

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AT 246 PALATINE ROAD, DIDSBURY, GREATER MANCHESTER

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

2

METHODOLOGY

3

RESULTS

4

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9

REFERENCES

10

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2019 by APL Architecture Limited to undertake a daytime bat survey at 246 Palatine Road in Didsbury, Greater Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and a new residential dwelling built in its place.
- 1.2 246 Palatine Road is located in Didsbury (O.S. grid reference: SJ 83483 90853). The proposed development site comprises a detached, two-storey dwelling. A mature garden is present at the rear with parking to the front.
- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the property will be intrusive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the property.
- 1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey at 246 Palatine Road was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the property.
- 2.2 An external survey was carried out, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges.
- 2.3 The building was also searched internally for evidence of a bat roost, which included looking for the following signs:
 - live or dead bats
 - bat droppings
 - bat entry/exit points
 - bat urine staining
 - grease marks on any timbers
 - feeding remains such as insect wings
 - areas clear of cobwebs.
- 2.4 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and an endoscope were used to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.5 Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 26th November 2019. Joel is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Reference: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was warm and dry.

Survey constraints

- 2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The whole building could be surveyed internally and externally, therefore there were no constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

External Survey

- 3.1 The development site at 246 Palatine Road is a detached residential dwelling, constructed from brick with a pitched, tiled roof.
- 3.2 The property exterior is fully rendered, with no cracks or gaps in the render for bats to exploit (see Photographs 1 and 2). The uPVC door and window frames are all intact and well-sealed to the surrounding masonry. The rear elevation has glass and uPVC conservatory, and this is well-sealed to the property exterior. The brick chimney stack is complete and intact. A small amount of lead-flashing occurs at the base of the chimney stack, and this is flat and flush to the brick and tiles.



Photograph 1 showing the side elevation



Photograph 2 showing the rear elevation

- 3.3 The roof of the property is pitched, with clay tiles (see Photographs 3 and 4). The tiles are all in position, with no slipped or visibly broken tiles. The ridge tiles are complete, and flush to one another, offering no suitable gaps for bats. The roof edge mortar is complete, providing a good seal to the roofing materials. The Velux windows are well-sealed to the surrounding tiles.



Photograph 3 showing the roof of the property from the rear



Photograph 4 showing the roof of the property

- 3.4 The property has soffits on each elevation (see Photograph 5). The soffits in good material condition and are well-sealed to the rendered bricks.



Photograph 5 showing the soffits

Internal Survey

- 3.5 Internally, the property living spaces do not provide suitable bat habitat and have been well maintained. The property roof void has been mostly converted into living spaces, with a reduced roof void present in the eaves of the roof only.

- 3.6 The roof void is small and enclosed. The wooden roof joists are complete and without gaps or cracks for bats to exploit (see Photograph 6). No daylight is visible at the roof edges, suggesting the roof void is well-sealed, and offers limited scope for bats to enter.



Photograph 6 showing the roof timbers

- 3.7 The ridge beam is cobwebbed, suggesting no recent bat access. The roof is lined with felt lining, which is complete with no major tears or rips (see Photograph 7). The roof void is fully insulated throughout. No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, was found within the roof void.



Photograph 7 showing the roof lining

Surrounding Land

- 3.8 The property has a mature garden to the rear, consisting of amenity grass, two mature trees and introduced shrubs (see Photograph 8). The trees were inspected from the ground and were found to not support Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) for bats. No evidence of protected species could be found on the wider site.



Photograph 8 showing the trees and mature garden on the site

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at 246 Palatine Road. The property is well-maintained and offers no suitable bat roosting cavities. The loft void is well-sealed. Given the results of the survey, the property is considered to offer **negligible bat roost suitability**.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the development can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the building to support bats. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.
- 4.3 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.
- 4.4 **If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance.** This can be Rachel Hacking Ecology (0161 465 8971) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, were found within the building. No evidence of protected species was found on the wider site.

REFERENCES

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

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