



PENNINE ecological

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Jeff Smith
Jeffrey Jordan Architects

Date: 9th November 2020

For the attention of: Jeff Smith

Dear Jeff,

Re: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and General Ecological Statement: 16 Saxon Street, Manchester, M40 7BY.

PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a daytime inspection for bats and provide a general ecological statement for the above site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential issues in relation to bats and other protected species resulting from the proposals to build two new semi-detached houses on the plot. The sites grid reference is SJ 8635 9920 and the location is shown below;

Site location plan for Saxon Street.



1. Desk Top Study:

A desk top consultation study with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit was not undertaken for this study. However, searches for statutory sites and European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) were undertaken as follows;

Statutory Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no statutory protected wildlife site within 500m radii of the site. The nearest sites are Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR) located approximately 1.2km east of the site.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences:

Details of EPSML for bats was sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no EPSML in relation to bats within 500m radii of the site. The nearest EPSML for bats is located 1.4km south-west within Ancoats, Manchester. The licence in relation to a common pipistrelle roost and expired in 2019.

2. Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their roosts¹ are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2017 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 in relation to species and habitats, places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity' in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependent upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (NPPF, 2019):

¹ The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Use of Buildings by Bats:

- a) Summer breeding roost.
- b) Hibernation.
- c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Up to ten bat species have been regularly recorded in Greater Manchester most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Greater Manchester is reflected throughout the UK. All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2017 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

3. Survey Methodology:

A daytime survey was conducted on 6th November 2020. The property was inspected externally only for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. The exterior elevations were investigated from ground floor level, with the aid of close focusing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers. All elevations were visually accessible.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Robert Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist. The results of the survey were discussed with Mrs Kylee Wilding, a highly experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat license (CLS -14227). Mrs Wildings evaluation of the site and conclusions concur with those of Mr Leatham's. The findings of this survey are provided in section 5 below.

During the survey information on the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats and other protected species. The general ecological condition of the red line boundary site and its potential to support protected or notable species was recorded and has been documented in section 6 of this report.

4. Constraints:

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the instability of the building, an internal inspection of the building was not undertaken on the grounds of health and safety. The assessment provided within this document has been based on the external inspection only. This is not considered a constraint to the survey as the external inspection was considered sufficient to provide an accurate potential roost assessment of the building.

There are therefore no constraints to the survey.

5. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results:

No. 16 Saxon Street comprises a semi-detached building which has been partly demolished and now stands as a detached building. The building is not currently occupied, however the property to the immediate south is occupied. The partly demolished building within the red line boundary is of brick construction with a concrete tile roof. The building is in poor condition and appears to be structurally unsafe. Due to the building being part demolished and in poor condition, several features have been identified which have the potential to support roosting bats:

On the south aspect where the demolition has occurred, there are numerous voids which have been exposed which could be used by bats. These include gaps between the exposed concrete roof tiles and the internal roof structure; entry into the exposed soffit boards along the east and western faces; and gaps between the external (brick) and internal (breeze block) wall cavity along the entire aspect.

Along the northern aspect of the building there are gaps between the wooden soffit boards and the brick work, particularly on the north-east and north-west corners of the building.

Feral Pigeons were recorded entering the partly demolished building and are likely to be nesting inside the building. The large open voids and gaps created by the part demolition provide suitable nesting opportunities for various bird species in addition to pigeon.

The site is located in a largely urban area and is surrounded by residential dwelling and street lighting. Saxon Saint Park, an area of unmanaged green space and Rochdale Canal are located to the north of the building and provide more suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

It is considered that roost potential overall for the partly demolished building is **Moderate**.

6. General Ecological Statement:

The remainder of the site is primarily an unmanaged garden comprising of hardstanding and overgrown amenity grassland which is transitioning into tall ruderal with areas of rank grassland. There is an area of rubble along the northern boundary and building debris near to the property entrance along the western boundary. Dominant grass species include false-oat grass, perennial rye grass and bent species. Herbaceous species include white clover, ribwort plantain, dock species, black medic and dandelion. Stands of hairy willowherb, nettle and bramble are present, particularly within the area of rubble. Ash saplings are also present along the foot of the eastern aspect of the property.

No evidence of protected or notable habitats and species was recorded on site. There is no potential for the unmanaged garden area to support protected or notable habitats and species.

7. Recommendations:

Bats:

Since the building is concluded to possess moderate potential for crevice dwelling bats, it is recommended that dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry surveys should be undertaken. Surveys are required to establish whether or not bats are using the building and if present how they are using it.

The surveys will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats i.e. between May – August. Two dusk/dawn surveys are accepted as being a reasonable level of survey effort where moderate potential has been identified. The surveys must be spaced between those months, at least 2 weeks apart. In addition, a data search of local bat records could be sourced to compliment the dusk emergence surveys.

Figure 1: Extract from Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Survey Guidelines 2016 3rd Edition

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^b	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b

^a Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis (see Section 5.2.9). If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species are present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

^b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period (see Table 7.1) as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least two weeks apart, preferably more. A dawn survey immediately after a dusk one is considered only one visit.

Following the completion of these surveys further recommendations will be made in respect of any issues in relation to bats.

Breeding birds:

In addition to bats and additional protected species surveys are recommended.

The building is infested with feral pigeons. There is potential that other birds such as house sparrow could nest in the building.

Recommendations: Birds:

No strategic bird surveys are required. Feral pigeons breed throughout the year. The client is advised that a specialist pigeon control contractor is contacted to deal with this issue. At the same time the contractor must make checks for other breeding birds if the demolition is scheduled in the breeding bird season (*March 1st - August 31st*).

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Robert N. Leatham

Robert N. Leatham, BSc. (Hons.) P.dip. Ecological Consultant.
(see photographs on following page)

Site Photographs: November 6th 2020



View of western aspect of partly demolished property (within red line boundary) and property to the immediate south.



North aspect of building. Gaps between the wooden soffits and brick work. Present on north-east and north west corners.



South aspect of demolished building with large open void. Pigeon recorded nesting.



View of the rear property. Overgrown garden landscape with areas of tall ruderal and ash saplings.



South aspect. Bat roost potential present with gaps in wall cavities and gaps under roof tiles.



Front of property with areas of tall ruderal and unmanaged grassland.



View of garden and land to the north of the partly demolished building.