

385 Bury & Rochdale Old Rd, Rochdale

BAT SURVEY REPORT

October 2024



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Report Aims

Knight Sky Ecology was commissioned to undertake bats surveys of 385 Bury & Rochdale Old Rd, Rochdale, OL10 4AT. The surveys were undertaken in relation to the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a new dwelling.

The bat surveys included a preliminary roost assessment and two dusk emergence surveys completed between July and September 2024.

The primary aim of the bat surveys was to gather information on the presence or absence of a bat roost(s) at the property. This report presents the results of the bat surveys and provides all the necessary data, assessment and guidance to satisfy the relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative framework. Details of the legislation afforded to bats is presented in Appendix A.

In addition to bats, any other ecological findings of relevance to the proposal including nesting birds were also documented.

1.2 Site Description

The property comprises a detached dwelling with front and rear gardens and is located on the western edge of Rochdale and north of Heywood at grid reference SD 86061 12275. It is surrounded by similar properties to the west, north and east. To the south (across Bury & Rochdale Old Rd) are woodlands and fields. The River Roch is also 500m south. The wider area is a mix of parklands, golf courses, residential areas and agricultural land. Figure 1.1 provides an aerial image of the property location along with a photo (taken July 2024).

Figure 1.1. Property location (imagery dated 09/06/2023)





2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

The 'Granted European Protected Species Applications' dataset in respect of bats was searched with use of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>) to identify bat roost records within 1km of the property.

2.2 Survey Personnel

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and has held this licence for over 11 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England (NE) which covered several bat species and roost types.

All other personnel who were involved in the surveys have been trained by Ryan or hold Natural England licenses and / or have several years of experience in bat surveys.

2.3 Overarching Guidance

The preliminary bat roost assessment was primarily based on the methods described in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*'. *Bat Conservation Trust, London.* (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023). Any deviation from standard practice is justified where required.

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary bat roost assessment of the property was undertaken on 5th July 2024. The assessment involved a visual inspection of the property to search for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential bat roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch and ladders. The interior and exterior of the building was comprehensively inspected.

Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, environmental conditions including expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the building was assigned a bat roost suitability category of none, negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost based on the collated information.

2.5 Dusk Emergence Surveys

Two dusk emergence bat surveys were undertaken on the property on 10th August and 2nd September 2024 to gather further information on the presence / absence of a bat roost.

With respect to the size of the structure, two survey positions were required to gain clear sightlines of all potential roost features identified during the preliminary roost assessment and to record the species and numbers of bats emerging from the property if present. All other non-emergence bat activity was also recorded including flight direction, type of activity, time of activity and species. Each survey started at least 15mins before sunset and continued for at least 1hr and 30mins after sunset.



Each survey position during each dusk emergence survey comprised a surveyor with a full spectrum bat detector supplemented by infra-red cameras (commonly referred to as Night Vision Aids (NVAs)).

All footage from the NVAs was fully reviewed via a desktop media player following the completion of the surveys. Table 2.1 details the survey times, weather conditions, equipment used and survey positions.

Table 2.1. Survey data and conditions

Date	10 August 2024	2 September 2024
Sunset	20:47	19:55
Survey duration	20:25 to 22:20	19:40 to 21:30
Weather conditions	• Dry throughout • 18°C at survey start • 17°C at survey end • 0-5% cloud cover • Wind 0-1(Beaufort scale) • No significant weather changes were encountered.	• Dry at survey start • 16°C at survey start • 15°C at survey end • 30% cloud cover • No wind • No significant weather changes were encountered
Personnel & equipment	• Catherine Wood (NE Class bat licence: 2016-24176-CLS-CLS (CW)) – Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and 1no. Nightfox whisker with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch. • Sam Fishwick – Echometer Touch 2 Pro (full spectrum) and 1no. Canon XA15 IR camera with 2no. Nightfox XB5 Pro torches	• Ryan Knight - Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and 1no. Canon XA15 IR camera with 2no. Nightfox XB5 Pro torches. • Catherine Wood - Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and 1no. Nightfox whisker with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch.



Survey
Positions (0)



2.6 Assessment Comments

The preliminary roost assessment was undertaken within the main active season for bats (April to October) when signs of a bat roost are most evident. The property was fully accessed throughout and no limitations to the site survey were encountered.

The dusk emergence surveys were undertaken within the main bat activity period during weather conditions deemed suitable to conduct bat surveys in accordance with the guidance (Collins, 2023). Overall, no significant constraints to the surveys were encountered.

This report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained (if required) or works do not commence within this time period.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

EPS Mitigation Licenses

No EPS mitigation licenses for bats were identified within a 1km radius.

3.2 Site Survey

3.2.1 Building Description and Potential Bat Roost Features

Photos of the property are provided in Appendix B for a general overview and supporting information for the assessment.

The property is a red brick, detached dwelling with a pyramid hip roof. There is a small single storey extension on the west elevation and a larger single storey extension on the east elevation. The property appears to have been vacant for an extended period.

The frontage (south) of the house features red clay hanging tiles both above and below the first-floor bay window. Several of these tiles appeared warped and there were numerous gaps underneath the tiles. Such crevices are only expected to be shallow but were potentially suitable for use by bats.

There were timber soffits on the west, east and south elevations. A small gap measuring around 15-20mm was present underneath the soffits all the way along each elevation which presented a potential roost entrance feature for bats. The roof of the house appeared in good repair overall; however, there were several gaps underneath the ridge tiles and a missing slate was noted on the east aspect which had resulted in a slight gap in the roof. It should be noted that the roof did not have an underlining and there were no recessed crevices in the roof.

The loft was disused and very dusty with extensive cobwebs throughout. The loft space was relatively uncluttered and high (over 2m from floor to ridge).

The extension on the east elevation had a concrete tiled, sloping roof. No potential roost features were identified on the extension. A gap under the soffit on the junction between the extension and house was observed on the west elevation.

3.2.2 Habitat Description

The property contains a large, unkempt back garden and a smaller front garden. The garden was being colonised by tall ruderal vegetation and featured ornamental hedgerows and trees on the boundaries. The property is bound to the north, west and east by similar properties with mature gardens. Such habitats will provide some, albeit low value for bats. However, there are habitats of high value for bats within the surrounding area including mature tree lines, woodlands and parklands. The River Roch and associated riparian habitats is 500m south.

Prior to the dusk emergence surveys, bat activity levels within the immediate area of the property were expected to be low to moderate and several bat species were expected to be present within the locality.

3.2.3 Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded. A comprehensive, close visual inspection was completed both externally and internally.



Potential roost features on the property were found on all elevations and comprised:

- Gaps under the hanging tiles on the frontage.
- Gaps under the soffits on the west, north and east elevation.
- Gaps within the roof (considered suboptimal).

In relation to these findings, the property was categorised as **moderate roost suitability**.

3.3 Dusk Emergence Survey

The results of the dusk emergence surveys are summarised in Table 3.1. **No evidence of a bat roost was recorded during both dusk emergence surveys.**

The survey positions recorded a low but fairly regular level of bat activity during both surveys with single bats foraging around the property. Bat activity was dominated by common pipistrelle with a low number of registrations of soprano pipistrelle (1 pass) and noctule bats (2 passes) recorded. Several common pipistrelle commuting flights were recorded from north to south over the site which suggested a roost was located within a property to the north.

During the first survey, it became apparent that the adjacent property (west) was very heavily illuminated with several external lights. The light spill did cover much of the survey site. Such light levels can have an adverse effect on the presence of bats known to be sensitive to such conditions (i.e., brown long-eared bats or *Myotis* species).

Table 3.1. Bat activity summary

Date	Activity Summary
10 th August 2024 (sunset 20:47)	First bat (common pipistrelle) recorded at 20:47 (pass not seen). At least three further passes recorded from rear of site southwards between 20:53 and 21:00. Common pipistrelle constantly to frequently foraging during the first hour. Activity decreased thereafter. One noctule pass recorded (not seen). No emergence observed on site or on the NVA footage.
28th August 2024 (sunset 19:55)	First bat (common pipistrelle) recorded at 20:00 (pass from rear garden to south). The survey position on the rear and west elevations recorded 13 common pipistrelle foraging passes only and two noctule bat passes. The front elevation recorded seven common pipistrelle commuting passes within the first 15 minutes and occasional foraging only thereafter with no activity recorded after 20:32. No emergence observed on site or on the NVA footage.

3.4 Nesting Birds

No evidence of birds' nests was observed. The property has a very low suitability to support nesting birds. However, the rear garden was unkempt and contained shrubs and hedges. Such habitat may support nesting birds.

3.5 Other Ecological Considerations

No other potential constraints to the proposed development were identified.



4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Bats

The main findings derived from the bat surveys are listed as follows:

- No evidence of a bat roost was recorded during the preliminary roost assessment in July 2024.
- No evidence of a bat roost was recorded during two dusk emergence surveys completed in August and September 2024.
- The two dusk emergence surveys recorded relatively low but regular levels of common pipistrelle bat activity. A further two species (soprano pipistrelle and noctule bat) were recorded.

The findings of the bat surveys described in this report are considered sufficient to conclude that bat roosts are likely absent from the property.

Therefore, bats do not present a potential ecological constraint to the development proposal. The works will not result in any impacts to bats and will therefore remain compliant with the legislation (Appendix A). No further assessment or detailed mitigation is required.

Given the nature of bats, there will always be a very low residual risk of encountering a bat during such works. This risk can be easily mitigated via the use of standard, good practice measures that can be adopted by the relevant contractors during the construction work. These measures are detailed in Section 5.

4.2 Nesting Birds

Vegetation clearance works may result in impacts to nesting birds if commenced in the nesting season (generally accepted as March to August (inclusive)). Therefore, the proposals need to be aware of the legislation afforded to nesting birds:

- All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

Mitigation

In the unexpected event that a bat is discovered during the works, the contractors will be advised to stop immediately and contact the licensed ecologist whom will travel to site to provide assessment and advice. Contractors will be specifically forbidden to handle bats. Contractors will be advised that if it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves **MUST** be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the licensed ecologist arrives on site.

Enhancements

Details of the 2 bat boxes recommended to be installed at the site are provided in Table 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Bat box recommendations

BAT BOX			
Locations and positioning	The boxes can be fitted on the walls of the house at a height of at least 3m from the ground (ideally just under the roof eaves and away from any windows).		
Bat box models and purchasing	Bat box models along with the locations for purchasing are provided below. There can be a considerable waiting time for delivery for certain models, therefore, two options have been provided.		
	Low Profile WoodStone Bat Box (Vivara Pro)		These boxes are manufactured from WoodStone, a breathable and insulating material made from concrete and FSC Certified wood fibres. Woodstone is designed to be robust and hard-wearing, providing a warm and stable temperature for summer bat roosts. Available from: https://www.nhbs.com/
	Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box		This bat box is also made entirely from WoodStone. The Beaumaris box has a single narrow cavity which makes it suitable for crevice roosting bats such as common pipistrelle. Available from: https://www.nhbs.com/



Maintenance

The models chosen do not require cleaning as bat droppings do not typically accumulate within these types of boxes to a level likely to cause problems for future habitation.

5.2 Nesting Birds

Any vegetation clearance works which will potentially impact bird's nests should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season of March to August (inclusive). If this is not possible, any works potentially affecting bird's nests must be preceded by a nesting bird check, undertaken by a suitability qualified ecologist. If an active nest is found, it must be left in-situ until no longer in use.



APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of bats.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroys the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damages or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of European Protected Species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity. There are 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance, often referred to as priority habitats and priority species respectively, which were initially identified as requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as priorities under the relevant national and local frameworks.

The Section 41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their general biodiversity objective under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.

An amendment to the original Section 40 duty, provided for in the Environment Act 2021, extends the biodiversity duty on public authorities to include the enhancement of biodiversity alongside conservation by way of creating “the general biodiversity objective”. Bat species listed under Section 41 and known to be present within Lancashire comprise soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and noctule bat.



APPENDIX B. PHOTOS

Photo 1.
Rear (north)
elevation



Photo 2.
Front (south
elevation)





Photo 3

Gaps under hanging
tiles under roof
ridge at the front



Photos 4a & 4b

Soffit on east
elevation with small
gap underneath.





Photos 5a & 5b
Rear elevation &
soffit

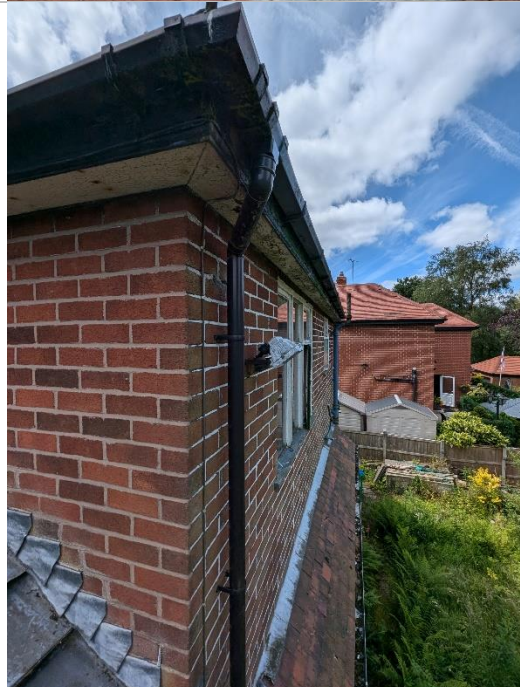




	
Photo 6. Missing slate and gap in roof & gap under ridge tiles (east aspect).	

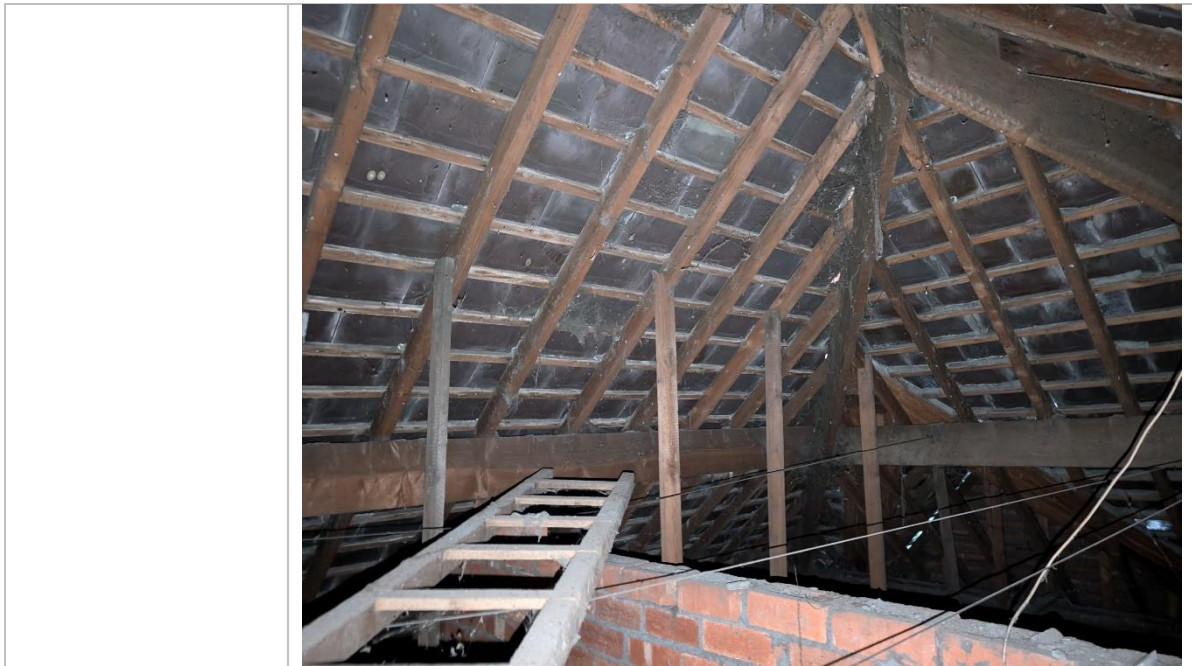


Photo 7.
Gap under soffit on
west elevation



Photos 8a & 8b.
Photos of loft and
underside of roof.







APPENDIX C. NVA SCREENSHOTS

Front and east side elevation (10/08/2024)



Rear and west side elevation (02/09/2024)

