



BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

PROTECTED SPECIES (BAT AND NESTING BIRD) SURVEY
OF
RECREATIONAL BUILDING AT REDBANK PLAYING FIELDS
UNSWORTH STREET
RADCLIFFE
MANCHESTER

A report to:

Surfacing Standards Limited

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Report to:	Surfacing Standards Ltd
Report Title:	Protected Species (Bat and Nesting Bird) Survey of Recreational Outbuilding at Redbank Playing Fields

Survey Site/Job:	Redbank Playing Fields, Unsworth Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 3RF
OS Grid Reference:	SD 7766 0764

Survey Date(s):	20 th October 2022
Surveyed by:	Mr Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM

Architect/Agent:	Surfacing Standards Ltd
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RELIANCE - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) *On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* CIEEM.

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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Ltd on behalf of Surfacing Standards Ltd. The report provides the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) of the recreational outbuilding located at Redbank Playing Fields, Unsworth Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 3RF. The survey building is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SD 7766 0764.

The proposal is to demolish the recreational outbuilding.

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the visual inspection. The outbuilding is in reasonable structural condition and no suitable features were located that would appeal to roosting bats.

The PBRA survey determined that the outbuilding did not contain features for roosting bats and was assessed/categorised as being of “Negligible Bat Roosting Potential” as per the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016), and therefore no further surveys were recommended.

No evidence of breeding birds was found associated with the building during the survey although, gaps suitable for nesting birds were located; therefore, the demolition works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (typically March to August). Or alternatively, a precautionary approach has been provided within this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Surfacing Standards Limited on behalf of the site owners.

The report provides the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment of the recreational outbuilding located at Redbank Playing Fields, Unsworth Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 3RF. The survey building is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SD 7766 0764.

The legislation with regard to bats (*Chiroptera*) is listed below.

1.1 Legislation applicable to bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations'). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat. It is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, to reproduce, to nurture their young, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate. Under this legislation development work that could affect a bat or bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural England.

Licences in respect of European Protected Species affected by development can be granted under Section 55(2) (e) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019), for the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Under section 55(9) of the Regulations licences can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative to the work specification
- and the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural England aim to process EPS licence applications within 35 working days of receipt and Low Impact Class licenses are typically registered within 14 working days of receipt.

1.2 Legislation applicable to birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all native birds and their nests, whilst in use, are protected from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season. To avoid conflict, development work that could affect breeding birds should be timed to take place outside of the breeding season, variable between March and September. Note that a nest is protected from the beginning of its construction until the young have fledged and have left the nest.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location of the building



Figure 1: The situation of the site, encircled in red, in relation to the surrounding landscape, courtesy of Google Earth.

The building is situated on the southwest edge of a series of large playing fields (Redbank playing fields), within the urban market town of Radcliffe in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, Greater Manchester. Immediately to the west of the site is Unsworth Street (a busy road), the south consists of a local shop and hardstanding car park, the north and east is open amenity grassland. The wider landscape is predominantly residential housing interspersed with recreational greenspaces and urban infrastructure.

There are few trees around the site which would add cover and connectivity for roosting bats. Habitats of value to bats in terms of providing foraging and roosting opportunities include interconnecting canopy from several mature trees on the opposite side of Unsworth St (west), leading north to the park and waterbody. The nearest water source is approximately 300 metres northwest, a series of three ponds within a local park. The local nature reserve of Chapelfield, a triangular shaped reservoir is approximately 1.5 km southeast from the site. Ash Clough a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (designated for its complex of geological uniqueness and river) lies 1.6 km to the southwest.

In summary, the immediate area is of poor quality although the wider area may provide reasonable foraging/commuting habitat for light tolerant bat species within the local range.

A search of the Magic Map application for previously granted European Protected Species Derogation Licences within a 2 km radius of the site identified three previous granted EPS licences.

Licence number: EPSM 2009-1596 destruction of a Maternity roost of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) dated 3rd of February 2010 approximately 1.8 km southeast of the site.

Licence number: 2015-15221-EPS-BDX destruction of a Maternity roost of Common pipistrelle dated 15th September 2015 approximately 1.3 km east of the site.

Licence number: 2018-37079-EPS-MIT destruction of a roost of Common pipistrelle dated 21st September 2018 approximately 1.0 km south of the site.

2.2 Description of the building

The recreational outbuilding is a single storey detached structure constructed of a mixture of pre-cast concrete framework and brickwork extension to create a connected toilet block with an overall L-shaped footprint.

The gabled roof is supported by wooden joists mainly lined with timber sarking to the underside; bitumen felt covers the exterior of the roof.

The interior of the building is divided into several compartments, a changing room, storage area, kitchen, and a toilet block. Access into the storage area and kitchen is via an east or west gable end roller-shutter door, with a tight-fitting canopy cover. The extension is accessed via the east elevation wooden door, also sealed with a roller-metal shutter, access into the toilets is via tight fitting timber doors at the south elevation. Tight fitting fascia boarding is located to all elevations above the brickwork extension.

There are gaps suitable for nesting birds located at the corners of the cast concrete building, where concrete has degraded and fallen away.



Photograph 1: The east and south aspect of the building (pre-cast concrete structure).



Photograph 2: The west elevations of the building.



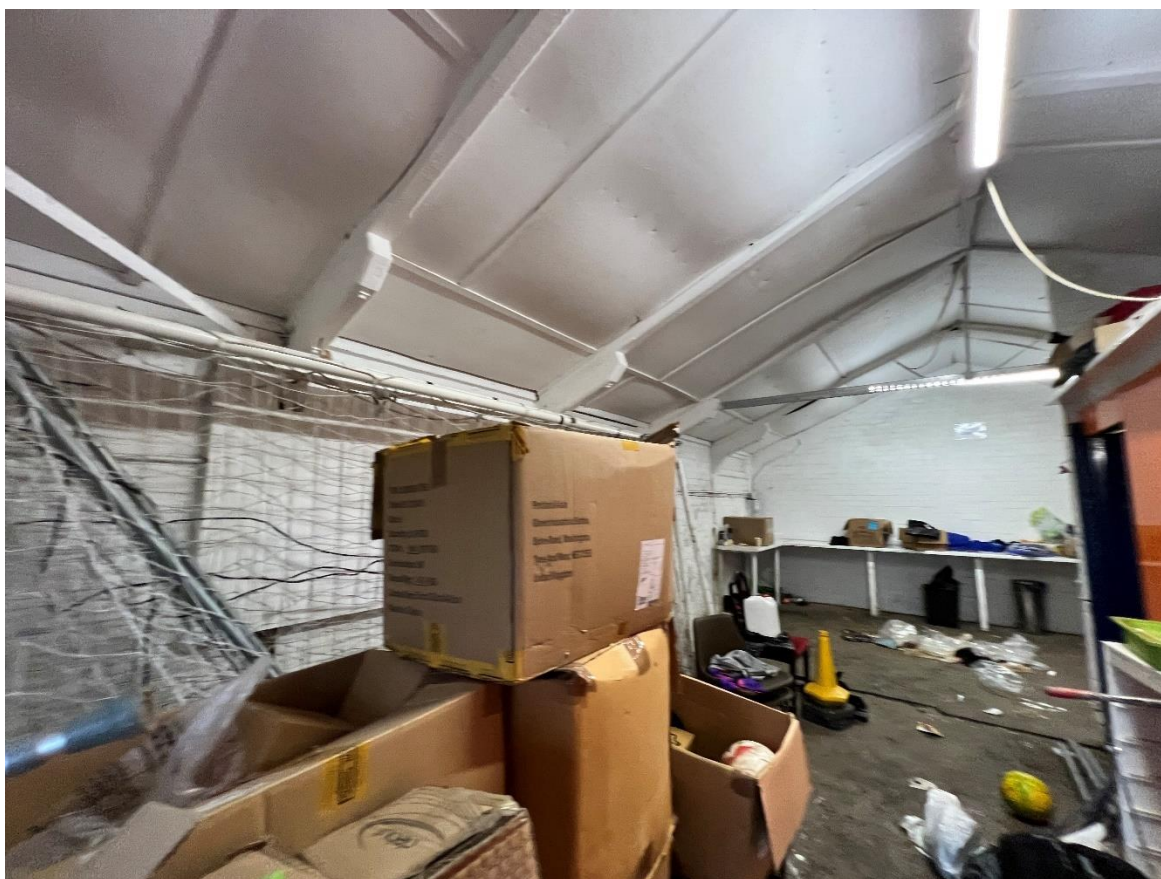
Photograph 3: The east elevation of the extension.



Photograph 4: The south elevation of the extension (toilet block).



Photograph 5: Internal roofing structure of the changing area.



Photograph 6: The internal roof structure showing the wooden sarking in the storage/kitchen area.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop study

The desktop study involved interrogating web-based resources. The following resources were examined:

- MAGIC - Multi-Agency Geographic Information website for maps of statutory designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the survey area (www.magic.gov.uk) and previously Granted European Protected Species Applications for Bats.

3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken to the building on site. This survey was completed in accordance with the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016), comprising a visual inspection of the building (formerly referred to as a bat scoping survey) as part of the ecological assessment of the potential development footprint.

The methodology included examining the building for potential roost features and assessing the likelihood of these features being used by bats. This included searching for evidence of bat roosting in the form of feeding remains, droppings, staining, worn surfaces and the bats themselves (alive or dead).

Equipment used included a powerful torch, collapsible ladders, camera, and binoculars.

3.3 Survey constraints

The survey was undertaken outside of the main bat survey season of May to August/September inclusive. Any evidence of bats may be removed by the actions of water and wind.

Overall, there were no significant limitations given the aims of the survey

3.4 Personnel

The ecology walkover and the preliminary bat roost assessment were undertaken by B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited on the 20th of October 2022. The survey was carried out by Mr Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (Bat Licence: 2020-49905-CLS-CLS) assisted by Mrs Andrea Lee.

3.5 Survey intensity

The results of the preliminary roost assessment determined the building to be of negligible potential of supporting roosting bats and consequently no further surveys are recommended to be undertaken in accordance with the national survey guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016).

3.6 Breeding birds scoping survey

Features that had potential to support nesting birds were recorded along with any breeding bird activity observed during the visual inspection.

3.7 Other protected species

An ecological walkover of the area immediately surrounding the outbuilding was carried out to assess the habitat for other protected species.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results

No evidence of use by bats was found during the visual inspection. The recreational outbuilding is in reasonable structural condition and lacks niches and crevices that would appeal to roosting bats. Access points into the building are tight fitting along with the roof covering (bitumen felt) resulting in a lack of access to the interior.

The immediate area is of poor quality, although the wider area may provide reasonable foraging/commuting habitat for light tolerant bat species within the local range.

The outbuilding was assessed as being of Negligible Potential for Bats.

4.2 Scoping survey results: breeding birds

The prefabricated outbuilding contains features that may be suitable for small nesting birds, these are located at the corners of the pre-cast concrete building, at the points where concrete has degraded and fallen away.

4.3 Scoping survey results: other protected species

No evidence of other protected species was found during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape.

5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats in building to be demolished

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, the assessment is that the proposed demolition will have a negligible impact on bats in the local area.

No further surveys are required.

Please note that although **no** bats were found during these surveys there remains a very low risk of a bat being found during the demolition activity.

To ensure all eventualities are covered, there is a procedure included in Appendix 2 that must be kept in the Site Office and be part of the induction for all workers on site.

5.2 Breeding birds

Due to the presence of suitable features suitable for nesting birds within the structure of the building, it is recommended that the demolition of the recreational outbuilding is undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (typically March to August inclusively).

If works are required within the breeding bird season, between March and September, then the following should be implemented:

- Prior to the commencement of works, the building should be thoroughly searched for nesting birds in advance of commencement. If a bird's nest is found the ecologist should be contacted without delay.
- Until advised otherwise, the nest should remain undisturbed and a 5m buffer zone should be created around the nest including above and below it. The zone around the nest site is to remain free of construction activities and disturbance until the young have fledged and left. Note that a bird's nest is protected by law from the commencement of the building of the nest until the young have fledged and left the nest.

5.3 Other protected species

No evidence of other protected species was found during the visual inspection of the surrounding landscape; therefore, no further action is required.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed) (2016) **Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition**, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE IF A BAT IS DISCOVERED DURING WORKS

- If at any point in the building works bats are discovered then contractors must stop work immediately and telephone BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors on 01636 830058 or 07887361487.
- B J Collins PSS will either provide an appropriately licensed bat worker to the site or provide a member of staff who will liaise directly with the contractor. Actions will then be taken following advice given. This may include removal of bats, but only where the bat ecologist considers this to be a viable and safe option.
- Bats are a protected species and there should be no attempt to handle a bat if discovered. The bat should be covered with a light material (cloth) and the bat worker called out to carry out the rescue.
- Only when the bat ecologist is satisfied that the risk to bats is ceased will works recommence.
- Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then works will be stopped until they can be supervised by an appropriately licensed bat worker.
- If a bat is found under a tile or within any other niche to the building fabric, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants and should not be a fibreglass-based material.