

Townhead, Rochdale

Bat Survey Report

18th July 2023



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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of Townhead was commissioned by architect Richard Storah on behalf of the client, Raj Hussain, on 8th June 2023.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to redevelop the Townhead building as an apartment block.
- 1.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study, an internal and external visual inspection and a single dusk emergence survey. The visual inspection and nocturnal survey were undertaken on 13th July 2023.
- 1.1.4 No historic bat records relating to roost presence in Townhead were received from GMEU.
- 1.1.5 No bats were found roosting in the building during the preliminary daytime assessment. Two probable bat droppings were identified near a potential roost location (gap between window frame and lintel) on the northeast gable of Building Section 1, however, presence of a roost in this location was not confirmed and is considered a possibility only. No signs of roosting bat presence were recorded during the single nocturnal survey.
- 1.1.6 Although Townhead was considered to display a moderate level of bat roost suitability, the scheme's potential to impact roosting bats is very limited, with confident assessment possible that external alterations to the building will not impact roosting bats. As a result, in this instance a single nocturnal survey is considered sufficient to inform the scheme.
- 1.1.7 No further bat survey is considered necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey works to be undertaken.
- 1.1.8 It is noted that a bat roost may be present in association with a sash window in the northeast elevation of Building Section 1, however, it is proposed to retain this window. If proposals change and this window is to be replaced, then a consultant ecologist must be contacted in order to provide further advice in relation to further survey and supervision/licensing requirements in relation to this work.
- 1.1.9 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 1.1.10 No bat roosting enhancement is proposed; however, it is recommended that two swift boxes are fitted to the renovated building.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of Townhead was commissioned by architect Richard Storah on behalf of the client, Raj Hussain, on 8th June 2023.
- 2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to redevelop the Townhead building as an apartment block.
- 2.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study, an internal and external visual inspection and a single dusk emergence survey.
- 2.1.4 Townhead comprises a Grade II listed building located off Yorkshire Street within a central location in the town of Rochdale.

3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 Townhead was located in an urban setting, adjacent to a busy road (John Street) and with a large apartment complex being constructed immediately to the south. Higher quality bat foraging areas and connective habitat linkages in the local area are lacking.
- 3.1.2 The range of species expected to use the immediate area for roosting was expected to be limited to common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed building.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Townhead, 150 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1BG			
OS Grid Ref. SD 89910 13672		Altitude. 135 m	
Local Planning Authority: Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Surrounded by other buildings
River bordered by trees			River Roch 270 m southeast of site
Standing water			Waterbodies 1.3km east of site
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Associated with River Roch
Trees		✓	Line of trees bordering John Street on eastern boundary of site
Woodland			Bordering River Roch, 560 m southeast of site
Grassland		✓	Small patches of lawn bordering John Street

Figure 1. Site location, as indicated by red circle



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- The presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Bat roosting areas and access/egress points into the building.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the building.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the building, if present.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

- 4.1.1 A records request was undertaken with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), with records requested for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

- 4.2.1 The internal and external visual inspection was undertaken on 13th July 2023 by Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS).
- 4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2016):
- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.
 - An extensive examination of all parts of the building both inside and out to record structural features and condition and to record features that may be suitable for roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps between beams and joists and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below beams, among a number of other factors. All signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
 - An assessment of the building's bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).
- 4.2.3 In addition, any signs of nesting bird usage of the building were recorded.
- 4.2.4 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:
- Clulight
 - Binoculars
 - Endoscope
 - Ladders
 - Camera

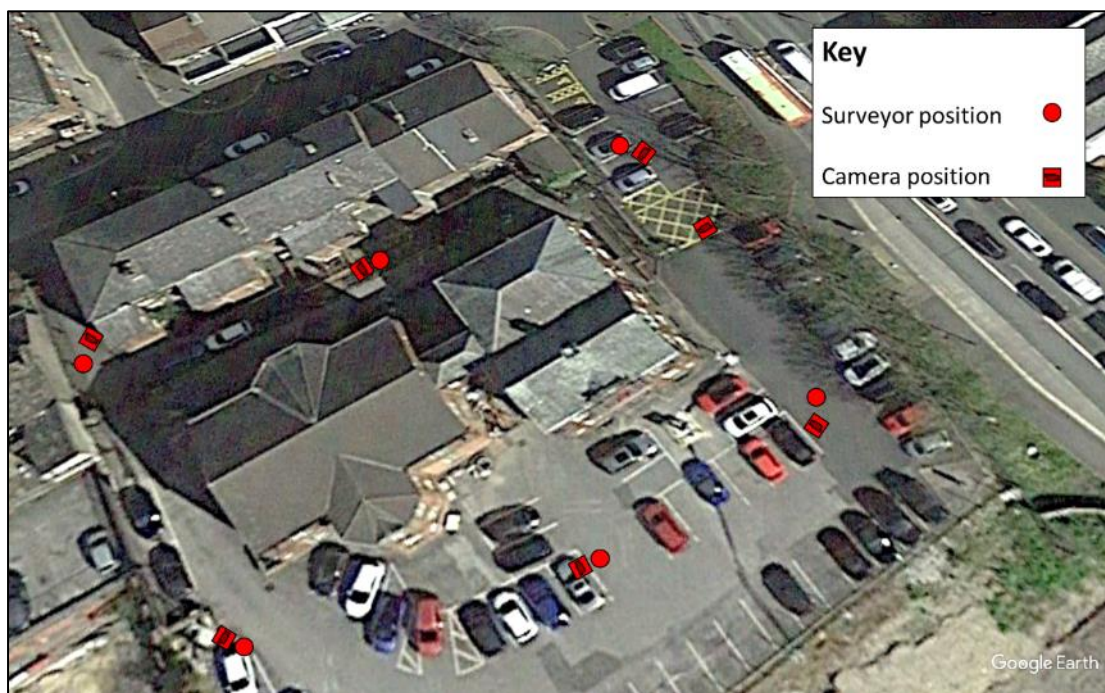
Nocturnal Survey

- 4.2.5 The following personnel conducted the nocturnal survey and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and iPad/iPod recorders, together with five Canon XA10 video cameras and two Panasonic VX980 infra-red video cameras:
- Robert Bell
 - Amanda Murphy (Qual CIEEM; Bat Survey Class licence WML-A34-Level 2, 2020-47913-CLS-CLS)
 - John Pearce (JP)
 - Ian Wright (IW) (Bat Survey Class licence WML-A34-Level 2, 2023-11218-CLS-CLS).

- Greg Slack (GS) (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS)
- Carl Dixon (CD)

- 4.2.6 Surveyor and camera locations during the dusk emergence survey are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2.7 The dusk emergence survey was carried out on 13th July 2023, in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016).
- 4.2.8 The dusk emergence survey continued from 15 minutes prior to sunset and lasted for 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Figure 2. Nocturnal survey plan



4.3 Survey Limitations

- 4.3.1 The roof voids of Building Sections 3 & 4 could not be accessed, either due to the lack of safe access (Building Section 3), or the lack of any access (Building Section 4). The voids of the other two building sections could however be accessed. The building was located in urban area, where the presence of typical void dwelling bat species (i.e. brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*) was highly unlikely, furthermore, a nocturnal survey confirmed the likely absence of void dwelling bats. For these reasons, the lack of access to two roof voids was not considered a significant survey limitation.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

- 5.1.1 A total of 167 bat records was received from GMEU.
- 5.1.2 None of the records received related to the site itself. The closest records comprised 2009 observations of common pipistrelle and Daubenton's bats *Myotis daubentonii* recorded from the River Roch, c. 250 m from the site. Species positively identified in the records included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, brown long-eared bat, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* and Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*. Other records related to either an unidentified *Pipistrellus* species, an unidentified *Myotis* species, or an unidentified bat species. The distribution of bat records received from GMEU can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 5.1.3 A search of MAGIC highlighted three bat EPS mitigation licences having historically been issued for locations within 2 km of the site. This closest licence was issued in 2015, to permit destruction of resting places belonging to common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Daubenton's bat in a location 430 m southwest of the site. The two other licences also related to impacts on resting places belonging to common pipistrelle and in one case soprano pipistrelle.

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

- 5.2.1 No signs of bat presence were recorded from the site, however, the building was considered to display a moderate level of bat roost suitability.
- 5.2.2 To aid building description, it was split into sections as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Building sections



Description and external inspection – Building Section 1

- 5.2.3 The surveyed building was Grade II listed and comprised an early C19th two-storey structure with some decorative stone sections (i.e. banding course) (Plate 1). The roof was dual-pitched and hipped with a Westmorland slate covering. Hip coverings comprised a mix of flashing and felt, with internal rainwater goods behind parapets. Windows mainly comprised new wood-framed double-glazed units with occasional single-pane units remaining.
- 5.2.4 On the exterior of the building, potential bat roosting features were mainly associated with the roof and comprised crevices between slates and gaps below lifted sections of flashing on the hips and parapet wall tops. A shallow crevice (c.20 mm wide x 30 mm deep) was present between an original wooden single-pane sash window and a stone lintel on the northeast elevation (Plate 2). Two probable bat droppings (which could not be safely accessed to confirm their status) were recorded from the glass pane below this gap. The gap between the window frame and lintel was fully inspected from the ground using binoculars and a high-power torch, with no bat/s present or droppings visible in this crevice.

Internal inspection – Building Section 1

- 5.2.5 The wood sarking lined roof was suspended on king-post roof trusses, a ridge beam, purlins, rafters and battens. The floor/ceiling was insulated with c. 200 mm of glass fibre insulation and the void was very dusty (Plate 3). No potential bat access points or signs of bat presence were recorded.

Plate 1. Northeast elevation of building, with Building Section 1 on right of image (hipped roof) and Building Section 3 on left of image (gable)



Plate 2. Original sash window on northeast elevation of Building Section 1. With crevice between frame and lintel circled in blue with probable bat droppings circled in red



Plate 3. Roof void of Building Section 1



Description and external inspection – Building Section 2

- 5.2.6 The surveyed building comprised an early C19th two-storey brick-built section of building with some decorative stone sections (i.e. banding course) (Plates 4 & 5). The roof was multi-pitched with two large bays and gables, and it had been re-covered with concrete roof slates and a concrete ridge. Gable verges were predominantly mortar filled, with a section of dry verge present on the southeast pitch of the southwest gable. Rainwater goods were internal and located behind parapets. Windows mainly comprised new wood-framed double-glazed units with occasional single-pane units remaining.
- 5.2.7 On the exterior of Building Section 2, potential bat roosting locations comprised missing sections of verge mortar and lifted sections of flashing along parapet wall tops.

Internal inspection – Building Section 2

- 5.2.8 Much of what would be roof space comprised a living area. Voids were present in the eaves and in places in the centre of the roof. The roof was lined with hessian backed Type 1F bituminous felt and was suspended on king post trusses, purlins, a ridge beam, rafters and battens. Approximately 100 mm of glass fibre insulation was present, and the void was very dusty (Plate 6). No potential bat access points or signs of bat presence were recorded.

Plate 4. Building Section 2 on left of image, Building Section 4 (entrance) in centre, with Building Sections 3 on right of image



Plate 5. Southwest gable and northwest elevation of Building Section 2



Plate 6. Eaves void in Building Section 2



Description and external inspection – Building Section 3

- 5.2.9 The surveyed building sector comprised an early C19th two-storey brick-built section of building with some decorative stone sections (i.e. banding course) (Plate 4). The roof was dual pitched with a dormer in the southeast elevation. The roof was covered with Westmorland slates, with a central tower present (Plate 7). The tower had a lead topped roof and metal sides. Gables were present on the roof, with wooden barge

boards covering the verges. Rainwater goods were internal and located behind parapets. Windows mainly comprised new wood-framed double-glazed units.

- 5.2.10 On the exterior of Building Section 3, potential bat roosting locations comprised gaps between roof slates and small sections of lifted flashing on parapet topped walls.

Internal inspection – Building Section 3

- 5.2.11 Much of what would be roof space comprised a living area. A small void (approximately 2 m high) was present beneath the tower (Plate 8), however, this could not be safely accessed. It could however be seen that the roof was lined with sarking in this area.

Description and external inspection – Building Section 4

- 5.2.12 Building Section 4 comprised an entrance and connecting corridor between the northeast (Building Sections 1 & 3) and southwest (Building Section 2) wings of the building. Building Section 4 was brick-built and mainly two storey, with a single storey extension present on the northwest elevation (Plate 9). The two-storey section had a dual-pitched and hipped Westmorland slate covered roof with lead and felt ridge and hip coverings. The single-storey section had a flat roof. rainwater goods were internal and behind stone parapet wall tops. Windows comprised wood-framed sash units.

Internal inspection – Building Section 3

- 5.2.13 A small void was present but could not be accessed due to the apparent lack of an access point.

Plate 7. Looking northeast across roofs of Building Section 4 (in foreground) and Building Sections 1 (rear left) and 3 (rear right)



Plate 8. Entry hatch to roof void in Building Section 3



Plate 9. Northwest elevation of Building Section 4



Nocturnal Survey

13th July 2023 – dusk emergence survey

- 5.2.14 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 16°C, with a light air (Beaufort Scale Force 1) and 20 % cloud. The temperature dropped to 14°C during the survey with cloud cover and the wind remaining the same. The weather was dry throughout. Sunset was at 21:33.
- 5.2.15 No bat roosting activity was recorded during the survey.
- 5.2.16 The first bat activity recorded comprised a common pipistrelle, heard by the surveyor to the south of the building at 21:50. Thereafter very occasional common pipistrelle activity was recorded by surveyors across the site.

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No historic bat records relating to roost presence in Townhead were received from GMEU.
- 6.1.2 No bats were found roosting in building during the preliminary daytime assessment. Two probable bat droppings were identified near a potential roost location (gap between window frame and lintel) on the northeast gable of Building Section 1, however, presence of a roost in this location was not confirmed and is considered a possibility only.
- 6.1.3 No signs of roosting bat presence were recorded during the single nocturnal survey.
- 6.1.4 The works proposed to Townhead comprise mainly re-modelling of the building's interior. Remaining proposed external works are very limited in extent and the only relevant alteration with regards to bats comprises the fitting of three skylights into the existing concrete-tile covered southeast pitch of Building Section 2. It is our understanding that it is not proposed to replace any additional windows.
- 6.1.5 Although Townhead was considered to display a moderate level of bat roost suitability, the scheme's potential to impact roosting bats is very limited, with a confident assessment possible that external alterations to the building will not impact roosting bats. As a result, in this instance a single nocturnal survey is considered sufficient to inform the scheme.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 6.2.2 It is an offence to:
 - Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
 - Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
 - Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
 - Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.
- 6.2.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.
- 6.2.4 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*,

brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

- 6.2.5 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats, the site must either be registered on the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or Earned Recognition (ER) licence, or a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.
- 6.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

6.3 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

- 6.3.1 No further bat survey is considered necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey works to be undertaken.
- 6.3.2 It is noted that a bat roost may be present in association with the sash window in the northeast elevation of Building Section 1 (Plate 2), however, it is proposed to retain this window. If proposals change and this window is to be replaced, then a consultant ecologist must be contacted in order to provide further advice in relation to further survey and supervision/licensing requirements in relation to this work.
- 6.3.3 No bat roosting enhancement is considered necessary due to a low number of bats recorded from the area during nocturnal survey work and the abundance of alternative roost locations in neighbouring buildings. However, in order to enhance the site's ecological value, it is recommended that two new swift *Apus apus* boxes are fitted to the exterior of the building during the redevelopment. These boxes could be fitted in the same location and a suitable visually discrete place would comprise the northwest gable of Building Section 2 (Figure 4). A suitable model of box would comprise the Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Box. Studies have shown that swift boxes are used by the full range of nesting birds that utilise buildings; consequently, this box would also provide potential nesting space for house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*.

Figure 4. Proposed location for swift boxes



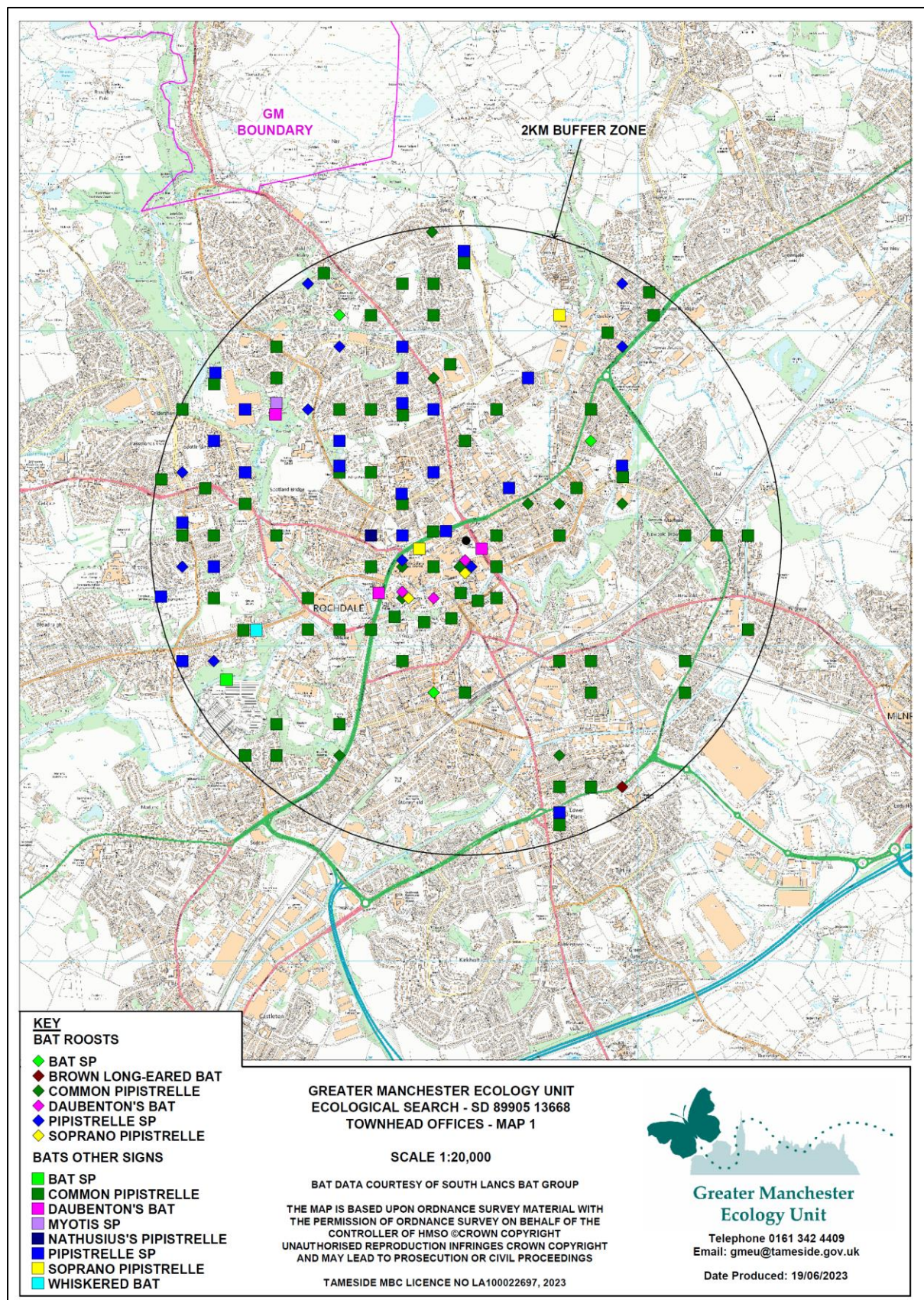
6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 No confirmed bat roosting activity was recorded from Townhead during the bat survey, and it is confidently assessed that the development as proposed will not impact on roosting bats.
- 6.4.2 No further survey effort is necessary, providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works are to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.
- 6.4.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.

7. References

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

Appendix 1. GMEU Bat Records Received



Appendix 2. Records to Be Submitted To Recording Organisations

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below. House names/numbers are not given out by record holding organisations except under very particular circumstances. Please let us know if you object to the distribution of these records.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
13/07/2023	Common pipistrelle	Townhead, 150 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1BG	SD 89910 13672	Pass