

Preliminary Roost Assessment

132 Drake Street

Rochdale

Greater Manchester

OL16 1PN

For

Farhan Rama



Gritstone Ecology

Contents

- 1. Introduction2
- 2. Methods4
- 3. Results6
- 4. Evaluation8
- 5. Impact assessment9
- 6. Required actions9
- 7. References10
- 8. Appendix 1 – Photographs11



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Farhan Rama. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 132 Drake Street, Rochdale, on 5th July 2023.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the conversion of the building to residential apartments, including conversion of the roof void to living space, construction of rear dormers, and changes to the internal layout.

1.5. Site context

132 Drake Street is a Grade II listed building located on the corner of Moore Street and the A640 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PN, GR SD 89864 13016, approximately 500m south of Rochdale Town Centre. The building is in a heavily urbanised area surrounded by commercial buildings, light industrial units, and houses without gardens.

The site includes a semi-derelict building on the end of a row of shops, with areas of hard landscaping, and no garden.

Habitat within 50m of the building includes; shops, commercial buildings, light industrial units, housing, rail lines, and busy well-lit roads.

Habitat within 500m includes, housing, commercial units, and busy roads, small areas of open green-space, rail lines, watercourses and mature trees.

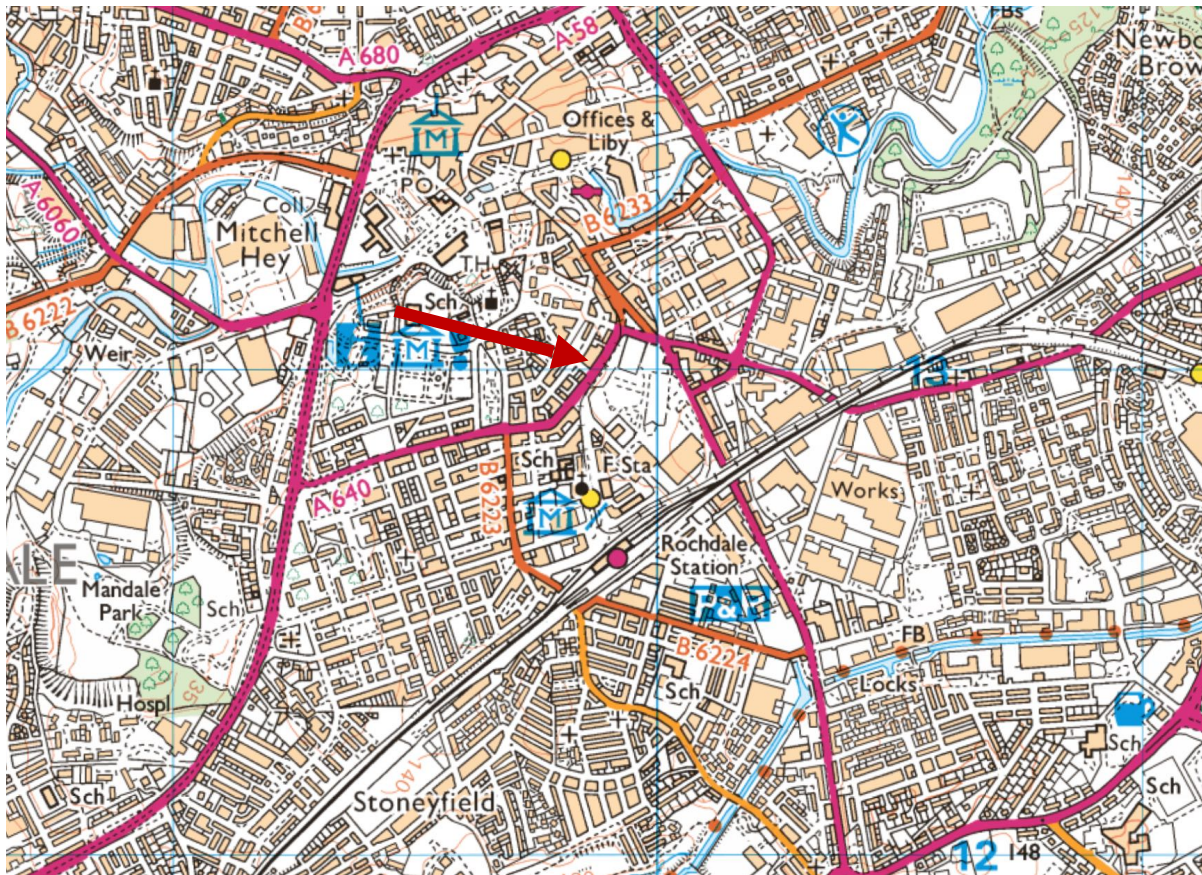
The area in general is dominated by buildings, hard landscaping, and busy roads with high level lighting. There are no areas of good quality foraging habitat in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

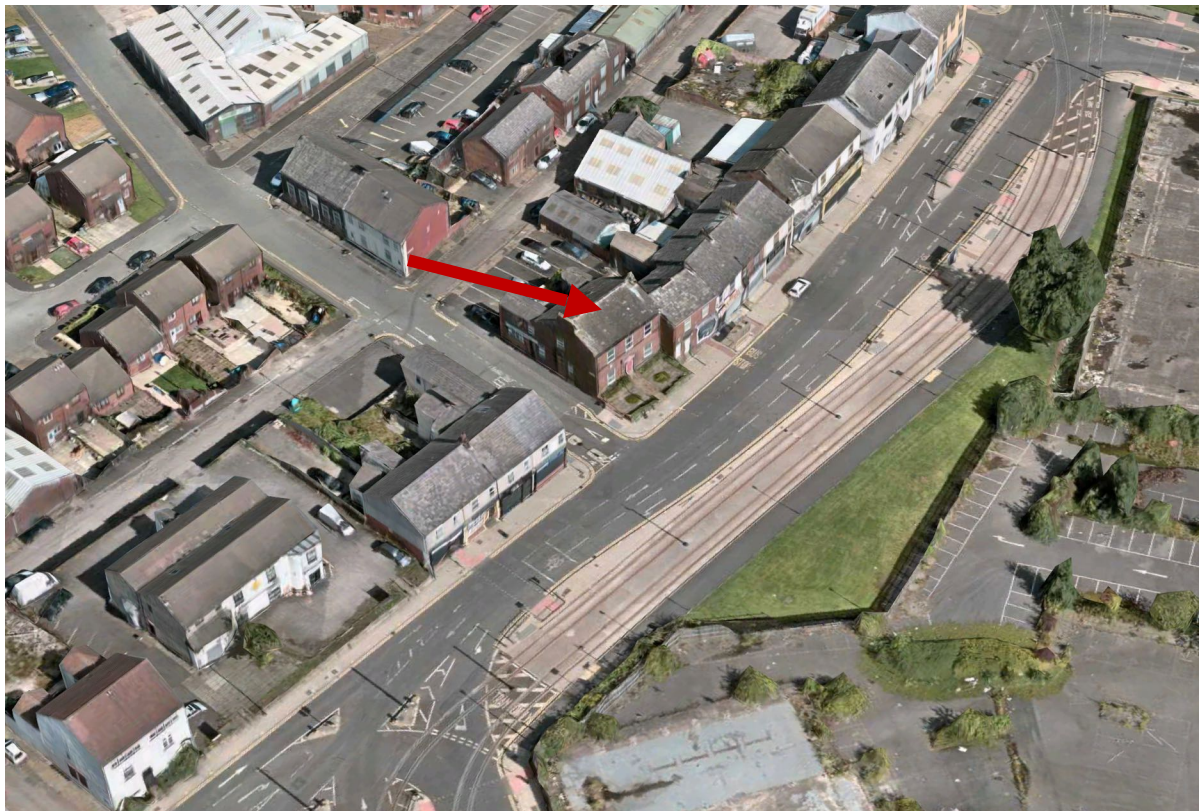
The site and surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats.



1.6. Site location



1.6a – 132 Drake Street – site location.



1.6b – 132 Drake Street – aerial photograph.



2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 5th July 2023. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, warm, and dry, with a temperature of 20°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordinance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.



Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in July, when bats are active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are more likely to be evident, if present.



3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – The front of the house.

No 132 Drake Street, Rochdale, is a pre-1950's Grade II listed building on the end of a row of shops and commercial premises. The building is not currently occupied, and has been empty for a number of years. The building is semi-derelict, and has been the subject of vandalism, anti social behaviour, drug use, and is used by squatters.

It has a pitched roof, covered with stone roof and ridge tiles. Extensions to the rear have pitched roofs covered with slate and stone tiles.

Roof pitches face northwest and southeast; the gable end faces southwest. Lead flashing has been removed and replaced with bitumen flash banding. Timber hidden gutters are fitted at the front of the building, timber fascia boards are fitted at the eaves and gable end.

Walls are solid brick with no insulating cavity, slate hanging tiles are fitted to walls at the rear. Lintels are stone & flat-arched brickwork, sills are stone; window and door frames are timber and UPVC. Some windows are boarded, some glass is intact, some panes are broken, open, or missing.

The building is in poor condition. There are gaps between natural stone tiles, timbers at the eaves are in poor condition, windows could give access to the inside of the building. Fascia boards and hidden gutters are perished, with gaps between timbers and brickwork. Walls are in good condition, with no missing mortar or cracks.

Given the heavily urbanised setting, there are no features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no indications of use by bats were present during the inspection.



3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – The cellar.

The building has a single roof void, which is not used for storage, and accessed infrequently for essential maintenance.

The roof has a timber rafter and purlin structure which is not lined, and the underside of stone roof tiles and timbers is exposed.

The wall plate, gable end, and party walls were inspected in detail using an endoscope; these areas are generally filled with dusty cobwebs. There are minor gaps at the gable end, however no indications of use by bats were found. The building has a large cellar. The cellar has no direct access from the outside, and is dusty and cobwebbed.

Internally the building is in poor condition, it has been subject to fires and vandalism, and is used by rough sleepers. All rooms were inspected in detail. There are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is situated in a built-up area which provides poor habitat for bats, and is subject to disturbance from noise and light, and has been subject to disturbance from fires and vandalism. And as no signs of use were noted during the building inspection.



4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats.

There are no suitable foraging opportunities for bats, close to the site, and the area is fragmented by light and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. The closest area of open green space is 250m away, and the building has no features which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is in poor condition. There are no features externally, which are likely to be used by roosting bats; and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The lack of any indications of use inside the roof void or cellar, such as bat droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the roof void, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

The roof is not lined, and the underside of stone tiles and timbers is exposed. This allowed a detailed inspection of the underside of tiles and timbers. These areas are covered in dusty cobwebs, with no indications of use.

Walls are solid brick with no insulating cavity. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities. There are a number of open or broken windows which could allow bats into the building, however, no indications of use were found.

Cellars are dusty and cobwebbed with no sign of disturbance, no direct entrance from the outside, and no indications of use by bats.

The building has been subject to fires and vandalism, and is subject to constant disturbance from traffic noise and light.

The small gaps between brickwork, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using an endoscope. No droppings were found, and no suitable gaps were present which could give access, or shelter to roosting bats.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats



3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the conversion of the building to residential apartments, including conversion of the roof void to living space, construction of rear dormers, and changes to the internal layout.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats and has negligible suitability for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.



7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the building.



2 – The rear of the building.





3 – Stone roof and ridge tiles are in good condition.



4 – Timber fascia boards at the eaves are fixed tightly against brickwork, but perished.





5 – Lead flashing has been replaced with bitumen.



6 – Brickwork and mortar are in good condition with no suitable gaps.





7 – Window and door frames are sealed into brickwork with no suitable gaps.



8 – End tiles at the verges are sealed with cement.





9 – Gaps in hanging tiles were checked from a ladder using an endoscope.



10 – Cellars have no direct access points from the outside.

