



**MILNROW LIBRARY,
MILNROW, ROCHDALE**

EVENING BAT SURVEYS

**Prepared for
Rochdale Borough Council**

June 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared for Rochdale Borough Council. It presents the results of evening surveys for bats of Milnrow Library, Rochdale during May and June 2024.
- 1.2 The building requires extensive restoration works including ridge tile re-setting and other roof repairs, repairs to the ventilation turret, works to the stone work and windows and re-surfacing of the flat roof. The works proposed are shown on the drawing *Roof Plan & Proposed Works* prepared by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope (drawing reference 2215.57.302 Rev P3, dated April 2023).
- 1.3 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in February 2024, the results of which are detailed in our report *Milnrow Library, Milnrow, Rochdale – preliminary Roost Assessment* (report reference HB/240307, dated March 2024). Although no evidence of bats was located, the building was assessed as holding high potential for use by bats for roosting due mainly to the presence of gaps associated with the ridges, slates, flashing/felt and fascias.
- 1.4 Milnrow Library is Grade II listed. It dates from 1907 and combines the styles of both Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau. The front elevation is set back from the street. It is sandstone and has stone relief carvings and ornamentation. Downstairs the library retains its original layout including a top-lit borrowers' hall and lending library and interconnecting barrel-vaulted reading room, with a former lecture hall on the first floor, originally shared with the adjacent town hall offices.
- 1.5 The building is situated on Newhey Road in an area known as Milnrow, 3.7km to the southeast of Rochdale. The building is in a residential area, with woodland and farmland relatively close by. Amenity greenspaces of Hollingworth Academy lie 280m to the northeast and Tunshill Golf Club 580m to the northeast. Hollingworth Lake Country Park lies 2km northeast and wide densely wooded edges of the M62 are located 140m southeast. The River Beal runs in a south to north direction 230m to the west of the building. The Butterworth Brook joins the River Beal from the west and runs 150m to the north. The OS grid reference for the building is SD 93180 12173.
- 1.6 The report describes the methods used for the surveys and any constraints encountered, along with the results of the surveys and any evidence of bats found. The findings are then assessed in light of the proposals and recommendations for further survey or action are given where appropriate.
- 1.7 The legislation relating to bats is given in Appendix I.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 For the purposes of the surveys and report, the building has been divided into numbered sections. The layout of the building is shown on Figure 1.
- 2.2 Evening emergence surveys were carried out of the building during May and June 2024 by Helen Ball, Max Robinson and Caroline Alcock. Helen and Max are licensed to survey for bats and their Natural England licence numbers are listed below:

Max Robinson: 2015-14473-CLS-CLS (class 2)

Helen Ball: 2018-37791-CLS-CLS (class 3) & 2018-37792-CLS-CLS (class 4)

- 2.3 The emergence surveys were carried out during the evening and commenced approximately 0.5 hours before sunset and finished 1.5 hours after sunset. The surveys followed standard methodologies set out in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*, Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023).
- 2.4 Bat detectors (Anabat Scout Detectors, Titley Electronics, Australia) were used to identify the presence and identity of bats. Bat calls picked up by the detectors were written onto a compact flash card and, where necessary, analysed on a PC to confirm species. Thermal scopes (Guide TK612) and Canon night vision cameras (XA60) coupled with mounted infra-red lights, were used to aid the surveys, with surveyors using a screen to watch in real time. Where necessary, footage was watched following completion of the surveys, and any emergence of bats analysed in conjunction with the sound recordings.
- 2.5 The surveyors positioned themselves and the night-vision aids externally around the building to watch for and record any bats emerging from the locations identified as containing potential roost features. The PRA identified Sections 1 and 2 of the building to contain potential roost features (Section 3 holds negligible roost opportunity).
- 2.6 The table below summarises the weather conditions during each survey.

Date	Weather Conditions	Temperature
14 th May 2024	Dry, overcast, light air (BS1).	Start: 15.4°C End: 14.6°C
3 rd June 2024	Dry, overcast, light air (BS1).	Start: 13.4°C End: 12.3°C
26 th June 2024	Dry, 10% cloud, calm (BS0), humid.	Start: 20.1°C End: 17.9°C

Constraints

- 2.7 During the first survey, it became apparent that surveying the front elevation of the building from Newhay Road was difficult. There was limited scope to install a camera on the pavement without blocking access and vehicle noise from passing traffic caused interference on the bat detector. The front elevation is also partially illuminated by streetlighting. Bats were seen and heard during this survey by the surveyor positioned at the front thus the survey results are valid. However, for the

ease and safety of the surveyor, for subsequent surveys, the front portion of the building was surveyed side-on from a viewpoint to the north-east in Clock Tower Court.

3. SURVEY FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION

Survey Findings

- 3.1 No bats emerged during the surveys.
- 3.2 Bat activity in the vicinity of the building varied across the surveys and between survey positions, with most activity noted to the south of the building. Here, common pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were recorded during all three surveys, mostly as brief flight passes, but with foraging during the May survey.
- 3.3 Four passes by common pipistrelle were noted at the front building during the first survey. Very limited activity by common pipistrelles occurred to the north and east of the building in Clock Tower Court, with this area devoid of vegetation cover and illuminated by external lighting.

Interpretation of Survey Findings

- 3.4 There is no evidence that bats use building for roosting based upon the results of the initial Preliminary Roost Assessment (no evidence such as bat droppings) and the evening emergence surveys.
- 3.5 The building holds high potential to support roosting bats. For this reason, recommendations for precautionary working practices are given in the following chapter.

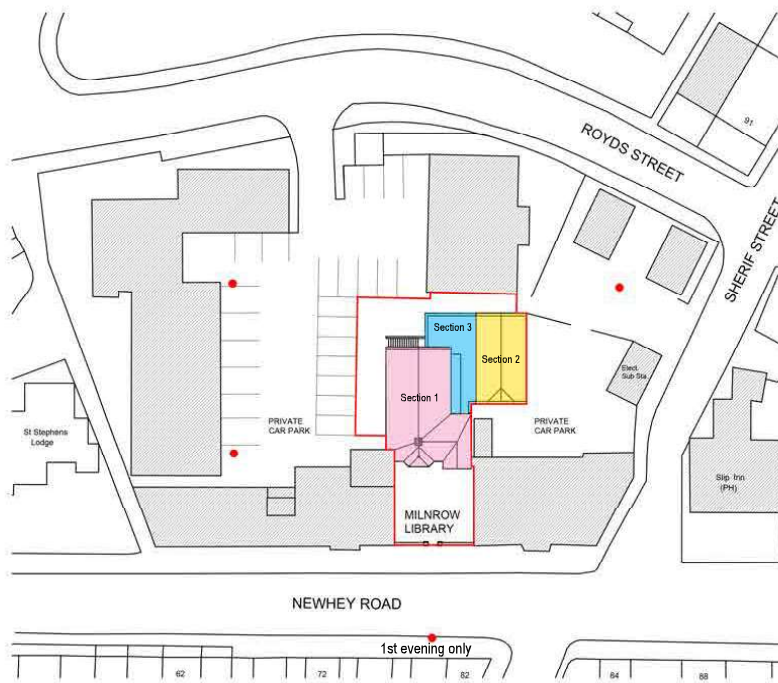
4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bats has been found during the surveys. As the building provides high potential for roosting, it is advised a precautionary approach be undertaken during works to reduce the likelihood of an offence being committed. The contractors undertaking the work would need to be made aware of these requirements and any works should be undertaken using precautionary methods as per below.
- 4.2 During works, stripping/disturbance of roof ridges and slates, lead flashing and fascias would need to be carefully undertaken by hand to avoid injury to any bats that may be present. These would then need to be lifted outwards/upwards and the exposed void below inspected for bats or signs of bats. The reverse surface of each slate should be inspected as bats can cling to rough surfaces. A similar careful approach should be taken for the removal of lead flashing and fascias. Any repairs to the masonry and roof timbers should also be carried out carefully with gaps, cracks and holes inspected prior to being filled or repaired.
- 4.3 Should bats be found to be present, they would need to be left in situ and not handled or touched. If a bat is disturbed and it wishes to fly, then it should be allowed to do so. If a bat is uncovered, for instance by lifting a tile, then the tile should be gently placed back with care taken not to crush the bat below. Alternatively, if the circumstances allow a plastic or cardboard box with ventilation holes could temporarily be placed over the bat to protect the bat or if circumstances allow the bat placed into the box.
- 4.4 In the unlikely event that bats, or evidence of roosting bats (such as bat droppings) be found, works would need to be suspended and the bat ecologist contacted to help resolve the situation and consulted as to the best method to proceed. A statutory licence from Natural England may need to be obtained and, as part of this, additional surveys may be necessary (which may be seasonally constrained), along with mitigation and compensation, such as the provision of replacement roosting where appropriate.

5. REFERENCES

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

Milnrow Library, Milnrow, Rochdale
Evening Bat Surveys



Legend
● Surveyor locations



Apex Ecology Limited
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status			
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Bradshaw Gass & Hope LLP			
client ROCHDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL			
project MILNROW LIBRARY REPAIRS TO THE ROOF AND WINDOWS			
drawing Figure 1. Layout of Building and Location of Surveyors and Night-vision Aids			
drawn by	AGR	date	JANUARY 2021
checked by		date	
scale	1:500 Approx		A3
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APPENDIX I - LEGISLATION

The information below is intended only as guidance to the legislation relating to bats. It relates solely to England and does not purport to provide legal advice. It is recommended that the legislative documents be referred to for the full legal wording and the services of a relevant specialist sought where legal advice is required.

There are eighteen different species of bat in the UK; some are very rare whilst others are widespread. However, because the populations of most species have declined in past decades, all British bats have been protected by law.

Bats are protected in England under European Legislation via the Conservation (Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (92/43/EEC)) or 'The Habitats Directive'. The Directive is transposed into UK law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitats Regulations). Due to their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations, bats are considered 'European Protected Species'.

In summary, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- deliberately disturb a bat;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat.

Disturbance of bats includes in particular any disturbance which is likely:

(a) to impair their ability:

- (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
- (ii) to hibernate or migrate; or

(b) to affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which has also been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000.

In summary, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection.

NERC ACT AND BIODIVERSITY

A number of UK habitats and species are also included on the list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. The NERC Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England, as required by the Act.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of NERC Act to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Fifty-six habitats of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and continue to be regarded as conservation priorities in the subsequent UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. They include terrestrial habitats such as upland hay meadows to lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and freshwater and marine habitats such as ponds and subtidal sands and gravels.

There are 943 species of principal importance included on the S41 list. These are the species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. In addition, the Hen Harrier has also been included on the list because without continued conservation action it is unlikely that the Hen Harrier population will increase from its current very low levels in England. In accordance with Section 41(4) the Secretary of State will, in consultation with Natural England, keep this list under review and will publish a revised list if necessary.

The impact that this legislation has on the Planning system is also outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their Impact within the Planning System. This states:

The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Local authorities should consult English Nature [now Natural England] before granting planning permission. They should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species. They should also advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species' protection provisions affecting the site concerned.