

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Substation 3 - Fairfield General Hospital

Client:

Northern Care Alliance

Survey date:

11th February 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

Proposed development to convert an existing estates store into substation.

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Leo Plevin BSc (Hons) MSc, Senior Ecologist, an ecologist with over 8 years of experience, and holder of Natural England survey licence for bats (2023-11521-CL18-BAT) (Level 2)					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
11/02/2025	5	86	10	5	None
PRA Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey. Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.				
See PRA plan in Appendix 1, location plan in Appendix 2, proposed plans in Appendix 3 and photos in Appendix 4.					
Background and Site Location					
Summary of site and desk Study	Site context The site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 83223 11676 and has a total area of 0.049ha, encompassing all building sections and an external courtyard. The immediate surroundings of the site offer limited bat foraging and commuting opportunities, with the immediate vicinity comprised of urban infrastructure associated with the wider Fairfield General Hospital site. Higher quality habitat for bats is located to the north of the site, comprising an area of woodland with connectivity to vegetated gardens associated with residential gardens. Designations The site is not subject to any designation, and there are no known statutory sites within 1km. However, the site lies within the impact risk zone of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the wider area, the closest of which being Rochdale Canal SSSI, situated ~5.5km south-east. The proposed conversion of the building is not listed as a possible high risk in regard to these designations. Areas of Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat are present within 500m of the site. The nearest parcel of this habitat is located ~80m north. These priority habitats provide good commuting, foraging and roosting opportunities for bats. EPSL data A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. There is one EPSL for bats from within a 2km radius of site as detailed below:				

	EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
	EPSM2010-2617	Common Pipistrelle	1.5km south	Destruction of a resting place
Background No previous ecological reports have been prepared for the site, in relation to the proposed development.				
Field survey results				
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Foraging and commuting habitat No habitats are present within the site that would provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, however there is some connectivity to higher quality habitats within the wider area via scattered urban trees. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the site is connected to lines of semi-mature urban trees extending to woodland beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites. However, the site is considered to offer no suitability for foraging and commuting bats due to a lack of vegetation within the site, with semi-mature trees within proximity to the site well lit by street lighting associated with the wider Fairfield General Hospital site. This likely reduces the suitability of these features for foraging and commuting bats.			
	Roosting habitat Buildings to be impacted by the proposed development are assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats below. Only one building is present within the site (B1), this building will be impacted by the proposed development. No evidence of roosting bats was identified on or within B1.			

B1 Building description	Photographs
<i>Summary</i> B1 is split into three distinct sections as detailed below: B1a is brick-built, two-storey, with a stone facade, located on the southern elevation of B1. This building section forms the entrance porch into B1b and houses a boiler room abutting B1c. The roof is pitched and slate tiled, internally this building section is open to the ridge with no roof space present. B1a is well lit from existing street and security lighting. B1b forms the main storage building subject to development. This building section is brick-built, two-storey and connects directly to the porch section of B1a internally. The roof is pitched and slate tiled with two central dormers present. Internally this section is open to the ridge with no roof space present. B1a is well lit from existing street and security lighting. B1c is a switch room located to the east of B1a on the southern elevation of B1. It is brick-built, single storey, with a stone facade. This building section has a flat concrete roof construction. There is no connectivity internally between this building and the other sections. B1a is well lit from existing street and security lighting. Overall, B1 considered to offer Negligible roost suitability, discussed further below.	 B1a and B1c (Southern elevation)  B1b (Eastern Elevation)

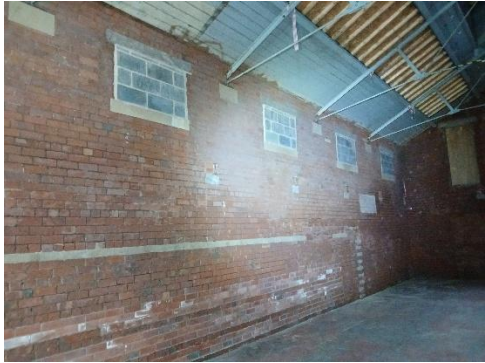
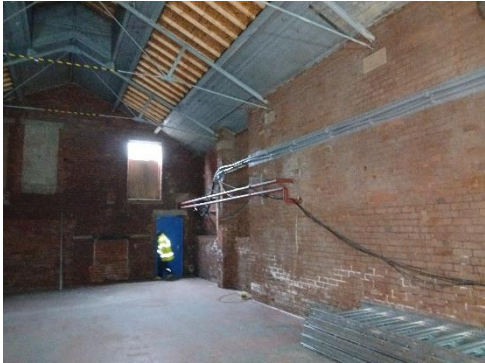
Feature	Materials	Condition/description/suitability	Photograph(s)
Walls	Brick and mortar construction	Condition/description All brick and mortared walls on all elevations are in good condition overall. Two single gaps are present adjacent to the door lintel of B1a above the access door. Additional small gaps are present on the eastern elevation where, pipework exits the building. Suitability/access/evidence of bats Overall, the exterior wall construction is well sealed with no missing mortar present. The two gaps present above the access door into B1a extend inwards above and below the steelwork, however, do not extend into the buildings internal space. These gaps are exposed to the elements and are considered unsuitable for roosting bats due to their shallow extent. Gaps in the walls where pipework exits the building allow external light to enter the internal space, however these features are cluttered with cables and pipework and would not offer suitable access for bats to enter into the internal space. No evidence of bats or bat roosting within the external walls was observed.	 Gap above steel lintel at entrance to B1a

Roof	Slate tiles on pitched sections.	Condition/description All roof tiles on all roof elevations are tightfitting and in good condition, where present. Two tiles are missing from the roof of section B1b on the southern sloping aspect; however the above tiles are tightfitting with no significant gap present due to missing tiles. Suitability/access/evidence of bats No gaps suitable for bats to enter into the buildings internal space or access between the tiles and any roof lining present have been recorded. No evidence of bats or bat roosting within the roof was observed.	 B1a roof tiles  B1b roof tiles northern elevation
------	----------------------------------	--	---

			 Missing tiles in B1b southern elevation
Eaves	Overhanging	Condition/description All roof eaves are sealed with mortar on all roof aspects, with capping stones present along the northern elevation. Suitability/access/evidence of bats No access points into eaves or capping stones are possible.	 Mortared eaves of B1a and B1c

			 Mortared capping stones on northern elevation of B1b
Window/doors/ frames	UPVC	Condition/description All windows, doors and door frames are in good condition and well-sealed where present. External doors on the eastern elevation of B1b have been boarded over, however, a section of the boarding has broken off, giving access into the internal space of the building. Suitability/access/evidence of bats The missing boarding on the eastern elevation would give bats access into the buildings internal space.	 Missing boarding at second storey doorway of B1b

Internal voids	Timber rafters and ridge beam. Open floor to ridge, sloping to eaves. Wooden OSB and sarking boarded lining present. Exposed brick walls	Condition/description The internal space of B1 is split into multiple sections, relative to the previous building sections discussed externally. B1a comprises of two sections and two-storeys, with a mezzanine second floor present above the access door. Internally the porch section of B1a extends directly into B1b. This section is open to the ridge with exposed OSB boarded roof lining and brick wall construction present. The boiler room section of B1a is separated by a locked internal door with no direct connectivity between the two sections of B1a. This section is also open to the ridge with OBS boarding and wooded sarking present, the walls of the boiler room are well sealed, however gaps extend from the boiler room into B1b where pipes have been removed. No gaps are present within the brick wall construction of B1a. The internal spaces of B1a measure approx. 6m from floor to ridge, with the mezzanine floor present at approx. 2m within the porch section, with a width of 5.8m. The porch extends 2.8m west to east, transitioning into the boiler room which extends a further 9.5m. The boiler room section of B1a is cluttered, housing heating infrastructure and stored materials. Both sections are well lit by external windows. Internal climatic conditions within B1a were 13°C 65% RH for the boiler room and 10.5°C 72% RH for the porch.	 Internal porch section of B1a  Boiler Roof section of B1a
----------------	--	--	---

		Suitability/access/evidence of bats Access points into B1a are available internally from B1b, however no suitable roosting features for bats were observed within B1a. B1b: Section B1b is a large open building which has been subject to recent soft stripping and asbestos removal (October 2024 – January 2024). The main section of B1b is open to the ridge with exposed OSB boarded roof lining and brick wall construction present. There is a small subterranean annex to the rear of B1b, which extends under an access ramp to the rear of the building. This section comprises exposed brick with a concrete ceiling which slopes from west to east. No gaps are present within the internal roof construction of B1b. Gaps are present within the internal wall construction of B1b, due to the removal of storage infrastructure and asbestos containing materials. These gaps vary in extent with some gaps present leading into B1a where pipework has been removed (PRF1), whilst others extend from the first to the second row of bricks within the external English Bond wall construction on the northern and eastern elevation (PRF2). No cavity wall is present, however a cavity is present between blockwork installed on the northern elevation, where previous louvres were present (PRF3). All PRFs were inspected via torch and endoscope during the inspection. The subterranean section of B1b is well sealed with no suitable gaps present.	 Northern elevation of B2b  Southern and eastern elevations of B1b  Subterranean section of B1b
--	--	--	--

	The internal spaces of B1b measure approx. 6m from floor to ridge with a height of 7.5m at roof dormers. The central room width is approx. 8.5m. The subterranean annex measures approx. 14m in length, with a width of 3m narrowing to 1.5m west to east. The height of this section is approx. 2m decreasing to approx. 1m. Internal climatic conditions within B1b were 10.5°C 72% RH within the main internal space and 12.3°C 77% RH for the subterranean section. No bats or evidence of roosting bats was observed within B2b. Suitability/access/evidence of bats Access into the building is available via the missing boarding at the second storey doorway on the eastern elevation. The identified PRFs (1,2 and 3) may offer suitability for crevice dwelling bats species, with the overall construction of B1b offering suitable roosting habitat for void dwelling species. These features could offer a maximum of Low suitability for roosting bats due to their extent and condition. However, having reviewed the programme of works undertaken at B1b to date including the removal of storage and heating infrastructure and asbestos containing materials (including paintwork and pipe lagging) it is considered that no PRFs or access for bats into the building was available prior to October 2024. On this basis it is considered that section B1b offers Negligible suitability for roosting bats throughout the	 Example of PRF1  Example of PRF2  PRF3
--	---	--

		summer roosting period, and that all PRFs and access points are newly created, resulting in an increase in suitability encountered during the survey. Due to the nature of the building and connectivity to the adjacent boiler room, with copper pipework running through B1b to other areas of the hospital grounds, the building is considered unsuitable for hibernating bats due to its heated nature throughout the winter and fluctuating climatic conditions compared to external temperatures. B1c is a single storey switch room, which is well sealed on all elevations and not directly connected to B1a or B1c. The internal space of B1c measure approx. 3m from floor to wooden sarking below the flat concrete roof. No void above the sarking is present. B1c. It extends approx. 6m in length and 4m in width. Internal climatic conditions within B1c were 8°C 65% RH. Suitability/access/evidence of bats B1c offers no access or suitability for roosting bats.	 Internal structure of B1b (prior to September 2024) east  Internal structure of B1b (prior to September 2024) west  B1c
--	--	--	---

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Roosting habitat [Buildings] The proposed development will include conversion of the building from an estates store to a substation. This will include the construction of internal dividing walls to separate B2b into two switch rooms and two generator rooms and associated installation of plant. Connection into the existing switch room B1c will also be required. Internal works will also include the pointing and sealing of internal walls following the soft strip and asbestos removal already undertaken. External works will include the installation of a new louvre to the eastern elevation and the sealing of existing second floor openings. No works to the existing roof construction are proposed. Works to convert the building are scheduled to commence from June 2025 to March 2026, (subject to planning permission) with the securing of the boarding / access point into the building at the second storey level scheduled to be sealed immediately following the completion of the survey due to health and safety and security concerns. Considering all PRFs and access points identified within B1b are newly created and the building considered to offer Negligible suitability for roosting bats over the summer period, prior to the soft stripping and removal of asbestos within the building, and the securing of the only access point into the building imminent. No impacts to roosting bats are anticipated as a result of the proposed works. The building is also considered to offer no suitability for hibernating bats and the sealing of the damaged boarding on the eastern elevation and removal of access into the building for bats over the hibernation period, will not impact upon any bats or bat roosts, as it is highly unlikely bats would have accessed the building over the winter period. Foraging and commuting habitat The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.
-------------------------	--

	Artificial lighting No new lighting will be installed as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Roosting habitat [Buildings] No further surveys or mitigation is required for the proposed development to proceed. Foraging and commuting habitat No further surveys or mitigation are required. Artificial lighting None required. Enhancements Due to the well-lit nature of the site by existing lighting associated with the Fairfield General Hospital site, no enhancements for bats are considered appropriate to be installed onto the building.
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Buildings No evidence of nesting birds was identified on or within any section of B1. B1 is deemed to provide negligible habitat value for nesting birds due to a lack of suitable nesting sites.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Buildings None
<i>Recommendations</i>	Buildings None

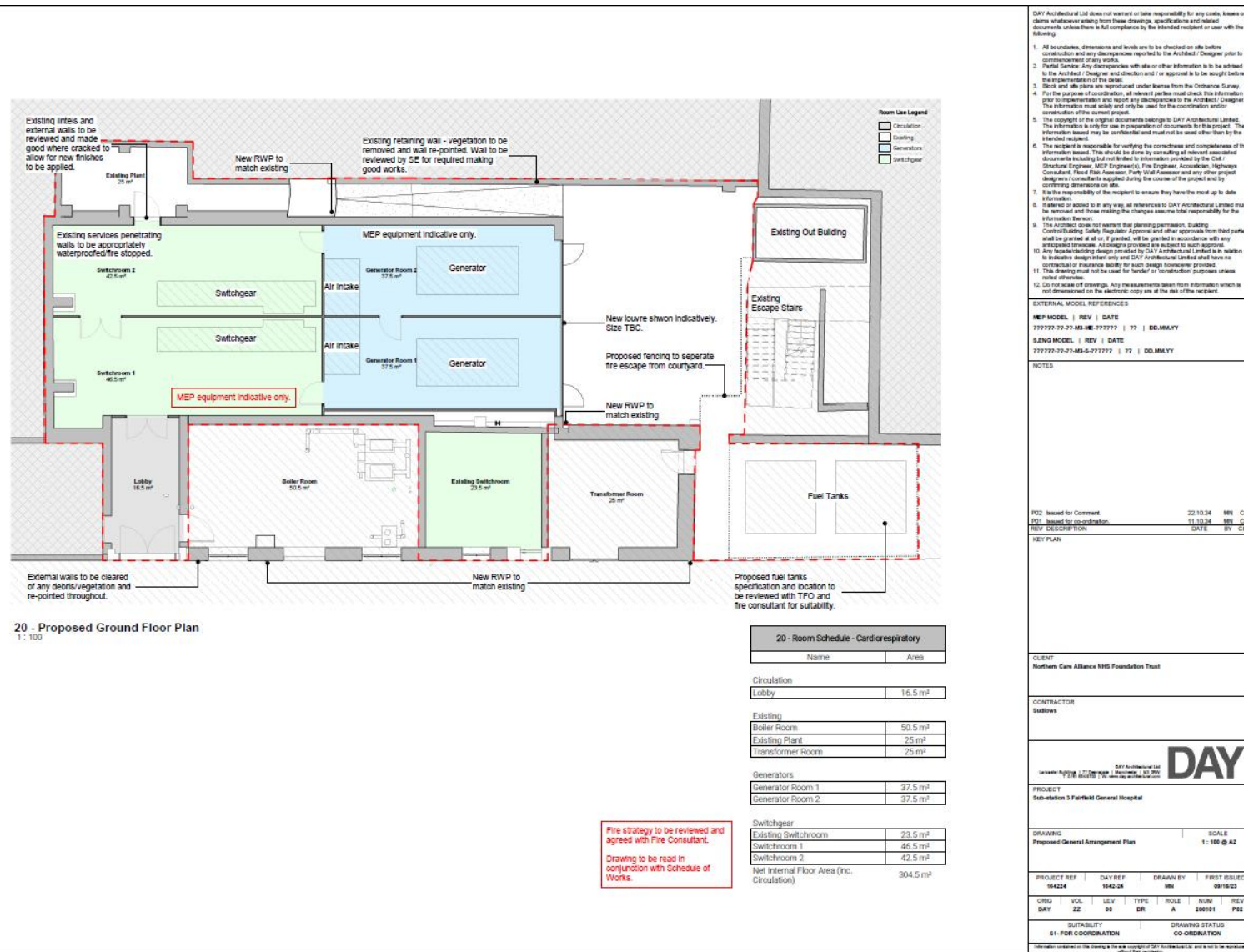
Appendix 1: PRA plan



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Limitations and Copyright

Limitations

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. Due to the location, scale and nature of the development. This information is not considered to be required.

Legal

Arbtech Consulting Limited has prepared this report for the sole use of the above-named client or their agents in accordance with our General Terms and Conditions, under which our services are performed. It is expressly stated that no other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of Arbtech Consulting Limited. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based upon information provided by third parties. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Arbtech Consulting Limited.

© This report is the copyright of Arbtech Consulting Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Leo Plevin BSc (Hons), MSc Senior Ecologist	19/02/2025
Proof	0.2	Mel Reid BSc (Hons) MRes MRSB, Senior Consultant	21/02/2025
Final	1.0	Leo Plevin BSc (Hons), MSc Senior Ecologist	21/02/2025