



Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover

Riverside Business Park, Todmorden Road

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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT AND ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

Riverside Business Park
Todmorden Road

Prepared for:
G. B. Services (Littleborough) LLP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Riverside Business Park, Todmorden Road, Littleborough, Lancashire, OL15 9EG
Coordinates	E 394107, N 416800
Site Area	Approximately 0.33 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprised four buildings (B1 to B4), two structures (S1 and S2) and a redbrick wall (W1). A HGV trailer was located in the north-east of the site within a fenced-off area. The north-west of the site was in use as a car park.
Proposed Development	The proposed scheme includes the demolition of existing structures and construction of attached and detached commercial units to the existing Riverside Business Park.
Results	B1 and S1 were assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential. The remaining buildings (B2 – B4), structure (S2) and wall (W1) were assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential.
Conclusions and Recommendations	No further surveys are required. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified during the course of works, then works must cease and an ecologist should be contacted immediately. The proposed development will be exempt from a Biodiversity Metric calculation in line with the Environment Act (2021) due to the habitats on site being below the threshold of 25 m² of habitat, or 5 linear meters of water courses or hedgerows. To further increase the site's value for wildlife, bat and bird boxes could be integrated into the proposed development.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P has been instructed by G. B. Services (Littleborough) LLP to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Riverside Business Park, hereafter referred to as “the site”. An Ecological Walkover was also undertaken to assess the site for any additional protected species constraints.

The report was produced by Conor Evans BSc (Hons) MRes QCIEEM Consultant Ecologist, who has experience in completing Preliminary Roost Assessments and Nocturnal Bat Surveys at many sites across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Detailed proposals include the demolition of existing structures and the construction of attached and detached commercial units to the existing Riverside Business Park. It is understood that Building 1 and Structure 1 will require demolition to facilitate the development.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located in central Littleborough, within a predominantly commercial area. The site is accessed via Todmorden Road (A6033), which defines the western site boundary. Town House Brook and an unnamed watercourse define the southern and eastern site boundary respectively. Town House Brook flows into the unnamed watercourse. A series of commercial buildings are located directly adjacent to the northern site boundary. The wider landscape comprises commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. An active railway is located approximately 100 m south-east of the site boundary, while the Rochdale Canal is located approximately 140 m south-east of the site boundary. Please refer to Figure 1.1. for the approximate site location.

FIGURE 1.1 APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION



1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are as follows:

- ✦ Determine if bats currently, or could potentially, utilise the on-site buildings, structures or walls for roosting.
- ✦ Determine whether further surveys (e.g. nocturnal bat surveys) and/or further mitigation is necessary for development to proceed.

The objectives of the Ecological Walkover are as follows:

- ✦ Identify the major habitats present.
- ✦ Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- ✦ Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The survey findings are detailed in this report, as well as any recommendations.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- ✳ MAGIC – A government web-based interactive mapping system, demonstrating European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and Natural England Licences which have been previously granted within England.
- ✳ Information and species records from South Lancashire Bat Group.

A search via MAGIC was undertaken in November 2023 to identify EPSL within 1 km of the site boundary. This search area is considered suitable for the size of the development and the surrounding habitat.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 22nd November 2023 by Conor Evans who has undertaken multiple PRAs on buildings and trees across the UK. Assistance was provided by Huw Morgan, Principal Ecologist at E3P. Huw holds a Natural England Class 1 Bat Licence (2021-53691-CLS-CLS). The weather was cool and overcast, with light rain throughout the survey.

No trees were identified on site, therefore the survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the buildings and structures, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023). The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars and ladders to access all areas where safe to do so. Please refer to Figure 2.1 for building locations and references.

FIGURE 2.1 BUILDING AND STRUCTURE LOCATIONS AND REFERENCES



The buildings were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 2.1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

TABLE 2.1 BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATION OF BUILDINGS

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
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).
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.
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 and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a large number 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).
MODERATE	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
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, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

2.3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

A site walkover was undertaken by Conor Evans on 22nd November 2023 to assess the site for any protected or notable species. Assistance was provided by Huw Morgan.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010). The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including but not limited to Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.4. LIMITATIONS

Access to all areas within 30 m of the site was not possible as some areas were private land; however, due to the urban nature of the site, this is not considered to be a major constraint.



The site walkover was undertaken in November, and as a result of seasonal vegetation dieback, it is possible that some species of flora may have been missed or misidentified, including some invasive/non-native species. Due to the urban nature of the site and the limited diversity of vegetation and habitats located on-site, this is not considered to be a major constraint.

Internal access into B2, B3, B4 and S2 was not possible due to being rented by private tenants. This is not considered to be a major constraint, as no suitable bat roost features or access points into the buildings were identified externally on each of the buildings.



3. RESULTS

3.1. LOCAL BAT GROUP RECORDS

Based on information from South Lancashire Bat Group, species present within the local area include; Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

3.2. MAGIC REVIEW

A MAGIC review did not find any European Protected Species Licences located within the 1 km search area. The nearest such licence was located approximately 2.2 km south-west of the site boundary. The licence was active in 2009 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

3.3. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprised a total of four buildings (B1 to B4), two structures (S1 and S2) and a redbrick wall (W1). A HGV trailer was located in the north-east of the site within a fenced off area. The north-west of the site was in use as a car park. A series of commercial buildings are located directly adjacent to the northern site boundary. A large warehouse is located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. These areas are anticipated to offer little value to local wildlife due to the urban nature of the site.

A series of scattered trees are located directly adjacent to the south and east of the site boundary. Multiple areas of deciduous woodland, a Priority Habitat, are located within 1 km of the site boundary. The nearest area of deciduous woodland is located approximately 330 m north of the site boundary. Town House Brook and an unnamed watercourse are located directly adjacent to the southern and eastern site boundary respectively. Multiple other watercourses are located within 1 km of the site boundary, including the River Roch, Ealees Brook, Shore Lane Brook, and multiple other unnamed watercourses. An active railway, which is lined by scattered trees, is located approximately 100 m south-east of the site boundary. The Rochdale Canal is located approximately 140 m south-east of the site boundary. A large waterbody is located approximately 960 m north of the site boundary. These habitats are anticipated to offer essential resources for local wildlife, including commuting and foraging opportunities for local bat species, as well as roosting opportunities within the scattered trees.

3.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A PRA was undertaken on the on-site buildings (B1 to B4), structures (S1 and S2) and wall (W1). No other buildings, structures, walls or trees were present within the site boundary.

3.4.1. BUILDING 1 (B1)

Building 1 (B1) was a single-storey former mechanics, comprising concrete block walls with a corrugated iron and corrugated plastic mono-pitch roof. It is understood that B1 will be demolished to facilitate the development. The concrete walls comprised a single breezeblock layer, and therefore no wall cavity was present. A concrete block parapet wall was present on the north-west aspect of the building. A single wall on the north-west aspect was covered in box profile corrugated iron sheeting. B1 was accessed via



a wooden sliding door with a metal beam mantle on the north-west aspect, which was open at the time of the survey. No artificial lighting was identified in close proximity to B1.

PLATE 1 SHOWING NORTH-WEST ASPECT OF B1



The brickwork on B1 was mostly in good condition; however, an area of concrete brickwork was damaged on the north-east aspect of the building. The area of damage was approximately 10 cm in diameter and 4 m high. The damaged brickwork provided access directly into the building. It was determined that the damaged brickwork would not be suitable to support roosting bat species as no cracks or crevices were present, as well as the exposed nature of the damage.

PLATE 2 SHOWING CLOSE UP OF DAMAGED BRICKWORK ON B1



It was determined that the damaged brickwork lead into the building by shining a clulite at the brickwork from outside the building; the light was then observed from within the building through the damaged brickwork.



PLATE 3 SHOWING INTERNAL DAMAGED BRICKWORK OF B1



An internal inspection was undertaken on B1. The building was well-lit during the day due to the corrugated plastic sheeting skylights and two windows on the south-west aspect of the building. The building had clearly been undisturbed for a long time, as evidenced by the dust and multiple dried leaves noted on the floor. Therefore, if there was any evidence of roosting bats, such as insect wings or droppings, such evidence would be identifiable. The internal walls were also painted white, which would allow for the identification of any bat staining. No evidence of roosting bats was identified within B1. Due to the wooden sliding door being open, the building was subject to fluctuating temperatures, as any heat would be lost through the open door, therefore lowering its overall suitability for roosting bats.

PLATE 4 SHOWING B1 INTERNALS



Two single-pane windows with wooden frames were present on the south-west aspect of the building. The windows were in poor condition, with one of the windows having been broken. Two weep holes within the brickwork were present above the broken window; however, these were approximately 0.5 cm across, and therefore determined to be too narrow to support roosting bats.



PLATE 5 SHOWING BROKEN WINDOW ON SOUTH WEST ASPECT OF B1



The external brickwork was mostly in good condition and well-sealed; however, water damaged brickwork was noted on the north-east aspect of the building. Despite the water damaged brickwork on the north-east aspect, no obvious cracks or crevices were present that could be utilised by roosting bat species. Barge boards were present at the top of the wall plate along all aspects of the building, excluding the north-west aspect. The barge boards were flush against the wall, and therefore no crevices were present which could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* sp.).

PLATE 6 SHOWING DAMAGED BRICKWORK ON NORTH-EAST ASPECT



A single-storey concrete block extension with a corrugated iron mono-pitch roof was present adjacent to the north-west aspect of the building. The north-west and south-west aspects of the extension were part-rendered with pebble-dash. The extension was inactive at the time of survey. The extension is accessed internally by a metal door on the north-east aspect of the building. The metal door was sealed shut and was difficult to open to gain internal access, likely due to the metal rusting as a result of the extension being undisturbed for several years.



PLATE 7 SHOWING B1 EXTENSION



A damaged wooden soffit, which was covered in felt, was present on the western aspect of the extension on B1. The damaged soffit potentially may allow access into the extension for bat species. No scratch marks were observed around the damaged soffit. This was not determined to be a potential roost feature, as the soffit is too exposed and subject to temperature fluctuations.

PLATE 8 SHOWING DAMAGED SOFFIT ON WESTERN ASPECT OF B1



An internal inspection of the extension on B1 was conducted. The extension had clearly not been accessed for multiple years, as undisturbed dust was on the floor. If any bat droppings were present, they would be identifiable due to the extension having not been disturbed; however, no bat droppings were identified. The walls were painted white, which would allow for the identification of any bat staining if present; however, no bat staining was identified within the extension. It was determined during the internal inspection that there were no suitable bat roost features that could be utilised by roosting bat species; there were no features within the extension that bats would be able to utilise. It should also be noted that it was cold within the extension, likely due to the missing plasterboard and damaged soffit.



The extension is likely to experience temperature fluctuations during the day, therefore reducing its overall suitability for roosting bats.

PLATE 9 SHOWING B1 EXTENSION INTERNALS



A white plasterboard ceiling was present within the extension. No evidence of bat staining or scratch marks were identified. One panel of plasterboard was missing from the ceiling. Through the damaged soffit on the western aspect and the missing panel, the extension could be accessed by bats. However, as there were no suitable bat roost features within, it was determined that the extension had Negligible potential to support roosting bats.

PLATE 10 SHOWING MISSING PLASTERBOARD CEILING WITHIN B1 EXTENSION



Overall, B1 was assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable bat roost features and temperature fluctuations exhibited within the main building and the extension.



3.4.2. BUILDING 2 (B2)

Building 2 (B2) was an active commercial building. It is understood that no works will be undertaken on the building to facilitate development. The building could not be accessed internally due to being privately tenanted. The building comprised concrete block walls covered with box profile corrugated iron, a gable-to-gable corrugated iron pitched roof, and metal roller doors. No windows were present. Utilising satellite images from previous years, it was determined that B2 had been built within the past 5 years. As such, the building was in good condition, with no obvious cracks or crevices that could be utilised by opportunistic bat species.

PLATE 11 SHOWING WESTERN ASPECT OF B2



PLATE 12 SHOWING SOUTHERN ASPECT OF B2



B2 was therefore assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable features to support roosting bats.



3.4.3. BUILDING 3 (B3)

Building 3 (B3) was an active commercial building. It is understood that no works will be undertaken on the building to facilitate development. The building could not be accessed internally due to being privately tenanted. The building comprised concrete block walls covered with box profile corrugated iron, a gable-to-gable corrugated iron pitched roof, and metal roller doors. Utilising satellite images from previous years, it was determined that B3 had been built within the past 5 years. As such, the building was in good condition, with no obvious cracks or crevices that could be utilised by opportunistic bat species.

PLATE 13 SHOWING NORTH-WEST ASPECT OF B3



PLATE 14 SHOWING NORTH-EAST ASPECT OF B3



B3 was therefore assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable features to support roosting bats.



3.4.4. BUILDING 4 (B4)

Building 4 (B4) was an active portacabin commercial unit located in the south-east of the site. No works will be undertaken on the building to facilitate development. The building could not be accessed internally due to being privately tenanted. The building comprised a metal frame, black metal sheeting and a corrugated iron flat roof. Utilising satellite images from previous years, it was determined that B4 had been placed on-site within the past 2 years. As such, the building was in good condition, with no obvious cracks or crevices that could be utilised by opportunistic bat species.

PLATE 15 SHOWING NORTH-WEST ASPECT OF B4



PLATE 16 SHOWING NORTH-EAST ASPECT OF B4



B4 was therefore assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable features to support roosting bats.



3.4.5. STRUCTURE 1 (S1)

Structure 1 (S1) was located in the centre of the site, adjacent to B1, B2 and B3. It is understood that the demolition of S1 will be required to facilitate development. The structure comprised a steel metal frame and a single concrete block wall, with the south-west aspect of the wall rendered in pebble dash. The north-west aspect of the wall was not rendered. Three single-pane windows with wooden frames were present within the wall. The window frames and brickwork were in good condition and well-sealed, with no obvious cracks or crevices that could be utilised by crevice dwelling bat species.

PLATE 17 SHOWING SOUTH-WEST ASPECT OF S1



PLATE 18 SHOWING NORTH-EAST ASPECT OF S1



S1 was therefore assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable features to support roosting bats.



3.4.6. STRUCTURE 2 (S2)

Structure 2 (S2) was a disused covered car wash. The structure comprised various sections. The north-west of the structure comprised a steel frame covering with a corrugated iron roof. Adjacent to the steel frame was a separate covering section that appeared to previously have been covered with tarpaulin. The frame was bordered by box profile corrugated iron sheet walls. A small static office room was adjacent to the steel frames and accessed via a door on the north-east aspect. The room could not be accessed due to being privately tenanted. The office room comprised metal walls and a metal flat roof. Adjacent to the office room, along the south-east site boundary was a wood frame covering with a corrugated iron pitched roof. It was determined that the structure provided no suitable bat roost features due to the materials that the structure comprised, there being no suitable cracks and crevices present, the exposed nature of the frames and corrugated rooves, and fluctuations in temperatures.

PLATE 19 SHOWING NORTH WEST ASPECT OF S2



PLATE 20 SHOWING TARPAULIN COVERING OF S2



PLATE 21 SHOWING NORTH-EAST ASPECT OF S2



PLATE 22 SHOWING SOUTH-EAST ASPECT OF S2



S2 was therefore assessed as having no ("None") bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable bat roost features.

3.4.7. WALL 1 (W1)

A redbrick wall was present along the north-west site boundary. The wall was approximately 1 m high and 30 m in length. The brickwork and mortar were mostly in good condition, with no obvious cracks or crevices that were deep enough to be utilised by roosting bat species.



PLATE 23 SHOWING NORTHERN ASPECT OF B3



The wall was therefore assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential due to a lack of suitable bat roost features.

3.5. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

The habitats on-site comprised buildings, hardstanding and bare ground.

Tarmac hardstanding was present adjacent to B2 in the north-east of the site. The concrete had been colonised in parts by species comprising cock's-foot (*Dactylus glomerata*), a *Crepis* species, and petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*).

PLATE 24 SHOWING HARDSTANDING



A large area of gravel bare ground was present in the north-west, south, and south-east sections of the site.



PLATE 25 SHOWING BARE GROUND



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. BATS

B1 and S1 were assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential. The remaining buildings (B2 – B4), structure (S2) and wall (W1) were assessed as having no ('None') bat roosting potential. As such, no further surveys are required. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified during the course of works, then works must cease and an ecologist should be contacted immediately.

4.2. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The proposed development will be exempt from a Biodiversity Metric calculation in line with the Environment Act (2021) due to the habitats on site being below the threshold of 25 m² of habitat, or 5 linear meters of water courses or hedgerows.

To further increase the site's value for wildlife, bat and bird boxes could be integrated into the proposed development.



5. REFERENCES

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END OF REPORT

