

Preliminary Roost Assessment

2-32 Bridgenorth Road
Blackley
Manchester
M9 8HN

For
Northwards Housing



Gritstone Ecology

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Northwards Housing. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 2-32 Bridgenorth Road, Blackley, on 19th March 2021. The survey report will be used to provide supporting information for a planning application, at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Proposed development

The development proposals are for the demolition of the property.

1.5. Site context

The building is located on Bridgenorth Road, Blackley, M9 8HN, GR SD 84579 03444, approximately 5km north of Manchester City Centre. The building is on the western edge of Blackley, on a busy well-lit road with urban housing & apartments to the east & south, and open green-space and mature trees to the west.

The site includes a partially occupied block of maisonettes, with areas of communal green space to the front and rear, and areas of hard landscaping. Habitat within 50m of the building includes; housing, mature trees, open green-space, and busy well-lit roads. Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, areas of open green-space, mature trees, ponds, and watercourses.

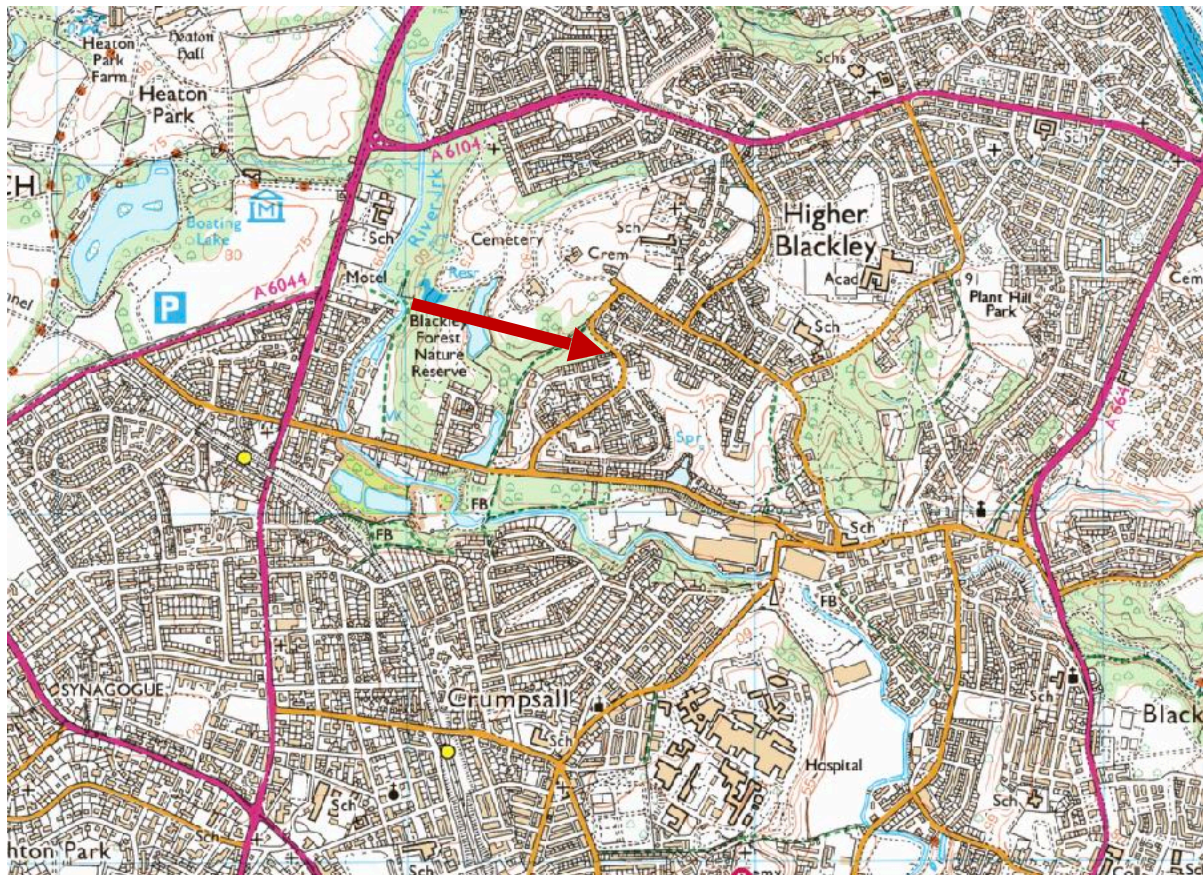
Blackley Forest Nature Park to the west of the building, and linked back gardens, potentially provide good foraging opportunities for bats. However the area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, and other human activity.

Blackley Forest Nature Park and connected habitats along The River Irk provide moderate quality habitat for bats.

The site and surrounding area to the south and east are more disturbed by light, noise, and human activity, and provide lower quality habitat for bats.



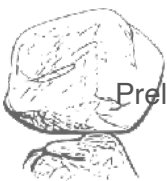
1.6. Site location



1.6a – 2-32 Bridgenorth Road – site location.



1.6b – 2-32 Bridgenorth Road – aerial photograph.



2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The survey was completed on 19th March 2021. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, cold, and dry, with a temperature of 10°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordinance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.



The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were searched in detail. The survey was completed in March, when bats are less active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are less likely to be present.



3. Results

3.1. Building inspection



3.1a – The front of the building.

2-32 Bridgenorth Road Blackley is a block of 16 maisonette apartments, the majority of which are occupied. The building has a reinforced concrete frame, with a flat felt-covered concrete roof, and cavity insulated brick walls between apartments. Front and rear walls of individual apartments are constructed from brick with a white painted cement render, and UPVC window and door frames.

End walls are fitted with concrete capping stones, no fascia boards or boxed soffits are fitted, and there are no chimneys or leadwork. The majority of apartments are occupied. Vacant apartments have been secured with ventilated steel panels, which are securely fitted with no gaps suitable for use by roosting bats.

The building is in reasonable condition. There are no gaps between capping stones and brickwork at the end walls. There are no gaps or cracks in brickwork which could be used by roosting bats. Cement has perished in some areas, but only leaves a superficial crevice with no access to the wall cavity. There are no gaps between concrete and brickwork, and no gaps between indoor and door frames and walls.

The building has no roof voids and no cellar or other enclosed spaces which are suitable for, or likely to be used by, roosting bats.

There are no features externally or internally which are likely to be used by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was present during the inspection.



3.2. Evidence of use

No evidence of use by bats was present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.3. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is well maintained, in reasonable condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection.

4. Evaluation

The building is adjacent to The Blackley Forest Nature Reserve which provides an area of moderate quality habitat for bats, and bats are likely to be present locally.

Areas to the south and east of the site are well-lit, and subject to more light and noise disturbance, and provide lower quality habitat for bats.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. However, the building is well-sealed, and has no features which could be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is well maintained, and in reasonable condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; there is no roof void, there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable for use by roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The building has a felt covered flat concrete roof. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

End walls, and walls between apartments are brick with an insulating cavity. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the walls, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

All glass is intact in occupied apartments; vacant apartments are secured with ventilated steel security panels, with no gaps which could be used by roosting bats.

There are no fascia boards or boxed soffits, and no other materials externally which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat



2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats or bat roosts are present in the building, the proposed demolition would likely result in an offence being committed.

5. Impact assessment

The proposals are for the demolition of the building.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats, and has **negligible suitability** for use.

The proposed demolition is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.



7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

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

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the building.



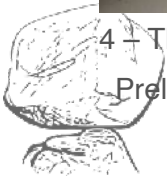
2 – The rear of the building.



3 – Concrete capping stones on the end walls are tightly fixed with no suitable gaps.



4 – There are no fascia boards, and no gaps between roofing materials and walls.

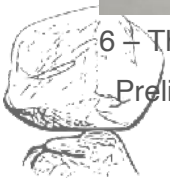




5 – There are no gaps between rendered walls and brickwork.

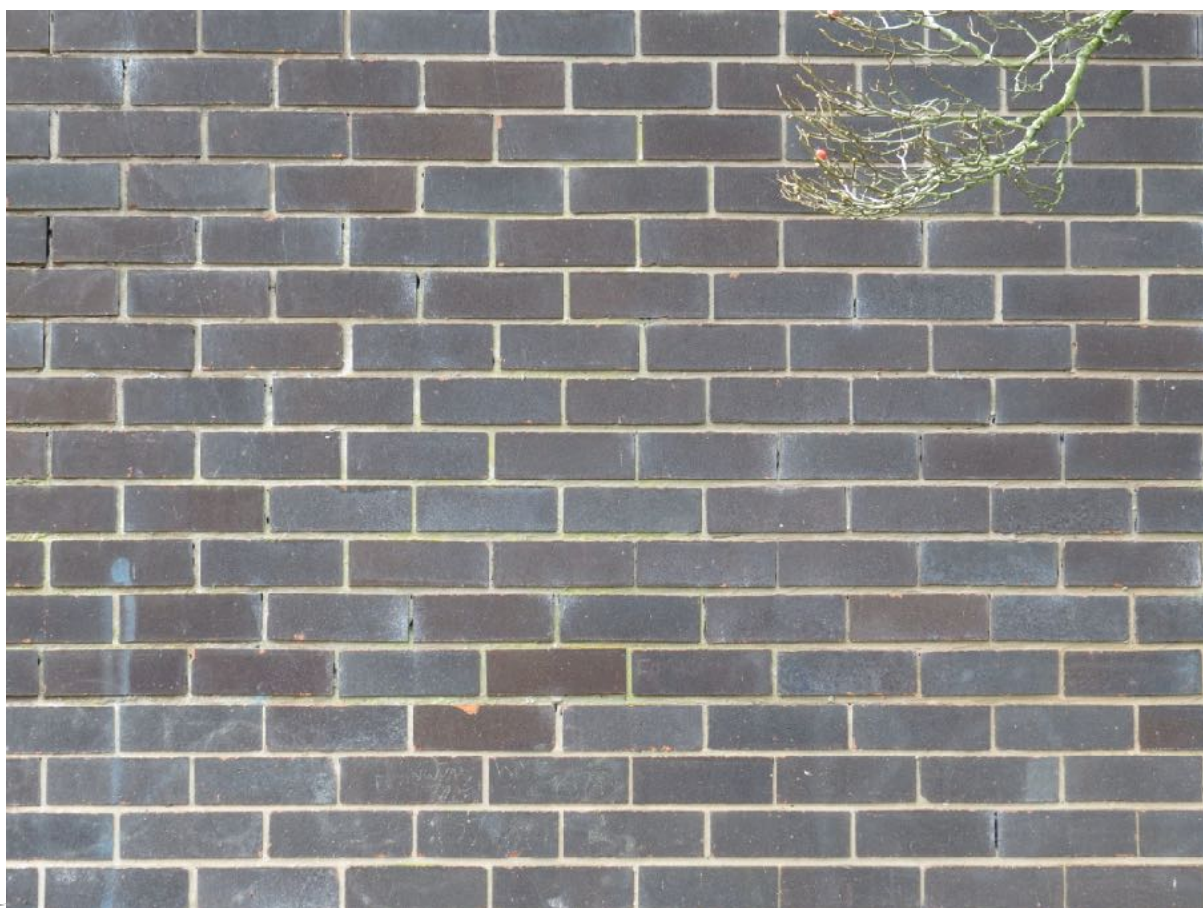


6 – There are no gaps between window and door frames and brickwork.





7 – Vacant apartments are secured with steel security panels with no suitable gaps.



8 – Brickwork at the end walls is in good condition with no suitable gaps in mortar.





9 – The building is adjacent to Blackley Forest Nature Reserve.

