



Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

Star Radcliffe Academy, Spring Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 2UW

Client: Morgan Sindall Construction and Infrastructure Limited.

AMENITY TREE Ltd

WILLOW HILL COTTAGE, SCHOOL LANE BURWARDSLEY CHESTER, CH3 9NX

Tel: 01829 770075 www.amenitytree.com

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Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	1	Christopher Gaughan, Technical Director	11/07/2023
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Site Description, Location, and Development Proposals

- 1.2 Amenity Tree Care was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction (the client) to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of Spring Lane School and Coney Green Leisure Centre, Spring Lane, Radcliffe, M26 2UW (the site) centred at grid reference SD 7871 0765.
- 1.3 The survey area consists of school buildings, leisure centre facilities and adjacent woodland located within the Radcliffe area of Bury in a semi urban environment and enclosed by existing residential and commercial land uses. The Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal borders the north of the site, and the Manchester Metro Link line borders the eastern side of the site. The habitat on site comprises of scattered trees, amenity grassland, scrub and building habitat including areas of hard standing and play areas.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to establish the potential of the buildings to offer shelter and/or roost potential for bats
- 1.5 The objective of the report is to be able to assess a range of factors including a rated (low-high) potential of the buildings to offer shelter for bats, absence/presence of protected species, species affected, population numbers, potential access points, types of roost and their seasonality of use.
- 1.6 The objectives include the provision of any applicable mitigation measures and/or further survey recommendations about the extent and use of the site by protected species as is required by the current Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist best practice guidelines (Collins 2016).



Figure 1: The map shows the location of the survey area, Grid reference SD 7871 0765 Map Scale 1:2500.

2.0 Bat Survey Methodology

- 2.1 An external and internal inspection was carried out on the buildings concerning their potential use by roosting bats. The survey was undertaken following the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists' best practice guidelines (Collins 2016).
- 2.2 In summary this means an external and internal examination of the buildings was conducted looking for signs of bat use and to quantify any field signs for their ecological significance along with the buildings potential to accommodate roosting Bats.
- 2.3 The following equipment was used during the survey a high-powered LED Lenser P17.2 Torch, and Bushnell Binoculars.
- 2.4 The following signs may indicate a bat roosting within a building.
 - Droppings can be found internally within the roof spaces of buildings maybe be found externally on walls, windows sills, or below the entrances to roost sites.
 - Evidence of access and egress by bats to a roost site may include droppings below the entrance to the roost site or staining around the access to the roost site. Where bats are present in large numbers there may be evidence of urine stains.

2.5 Pre-existing Data on Local Bat Species

- 2.6 A two-kilometer desktop search was carried out using the MAGIC website which is managed by Natural England. The results showed that there are 3 no European Protected Species License issued for bats. One to the north within 300m and 2 to the south within 1km for Common Pipistrelle.

2.8 Surveyor Information

- 2.9 The Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment survey was undertaken by licensed bat surveyor Chris Gaughan (Natural England Licence Ref: 2015-14359-CLS-CLS.) on the 7th of July 2023.

2.10 Survey Limitations

- 2.11 Some external features were only viable from a distance due to the layout of the building and restricted views to potential features at height. Internal access was not possible in all areas of the buildings including roof voids due to the leisure Centre and school still currently being in use.

3.0 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential

3.1 Internal and External Survey of the Building

- 3.2 The majority of buildings on site are concrete block built with flat roofs and wooden fascias. The leisure centre has a large tower of the same construction type and numerous areas of wooden cladding in a poor state of repair, with several slate cladding areas leading from roof spaces on the upper areas of external walls.

- 3.3 Externally, the buildings contain numerous features that would be suitable habitats for roosting bats. The buildings appear to be generally well-sealed but do have several possible points of entry into them for Bats noted in the form of gaps between brick work and roofing timbers, lifted lead flashing, gaps between soffits and fascias, damaged timber cladding and warped/lifted roofing materials. No external evidence of Bats using the building were discovered in the form of concentrations of droppings below potential entry points, staining around potential entry points, and scattered droppings on external walls and features.

3.4 Foraging and commuting habitat for bats

- 3.5 An assessment was made of the habitat that surrounds the survey area and its suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Bats use key features in the landscape such as hedgerows, rivers, ponds, and woodland edges to navigate from one area to another. These features are also used by bats for foraging insects. The landscape that surrounds the site provides good habitat for commuting and foraging bats.
- 3.6 Areas of mature deciduous woodland are near the site to the east adjacent to the metrolink line, and to the west in the amenity grass area leading to the canal to the north which contain linear features such as tree lines and hedgerows which Bats may use for commuting and foraging purposes.



Figure 2: The aerial image of the site shows the location of the survey area and its context with regard to the wider landscape. The aerial image clearly shows areas of woodland, linear mature tree planting and the canal to the north containing hedgerows and trees.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Numerous potential roost features were discovered during the survey mainly consisting of external features such as lifted lead flashing and damaged roof tiles, warped and damaged soffits and fascias, gaps between roofing materials and brick work, missing and damaged pointing (see images). The buildings surveyed have been classified as having medium potential to support roosting Bats.

5.0 Further Survey Requirements and Mitigation

- 5.1 Given the buildings contain potential roost features suitable for Bats they are classified will be a requirement for a minimum of 2 separate presence/absence survey visits between the months of May and September.

6.0 Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Licenses

- 6.1 Mitigation measures and the need for Natural England licensing cannot be determined until all summer presence/absence surveys have been carried out. Should bats be found then a full mitigation statement will be needed for the planning application. In any buildings that are found to contain bats, Natural England licensing will be needed before any demolition or construction works can continue to the building, even with approved planning permission.

Appendix One – Legislation for protected species

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) [WCA] is the primary legislation for England and Wales for the protection of flora, fauna, and the countryside. Part I of the Act deals with the protection of wildlife.

Most European Protected Species offenses are now covered under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (see below), but some 'intentional' acts are still covered under the WCA, such as obstructing access to a bat roost.

The WCA prohibits the release to the wild of non-native animal species listed on Schedule 9 (e.g. Signal Crayfish and American Mink). It also prohibits planting in the wild of plants listed in Schedule 9 (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and *Rhododendron ponticum*) or otherwise deliberately causing them to grow in the wild. This is to prevent the release of invasive non-native species that could threaten our native wildlife.

The provisions relating to animals in the Act only apply to 'wild animals'; these are defined as those that are living wild or were living wild before being captured or killed. It does not apply to captive bred animals being held in captivity.

There are 'defences' provided by the WCA. These are cases where acts that would otherwise be prohibited by the legislation are permitted, such as the incidental result of a lawful operation which could not be reasonably avoided, or actions within the living areas of a dwelling house.

Licensing: certain prohibited actions under the Wildlife and Countryside Act may be undertaken under licence by the proper authority. For example, scientific study that requires capturing or disturbing protected animals can be allowed by obtaining a licence – e.g. bat surveys.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (which are the principal means by which the EC Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales) update the legislation and consolidate all the many amendments which have been made to the Regulations since they were first made in 1994.

These regulations provide for the:

- protection of European Protected Species [EPS] (animals and plants listed in Annex IV Habitats Directive which are resident in the wild in Great Britain) including bats, dormice, great crested newts, and otters;
- designation and protection of domestic and European Sites - e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] and Special Area of Conservation [SAC]; and
- adaptation of planning controls for the protection of such sites and species.

Public bodies (including the Local Planning Authority) have a duty to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in exercising their function – i.e. when determining a planning application.

There is no defence that an act was the incidental and unavoidable result of a lawful activity.

Licensing: it is possible for actions which would otherwise be an offence under the Regulations to be undertaken under licence issued by the proper authority. For example, where a European Protected Species has been identified and the development risks deliberately affecting an EPS, then a 'development licence' may be required.

Species protection

The following protected species information is relevant to this report. Legislation is only discussed in relation to planning and development; other offences may exist.

Bats

All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence inter alia to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts, then a licence will need to be obtained from Natural Resources Wales, which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats.

Photographs of Potential roost features.

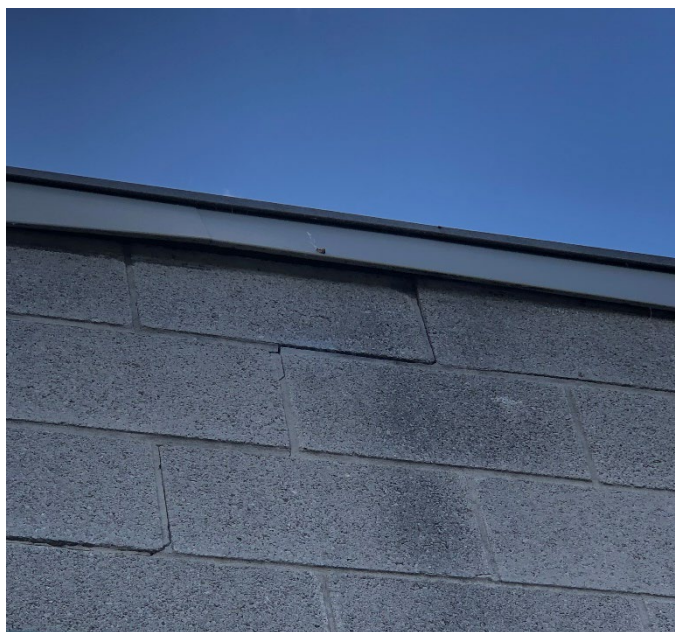


Figure 3: Gaps between brick work, soffits and fascias on north-west elevation of school building.

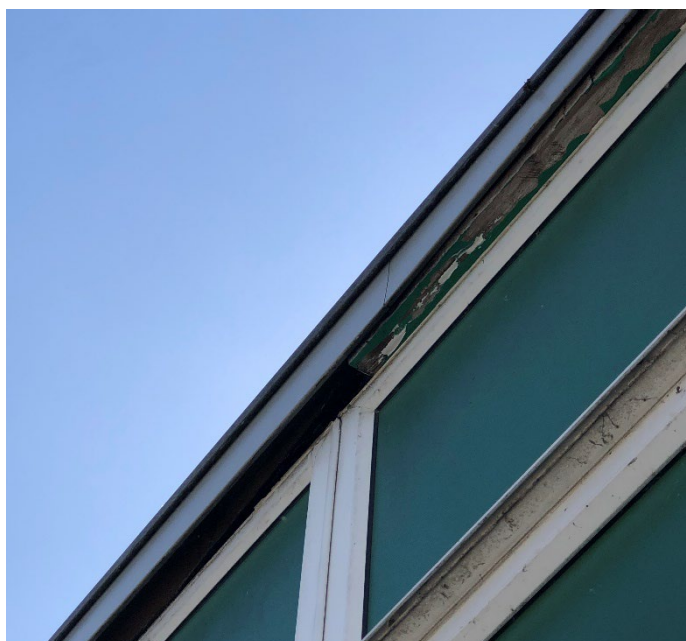


Figure 4: Gaps in fascia boards and lifted, missing/warped boards between soffit and brickwork on northern elevation of school building.



Figure 5: Missing cladding. gaps in fascia boards and felting between soffit and brickwork on southern elevation of school building in front of MUGGA area.



Figure 6: Gaps between brick, timber cladding, hung slates and fascias on south-west elevation of school building adjacent to playground area.



Figure 7: Entrance to leisure centre detailing extensive slate cladding with gaps, and fascias in poor condition with gaps between roofing materials and brickwork.



Figure 8: Western side of leisure centre entrance detailing building with wooding cladding containing numerous gaps and potential roost features.



Figure 9: Same building, image taken from northern elevation.



Figure 10: South-east elevation of leisure centre entrance with damaged fascias and cladding containing PRF's