



ROAVR | GROUP

Project: 25_PRA_02_67
Site: Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX
Client: Subhan Saleem



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Project Number:	25_PRA_02_67
Report Type:	Preliminary Roost Assessment Report [PRA] Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW)
Site Address:	Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX

Role:	Name:	Position:	Date:
Surveyor	Alex Barnes	Ecologist	3/3/25
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Revision History		
Date:	Version number:	Summary of changes:
21/3/25	1.0	First Draft
21/3/25	1.0	First Issue

Summary:

ROAVR Group were appointed by Subhan Saleem to undertake a preliminary roost assessment survey and report at Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX.

The proposed development involves the conversion and extension of the existing residential dwelling into the adjoining barn/storage area, currently utilised as a workshop. This will integrate the structure into the primary living space, facilitating an expansion of habitable accommodation while retaining the overall footprint of the building..

Before visiting the site, a desk study was undertaken in order to determine records of local designated sites, habitats and bat species within a 2km of the proposed development. Data was sourced via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (DEFRA MAGIC) on the 18th March 2025, at this stage, and due to the size of the proposed development a further Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) search was not deemed necessary.

A site survey was carried out by Alex Barnes on the 3rd March 2025 under the guidance provided within Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023). Alex Barnes has continuous experience carrying out preliminary roost assessments and nocturnal bat activity surveys under supervision from a licensed ecologist.

The survey site comprises a two-storey detached residential dwelling (B1) with an adjoining barn/storage area, situated within a mixed hard and soft landscaped plot. The western section of B1 is a habitable living space, while the eastern section consists of an older barn/storage area, which appears to be in regular use for general storage and workshop activities. A detached two-car garage (B2) is located within the site, constructed in a similar style to the main dwelling. The site is accessed via a wrap-around cobblestone driveway, which encircles the property and provides vehicular access to both buildings.

Three distinct soft landscape areas are present, featuring patches of bare soil due to recent construction activity, along with some mature tree cover. Notably, a mature Manchester poplar (T1) stands adjacent to the site access, with a cavity at approximately five metres on a pruned limb. The surrounding environment consists primarily of residential dwellings, with some retained mature trees and hedgerows providing potential ecological connectivity.

An internal and external examination discovered two known potential roosting features on the northern and eastern elevations of B1, and a PRF-I feature found on T1. No potential roosting features were seen on B2. No known evidence of bats was seen within the void space. B1 was assessed as holding low potential for roosting bats and B2 was assessed as holding negligible potential.

Located close to the Skye Brook (170m to the north of the site) and bordered by residential properties with attached private gardens as well as Skye Woods 230m to the east there is the moderate potential for foraging bats to sporadically and opportunistically utilise the property through the adjacent linking gardens . Two EPSM licences have been granted within 2km of the site for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats.

One nocturnal emergence survey is recommended as per the guidance located within Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition) Collins, J. (Ed.) 2023.

With the assumption that the existing conditions on-site remain unchanged. The results of this report are likely to remain valid for 12-months inline with the guidance published by CIEEM and the Bat Conservation Trust.

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Acknowledgements:

Data referred to within this report has been sourced from Natural England Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (DEFRA MAGIC) database, NBN Atlas.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ROAVR Group were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost and daytime bat walkover survey at Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX.
- 1.2 The survey was comprised of a desktop study, which was undertaken before the site visit and a site survey, which was carried out by Alex Barnes on 2025-03-03.
- 1.3 The methodology and results are outlined within the report. Where applicable, recommendations for suitable mitigation and ecological enhancements are provided.
- 1.4 The report is to be submitted to support a planning application to renovate the site. Full details of the proposed development are available in the planning portal.
- 1.5 The information and recommendations within this report have been prepared and provided in accordance with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.6 The survey site covers an area of approximately 3337.7 sqm and is centred on grid reference SD 8975 1562.
- 1.7 The survey site comprises a two-storey detached residential dwelling (B1) with an adjoining barn/storage area, situated within a mixed hard and soft landscaped plot. The western section of B1 is a habitable living space, while the eastern section consists of an older barn/storage area, which appears to be in regular use for general storage and workshop activities. A detached two-car garage (B2) is located within the site, constructed in a similar style to the main dwelling. The site is accessed via a wrap-around cobblestone driveway, which encircles the property and provides vehicular access to both buildings.

Three distinct soft landscape areas (HAB2) are present, featuring patches of bare soil due to recent construction activity, along with some mature tree cover. Notably, a mature Manchester poplar (T1) stands adjacent to the site access, with a cavity at approximately five metres on a pruned limb.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 1.9 The proposed development involves the conversion and extension of the existing residential dwelling into the adjoining barn/storage area, currently utilised as a workshop. This will integrate the structure into the primary living space, facilitating an expansion of habitable accommodation while retaining the overall footprint of the building..

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

- 1.10 All UK bat species and their roosts are strictly protected under European and UK legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (CHSR), and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, (1981) (WCA). Furthermore, Annex II of the Habitats Directive lists four UK bat species, providing them further protection. Under the National Planning Framework, bats and their roots must be considered during development.
- 1.11 Non-licensed bat workers are permitted to carry out preliminary roost assessments providing that they do not enter a known roost site or use invasive survey techniques such as endoscopes or artificial light. Survey constraints are discussed later in this report.

SCOPE OF WORKS

- 1.12 The aims of this assessment were to:
- Assess the presence/potential for roosting bats within the existing building;
 - Identify potential access/egress points for bat species;
 - Assess potential habitat usage for foraging/commuting bats on-site;
 - Determine whether further Bat Surveys may be necessary;
 - Provide recommendations for suitable mitigation and ecological enhancement (if required).



Figure 1 - Site Location Plan and Assessment Boundary.

2 Methodology

DESKTOP STUDY

- 2.1 Site-specific information in relation to land designations, bat species and protected habitats within a 2km zone of influence (Zoi) was sourced from DEFRA MAGIC.
- 2.2 In order to ensure that ecological data searches were up to date, species data was screened and all data records pre-2012 were omitted from the results.
- 2.3 Results of the desktop study should be considered to be indicative only.

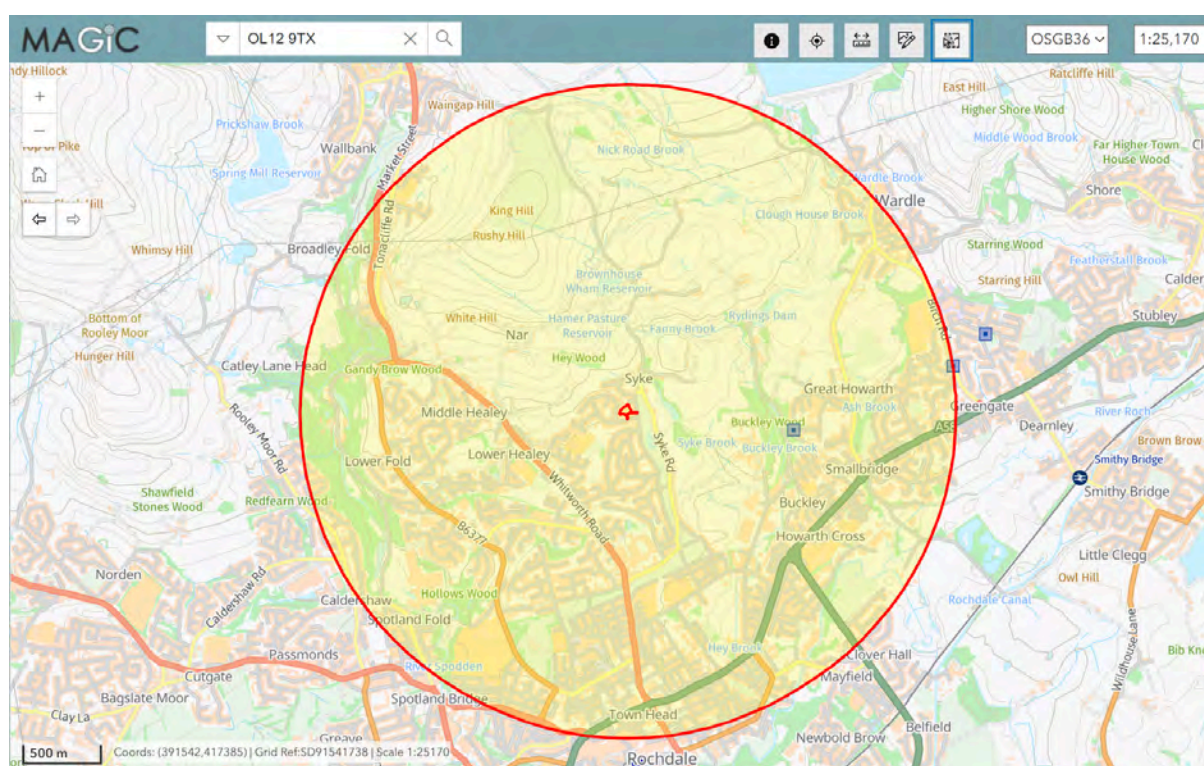


Figure 2 - EPSL licences granted within 2km ZOI.

Licence number	Date of Issue	Species listed on licence
2016-19740-EPS-MIT-1	1st April 2016 - 1 km E of the site.	Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)
2016-19740-EPS-MIT-2	20th June 2016 - 1.8km E of the site.	Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)

Table 2.3.1 - Details of granted EPSM licences (DEFRA MAGIC, 2025).

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

- 2.4 A Preliminary Roost (PRA) assessment was undertaken by Alex Barnes on 03/03/25. The PRA was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition) Collins, J. (Ed.) 2023.
- 2.5 The survey included an active search for evidence of roosting bats such as droppings, feeding remains, oil staining, bat fur and/or scratch marks. The survey also assessed the building for suitable Potential Roosting Features (PRF).
- 2.6 The survey was conducted from the ground and from the air using a GPS enabled DJI Mavic Mini 3 Pro drone operated by a CAA approved operator.

SPECIES POTENTIAL

- 2.7 The potential for roosting bats within building B1 & B2 and foraging/commuting bats within the existing habitats was assigned a rank as per Table 2.7.1. An assessment was carried out using data collected during both the desktop study and site survey.

Table 2.7.1: Criteria used to assess the likelihood of occurrence (site's suitability) for bats, from Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) (Table 4.1.)

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting bats	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available for foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats but isolated (i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat). Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats for foraging such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only - with respect to roost type only).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used for bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitats. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Table 2.7.2: Potential roosting features (PRFs) in trees listed in Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) Table 6.6.

Table 2.7.2. PRF types that can be exploited by bats and how they form (adapted from Bat Roosts in Trees, BTHK, 2018) reproduced from Table 6.6. (Collins, 2023.)		
PRFs formed by disease and decay	PRFs formed by damage	PRFs formed by association
• Woodpecker holes • Squirrel holes • Knot holes • Pruning cuts • Tear outs • Wounds • Cankers • Compression forks • Butt rots	• Lightning strikes • Hazard beams • Subsidence • Cracks • Shearing cracks • Transverse snaps • Welds • Lifting bark • Desiccation • Fissures • Frost cracks	• Fluting • Ivy

Table 2.7.3. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.reproduced from Table 6.6. (Collins, 2023.)	
Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

- 2.8 An evaluation of the potential impacts to roosting and foraging/commuting bats caused by the proposed development was made with reference to the the 'Bat Mitigation Guidelines' (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) and CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018).

LIMITATIONS

- 2.9 The site surveyor does not currently hold a bat licence. However, this is not seen as a major limitation as no licensable activities were thought to be needed to fully evaluate the building.
- 2.10 With the assumption that the existing conditions on-site remain unchanged. The results of this report are likely to remain valid for 12-months inline with the guidance published by CIEEM and the Bat Conservation Trust.

3 Desktop Study

BAT ECOLOGY AND LEGISLATION

- 3.1 Several bat species have been recorded within 2km of the site including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*); Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). In order to obtain this information, a record search of NBN Atlas and DEFRA were undertaken prior to the site visit.
- 3.2 All species of bats in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, which prohibits the intentional or reckless disturbance, harm, or destruction of bats and their habitats. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 implements the EU Habitats Directive in the UK, providing even more stringent protections. This means it is an offence to deliberately capture, kill, or disturb bats, or to damage, destroy, or obstruct access to their roosts.
- 3.3 Specific licences may be granted for certain activities that might otherwise be considered offences under these regulations, such as building developments or research projects, but these are typically accompanied by requirements for mitigation and compensation measures to protect the bat populations. It is essential to maintain compliance with these legislations to conserve the bat populations.
- 3.4 All bat species are also a Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. The Rochdale Unitary Development Plan provides advice on the design of development proposals and reference should be made to its policies 'NE/3 Biodiversity and Development & NE/4 Protected Species'.

SITE DESIGNATIONS

3.5 There are no designated sites within the 2km of the proposed development, there is one Local Nature Reserve and the site falls within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone (Table 3.5.1).

Table 3.5.1: Statutory and non-statutory designated sites recorded within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)	Notes.
Healey Dell LNR	SD 8822 1602	26.4	1.5 km	Beauty spot and wildlife sanctuary rich in industrial archaeology, two miles from Rochdale town centre on the way to Whitworth and Bacup. The River Spodden has carved its way through the woodlands through thousands of years, creating delightful scenery and spectacular waterfalls which once powered ancient corn, wool and cotton mills. A disused 1800s railway line is now a nature trail with magnificent views from a 100-foot high viaduct.
SSSI Impact Risk Zones	NA	NA	0 km	NA

*Data from DEFRA MAGIC.

LOCAL HABITAT

- 3.6 The site offers limited but potentially valuable foraging habitat for bats, primarily associated with the mature trees and hedgerows present within and around the property. A mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) stands near the site entrance, providing a source of sheltered forage and habitat connectivity. The hedgerows surrounding the site, composed of species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), and elder (*Sambucus nigra*), offer further foraging opportunities and a commuting corridor for bats moving through the area.

The soft landscape areas contain patches of bare soil due to recent ground disturbance, with scattered mature trees providing insect-rich foraging habitats. These trees, including occasional sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), support a diversity of invertebrates that may serve as a food resource for bats such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Beyond the site boundary, additional foraging opportunities exist in adjacent residential gardens and nearby green spaces, which are likely to contain nectar-producing plants and artificial light sources that attract moths and insects. The retained habitat features on-site contribute to local ecological connectivity by maintaining access to suitable bat foraging resources in an otherwise urbanised setting.

HISTORICAL SPECIES RECORDS

- 3.7 Records for bats are present within 2km of the site, including records for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*); Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*); and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). These records were obtained through a search of NBN Atlas prior to the site visit.

4 Site Survey

- 4.1 The site survey was undertaken by Alex Barnes on 03/03/25. The survey was undertaken during Weather conditions: The survey was conducted under clear, bright, and dry conditions.
- 4.2 Tree T1 is a mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) located near the site entrance. The tree features a cavity at approximately five metres above ground level on a pruned limb (TN1). The cavity has the potential to provide a roosting opportunity for bats, particularly crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) or soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Further assessment of the cavity would be required to determine any evidence of current or historic bat usage, such as staining, scratch marks, or droppings. Given the potential suitability of this feature, any tree works should be undertaken with caution and adhere to best practice guidance to minimise the risk of disturbing any roosting bats.

TN2 is a potential roost feature (PRF) situated on the northern elevation of B1. The feature consists of an air brick that provides direct access into the upper barn area. The air brick could act as an entry and exit point for bats accessing the roof void, offering a sheltered space with minimal disturbance. This type of PRF is commonly utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species, and its suitability should be further investigated through nocturnal surveys.

TN3 is a second PRF identified on the eastern elevation of B1. This feature consists of a gap within the masonry, which may allow access to internal cavities within the structure. The positioning of the void within a relatively sheltered aspect could enhance its potential for bat roosting. Close inspection would be necessary to determine signs of bat presence, such as fur oil staining around the entry point or accumulation of droppings beneath the feature.

ON-SITE ROOSTING POTENTIAL

All methodology follows the current guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust (Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition) Collins, J. (Ed.) 2023) unless otherwise specified.

The survey was undertaken via a ground-based daytime inspection with the assistance of close focus binoculars. The surrounding habitats were assessed in relation to their connectivity and foraging resource value.

The survey focused on identifying a range of characteristic signs which can indicate current/recent use of a potential roost site by bats in addition to a detailed focus on potential features which could be utilised by bats as survey effort should not focus on field signs alone. A more detailed external inspection was then undertaken using a drone to allow examination of the roof for potential roosting features that cannot be viewed from the ground.

An internal inspection of the roof void limited to only safely accessible areas was conducted to identify any field signs of bats including: droppings, grease marks, urine stains and feeding remains.

Building B1:

B1 is a detached two-storey residential dwelling of traditional construction, incorporating an adjoining barn/storage area to the east. The building exhibits a combination of brick and stonework, with areas of weathered mortar and gaps in the masonry that could provide potential roosting opportunities for bats.

The northern elevation features an air brick leading directly into the upper barn area, presenting a potential roost feature (PRF) suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species. The brickwork and mortar joints show signs of wear, which may create additional opportunities for wildlife, including invertebrates and small mammals.

The eastern elevation includes a secondary PRF in the form of a gap in the masonry, which could provide access for bats or other cavity-nesting species. This side of the building is partially shaded by adjacent structures and vegetation, potentially increasing its suitability for roosting due to the stable microclimate.

The southern elevation is relatively intact, with minimal observable defects, reducing its potential for supporting roosting bats. However, ivy growth and external fixtures may provide limited shelter for invertebrates and nesting birds.

The western elevation is largely residential in use, with well-maintained brickwork and fewer structural voids. The pitched roof comprises traditional tiles, with some minor gaps identified along the ridgeline and eaves, which may offer further bat roosting opportunities. The roof structure overall appears to be in moderate condition, though future development works could disturb any species utilising existing cavities.

The interior of B1 consists of a mix of modern residential spaces and an older barn/storage area, the latter exhibiting exposed wooden beams and a pitched roof construction. The barn section has a lofted upper floor with direct access to roof voids, where gaps between timbers and roof tiles create potential roosting opportunities for bats. The space is relatively undisturbed, with low human activity outside of storage use, which could enhance its suitability for roosting species.

The internal roof structure of the barn area features wooden rafters with minor gaps and crevices where bats may roost. The presence of cobwebs in some recesses suggests limited disturbance, but no obvious bat droppings were noted during the inspection. However, the air brick on the northern elevation allows direct access into this space, providing a potential entry point for wildlife.

The habitable section of the dwelling has plastered and well-sealed ceilings with no visible access to internal voids for bats. No signs of nesting birds or bat activity were identified in these areas. However, any works to connecting roof spaces or structural elements should be undertaken with precaution to avoid disturbing potential roosting locations in the lofted storage area.

There was no known evidence of bats found during the internal inspection, including: staining, feed remains, droppings or bats (living or dead).

Trees:

Tree T1 is a mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) located near the site entrance. The tree features a cavity at approximately five metres above ground level on a pruned limb. The cavity has the potential to provide a roosting opportunity for bats, particularly crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) or soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). The presence of natural shading and shelter from surrounding vegetation may enhance its suitability as a roost site by maintaining stable microclimatic conditions.

Further assessment of the cavity would be required to determine any evidence of current or historic bat usage, such as staining, scratch marks, or droppings. Given the potential suitability of this feature, any tree works should be undertaken with caution and adhere to best practice guidance to minimise the risk of disturbing any roosting bats.

FORAGING & CONNECTIVITY

The site offers limited but potentially valuable foraging habitat for bats, primarily associated with the mature trees and hedgerows present within and around the property. A mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) stands near the site entrance, providing a source of sheltered forage and habitat connectivity. The hedgerows surrounding the site, composed of species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), and elder (*Sambucus nigra*), offer further foraging opportunities and a commuting corridor for bats moving through the area.

The soft landscape areas contain patches of bare soil due to recent ground disturbance, with scattered mature trees providing insect-rich foraging habitats. These trees, including occasional sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), support a diversity of invertebrates that may serve as a food resource for bats such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Beyond the site boundary, additional foraging opportunities exist in adjacent residential gardens and nearby green spaces, which are likely to contain nectar-producing plants and artificial light sources that attract moths and insects. The retained habitat features on-site contribute to local ecological connectivity by maintaining access to suitable bat foraging resources in an otherwise urbanised setting.

The surrounding landscape does provide extensive foraging and commuting habitats including vegetated residential gardens to the north, south and west of

the site. Skye Woods to the east provides pockets of tree cover, scrub and grassland that could be utilised for foraging in calm weather conditions.

Bats are commonly found in both broad-leaved and coniferous woodlands, which serve as excellent foraging sites such (as as those found to the west of the site). Local tree cover offers an abundance of insect prey and provides cover, reducing the chances of predation. Woodland edges, particularly those adjacent to open habitats such as the fields found within Skye Woods are crucial commuting routes.

Hedgerows, lines of trees, and other linear features are used by many bat species as commuting routes between roosting and foraging sites. They provide navigational aids and offer protection from predators. Ancient and species-rich hedgerows may also serve as good foraging areas.

Rivers, ponds, lakes, and wetlands attract a large quantity of insects, making them attractive foraging sites for bats. Water bodies are also commonly used as commuting routes, with some species like the Daubenton's bat, specifically adapted to forage over water surfaces.

Grasslands, especially those adjacent to other habitats such as woodlands or hedgerows, are important for certain bat species. They provide a rich source of insect prey.

Although urban areas are generally less suitable due to light pollution and habitat fragmentation, many bat species have adapted to urban life. Parks, gardens, and green corridors can provide important foraging sites and commuting routes.

Traditional farmland can provide a mosaic of habitats, including hedgerows, ponds, and grazed fields, which can be suitable for foraging and commuting.

Different bat species have different preferences and tolerances for these habitats, and so a mix of these features can support a diverse bat community. Conservation efforts often aim to maintain and enhance these landscape features to promote bat populations.

Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX is situated 2.9 km to the north of Rochdale and located in Dewhirst Road which is a residential street surrounded by similar style properties with a mix of vegetated gardens and scattered introduced shrubs and trees.

The wider landscape consists of urban landscape and woodlands.

5 Evaluation and Assessment

- 5.1 Results from the desktop study and site survey were evaluated to assess bat species potential (as per Table 2.7.1). An evaluation of potential ecological constraints (in relation to bats) to the proposed development and recommendations for appropriate mitigation strategies are provided in Table 5.1.1
- 5.2 No known evidence of bats was observed during the internal inspection of Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX. The external inspection noted two potential roosting features in the form of an air brick leading directly into the upper barn area and a gap in the masonry. The site has moderate connectivity to good foraging habitat to the east at the woods via vegetated gardens.
- 5.3 The air brick and gap in the masonry provide roosting potential for crevice dwelling bats species such as Common and Soprano Pipistrelle species which are known to be present in the local area. Therefore, based on this information and the guidance outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust, the building has been assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats.
- 5.4 To determine whether roosting bats are using the building, further bat emergence/re-entry surveys should be carried out. This would require 1 separate survey visits by 2 surveyors at dusk supported by night vision aids and thermal cameras. The visit should be carried out between May and August inclusive as the optimal period. September is considered sub-optimal.
- 5.5 Survey visits can only be carried out when temperature at sunset is 10 C or more and there are no strong winds or heavy rain. Should bats be found to be roosting in the buildings two further survey visits will be required and then a licence applied from Natural England to allow the proposed works of the building to be carried out.
- 5.6 Construction works should be limited to daylight hours (excl. dawn and dusk) in order to prevent disturbance to nighttime foraging activity. Post-construction, the use of artificial lighting should be limited where possible. Motion sensors on outside lighting will prevent prolonged disturbance. It is recommended that outside lighting be set on short-timers (1 minute) and that the sensitivity is set to large moving objects only.

Table 5.1.1: Potential ecological constraints (in relation to bats) to the proposed development and appropriate mitigation strategies.

Bats (Chiroptera)	Presence/Potential	Further Comments	Potential Impacts	Recommendations for Mitigation
Roosting Bats	Low	Building B1 had some potential for roosting bats in the form of small cracks/crevices.	The proposed development may result in both short-term and long-term disturbance to roosting bats (if present) if appropriate mitigation strategies are not put in place.	One bat presence/absence survey (NBW) is to be carried out. The survey should be carried out between May and September (with September considered to be sub-optimal), a minimum of three weeks apart should further surveys be required. No works must proceed until further surveys have been carried out and appropriate mitigation strategies have been identified.
Bats (Chiroptera)	Presence/Potential	Further Comments	Potential Impacts	Recommendations for Mitigation
Foraging/Commuting Bats	Moderate	The site is considered to be part of a mosaic of suitable foraging/commuting habitats. The playing fields to the west of the site and the wider Riparian corridor have excellent foraging potential.	The proposed development may result in the loss of suitable foraging/commuting habitats if suitable mitigation strategies are not put in place.	Care must be taken to ensure that flight paths are not obstructed. Construction works should be limited to daylight hours in order to prevent disturbance to nighttime foraging activity.

				The use of artificial lighting should be limited where possible. Motion sensors on outside lighting will prevent prolonged disturbance. It is recommended that outside lighting be set on short-timers (1 minute) and that the sensitivity is set to large moving objects only.
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All activity surveys should be carried out inline with the guidance outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust in Chapter 7 of Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th Edition) The Bat Conservation Trust, London

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The property at Dewhirst House, Rochdale, OL12 9TX is to be redeveloped with the conversion and extension of the existing residential dwelling into the adjoining barn/storage area, currently utilised as a workshop. This will integrate the structure into the primary living space, facilitating an expansion of habitable accommodation while retaining the overall footprint of the building. These alterations will require works to the roof of the building and possible disturbance / destruction of PRFs.
- 7.2 A local record search using NBN Atlas and DEFRA Magic prior to the site visit highlighted that a number of bat species are present within the local landscape.
- 7.3 The features present at the property are suitable for crevice dwelling bats species which are present in the local area. These features amount to two areas of ingress into the internal void of the property and as such the property has been classified as having low suitability for bats.
- 7.4 It is recommended that one bat presence/absence survey be carried out. The survey should be carried out between May and September (with September considered to be sub-optimal).

Any tree works of T1 should be preceded by a climbing inspection or endoscopic survey to assess PRFs.

- 7.5 Should bats be found to be roosting in the buildings two further survey visits will be required to obtain sufficient information to classify the roost type and then a licence applied from Natural England to allow the proposed works of the building to be carried out.

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Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Ecological Consultant

Max SHaw



Prepared by: Max Shaw BSc QCIEEM
Checked by: Gwennan Butler BSc (Hons), MSc
Surveyor: Alex Barnes

Appendix 1: Site Location and Assessment Boundary

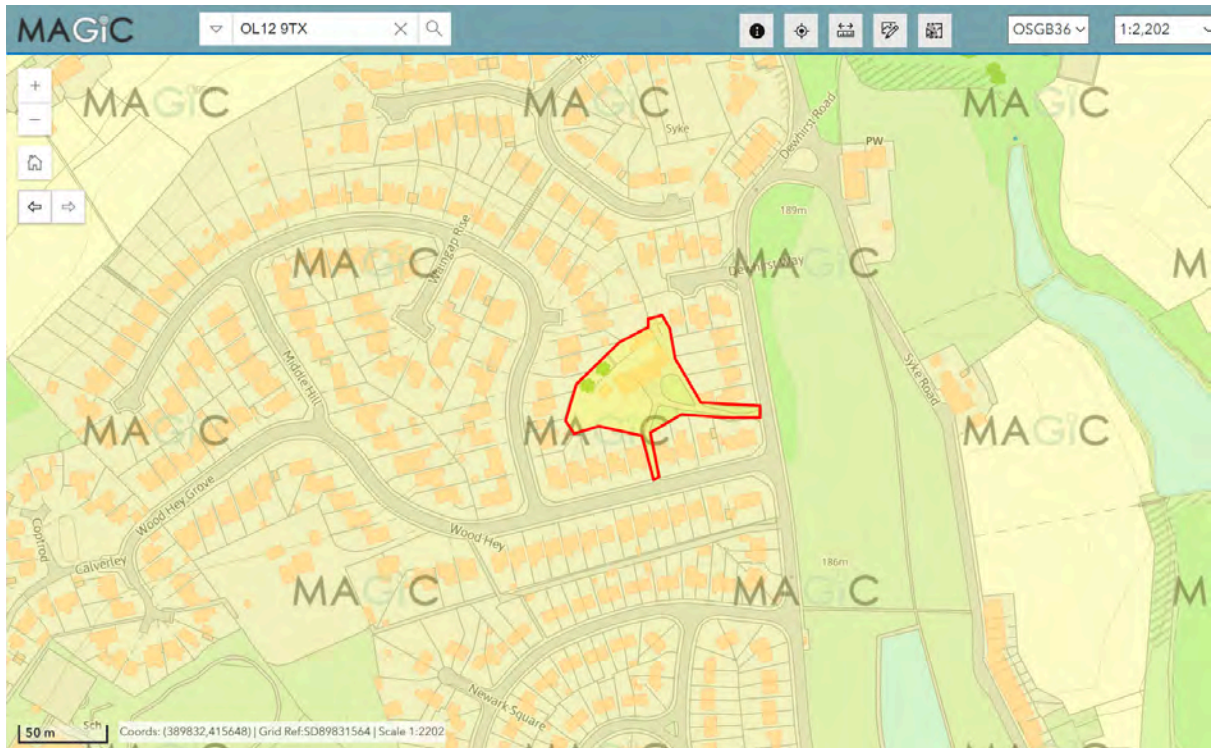


Figure A1.1: An extract from DEFRA showing the site location.

Appendix 2: Additional Site Photographic Plates & Target Notes

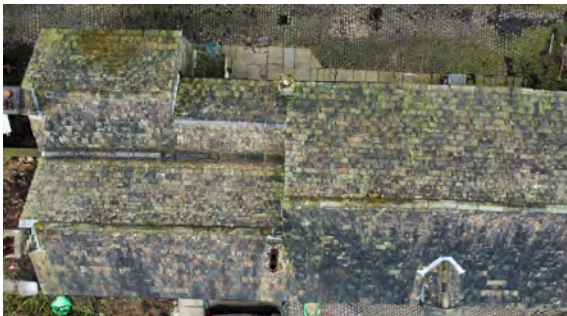
Detail	Photograph
Image 1 - TN1 (PRF1) found in T1.	
Image 2 - TN2 (PRF2) found on B1.	
Image 3 - TN3 (PRF3) found on B1.	
Image 4 - General condition of roof tiles on B1.	

Image 5 - General condition of roof tiles on B1.



Image 6 - General condition of roof tiles on B2.



Image 7 - Gable end of B1.



Image 8 - Internal B1.

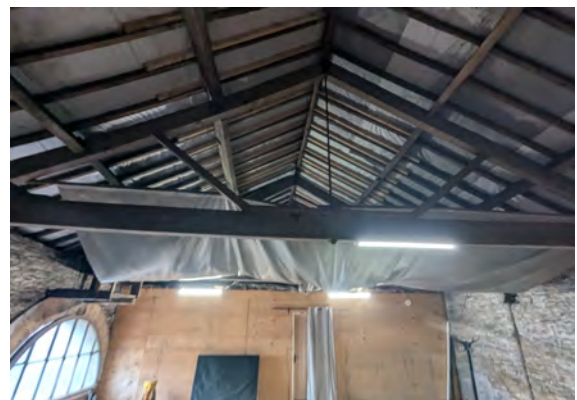


Image 9 - PRF2 internal view.



Image 10 - Internal B1, lower storey.

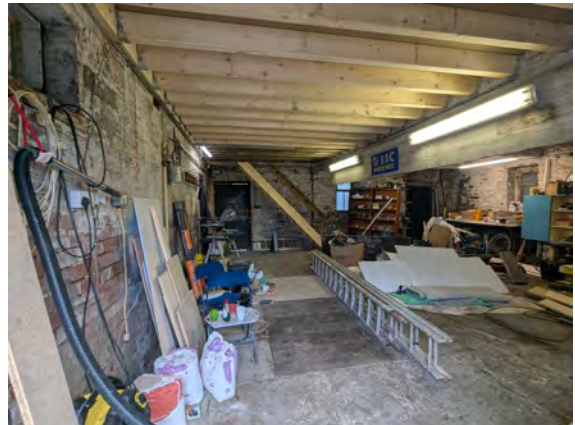


Image 11 - B1



Image 12 - B2



Image 13 - Internal B2.



Image 14 - Internal B2.

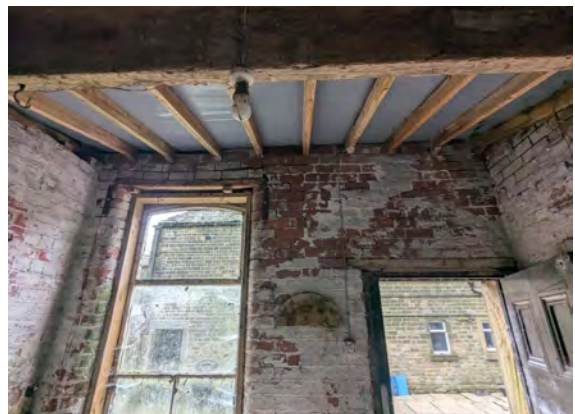


Image 15 - Loft hatch in residential area of B1.

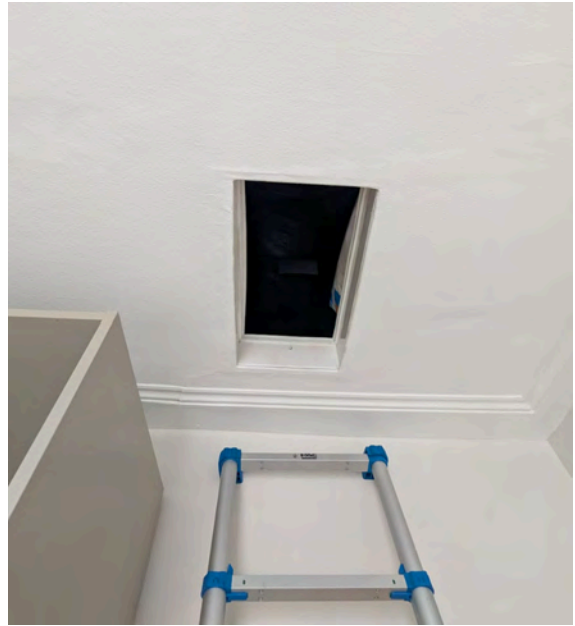


Image 16 - Internal loft void of B1.



Image 17 - Internal loft void of B1.



Image 18 - Internal loft void of B1.



Target Notes:

Tree T1 is a mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) located near the site entrance. The tree features a cavity at approximately five metres above ground level on a pruned limb. The cavity has the potential to provide a roosting opportunity for bats, particularly crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) or soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). The presence of natural shading and shelter from surrounding vegetation may enhance its suitability as a roost site by maintaining stable microclimatic conditions.

Further assessment of the cavity would be required to determine any evidence of current or historic bat usage, such as staining, scratch marks, or droppings. Given the potential suitability of this feature, any tree works should be undertaken with caution and adhere to best practice guidance to minimise the risk of disturbing any roosting bats. TN1 is a cavity on a mature Manchester poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) located adjacent to the site access at what3words location Unrealistic.roofs.rushed. The cavity is positioned approximately five metres above ground level on a pruned limb. It has potential to support roosting bats, particularly crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). The feature appears to offer shelter and protection from the elements, creating stable microclimatic conditions suitable for roosting. Further assessment would be required to determine any evidence of bat activity, such as staining or droppings.

TN2 is a potential roost feature (PRF) situated on the northern elevation of B1. The feature consists of an air brick that provides direct access into the upper barn area. The air brick could act as an entry and exit point for bats accessing the roof void, offering a sheltered space with minimal disturbance. This type of PRF is commonly utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species, and its suitability should be further investigated through nocturnal surveys or the use of endoscopic inspection where appropriate.

TN3 is a second PRF identified on the eastern elevation of B1. This feature consists of a gap within the masonry, which may allow access to internal cavities within the structure. The positioning of the void within a relatively sheltered aspect could enhance its potential for bat roosting. Close inspection would be necessary to determine signs of bat presence, such as fur oil staining around the entry point or accumulation of droppings beneath the feature.

What Are PRFs & What Does It Mean For My Project?

Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) are specific structures or characteristics in buildings, trees, or other parts of the environment that might provide suitable places for bats to roost, or set up home.

These can include things like gaps under roof tiles, holes in walls, hollows in trees, and other sheltered, undisturbed spaces that bats might find attractive.

A **Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment** is a survey conducted by an ecologist to check a property or area for these Potential Roosting Features. The goal is to identify whether there's a likelihood of bats being present, which could impact development plans because bats and their roosts are legally protected.

Now, what does this mean for a client, typically someone planning a development or construction project?

If the assessment finds **no PRFs**, or if the features found are assessed as offering **negligible potential** for bats, the customer can usually proceed with their plans without further steps to mitigate bat impact.

However, if the assessment **finds PRFs** that could potentially house bats, the next step would typically be **a more detailed** bat survey, **carried out at dusk or dawn** when bats are most active.

If bats are indeed found, **this doesn't mean the project can't proceed**, but there might be some requirements to meet first. Usually this involves drawing up mitigation measures which are implemented **after planning** is determined.