

Bat Scoping Report

Land adjacent to 391Whalley Road, Ramsbottom

Date: 03/03/2025

By: Dominic Rigby MCIEEM

Ref: JE8556-25

Client: Mr. S. Mort

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Any future readers should note that both the physical state of the site and the relevant environmental legislation may have changed since this report.

Ecological data remains valid for up to eighteen months following the surveys.

Revision Schedule				
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Ecology Report

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March, 2025

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1. SUMMARY

Conservations Contracts Northwest Ltd. (CCNW) were contracted in February 2025 to undertake a bat scoping assessment at a land adjacent to 391 Whalley, Ramsbottom in the Manchester Combined Authority borough of Bury.

The site formed a block of vacant land at the northern end of Ramsbottom, off Whalley Road, the A56.

The site was largely composed of sealed and unsealed urban surfaces currently used as informal parking and storage for properties immediately south of the site. There were six unofficial garage/shed buildings on the 670m² plot.

Planning permission had been granted for the demolition of the existing garages and erection of two semi-detached dwellings with associated parking and providing additional off-street parking for residents of Whalley Road.

The planning permission (reference 68608) had conditioned a survey to establish the suitability and utilisation of the garages by bats.

Four of the six garages were single-skinned concrete panelled buildings, with flat roofs, the other two wooden single-skinned units, one with a pitched, felted roof.

The habitat surrounding the site was open, intensively managed pasture, separated by Whalley Road and its discontinuous ribbon development between Ramsbottom and Edenfield.

A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in February. Bats *and* their roosts were fully protected in UK and European law. The buildings were assessed as having negligible bat roost potential. No further surveys were recommended.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Principal author

This report was compiled by Dominic Rigby MCIEEM, Senior Ecologist at CCNW. He had over 35 years' professional experience in the ecology sector and held a current level two licence to survey for bats in England and a licence to disturb Barn Owls. He had the knowledge, skills and experience required to survey, disturb, handle or to carry out research works for bats in a professional capacity, as set out in CIEEM (2013) Technical Guidance Series

2.2 Guidelines

The Report followed the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines for undertaking and writing bat reports (Collins, 2023). The report considered the format and guidelines on Ecological Report Writing (Dean, 2021; CIEEM, 2017).

2.3 Client

Steven Mort (Landowner), Nigel Peel, PDP Ltd. (Architect).

2.4 Site Location and Description

Land immediately north of 391 Whalley Road, Ramsbottom, BL0 0ER

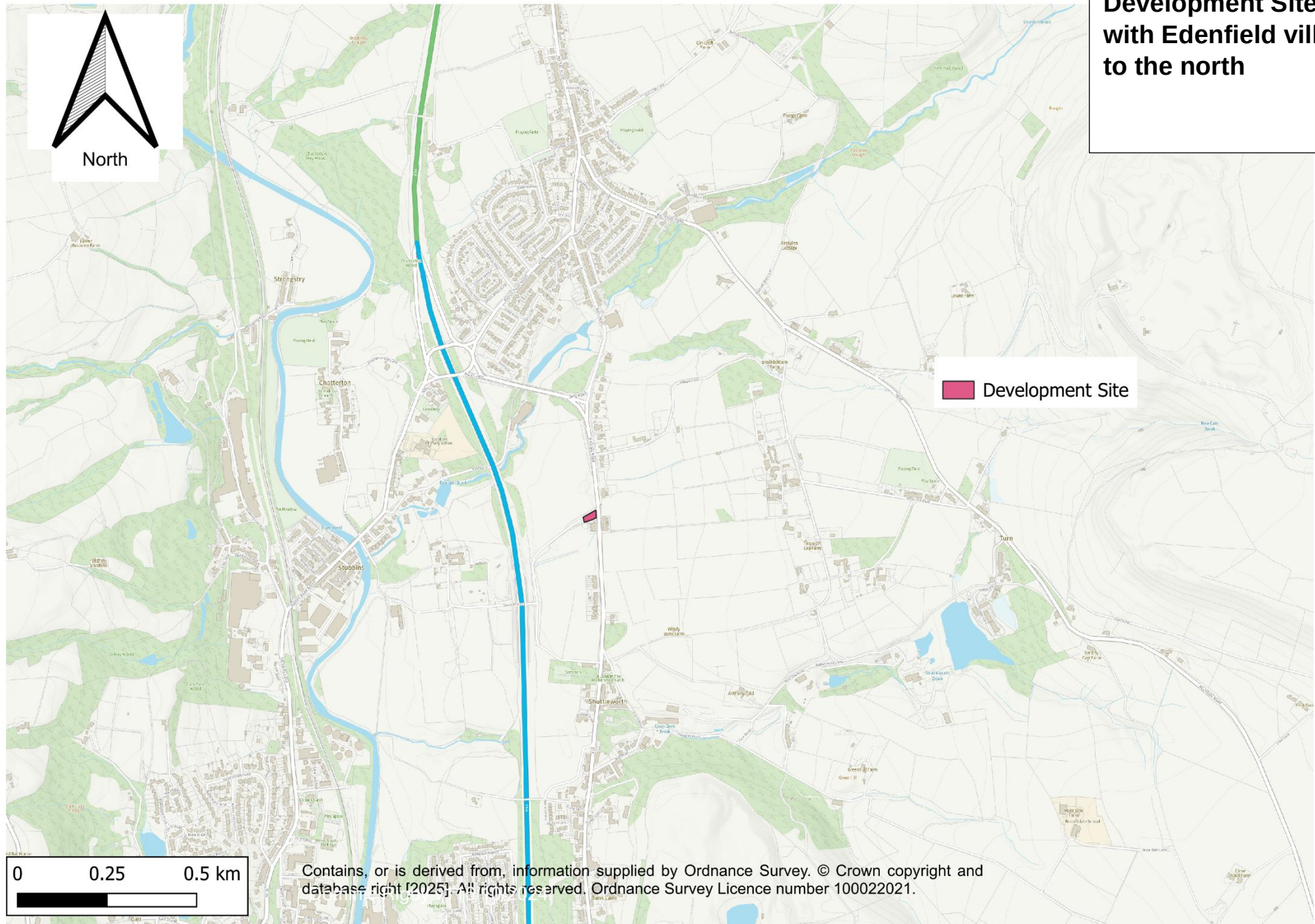
National Grid reference: SD80011817

Manchester Combined Authority borough of Bury.

The site formed a block of vacant land at the northern end of Ramsbottom, off Whalley Road, the A56. It was composed largely of sealed and unsealed urban surfaces currently used as informal parking and storage for properties immediately south of the site. There were six unofficial garage/shed buildings on the 670m² plot.

Figure One (p7, below), illustrated the site within the wider countryside.

Figure One:
Location of
Development Site,
with Edenfield village
to the north



2.5 Purpose of Report

The project proposed the demolition of existing units on site and required a bat potential roost assessment to inform any avoidance measures, mitigation and licencing required before development could proceed.

This report was compiled to inform the client of any procedures necessary regarding bats. The preliminary inspection would inform any requirement for subsequent ecological surveys, constraints and avoidance measures.

Photograph One: Units at Development Site, looking east



3. LEGISLATION, POLICY AND PLANNING

3.1 Legislation

3.1.1 European Protected Species

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Formerly The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, these provided safeguards for European Protected Sites and Species (as listed in the Habitats Directive). This had recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which continued the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

During the implementation period the 2017 Regulations would continue to be in force unamended. At the end of the implementation period the 2017 Regulations would continue to be in force but will be amended to make certain areas of the 2017 Regulations operate.

These regulations provided legal protection for European Protected Species (those listed under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive - Council Directive 92/43/EEC). With regards to European Protected Species, this made it an offence to:

Regulations made it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- deliberately disturb a bat (which included any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong);
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; or
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat or part of a bat or anything derived from a bat or any part of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Under Section 9 of the W&CA 1981 it was an offence to:

intentionally kill, injure or take any European protected species (EPS).

possess or control any live or dead EPS or anything derived from it;

intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which an EPS uses for shelter or protection;

intentionally or recklessly disturb an EPS while it is occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection;

intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used by an EPS for shelter or protection; and

sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from an EPS.

Former (post-Brexit) EPS -bats - are covered by 9 (4) b, c and 5 only.

Together however, the two aforementioned Acts resulted in a level of protection that prohibited the intentional, deliberate or reckless:

- killing, injuring, taking or disturbance of EPS;
- damaging, destroying or obstructing any place used by bats for the purposes of breeding, sheltering or protection; and,
- selling and/or advertising for sale a bat or any part thereof.

3.1.2 Other Legislation**The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006**

Section 40 of the NERC Act required that local and regional authorities had regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

3.2 Policy

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (Gov.uk, 2021 section: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, 7/2021 revision) set out the framework for planning decisions regarding ecological considerations. The relevant sections on the natural environment were paragraphs 174-188.

3.2.2 The British Standard for Biodiversity 42020:2013

British Standards Institution (2013) defined the requirements for ecological input in the planning process and illustrated how that fitted with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan of Work guidance stages. It also included suitable wording for planning conditions and other controls (e.g., Section 106 Agreements for maintenance of a building as a bat roost, or conservation agreements under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006).

3.3 Planning

3.2.1 Bury Local Plan Topic Paper 7 Natural Environment 2018

Bury Council were currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan that will guide future development in the borough. It produced a Topic Paper on Natural Environment 2018.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken, involving the collation and review of information such as designated sites and past records of protected and priority species occurring within the potential zone of influence of the development site:

- Previous bat mitigation licences using the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (Defra, 2025).
- Bat distributions were well-known to the report compiler as an active bat ecologist in the area.
- The NBN Atlas (NBN Atlas Partnership, 2025) was checked to see if any additional data sets existed within the public realm or through licence/purchase.

Aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey (OS) maps were reviewed to identify features of ecological interest surrounding the Site, nearby areas of ecological interest and features connecting these habitats (hedgerows, watercourses, railway lines). This would put the site in context.

4.2 Field Surveys

A site visit was made by Dominic Rigby (see 2.1) and colleague Gareth Lowe on 27th February 2025.

4.2.2 Species Assessment

4.2.2.4 Bats

- **Potential Roost Features in Trees**

There was tree just off the site's western boundary (viewable in Photograph One, p7). This was assessed for potential roost features using criteria in Collins (2023).

- **Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment**

A Preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was undertaken on all buildings in the block on 27th February. The PRA followed the procedure recommended in the BCT Guidelines (Collins, 2023). A visual inspection of the external features was followed by a thorough inspection of the exterior of the buildings using a high-powered torch and endoscope.

The weather was dry, still and fine.

4.5 Constraints and Implications

4.5.1 Time of Year

Bat potential roost assessments can take place at any time of year (Collins, 2023). Although direct evidence of roosting bats would be less likely to found in winter. However, that would not affect judgment regarding bat roost potential.

5. RESULTS

5.2 Habitats

5.2.1 Desk Study

There had been a bat mitigation licence to mitigate for disturbance to a Daubenton's bat roost over the River Irwell 620m west of the site.

The project site was not appropriate for Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) roosting.

5.2.2 Field Study

The off-site tree (Photograph One, p7) did not contain any potential roost features.

The PRA took place on 27th February 2025. The weather was dry, bright and still.

There were six existing buildings on the 670m² plot, with a total footprint of approximately 83m².

Four of the buildings were single-skinned flat-roofed concrete panel prefabricated units, two were wooden, with one these having a symmetrically gabled felt roof.

The following photographs and descriptions emphasised any features that were relevant to bats. **Following the PRA, all the buildings were assessed as having a negligible roost suitability.**

Figure Two below represents the units, for this report they were labelled Unit 1 to Unit 6 west to east.

Photograph Two: Unit One



Prefabricated pebbled, concrete panels, metal facias and flat roof. Poor thermal properties and no available crevices for roosting or entry points inside.

Figure Two:
**Existing block plan with 6
garages/sheds**



From PDP Ltd drawing 21-14-05

1:500 at A2, Orientation north

Photograph Three: Unit Two

Prefabricated pebbled, concrete panels, sealed wooden facias and flat roof. Poor thermal properties and no available crevices for roosting or entry points inside.

Photograph Four: Unit 2, sealed wooden facias offered no crevices for roosting bats

Photograph Five: Unit Three

Prefabricated pebbled, concrete panels, sealed plastic facias and flat roof. Poor thermal properties and no available crevices for roosting or entry points inside.

Photograph Six: Unit Four

Unit 4 was one of two wooden units. It was flat roofed and well-sealed, with no apparent entry points. The small eaves and fascias were inspected with ladder access. The eaves were clean and clear, there was no evidence of bat entrance or use (staining, smoothing, marks).

There was a longitudinal crevice running the length of both sides of this unit (Photograph Seven, below). It was inspected by endoscope, where deep enough to enable potential bat access. However, on inspection such patches were few and it deemed too shallow to be classed as offering anything but negligible potential.

Photograph Seven: Unit Four, eaves



Photograph Eight: Unit Five

Unit Five was another prefabricated pebbled, concrete panel unit, with sealed wooden facias and flat roof. Poor thermal properties and no available crevices for roosting or entry points inside.

Photographs Eight and Nine: Unit Six



Unit Six was a wooden structure with a symmetrical gabled roof. The gable ends had no overhang, but the sides did. However, these were clean with no apparent access.

The roof was F1 bitumen felt, it was in very good condition and offered no access under it.

The rear of the shed was partially covered in ivy. However, this would not have hidden any features as the remainder of the rear was visible and unsuitable for bats. There was some decay in the rear eastern-most gable-end barge board. However, ground inspection with binoculars showed this did not offer a suitable area for bats.

5.2.2.1 Bats and lighting

The site was reasonably well-lit, which will have further reduced its suitability for bats.

There was powerful main-road specification street lighting opposite the site on the A56, as well as a lighting column by Unit One and lighting from the abutting houses on to the rear of the units (Photographs Ten, Eleven and Twelve respectively).

Photographs Ten-Twelve: Lighting onto Site



6. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

No more surveys were required.

Balancing the site's rural location against the very limited opportunities for roosting within the buildings, the PRA was an assessment of "Negligible bat boost suitability".

Hibernation suitability was negligible, given the poor thermal properties of the garages/sheds.

The tree immediately west of the site had negligible bat roost potential.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

No further action was necessary regarding bats. The Units could be taken down without harming bats or disturbing roosts and there were no seasonal constraints.

8. REFERENCES

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