

Bob Leatham: Tel: 01204 844545 / 07505 172 087
email: bob@pennineecological.co.uk

Patrick Leatham: Tel: 07545 385 898
email: patrick@pennineecological.co.uk

Ian Ryding: Tel 01772 600441 / 07707 039 254
email: ian@pennineecological.co.uk

Stuart Macpherson: Tel: 07883 438 666
email: stuart@pennineecoligal.co.uk

- Protected species survey & licensing
- Habitat survey
- Habitat creation & management
- Arboricultural survey & impact assessment
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- Management plans

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Client: Hanson Springs Ltd

Date: 12th August 2024

Dear Rod Slater,
CC: Richard Gee (Roman Summer Associates)

Preliminary Roost Assessment: Hanson Springs, Hanson Place, Gorrels Way, Rochdale OL11 2PX

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at the above site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential issues in relation to the proposed extension of the existing warehouse.

Impacts in relation to the proposal are considered to be confined to bats and birds which may be utilising the buildings. As such a PRA and bird suitability assessment was undertaken on the 2nd August 2024. The sites grid reference is SD 8893 1156 and the location is shown below;

Figure 1.1: Aerial Image of buildings at Hanson Springs, Rochdale



1. Desk Top Study:

A desk top consultation study with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) was not undertaken for this study. However, searches for statutory sites and bat licence records were undertaken as follows;

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 220m south of the building.

The Natural England (NE) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) tool was also reviewed and consultation with NE would not be required for this type of development. The NE IRZ tool states consultation would be required for the following infrastructure applications:

- **Infrastructure:** Pipelines and underground cables, pylons and overhead cables (excluding upgrades and refurbishment of existing network). Any transport proposal including new or extended footways, cycleways, roads/car parks, railways and waterways (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.

Rochdale Canal is also designated as a Site of Biological Interest (SBI).

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences:

Details of European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) for bats was sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no EPSML in relation to bats within 500m radii of the site.

2. Bat Ecology and Legislation:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their roosts¹ are afforded protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Section 15, Paragraph 186 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in December 2023) states:

186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

¹ The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Use of Buildings by Bats:

a) Summer breeding roost.

b) Hibernation.

c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Up to ten bat species have been regularly recorded in Greater Manchester, most of which use built structures. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Greater Manchester is reflected throughout the UK.

3. Survey Methodology

A daytime survey was conducted on the 2nd August 2024. The building was inspected externally for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. Close focusing binoculars were used to identify places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.

An internal inspection of the building was also undertaken to understand the roof structure and to search for any evidence of bat use (e.g. droppings or feeding remains).

A search for evidence of current / historic use of the building by birds was also undertaken simultaneously.

During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Patrick Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist and full member of CIEEM. Patrick is an accredited agent on Mr Stuart Macpherson's Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2021-10079-CL18-BAT).

The PRA was undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Collins, J. Bat Conservation Trust (2023).

Constraints:

A full inspection both externally and internally was completed for the building.

There are considered to be no constraints to the assessment within this report.

4. Bat Survey Results

Building Assessment

The buildings comprises a brick (stretcher bond) foundation wall, built around a steel portal frame, with both the upper walls and pitched roofs of metal corrugated sheeting. The extension is proposed on the front (south) elevation where there are a series of roller shutters. The internal inspection revealed a breeze block internal wall. Generally the building was in good structural condition with no defects.

A minor section of brick was missing on the west elevation of the building. However, this area is unlikely to be impacted by the extension proposals. Additionally, the building is a working factory and extremely noisy with lots of vibration from the machinery also expected. Security lighting is intense around the building and overall the suitability of this feature for use by bats is considered to be negligible.

There is no internal roof void. As mentioned, the building is noisy and lacks any suitable cavities which could be utilised by bats.

The building is considered to possess '**negligible**' bat roost potential.

Habitat Assessment

The building is situated within the factory grounds and is surrounded by hard standing and security lighting. There are no suitable habitats for bats.

There is a railway line which runs adjacent to the site which offers a commuting corridor for bats. However the surrounding area is heavily urbanised, so there is limited connectivity to any suitable bat foraging habitat.

Overall the habitat associated with the site is considered to be of negligible suitability for bats.

Figure 4.1: extract taken from Collins, BCT (2023); Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition) - Table 4.1

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.		
Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	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 to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	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 at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b 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 and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, 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 foraging bats 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, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure 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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.
a Negligible is defined as ‘so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant’. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance. c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten <i>et al.</i>, 2016 and Jansen <i>et al.</i>, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.		

Photographs



Photograph 1: Overview of the south (front) elevation where the extension is proposed. Negligible BRP.



Photograph 3: View along the western elevation. Security lighting along entire elevation. Negligible.



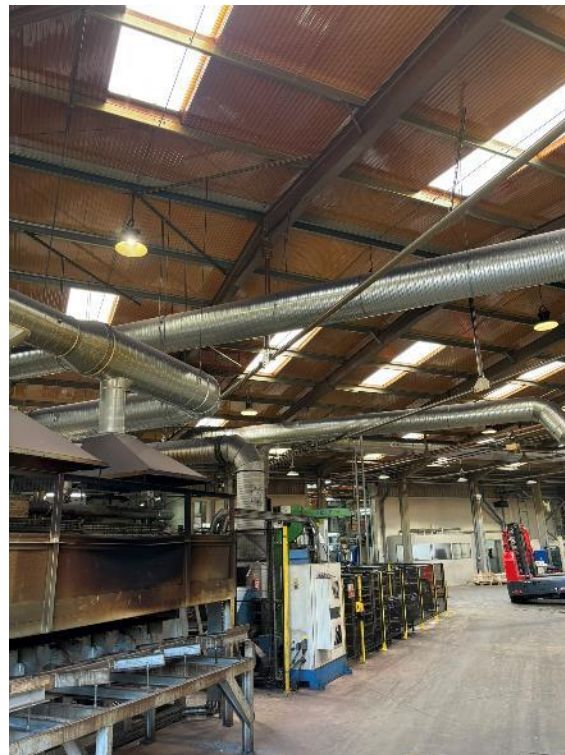
Photograph 2: Overview of the south (front) elevation where the extension is proposed. Negligible BRP.



Photograph 4: Section of missing brick on west elevation. Not considered to be affected by proposals and within very noisy and heavily lit building. Negligible.



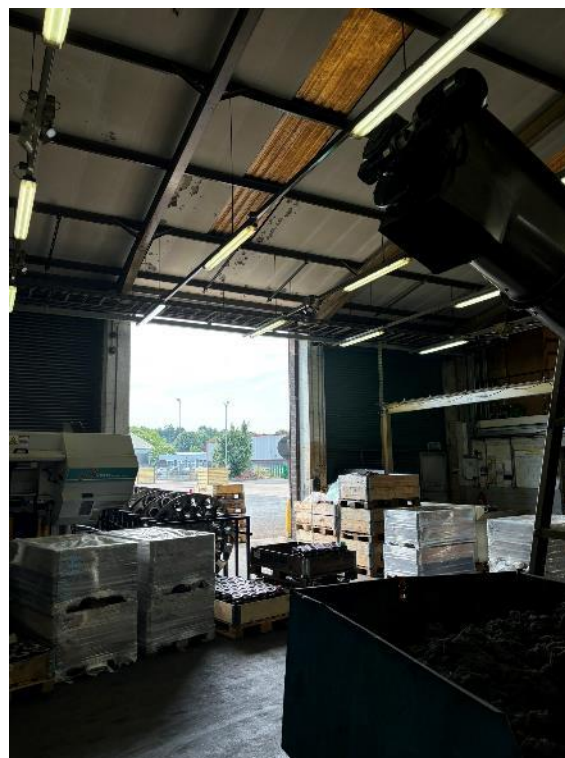
Photograph 5: View of the rear (north) elevation unaffected by the proposals. Negligible



Photograph 7: Inside the building. Working factory with noisy machinery.



Photograph 6: Eastern elevation of building unaffected by proposals. Negligible potential.



Photograph 8: inside the front of the building where extension proposed. Noisy and roller shutters along majority of elevation. Negligible.

5. Breeding Birds

The inspection of the building did not find any evidence of current or historic bird nesting. The building is highly unsuitable for birds with an absence of suitable nesting locations and the heavy disturbance from noisy machinery and workers. Recommendations

6. Recommendations

Bat Recommendations

There are no requirements for further surveys. The client is reminded that in the highly unlikely event that bats are encountered during the work, then all work must stop immediately, and the ecological consultant must be contacted for further advice.

Bird Recommendations

There are no requirements for further surveys. The client is reminded that in the highly unlikely event that nesting birds are encountered during the work, then all work must stop immediately, and the ecological consultant must be contacted for further advice.

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Leatham

Patrick Leatham BSc (Hons), MCIEEM

