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Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Alexandra Working Men's Club, 59 High Street, Royston, Barnsley, S71 4RF

Client:

Mr. Chris Wright

Survey date:

9th January 2025

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

"The demolition of the on-site working men's club building (B1) and two small outbuildings (B2 and B3)."

[Unsubmitted]

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

Site Location and Context

National grid reference: SE 35917 11450.

Size of survey area: one vacant working men's club, two small outbuildings, and an electricity substation, with areas of grassland, hardstanding, and scattered trees – ~0.3ha.

On-site habitats: one vacant working men's club, two small outbuildings, and an electricity substation, with areas of grassland, hardstanding, and scattered trees. Immediate surroundings are dwellings and gardens. Moderate value for foraging and commuting bats.

Surrounding habitats (within 2km): gardens, grassland, treelines, hedgerow networks, deciduous woodland, open mosaic habitat, traditional orchard, as well as watercourses and ponds. High value for foraging and commuting bats.

Designated sites:

- **On-site** – None.
- **Within 2km** – Notton Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – ~1.33km west – (mixed woodland including a stream and a pond), and Dearne Valley Wetlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – ~1.47km east – (wetland, scrub, and woodland).
- **Within a 10km radius (bat SACs only)** – None.

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken by Jessica Sibley BSc (Hons) MSc, Consultant Ecologist and accredited agent on a Class 2 Natural England bat licence to undertake level 1 activities (licence details can be provided on request).

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
09/01/2025	0	75	<5	16	None

Executive Summary

Bats:

- Two bat emergence surveys are required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost within B1.
- A low-impact lighting strategy should be adopted for foraging and commuting bats.

Birds:

- Building demolition should commence outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the buildings should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

Survey limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the desk study.

The loft space within B1 was inaccessible as the floorboards directly beneath the loft hatch had been removed when the building was broken into, thus the loft could not be inspected and any evidence of bats (if present), may have been missed. This limitation has been accounted for by the recommendation of the bat emergence surveys which should identify any roosts, via further survey.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

PRA Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey. Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
See PRA plan in Appendix 1, location plan in Appendix 2, and proposed plans in Appendix 3.	
Summary of Survey Findings	**<u>European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) data:</u>** A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roost sites in close proximity to the licensed site. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site. There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated for bats within 10km of the site. **<u>Foraging and commuting habitat:</u>** Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of grassland and scattered trees. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations, of low value. Dwellings with gardens, grassland, treelines, hedgerow networks, deciduous woodland, open mosaic habitat, traditional orchard, as well as watercourses and ponds, lie in the nearby vicinity of the site, of high value for foraging and commuting bats. **<u>Roosting habitat:</u>**

	Buildings to be impacted by the proposed development are assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats below. There are a total of four buildings on-site: the vacant working men's club (B1), two small outbuildings (B2 and B3), and a small electricity substation (B4). All of the buildings were subject to survey. No evidence of roosting bats was identified along or within any of the on-site buildings.

B1 - description	***Photographs***
Summary B1 is a double-storey vacant building with a pitched and gabled roof clad in bitumen, with areas of flat roof also clad in bitumen. There are wooden soffits around the building, and areas of wooden fascias and barge boards. There are two chimneys along the roof structure. The majority of the windows and doors around B1 are boarded, and the entry doors are covered by metal shutters. A few features were recorded along the building suitable for crevice and void-dwelling bat ingress to potential roosts (i.e., holes in soffits, gaps along bitumen, and missing brickwork). These features are suitable for moderate numbers of crevice or void-dwelling species. The building is unlikely to support a hibernation or maternity roost. The building has **moderate roost value**.	

Feature	***Materials***	***Condition/description/suitability***	***Photograph(s)***

Walls	Brick and mortar	**Condition/description:** An area of missing brickwork was recorded along the west elevation, which may support bat roosting ingress opportunities within the cavity walls. Also, along the north elevation of B1, is a low-lying opening where a vent is damaged, which provides possible access to bats into the cavity walls and within the ground-level cold room of the building. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** Missing brickwork and vent provide bat access into cavity walls and the vent also provides ingress opportunities into the cellar room. Suitable for moderate numbers of crevice or void-dwelling species.	 

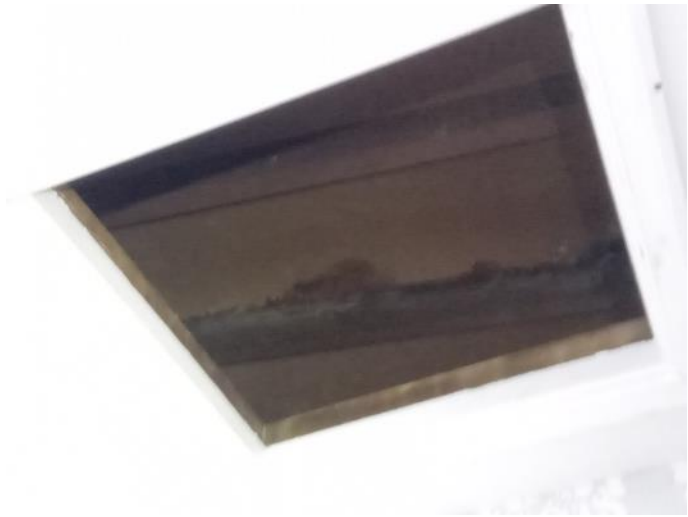
Roof	Bitumen	**Condition/description:** There are areas of pitched and flat roof clad in bitumen. The area of pitched roof bitumen appears to lie flush; however, light snow covered the roof in sections, thus tears may be present suitable for bat ingress. Furthermore, lifts along the bitumen along the south and north elevations of the building are present, which may be bat ingress locations with roosting potential for crevice-dwelling species beneath the bitumen. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** Bitumen roof could support moderate numbers of crevice-dwelling species for roosting. Lifts were recorded along the north and south elevation for ingress, and further ingress locations along the bitumen may be present, not visible from ground level.	 

			
Eaves	Overhanging with wooden soffits	**Condition/description:** Multiple gaps into the soffits were recorded along the west and south elevations, with opportunities for ingress by crevice of void-dwelling species, into the soffits. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** Provides bat ingress opportunities into the soffits, suitable for moderate numbers of crevice or void-dwelling species.	

Barge boards/fascia boards	Wooden	**Condition/description:** The barge boards and fascia boards appear intact with some cosmetic damage, but with no points of ingress recorded. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** No features were recorded.	
Windows/ doors	uPVC framed, boarded, or covered by metal shutters	**Condition/description:** The ground level windows are all tightly boarded, with no suitable features recorded. The doors have metal shutters which are tight fitting. The second-storey windows also appear tight fitting without suitable bat roost features. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** No features or evidence were recorded.	

			
Chimneys	Stone	**Condition/description:** Appear intact. **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:** No features were recorded.	

Internal voids	Plyboard	**Condition/description:** The loft void of B1 was inaccessible as the building had been broken into and areas of floorboard removed, including underneath the loft hatch. However, visible from the second storey level was plyboard roof lining within the void. The building does not have any cellar space (i.e., subterranean levels), however, there is a cold room where alcohol was previously stored prior to the building being vacant. The missing vent visible externally was recorded to provide a possible ingress point into the cavity walls along the north elevation, for roosting bat ingress. The interior of the cold room and other ground level spaces were found to be unsuitable for hibernating bats, given a lack of subterranean deep crevices with a stable cold temperature and consistent humidity. The cold room temperature and humidity measurements are as follows: ❖ Temperature reading: 12.0°C ❖ Humidity reading: 50.3% **Suitability/access/evidence of bats:**	 

		Ingress via external vent into cavity walls, suitable for moderate numbers of crevice or void-dwelling species.	 

B2:B4 - description	***Photographs***
Summary B2:B4 are small outbuildings which were recorded to lack any suitable roost features for crevice of void-dwelling species, and as such, have **negligible roost value**.	 

	
Foreseen Impacts	**<u>Roosting habitat:</u>** **B1:** The proposed development will result in the demolition of this building. This could result in the destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death, or injury to bats. **B2:B4:** Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within these built structures and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats as a result of their potential removal. **<u>Foraging and commuting habitat:</u>** The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats. However, the proposed development may include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging, or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.

Recommendations	**<u>Roosting habitat:</u>** **B1: Two bat emergence surveys are required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely absence of a bat roost in the building.** Both of the surveys should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive and surveys should be spread at least three weeks apart. Infra-red cameras should be used as an aid. Six surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building. **If bat roosts are confirmed in the building additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys should be a minimum of three weeks apart. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission.** **B2:B4:** In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop, and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. **<u>Foraging and commuting habitat:</u>** No further surveys are required. **A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors.** Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2 **<u>Suggested biodiversity enhancements:</u>**

	Enhancements are dependent on the outcome of further surveys.
Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	**Nesting birds:** No evidence of nesting birds was identified along or within the on-site built structures, however, the buildings are considered suitable for nesting for species such as swallows with B1 suitable for house sparrows. No habitat for schedule 1 birds was observed. **Barn owls:** The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls. **Overwintering birds:** Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.
Foreseen Impacts	**Nesting birds:** The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests. **Barn owls:** None foreseen. **Overwintering birds:** None foreseen.

Recommendations	**Nesting birds:** **Building demolition should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August.** If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the buildings should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during demolition works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged. **Barn owls:** None required. **Overwintering birds:** None required. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements:** The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. ▪ Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box ▪ Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Box (Or a similar alternative brand).

	Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.

Appendix 1: PRA map

Appendix 2: Location map

Appendix 3: Proposed plan

None were available at the time of writing this report.

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