
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

567 WILMSLOW ROAD, DIDSBURY, GREATER MANCHESTER



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2022 by Paul Gelder to undertake a daytime bat survey at 567 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84947 92368). The proposed development site currently comprises a semi-detached residential dwelling (upper floors only). The site is nearby to residential and commercial properties. The habitats immediately surrounding the site offer limited potential bat foraging and commuting opportunities.

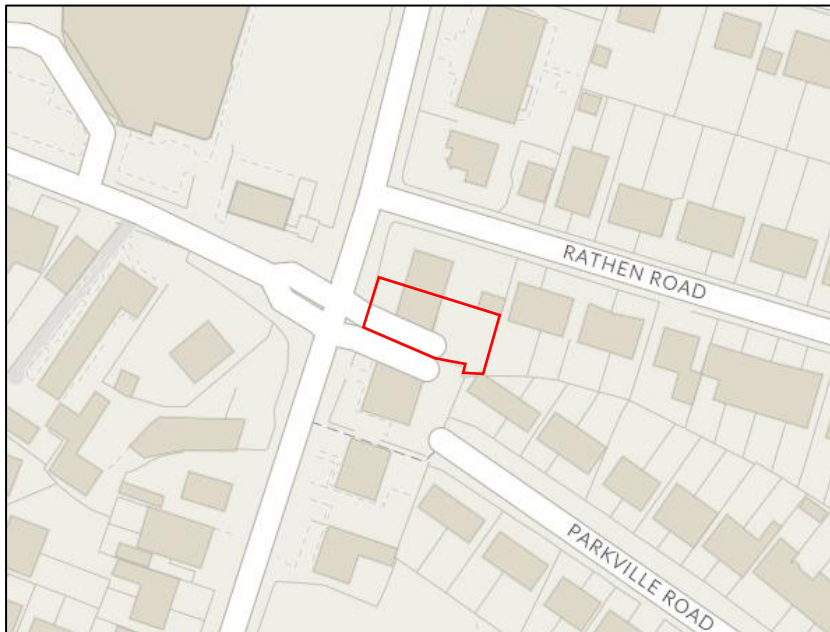


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the addition of a rear dormer window.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the building.
- 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. An internal survey was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.3 A pair of close-focussing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats externally.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 24th January 2022. Joel is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (ref: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was cold and dry.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The property was fully accessible.



3.0 RESULTS

Site Description

- 3.1 The property at 567 Wilmslow Road is a semi-detached residential property constructed from brick and has a pitched, tiled roof. The property consists of the upper floors only. The property has hardstanding car parking to the front and rear.

External Assessment

- 3.2 The external brick work is complete and intact (see Photographs 1 and 2), with no significantly damaged bricks or missing mortar. The door and window frames are flush to the surrounding masonry. The brick chimney stack is complete. The brick and stone window lintels are without cracks or gaps for bats to exploit.



Photograph 1 showing the front elevation of the building



Photograph 2 showing the side elevation

- 3.3 The roof of property is pitched and tiled with clay roof tiles throughout (see Photographs 3 and 4). The roof tiles are in position and flush to one another, offering no suitable gaps for bats to use. The ridge tiles are in situ and mortared. A small amount of lead flashing is present at the base of the chimney stack and this is flat and flush to the brick and tiles. The rear dormer window has wooden panelling, which is complete and the panels sit flush to one another. The mortar at the dormer edges is complete and provides a good seal to the surrounding tiles. The roof edges are mortared.



Photograph 3 showing the roof at the rear of the property



Photograph 4 showing the roofing at the front of the property

- 3.4 The property has wooden bargeboards, which sit away from the upper brick courses. The roof edges are firmly sealed to the bricks, with no signs of potential entry points.

Internal Assessment

- 3.5 The property internal living spaces do not offer suitable bat roosting habitat. The property has a large and accessible roof void, which covers the expanse of the roof space. The roof void has wooden roof joists, which are without gaps or cracks for bats to exploit (see Photographs 5 and 6). The roof is lined throughout with membrane. The lining is complete, with no significant tears or rips in the lining.



Photograph 5 showing the roof joists



Photograph 6 showing the roof void

- 3.6 The roof void is fully insulated. The internal brickwork is complete and mortared, offering no suitable crevices. The ridge beam is cobwebbed throughout. No daylight is present at the roof edges, suggesting the void is sealed. No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, could be found inside the property.

Surrounding Land

- 3.7 The property has hardstanding car parking to the front and rear only. A small, introduced shrub bed exists to the rear. No mature trees are to be affected by the proposals. No evidence of other protected species was found on the site.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at the property at 567 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. The property is well-maintained and offers no suitable bat roosting cavities. 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 or wider site.

5.0 REFERENCES

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