



TECHNICAL NOTE: PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT & BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN EXEMPTION STATEMENT

PROJECT ADDRESS	Peel Street Business Estate, Peel Street, Clitheroe, BB7 1RA
PROPOSED PLANS	Demolition of the existing commercial buildings and erection of a business centre and a second building as residential apartments.
DATE	17 March 2025
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide ecological services in relation to the proposed development plans for a site located off Peel St, Clitheroe. The commission included a preliminary bat roost assessment of the buildings and an initial assessment of potential requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain.

The assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) for bats and has held this licence type for over 12 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England which covered several bat species and roost types.

This document presents the results of the assessment and provides all the necessary data, assessment and guidance to satisfy the relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative framework.

METHODS

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in accordance with good practice guidelines (*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London. (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023)).* The very limited scope of the assessment was also designed in relation to the existing building types and the predicted degree of risk of impacts to bats. With this proportionate approach in mind, a desk top study was not considered to be required for the assessment.

A daytime visit to the site was undertaken on 12th March 2025. The assessment involved a visual search for evidence of bats and an assessment of the bat roost suitability of the buildings based on the extent and suitability of any potential roost features present.

The site visit was undertaken outside of the main active period for bats (April-October) when evidence of a bat roost is not as readily identifiable, particularly on the outside elevations of a building. The seasonal constraint did not present a significant limitation to the conclusions and recommendations made within this document. The main aim of the assessment was to evaluate the suitability of the buildings for use by bats.



PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Property Description & Potential Roost Features

Photos of the existing buildings on the site are provided at the foot of this document. There are three buildings on the site. All comprise steel framed units with brick / concrete block base walls, corrugated steel panel sides with roller shutter doors at the frontages. The northernmost unit did have an upper floor room and the remaining two units were ground level only. The roofs of each building comprise corrugated sheet panels with skylights. The buildings do not contain any loft areas and there were no cavities on any building. Such building types are not typically associated with supporting bat roosts and no potential roost features were observed on any building.

Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No bats, evidence of bats or potential roost features for bats were recorded.

Suitability of Surrounding Habitats

The site is directly adjacent to Mearley Brook. This is a highly modified watercourse which runs in a north-east to south-west direction through Clitheroe. It is culverted in several locations. There was a line of semi-mature trees on the opposite bank of the river; however, no obvious roost features were observed in any tree adjacent to the site. The surrounding area is largely urbanised with several recreational fields and occasional tree lines. Primrose Community Nature Reserve is located 500m south-west and this will provide some foraging value to bats within the area. The adjacent river will also provide a foraging resource for bats. Overall, with respect to the location of the site and the suitability of the habitats, bat activity levels are expected to be relatively low within the immediate area of the site.

Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed. The two lower units did appear to be used by feral pigeons for roosting purposes.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN - STATEMENT

The entire site comprised UK Habitat Classification type *u1b Developed land; sealed surface* (see photos below). This habitat type has a biodiversity unit value of zero. There were no linear habitats (hedgerows and watercourses) on the site. Mearley Brook is directly adjacent to the site. The development plans would not “impact” the watercourse. The watercourse has a stone retaining wall (on the side of the site) and the bank top comprises hardstanding. This constitutes major encroachment. The development would not result in any degradation to any section of the watercourse as existing.

In accordance with Regulation 4 (De minimis exemption) of *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024*, the proposal is exempt from biodiversity net gain.

Knight Sky Ecology has viewed the proposed site plan and it does appear that several soft landscaping areas are proposed which would provide biodiversity gains as compared to existing.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of bats was identified and the buildings are considered to have no suitability to support bats. Therefore, it is concluded that bats do not present a constraint to the development proposals as the works will remain legally compliant with respect to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as



amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). No further surveys or mitigation measures are recommended.

Enhancements

The development presents a good opportunity to increase roosting provision for bats and nesting features for birds via a bat and bird box mounting scheme. The details of which are recommended to be provided as a post-permission matter.



PHOTOS

Photos 1a to 1d.
Various aspects of buildings.







Photo 2.
View south-east
over site.



Photo 3.
View of adjacent
river and tree line.

