

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Old Ambulance Station
Cemetery Road
Ramsbottom
BL0 9PU

For
Gary McDonald



Gritstone Ecology

Contents

- 1. Introduction2
- 2. Methods4
- 3. Results6
- 4. Evaluation8
- 5. Impact assessment9
- 6. Required actions9
- 7. References10
- 8. Appendix 1 – Photographs11



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Gary McDonald. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of The Old Ambulance Station, Cemetery Road, Ramsbottom, on 22nd October 2025. The survey was completed to inform a planning application at the site.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 15 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the demolition of the existing building, and the construction of new residential units, with associated landscaping works.

1.5. Site context

The site is located on Cemetery Road, Ramsbottom, BL0 9PU, GR SD 78465 15729, adjacent to Ramsbottom Cemetery. The site is surrounded by suburban houses and gardens to the west, with mature trees and open green-space to the east.

The site includes a pre-1970's single-storey former ambulance station, with trees and shrubs, amenity grassland, and areas of hard landscaping.

Habitat within 50m of the building includes; houses, linked back gardens, mature trees, areas of open green-space, concrete hard-standing, and busy well-lit roads.

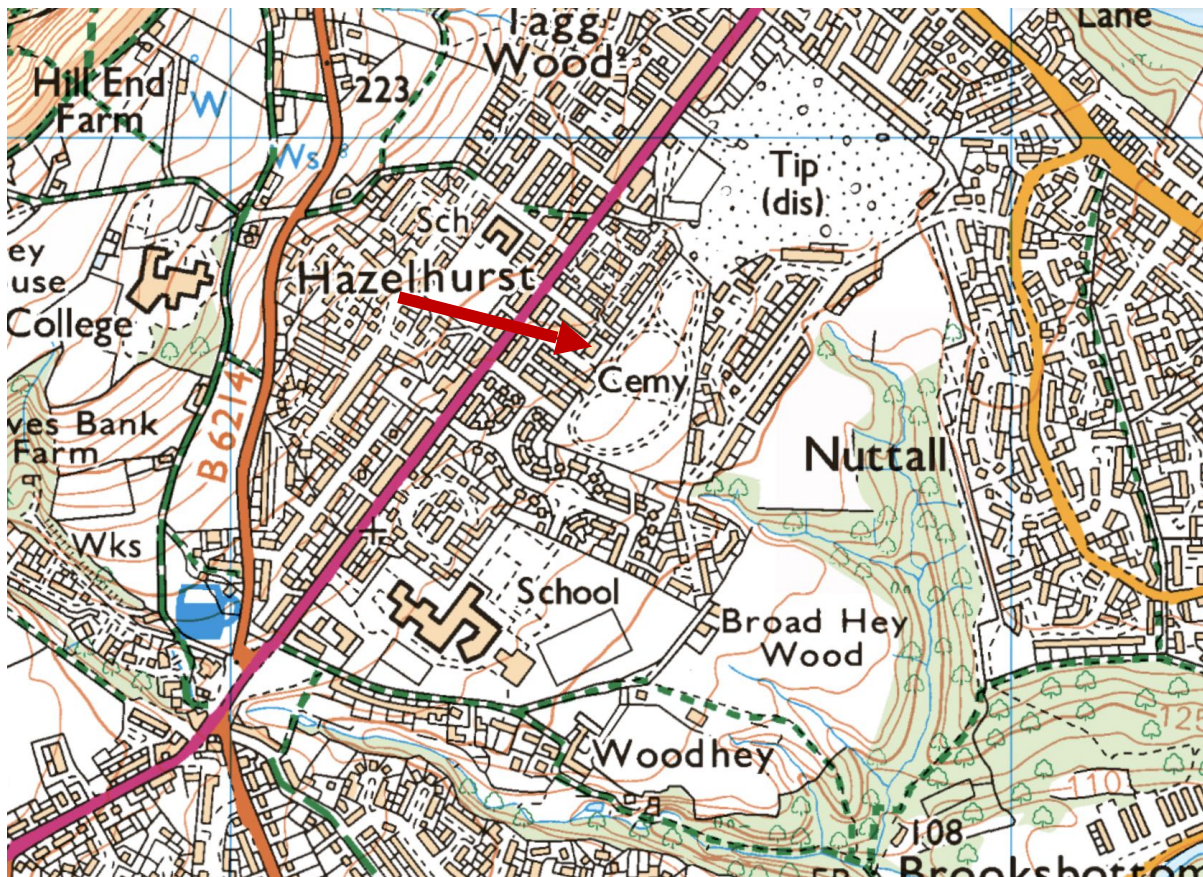
Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, sports pitches and other areas of open green-space, hedgerows, mature trees, blocks of woodland, ponds, and watercourses.

Mature trees, areas of open green-space locally, and linked back gardens, potentially provide good quality foraging opportunities for bats. However, the area to the west in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

The site and immediate surrounding area provide moderate quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats; with higher quality and less disturbed habitat around Ramsbottom Cemetery to the east, and along The River Irwell Valley 1km to the southeast.



1.6. Site location



1.6a – The Old Ambulance Station - Ramsbottom - site location.



1.6b – The Old Ambulance Station - Ramsbottom - aerial photograph.



2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 22nd October 2025. Weather conditions during the survey were overcast and mild with some showers, and a temperature of 12°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.



Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

Additionally a camera drone was used to inspect the roof in detail.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All areas of the building were inspected in detail. The building inspection was completed in October, when bats are less active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are less likely to be present.



3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – Looking west toward the building.

The Old Ambulance Station, Ramsbottom, is a pre-1970's built former ambulance station, which is currently unused, and has been unoccupied for a number of years. It has a flat concrete roof, covered with bitumen felt. Bitumen flashing is fitted at the base of chimneys & flues. There are no fascia boards or soffits fitted at the eaves.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity, lintels are concrete, sills are UPVC; window and door frames are UPVC, glass is largely intact, although some windows have been broken. Windows and doors have been secured with vented steel security shutters, which were removed to allow the inspection. The former ambulance bays have roller shutter doors, which are intact, and have been secured with steel shutters.

The building is in deteriorating condition. Roofing felt has become damaged in some areas, although there are no holes or gaps which could give access to the inside of the building or into wall cavities. There are no gaps between the underside of the concrete roof and brickwork. Walls are in generally good condition with no missing mortar or cracks in brickwork. Window and door frames are securely fitted, gaps around the frames are filled with sealant.

Steel shutters which are fitted over doors and windows ensure that there are no gaps around windows and doors.

There are no features externally which are suitable to be used by roosting bats, and no indications of use by bats were present during the inspection.



3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – Inside the ambulance bays.

Internally the building can be split into three sections; the ambulance bays, the boiler room, and the offices. The building has no enclosed roof voids. Walls are painted brickwork

The ambulance bays are a single open space with painted brick walls, and a concrete roof with supporting steel beams, and no enclosed areas. The boiler room has bare brick walls, and a concrete roof, with no enclosed areas. The offices have painted brick walls, and are divided into a number of rooms which are well lit by natural light.

Damage to the roof has allowed water ingress into the building and internally the building is in poor condition. However, there are no voids or crevices which are suitable for use by roosting bats.

At the time of the building inspection the building had not been disturbed for a number of years.

3.3. Trees

There are two mature trees within the site boundary which were inspected from ground level using binoculars and a torch. A mature oak tree adjacent Cemetery Road is approximately 12m in height, with a DBH of 45cm. A semi-mature sycamore on the western site boundary is approximately 8m in height with a DBH of 40cm. The trees have no features suitable for use by roosting bats.



3.4. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the building inspection, either internally, or externally.

3.5. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is in reasonable condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection. Trees on site have no features suitable for use by roosting bats.

4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides moderate quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, and bats are likely to be present locally.

Trees, areas of open green-space, and linked back gardens locally provide foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is fragmented by light and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. However, the building is well-sealed, and has no features which are suitable for use by roosting bats.

The area to the north in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building has been unused for a number of years and is in deteriorating condition. However, there are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; there are no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The lack of any indications of use inside the building, such as bat droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the building, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist. Particularly as the building has no roof voids, and was undisturbed prior to inspection.

The building has a solid concrete roof, covered with bitumen felt. Roofing materials are in generally good condition, although there are some areas of damaged felt. However, there are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity. Brickwork and mortar are in good condition, with no cracks or gaps which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the walls, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

The concrete roof is sealed tightly against brickwork at the eaves, with no suitable gaps between materials.

Trees on site were inspected from ground level using binoculars and a powerful torch. The trees have no features suitable for use by roosting bats.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.



4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats were roosting in the building, the proposed works would likely impact bats or bat roosts.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the demolition of the existing building, and the construction of new residential units, with associated landscaping works.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats and has negligible suitability for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.



7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The east side of the building.



2 – The south side of the building, from Cemetery Road.





3 – There are small areas of damaged roofing felt but no viable gaps between materials.



4 – Bitumen flashing is fitted tightly around chimneys and flues with no suitable gaps.





5 – There are no fascia boards at the eaves.



6 – There are no gaps between brickwork and the concrete roof.





7 – Window and door frames are tightly sealed into walls with no suitable gaps.



8 – Internally the offices are well lit by natural light and have been damaged by water.





9 – The ambulance bays have painted brick walls with no roof void.



10 – The boiler room has bare brick walls, and a concrete roof.

