

BAT SURVEY REPORT

Corner Plot Junction of Station Road & Maclure Road Rochdale

Provided for:

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Summary

A bat survey was commissioned by Rochdale Development Agency to inform proposals to change the use and extend the corner plot circular building on the Junction of Station Road and Maclure Street, Rochdale and to demolish the tow-storey building adjacent to Fire Station Yard, which is attached to the adjoining building. This is a report of the survey.

Bats and their roosting sites receive a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, 2019.

An inspection of the buildings was undertaken on 5th October 2023. The bat survey consisted of; an inspection of the exterior of the buildings to identify bats or signs of bats and to identify any potential bat access points; an assessment of surrounding habitat for its suitability to support bats and a desk-top study to identify any previous records of bats associated with the building.

No evidence of bats using the buildings was found.

The Circular building was assessed as having a negligible potential to support roosting bats.

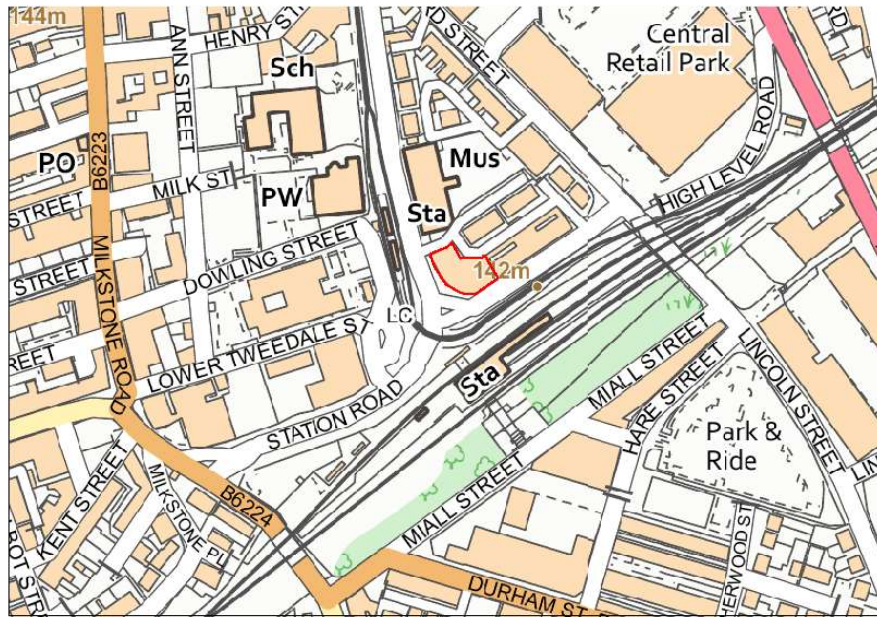
The two-storey brick building was assessed as having a very low potential to support a bat roost, however the occasional bat can never be discounted. Recommendations are made for the roof tiles to be removed by hand with care, prior to demolition.

Although it is concluded that works can take place with low risk of damaging a bat roost, if bats are found or suspected at any time during the works, work should cease immediately and advice sought from GMEU.

1 Introduction

1.1 Reason for survey

The proposed development is to change the use of a single storey commercial building into a six storey building comprising of five floors of residential units and ground floor commercial use.



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Fig 1 - Location of building surveyed (not to scale)



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Fig 2 – Aerial view of the building (not to scale)

1.2 Legal protection offered to bats

All species of bats found in the UK receive a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, 2019. In summary, it is an offence –

- To kill, injure or take any wild bat
- To damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection (known as a roost). Since bats are mobile in their habits and can use different places for shelter depending on the time of year this is taken to mean all identified bat roosts, whether bats are present in the roost or not.
- To disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place used for protection

It is possible to obtain licences for activities affecting bats that would otherwise be in breach of the law. In the case of development works (including building demolition), a licence can be issued under the terms of Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

1.3 Surveying for bats in buildings

Bats often use buildings as roosting sites because they provide a choice of safe, dry places. Buildings can provide a range of potential roost sites, e.g.

- Behind tiles or weatherboarding
- In cavity wall spaces
- In crevices between wall spaces and roofs
- Under soffit boards
- In roof spaces

Bats are mobile in their habits and can occupy a range of different roosting sites depending on the time of year and the stage of their life cycle. The most obvious use of buildings by bats is between May and August when the pregnant females gather in maternity roosts to give birth and raise their young. Although females and young often remain at one roost site all summer, they are sometimes known to move and can change roosting sites if conditions become unsuitable. Although some bats (e.g. brown long-eared bats) occupy the same roosting sites throughout the year, most summer colonies will have dispersed by the autumn. Temporary roost sites can then be occupied in the autumn before bats then move again into hibernation roosts for the winter. Hibernation roosts are often used by single or small numbers of bats and can be very difficult to detect.

Many buildings in areas supporting good feeding habitat can be used as temporary night roosts or feeding perches.

Since bats move roosting sites and can be difficult to detect directly the key identification feature to identify the presence of bats is droppings. Sometimes droppings are found on the outside of buildings. Otherwise droppings found in loft spaces or around chimneys or gable ends can be typical of bats. Other features used to identify the presence of bats include:

- Characteristic odour
- 'Chittering' by bats, usually in warm summer weather or when bats are active at dusk and are about to leave the roost
- Staining around possible access points

Any survey should include a desk-top survey for any existing records of bats close to the building being inspected and an assessment of the quality of the habitat surrounding the building. Since very many types of building can support bats, one of the best indicators of the possible presence of bats in a building is the presence of good feeding habitat for bats nearby.

It should be noted that the species of bat most commonly associated with buildings in urban areas of Greater Manchester is the pipistrelle and that pipistrelles, in spite of their protected status, remain relatively common the UK (estimated population is 2.5 million).

2 Aims of the survey

- 2.1** To identify any potential bat roosting features
- 2.2** To ascertain if bats currently use, or have used, the buildings for roosting purposes.
- 2.3** To ascertain the likely importance of the buildings for bats.
- 2.4** To recommend any further actions required resulting from the survey findings.

3 Methodology

A desk-top survey was undertaken for any existing records of bats within 1km of the site (see Appendix 1).

An assessment was made of the potential of the buildings to support bats.

An inspection of the outside of the buildings was made during daylight hours on the 5th October 2023 searching for bats or signs of bats and assessing the general suitability of the building to support bats. Close-focussing Minox F 8 x 32 binoculars and a one million power candle torch were used during the building inspections.

The survey was undertaken by Mandy Elford BSc Hons, MCIEEM, Ecologist an experienced bat surveyor, who currently holds a Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2015-11597-CLS-CLS) and Derek Richardson, Principal Ecologist, with over 20 years' experience in bat work.

The survey was carried out in line with the recommended methods contained in The Bat Conservation Trust Bat Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

3.1 Survey limitations

Given the mobile habits of bats it is possible that a one-off survey such as that conducted for the buildings at the Corner Plot, Station Road, Rochdale, may miss signs of bats if they are not occupying the roost at the time of survey. Even if bats are present they can be very difficult to detect if they are occupying inaccessible cracks or crevices. A bat survey cannot therefore hope to provide a definitive 'negative' result. Rather, results are expressed in terms of the *probability* of a particular planned development affecting bats.

3.2 Judgement of potential for bat roosts

The following table was used to both assess potential and to aid decisions about recommendations for example for further surveys.

Level of Potential	Justification
High Potential	- Abundant features suitable for use as bat roosts e.g. gaps into soffits, lifted and/or missing roof slates/tiles and ridge tiles, wall cavities, accessible enclosed roofspace, accessible below-ground structures. - Bat roosts known from similar structures in the vicinity. - Evidence of bats found on site e.g. droppings, feeding signs. *Surrounding landscape supports abundant features for foraging, commuting and possibly roosting bats e.g. mature trees, waterbodies, pastureland, high connectivity. *Bat activity recorded in vicinity of survey site
Medium Potential	- Occasional features suitable for use as bat roosts. - Bat roosts known from similar structures in same borough. *Surrounding landscape supports occasional features for foraging, commuting and possibly roosting bats *Bat activity recorded from the borough around survey site
Low Potential	- Few Features suitable for use as bat roosts. - Bat roosts known from similar structures within Greater Manchester. *Surrounding landscape supports few features for foraging, commuting and possibly roosting bats. *Bat activity recorded from the Greater Manchester area

* Additional factor used in combination with those listed above.

Adapted from BCT Bat Survey Guidelines 2016

4 Results

- 4.1 The desktop search shows a number of bat activity records within the 1km buffer zone, none of the records are associated with the building. There are eleven bat roost records within the area of search, the closest is located approximately 143 metres to the west of the site (see Appendix 1).
- 4.2 The building to be altered is a single storey circular shaped building containing a number of retail units.



Photo 1 – Circular Building

- 4.3 The building is metal clad to the roof line, the roof is flat. The retail units are all shuttered in metal. Internally there is no roof space.



Photo 2 – Metal cladding to the roof and metal shutter

- 4.4** The two storey brick building at the rear of the adjoining building and adjacent to Fire Station Yard is proposed for demolition. This building has a hipped tiled roof, which is separate from the main roofline of the four-storey building.



Photo 3 – Two-storey building proposed for demolition

- 4.5** The buildings are located in a residential/retail area of Rochdale, with a number of properties within the locality far more suited to bat habitation. The metro link station is to the south of the site
- 4.6** The buildings are located on the edge of Rochdale Town Centre and the area is well lit.
- 4.7** No signs of bats were found during the inspection.

5 Limitations of the Survey

- 5.1** A common issue on many sites is that the external field signs of bat presence, such as droppings and urine staining may be lost over time due to the weathering and damp conditions; this is a common issue when surveying buildings. It is therefore possible that signs of bats on the exterior of the building may not have been apparent at time of survey.
- 5.2** Another frequent limitation when surveying buildings is that droppings and other field signs of the presence of crevice dwelling species such as the pipistrelle are often not visible. Droppings often accumulate in hidden areas which may not be found during routine non-invasive surveys.

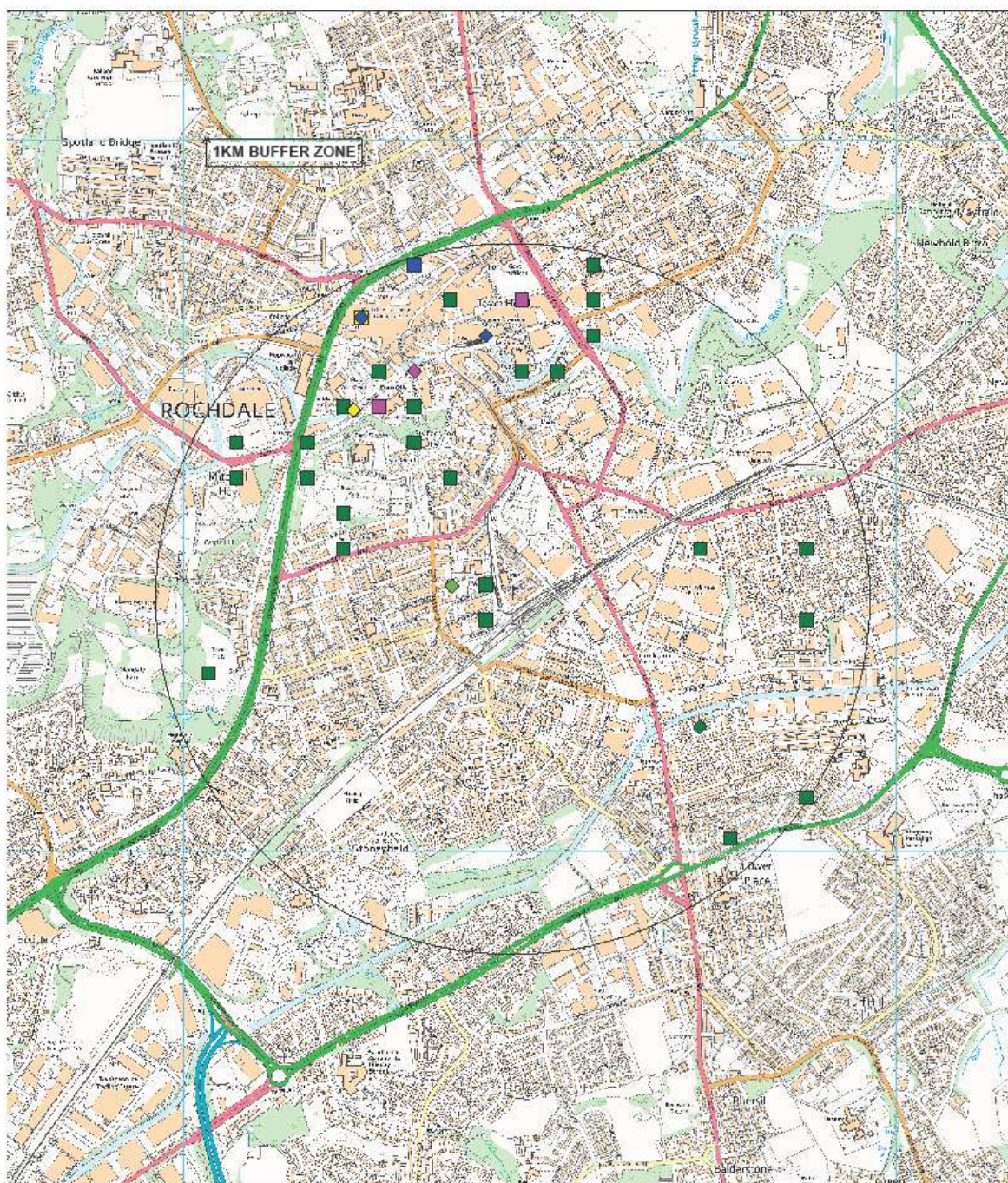
6 Conclusions

- 6.1** There was no evidence to suggest that bats were roosting in the buildings.
- 6.2** There was no evidence to suggest that bats have used the building for roosting prior to the survey.
- 6.3** The surrounding habitat in the locality of the site was considered to have some (limited) potential for bat foraging and commuting.
- 6.4** The buildings are located in a residential/retail area of Rochdale and is well lit.
- 6.6** The circular single storey building is considered to have a negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- 6.7** The two-storey building proposed for demolition is considered to have a very low potential to support a considerable bat roost. However, the occasional bat cannot be discounted.

7 Implications and Recommendations

- 7.1** Due to the mobile habits of bats, the occasional bat can never be discounted. We would therefore recommend, as a precautionary measure that the roof tiles on the two-storey building be removed by hand, with care with the presence of bats borne in mind.
- 7.2** All contractors should be reminded of their legal responsibilities regarding bats prior to works commencing.
- 7.3** **If bats are found or suspected at any time then work must cease immediately and advice sought from GMEU or a suitably qualified bat worker.**

APPENDIX 1 – Bat Map



GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT
ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SD89921270
CORNER PLOT, ROCHDALE - BAT MAP

SCALE 1:10,000

BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANC'S BAT GROUP

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