woodland, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitat, with the closest areas located approximately 190 m south of the site. The areas of woodland are anticipated to offer several valuable resources for local wildlife, in particular for bats by attracting invertebrate prey.

Longley Park Golf Course is located approximately 700 m east of the site. This area contains a large area of deciduous woodland which is likely an important foraging feature for the local bat population. This area is connected to the site by the two rivers that are located within close proximity to the site.

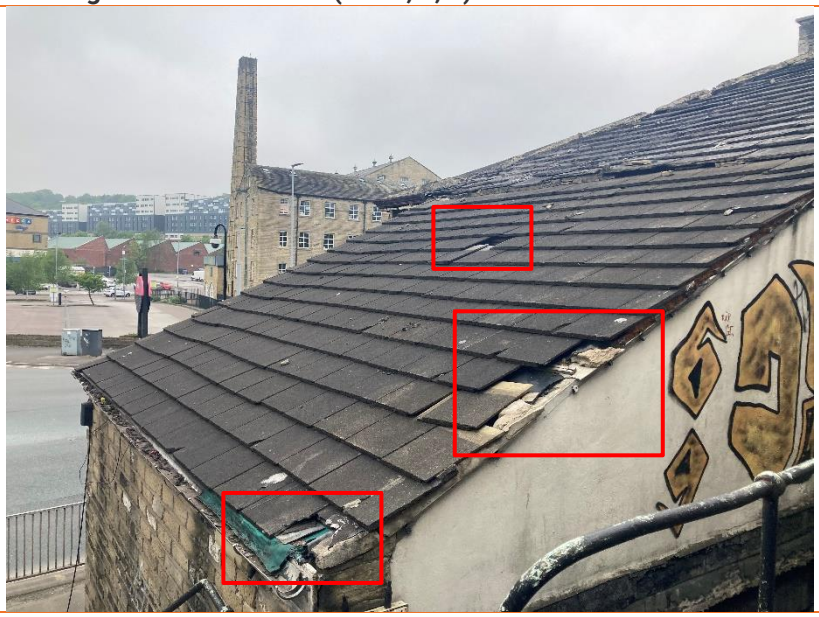
3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the building on-site. No other buildings, structures or trees were present within the site boundary. Please see Appendix I for the Preliminary Roost Assessment Plan which details the location of the potential roost features.

The building comprised a commercial unit, with a three-storey section and a two-storey section. The roof of the three-storey section was pitched, and the roof of the two-storey section was hipped. The building and the roofs had been extensively damaged by a fire. There was also a small single-storey extension to the south of the building. The majority of the building's interior could not be surveyed due to the building being deemed unsafe. A small part of the interior could be viewed through a broken boarded up door.

The small extension to the south of the building was constructed of stone brick and mortar, with a slate pitched roof. Multiple potential bat features (PRF) were located on the small extension. Lifted tiles were identified within the roof of the extension (PRF 1,2,3) Due to the size of these features, they are likely to provide roosting opportunities to a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis. However, felt was present underneath the tiles preventing access into the loft void.

Figure 2 Showing the extension roof (PRF1, 2, 3)



An access point (AP) into the small extension was identified along the east of the extension. This was within a doorway under where a small section of roof had fallen (AP1). This access point provided access into the small extension; however, an internal survey could not be undertaken as the building was deemed unsafe. Because of this, the presence of potential roost features that could support a small number of bats on a regular basis cannot be discounted.

Figure 3 **Showing an access point into the extension (AP1)**

A sealed-up door was present on the western side of the extension. A crevice between the brickwork and the door was identified around one side of the door (PRF 4). This feature is likely to provide roosting opportunities for a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis.

Figure 4 **Showing the extension sealed-up door (PRF 4)**

A crevice was identified in the soffit of the building, where the extension met the main building (PRF 5). The crevice was deemed likely to provide roosting opportunities for a small number of crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis.

Figure 5 Showing the crevice where the extension meets the main building (PRF 5)

The two-storey section of the building was constructed with stone brick and mortar, with a hipped roof comprising slate tile and ridge tiles. A stone brick feature was also present on the roof. Multiple access points and potential roost features were identified within the two-storey section. A brief look into this section was undertaken through a broken area of boarding blocking a doorway, however it was deemed unsafe to enter the building due to the fire damage.

AP2 and AP3 were located along the south of the two-storey section. Both of these access points were doorways that had been uncovered. Due to an internal survey not being completed, it is assumed that features within the building could provide a small number of bats roosting opportunities on a regular basis.

Figure 6 **Showing AP2**

Figure 7 **Showing AP3**

Multiple features were identified along the south of the two-storey section. PRF 6 and PRF 7 were both brickwork cervices within the brickwork above AP3. Both of these features are likely to support individual roosting crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis.

Figure 8 **Showing PRF 6**

Figure 9 **Showing PRF 7**

A lifted section of tiles was present where the extension meets the roof of the two-storey section (PRF8). The space underneath these tiles is likely to offer crevice-dwelling bats roosting opportunities on an occasional basis.

Figure 10 Showing PRF 8

Damaged and lifted roof tiles were present along both ridges of the hipped roof (PRF 9 and PRF 10). Due to the size of the ridges, they are likely to support a small number of opportunistic crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis. These features have the potential to provide access into the loft void, as an internal survey could not be undertaken. Because of this, the presence of potential roost features that could support a small number of bats on a regular basis cannot be discounted. The loft void is unlikely to support maternity or hibernation roosts as it is exposed to the weather through the large gaps in the roof where the roof collapsed because of the damage caused by the fire. This damage is likely to cause fluctuating temperatures within the loft.

Figure 11 Showing PRF 9

Figure 12 Showing PRF 10

A stone brick structure was identified along the top of the hipped roof (PRF 11). Multiple brickwork crevices were noted within the feature. These crevices are likely to support opportunistic crevice-dwelling bats on an occasional basis.

Figure 13 Showing stone structure (PRF 11)

Three access points were identified on the western side of the two-storey section of the building.AP4 and AP5 were windows that had been smashed which provided large gaps that bats could use to access the building. AP6 was a large hole within the roof which had butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) growing out of it. The hole provided access into the loft space. Due to the building being unsafe the interior could not be inspected to determine what features these access point led to. Because of this, the presence of potential roost features that could support a small number of bats on a regular basis cannot be discounted. The loft void is unlikely to support maternity or hibernation roosts as it is exposed to the weather through the large gaps in the roof where the roof collapsed because of the damage caused by the fire. This damage is likely to cause fluctuating temperatures within the loft.

Figure 14 Showing access points into the building (AP4, AP5 and AP6)

Multiple lifted and missing tiles were identified under the stone structure on the hipped roof. These lifted and missing tiles could provide suitable shelter to support small numbers of crevice dwelling species on an occasional basis.

Figure 15 Showing lifted tiles below the stone feature (PRF 12)

Multiple vents were located along the west of the building. These vents were approximately 2 m high. Due an internal survey not being undertaken; it was undetermined what the full extent of these features was. Because of this, these features have been assumed as having the potential to support a small number of bats on a regular basis.

Figure 16 Showing vents (PRF13, PRF14, PRF15 and PRF16)

On the west side of the building, above the old main entrance were holes that would have housed light. The removal of these lights has created a crevices beneath. These crevices are likely to provide opportunistic bats roosting opportunities on an occasional basis.

Figure 17 Showing old light holes (PRF17)

Damaged ridge tiles were identified on top of the pitched roof on the three-storey section of the building. These damaged ridge tiles are likely to provide opportunistic crevice -- dwelling bats roosting opportunities on an occasional basis.

Four broken windows were located on the western side of the three-storey section of the building. These windows provided access into the building and to the features that were located within. Due to an internal inspection not being safe to conduct, it is assumed that features within the building would provide a small number of bats roosting opportunities on a regular basis.

Figure 18 Showing damaged ridge tiles and broken windows (PRF18, AP7, AP8, AP9, AP10)

Multiple brickwork crevices (PRF19 and PRF20) were identified along the north of the building These crevices are likely to provide crevice-dwelling bats roosting opportunities on an opportunistic basis.

Figure 19 Showing brickwork crevices (PRF19)

The view of the eastern side of the building was restricted due to the adjoining building. However, two areas of roof were identified to have collapsed (AP11 and AP12). These sections of collapsed roof are likely to provide access into the building. It is assumed that the features within the building provide a small number of bats roosting opportunities on a regular basis.

Figure 20 Showing damaged roof (AP11)

No other potential roost features were identified externally. The features were identified as providing roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling species on an occasional basis and some features that would provide a small number of bats roosting opportunities on a more regular basis.

The building had a cellar. However, a survey of the cellar was unable to be undertaken due to the building being deemed unsafe. The floor of the building had collapsed into the cellar, filling it with rubble, and leaving it exposed to the elements and changing conditions. As such, the cellar does not provide the cool and stable conditions that are required to support a hibernation roost.

There was a loft void present within the building. The loft void is unlikely to support maternity or hibernation roosts as it is exposed to the weather through large gaps where the roof had collapsed due to fire damage. Please see Figure 20. This damage is likely to cause fluctuating temperatures within the loft, which does not provide the stable conditions that are needed for maternity or hibernation roosts.

The wider landscape provides suitable foraging opportunities for bats along the River Holme and the River Colne. These rivers also create commuting corridors to large suitable foraging habitats.

Overall, the building was assessed as having **moderate** bat roosting potential.

The building is anticipated to support nesting birds due to a number of suitable features externally and potentially internally.

3.5. ECOLOGIAL WALKOVER

A small section of developed land: sealed surface was connected to the building, which had been colonised by butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*). Due to the expanse of the building and developed land: sealed the site offers limited ecological value for local wildlife.

Figure 213 Showing developed land: sealed surface

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

Overall, the building was assessed as having **moderate** bat roosting potential as features that are capable of supporting a small number of bats on a more regular basis were identified on the exterior of the building. An internal survey was unable to be conducted due to the being deemed unsafe because of the fire damage. Multiple access points into the building were identified during the survey, because of this, the presence of potential roost features that could support a small number of bats on a regular basis inside the building cannot be discounted. Crevices, vents and missing brickwork were also identified on the external walls of the building that would provide roosting opportunities to a small number of bats on an occasional basis. The loft void and the cellar were deemed unable to support maternity or hibernation roosts due to the fire damage exposing them to the weather, creating fluctuating temperature. Therefore, the following surveys and/or mitigation is recommended:

The building was assessed as having **moderate** bat roosting potential. As such, two Nocturnal Bat Surveys spaced three weeks apart are required between May and September (inclusive) on the building with at least one survey undertaken between May and August (inclusive). If bats are identified roosting within the building, a further survey would be required to characterise the roost and a European Protected Species Licence will be required, with up-to-date surveys from the survey season prior to the application submission.

4.2. NESTING BIRDS

The building was assessed as having nesting bird value. The works should be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. Should any nests, or nests in construction be located, a suitable stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable standoff and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications. It is recommended that bat and bird boxes are incorporated into the development.

5. BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

The site boundary comprised the on-site building only. The site was assessed as 'developed land: sealed surface' as per UKHab, which had been colonised by a limited amount of butterfly bush.

In line with the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, any sites with less than 25 m^2 of on-site habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero are exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. Since the site exclusively comprised developed land including the building and with no biodiversity value/habitat units, a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation will not be required.

6. REFERENCES

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night Guidance Note 8.
- Legislation.gov.uk (2024). The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Institute of Lighting Engineers (2005). Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light.
- JNCC (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. 3rd Edition.
- Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT PLAN

Key:

- Redline Boundary
- Access Point (AP)
- Potential Roost Feature (PRF)

Notes

Issue: 1	Revision: 1	Date: 13/05/2024	Drawn: LS	Authorised: CK
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Environmental Engineering Partnership Ltd
Manchester Office
Taylor Road, Urmston M41 7JQ
Tel: 0161 707 9612
Email: info@e3p.co.uk
Website: www.e3p.co.uk