

Bat Presence / Absence Survey

St. Josephs Pre-school Nursery

SJPH-EVE-RP-01

OCTOBER 2024

CONTACTS

HENRY GUNNING
Director

dd +44 (0)7539719916
e henry.gunning@evelynecology.com

[Evelyn Ecology Limited](#)
19 Clarendon Road
Audenshaw
Manchester
M34 5PP

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Author Henry Gunning

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Evelyn Ecology Limited was instructed by Bradbury Consulting Ltd to undertake a bat survey at St. Josephs Pre-school Nursery, 57 Hind Hill St, Heywood OL10 1AQ (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for a roof replacement (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").
- 1.1.2 No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Evelyn Ecology Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

- 1.2.1 The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 85549 10626 and has an area of approximately 415m². The site is situated in the centre of Heywood between Rochdale and Bury. The immediate surrounding landscape is a mix of residential and industrial / commercial property. Scattered pockets of trees are interspersed within the urban nature of the surrounding landscape. The nearest semi-natural habitat is a woodland complex c 1.1km north of the site with the River Roch running through. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 1.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 Evelyn Ecology was commissioned in August 2024 to conduct site surveys which included the following activities:
- Conduct an external building inspection to look potential features and evidence of roosting bats.
 - Confirm bat presence or absence through undertaking emergence survey(s) of the building.
 - Assess the type and importance of the roost(s), if present
 - Recommend appropriate mitigation and compensation, if applicable.

2 LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY & STANDING ADVICE

2.1 Legislation

- 2.1.1 In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019 (known as the “Habitats Regulations”). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
 - Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection ☐ Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
 - Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat
- 2.1.2 Under UK law, a bat roost is any structure or place which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.
- 2.1.3 Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.
- 2.1.4 If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.
- 2.1.5 A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).
- 2.1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.
- 2.1.7 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:
- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
 - Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
 - Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
 - Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
 - Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
 - Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
 - Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database was reviewed in August 2024 to identify landscape value and the presence of notable habitats as well as granted European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats.

3.2 Field Survey

- 3.2.1 The following survey methods, design, data analysis and interpretation have been undertaken with due consideration of the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines 4th Edition (Collins, 2023).

Building Inspection

- 3.2.2 The survey was undertaken by David Spencer (2015-13435-CLS-CLS,) on 28/08/2024.
- 3.2.3 The external inspections of the buildings were carried out from ground level using binoculars to investigate suitable gaps and crevices. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:
- Bat droppings
 - Feeding remains
 - Grease staining / urine marks
 - Corpses or skeletons
- 3.2.4 The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:
- Roof and ridge tiles
 - Gaps under felt
 - Lead flashing
 - Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
 - Eaves
 - Gaps in brickwork and mortar
 - Boxed soffits
 - Air bricks
 - Fascia and barge boards
 - Grills
 - Windowsills and panes
 - Vents
 - Walls

3.3 Emergence Survey

- 3.3.1 Potential roost access points were identified during the building inspection. These points were covered by a surveyor during the dusk emergence survey.
- 3.3.2 Bat echolocation, flight and habitat characteristics were recorded where possible, in order to determine the species. The level and type of bat activity was also recorded to establish how bats are using the site.
- 3.3.3 Three surveyors were positioned at suitable locations to cover the entirety of the building and potential entry / re-entry points.

Equipment

- 3.3.4 The surveyors were using the Echo Meter Touch 2 Active Bat Detector. This device records bat

echolocation calls across the full spectrum, with a sensitivity range of 10 – 125 kHz. The integrated heterodyne live monitoring also allows the observer to hear the echolocation calls in real time, with automatic tuning.

- 3.3.5 Two Nightfox Red HD Digital Night Vision cameras were used during the survey to monitor part of the building during surveys. The cameras were positioned to cover potential roost access points. Footage of the survey was recorded and reviewed post-survey.

Table 1: Bat Survey Conditions

Date	Sunset	Start Time	End Time	Temp	Rain	Wind	Humidity
28/08/2024	20:07	19:30	22:00	17	0	5	86

3.4 Survey Limitations

- 3.4.1 There were no limitations to this survey as the weather conditions were favourable and bats were active throughout.



4 RESULTS

4.1 Habitat Assessment

- 4.1.1 The site is in Heywood, a village between Rochdale and Bury in north Manchester. The building is currently used as a nursery. The habitats within the curtilage of the site include hardstanding car park and playground and a single semi-mature Sycamore tree at its north eastern end. The nursery sits adjacent to Our Lady and St Joseph R C Church. The surrounding area consists predominately of residential and commercial properties with only pockets of trees and gardens. The habitats on and surrounding the site provide low foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.
- 4.1.2 Suitable foraging and commuting opportunities are present c. 1.1km north along the River Roch which extends along the northern settlement border of Heywood. The river appears to have a mix of woodland / trees and open areas of grassland along its banks.

4.2 Desk Study

- 4.2.1 One EPSL for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle was granted in 2020. The roost location was c. 1.7km south of the site.

4.3 Building Inspection

- 4.3.1 The building is a one storey property currently used as a nursery. The building is of a brick construction which is in good condition and does not provide any roosting opportunities for bats. The roof is pitched with slate roof tiles and terracotta ridge tiles. The roof tiles are mostly in good condition. However, there are minor lifted and slipped tiles on the roof which have the potential to provide roosting opportunities for bats. Lead flashing also lined the edges of the roof tiles where it was against a wall structure but was in good condition with no apparent gaps present. uPVC windows are frequent along all aspects of the building which are all in good condition. No evidence of bats was found during the external inspection and, taking into account the surrounding habitats, the inspection deemed that the building was of low potential for roosting bats and therefore required a single emergence survey. Potential roosting features are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Description and photographs of habitats within and adjacent to the site

Feature	Photograph
Some tiles lifted and gaps in ridge tiles	



4.4 Emergence Survey

4.4.1 The bat survey results are described in Table 3 below and illustrated on the Bat Survey Plan in Appendix 2.

Table 3: Bat Survey Results

Date	Species	Notes	Photograph
28/08/2024	Common pipistrelle	Foraging common pipistrelles were recorded above Surveyor 1 for part of the survey. Activity was more sporadic later into the survey and comprised mainly social calls and passes which were heard but not seen by Surveyor 1 and Surveyor 2. Surveyor 3 did not register any bats	



5 EVALUATION

- 5.1.1 The areas surrounding St. Josephs Pre-school Nursery are of low quality habitats for foraging and commuting bats due to built up urban nature of the landscape.
- 5.1.2 The building offers a low number of possible roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats which were limited to some slipped slate roof tiles and gaps between the terracotta ridge tiles.
- 5.1.3 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey and the bat activity was sparse with some limited foraging activity during the survey.
- 5.1.4 Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, it is considered that bats are absent and not roosting with the building. Therefore, the roofing modifications can take place without a licence.



6 REFERENCES

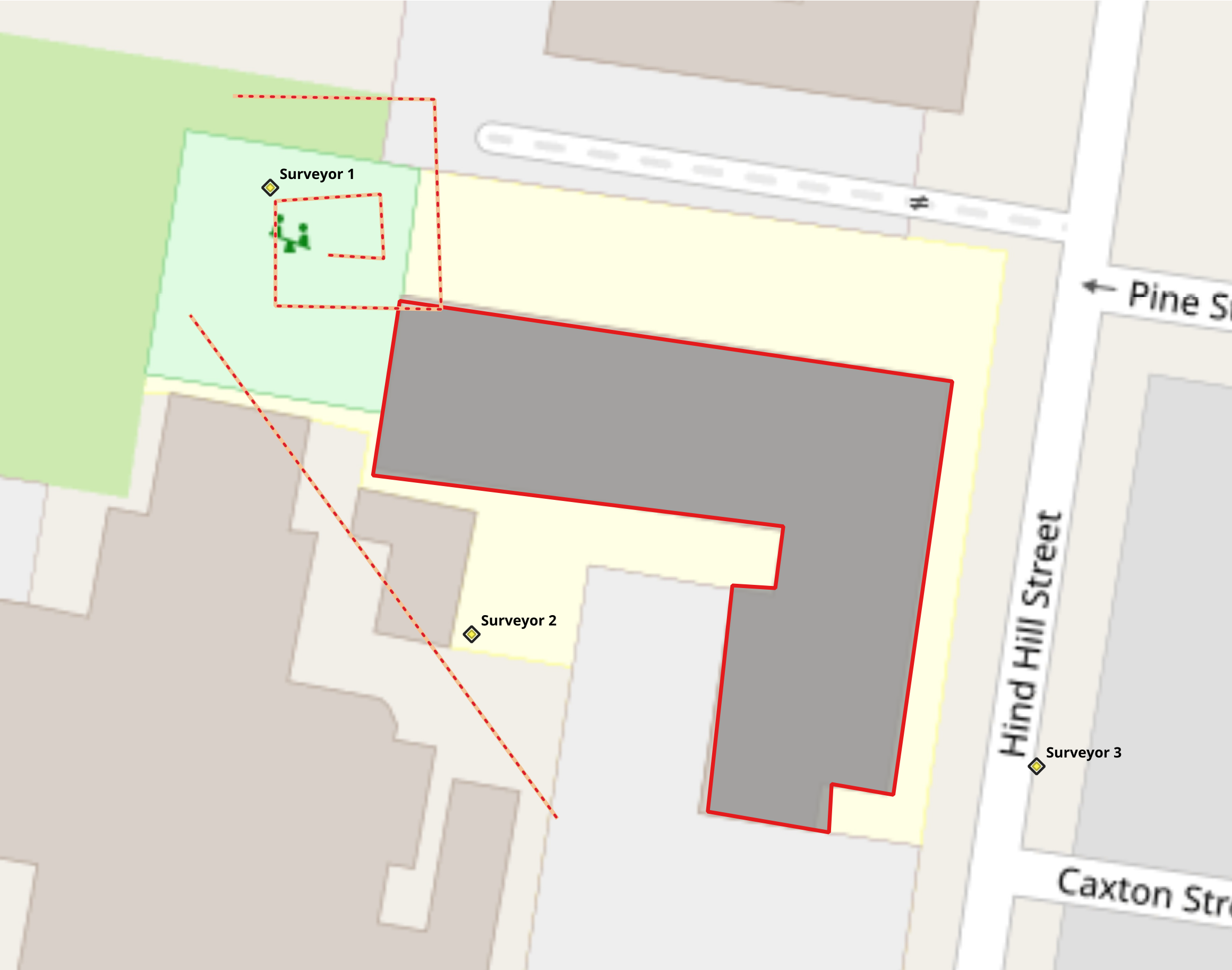
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APPENDIX 1 – Site Location Plan



APPENDIX 2 – Bat Survey Plan



Legend

Red Line Boundary

Building

Bat Flight Path

Surveyor Positions

051015 m

Project	St. Josephs Pre-school Nursery	Date	07/10/2024	Drawing No	SJPH-EVE-DR-01
Drawing Title	Bat Survey Plan	Scale	As shown	Revision	01
Client	Bradbury Consulting Ltd	Drawn	HG	Checked	HG