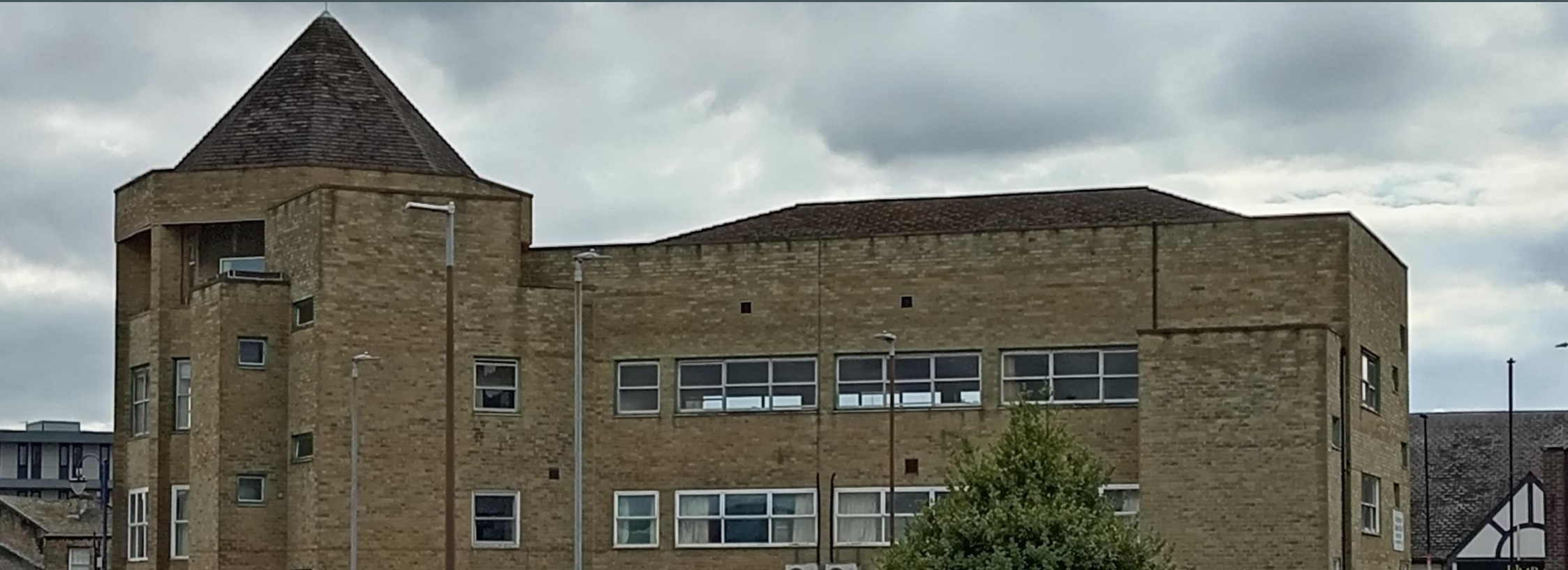




St Patrick's Centre Meeting Actions

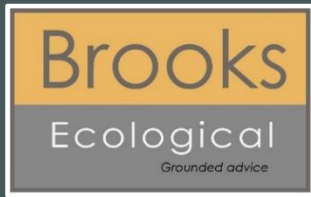


Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report Ref. ER-7985-01

30/09/2024

Wake Morley Architects



Report reference	ER-7985-01 - PRA
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Date	30/09/2024
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

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has found the building to provide Low bat roost suitability.

Information provided by the client shows that most of proposed works are due to take place internally, with external works limited to:

- Removal of a small ground storey unit adjoining the main building on the west aspect, measuring approximately 15m², and of negligible roost potential
- Removal of a small ground floor derelict storage building and fenced off area measuring approximately 5m²
- Removal of an access ramp to the northwest corner
- Removal of a window on the second storey to the west aspect

None of the PRFs (potential roost features) identified during the survey are due to be altered in any way or destroyed by the works. As such, the works can be carried out with minimum impacts to PRFs on site, but with appropriate precautionary measures in place.

However, should the proposals change at any point, meaning that impacts on the PRFs detailed in this report, then at least one emergence survey is recommended to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats in this building. This should be carried out during the active bat season (May-August inclusive, with September providing sub-optimal conditions).

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Wake Morley Architects to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at St Patrick's Centre Meeting Actions (grid reference SE 14214 16765).
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises a single building with several roof structures and balconies.
3. Proposals are to undertake some external and internal alterations to accommodate a change of use of the building.

Figure 1 The Site boundary (red line).



Method

4. A thorough daytime inspection of the site was made in September 2024 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 (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings.

Suitability	Criteria
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
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 (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating 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 (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation - the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
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.

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 1 km radius of the Site.
7. 10 records were returned by the desk study, which included common pipistrelles, leisler's as well as some intermediate species. 8 of these records consisted of roosting bats, including a common pipistrelle maternity roost 830m southwest of the site with up to 50 individuals, recorded in 2001. The nearest record was of an unidentified bat species roost recorded in 2005, circa 80m northeast of the site.

National, regional, and local Status

8. The application Site lies within the natural range of 10 species of bat. These are summarised in Table 2 below, together with a note on each species' national status, relative abundance, and status within the 1km search area.

EPSM Licences

9. There were 2 European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences returned within 1km of the Site, both consisting of single day common pipistrelle roosts, located 680m and 830m southwest of the site, recorded in 2014 and 2013 respectively.

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

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Natterer's bat <i>M. nattereri</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered bat <i>M. mystacinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Brandt's bat <i>M. brandtii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Uncommon and trend unknown	Yes	-
Nathusius' pipistrelle <i>P. nathusii</i>	Uncommon but stable	No	-

Site Context

10. The Site is located within the city centre of Huddersfield and is surrounded by urban habitats.
11. Huddersfield train station and adjacent railway line lies opposite the Site, 40m northwest and extends into a green corridor 940m northwest with strips of deciduous woodland running along the railway line. Huddersfield broad canal runs 820m south and west of the site, and the river Colne runs approximately 900m south and west, with a deciduous woodland extending along the river's eastern bank 920m east of the site.
12. An urban parkland with some areas of wood pasture lies 360m west of the site. Beyond, a pocket of deciduous woodland (priority habitat) lies 530m southwest of the site extending into an urban fringe Local Nature Reserve, located 860m west, consisting of a mature woodland and rough meadow. Pockets of deciduous woodland are also found 780m northwest and 715m north of the site, connected to areas of grassland interspersed with deciduous trees.
13. The wider landscape remains dominated by urban habitats, with residential areas interspersed with small green recreational sites and pockets of deciduous woodland, found between 2-5km away to all directions

Figure 2 Site context.



Preliminary Roost Assessment

15. The Site comprised of a sizeable three-storey building with a main rectangular section and structures of varying heights adjoined, including a hexagonal section on the western aspect with balconies on the third floor. It was generally in good condition but several features which could allow bats access were present throughout.
16. The building was a brick-made 1970s era office/retail type building. The main rectangular section had hipped tiled roofs, the hexagonal section to the west consisted of a parapet style tiled roof. Adjoined to the main rectangular building were sections of varying heights with flat, concrete roofs. On all aspects a small drip edge overhung from flat roof sections.
17. The main entrance of the building and extending to the east aspect consisted of covered terraces supported by structural brick columns and metal frames with cladding on upper sections of the walls and cement boarded ceilings with wooden fascia boards.
18. Potential roosting features included gaps in mortar in between stone which were present on all aspects (Figures 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), potentially leading to cavity walls. Other potential roost features included air vents present on all aspects, gaps surrounding cable entry points (Figure 8), dislodged bricks (Figure 9), potential gaps under the parapet roofs and lifted barge board at the wall joinery under the eastern terrace (Figure 10).

Figure 3 Gaps in mortar in-between bricks on the corner to the north aspect.



Figure 4 Gaps in mortar by the corner to the west aspect.



Figure 5 Gaps in mortar underneath windowsill to the south aspect.



Figure 6 Gaps in mortar and above wooden fascia boards.



Figure 7 Gaps in mortar on structural columns to the east aspect (hexagonal building).



Figure 8 Gaps surrounding electric cable entry points to the north aspect.



Figure 9 Dislodged bricks, corner to the west aspect.



Figure 10 Missing joinery flashing between the brick wall and ceiling, south aspect terrace.



Conclusion

19. Based on the potential roost features (PRF's) present, together with the Site's urban setting, the former St. Patrick's Centre building has been assessed as having low bat roost suitability.
20. Information provided by the client shows that most of proposed works are due to take place internally, with external works limited to:
 - Removal of a small ground storey unit adjoining the main building on the west aspect, measuring approximately 15m², and of negligible roost potential
 - Removal of a small ground floor derelict storage building and fenced off area measuring approximately 5m²
 - Removal of an access ramp to the northwest corner
 - Removal of a window on the second storey to the west aspect
21. None of the PRFs identified during the survey are due to be altered in any way or destroyed by the works. As a conclusion, the works can be carried out with minimum impacts to PRFs on site, but with appropriate precautionary measures in place.
22. Should the proposals change at any point, meaning that impacts on the PRFs detailed in this report, then a further survey should be carried out to establish the presence or likely absence of being used by bats, in line with best practice guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023). This should take the form of a single dusk emergence survey. Surveys should be undertaken during the active bat survey season, which runs from May to August inclusive, with September providing sub-optimal conditions.
23. In this situation, should evidence of bats be found and proposals result in impacts to bats or their roosts, a mitigation licence from Natural England is likely to be required. Further survey would likely be necessary to support a licence application.

Recommendations

Precautionary Mitigation

24. 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.
25. The removal of materials from the building should be undertaken carefully and by hand where feasible.
26. No night working should be carried out and works should end at least one hour before sunset and one hour after sunrise.
27. No security lighting should be used during the works. Permanent security lighting should use a warm white light of 2700kelvin or lower and be set on motion sensors.

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