
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY & DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

THE GREENFINCH PUBLIC HOUSE, DIDSBURY, MANCHESTER



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**RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY**

Bowden Hall,
Bowden Lane,
Marple, Stockport
SK6 6ND
0161 465 8971

www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk
mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2020 by Paul Butler Associates to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey of land at The Greenfinch Public House, Didsbury. The site is situated west of Palatine Road and south of Lapwing Lane in West Didsbury, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84324 92082 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises an unoccupied public house building, surrounded by a carpark and ornamental planting. The site is bordered by residential development to the north, west and south and roads and a tramline to the east. In a wider context the site is in a built-up area, surrounded by residential properties, shops and restaurants.



Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

The site will be the subject of a planning application for the change of use and conversion of former Greenfinch Public House including selective demolition to provide office accommodation (use class E) and 3 apartments (use class C3), and redevelopment of site to provide 9 dwellings (use class C3) with associated works including landscaping and car parking. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site. A daytime bat survey is required to assess the potential use of the property by bats.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.2 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked, and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.4 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost.
- 2.5 An external assessment of the buildings on the site was undertaken, 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 assessment 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.
- 2.6 A ground-level assessment of any trees affected by the proposals was also undertaken. This involved a search for potential roosting features, including peeled bark, knot holes and branch splits.
- 2.7 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and, where necessary, an endoscopic camera, were used to search for evidence of bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.8 Rosie Fisher (Ecologist) carried out the survey on the 6th January 2021. The weather was dry and bright. Rosie holds over six years of experience in conducting bat surveys, botanical surveys and protected species assessments and holds a Natural England Level 1 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Reference: 2018-35011-CLS-CLS). January is a sub-optimal time of the year for botanical work, however, due to the habitats present on site a thorough assessment could be undertaken. Protected species assessments can be undertaken at any time of year.

Survey Constraints

- 2.9 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



3.0 EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

Description of Habitats

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Bare Ground

- 3.2 The majority of the site comprises hardstanding used as carparking and access (see Photograph 1). This is mapped as bare ground.



Photograph 1 showing the bare ground

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3 Areas of amenity grassland are present at the edges of the site and around the carpark (see Photograph 2). The grassland is short-mown and species-poor. Species present include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and moss.



Photograph 2 showing the amenity grassland

Introduced Shrub

- 3.4 Introduced shrub beds line the majority of the site boundaries and are present in the carpark (see Photograph 3). Species in this habitat include Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, Wilson's Honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida*, Oregon-grape *Mahonia aquifolium*, Garden Privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*.



Photograph 3 showing the introduced shrub

Intact, Species-poor Hedgerows and other Boundaries

- 3.5 Two single-species hedgerows are present on site (see Photograph 4). A Leyland Cypress *Cupressus leylandii* hedgerow lines part of the western site boundary and a Garden Privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* Hedgerow lines an internal fence. The north-



western and eastern site boundaries are marked by brick walls and the remainder of the site boundaries and some internal boundaries are marked by fencing.



Photograph 4 showing the hedgerows

Scattered Trees

- 3.6 Trees are scattered along the site boundaries and on the amenity grassland on site (see Photograph 5). These are mainly semi-mature and tree species include Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Lime *Tilia x europaea*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*.



Photograph 5 showing the scattered trees



PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.7 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.8 No waterbodies exist on the site and no ponds exist within 250 metres of the site. The site supports suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat. The introduced shrub and hedgerow bases provide cover and foraging opportunities for Great Crested Newts. The bare ground and mown grassland are unsuitable for newts.

Bats

- 3.9 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Daytime Bat Survey

- 3.10 The buildings on site were the subject of a daytime bat survey and the results are detailed here. The buildings could be easily surveyed.
- 3.11 The three-storey public house is of brick construction with a pitched tiled roof (see Photograph 6). The external brick walls are in good condition, with no missing bricks or mortar, and do not support suitable cavities for roosting bats. The windows and door frames are well-sealed to the brickwork. The eaves overhang on the three-storey section of the building and a slit is present at the roof plate which could provide internal access for bats. Single-story conservatory extensions are present on the east and south-western elevations. These are clad with wooden panels which are in good condition and provide no roosting features for bats. A one-storey extension is present on the northern elevation (see Photograph 7). This is brick built and holds a hipped roof. The brickwork is in excellent condition, with all mortar intact. Wooden soffits are present on this extension which are in excellent condition and flush to the brickwork.





Photograph 6 showing the exterior of the building



Photograph 7 showing the one-storey extensions

- 3.12 The building has a tiled roof (see Photograph 8). The tiles are all place and intact across the main building. The ridge tiles are intact and in good condition. Two tiles are missing on the conservatory roof. This area was inspected, and no evidence of bat use was found. Lead flashing exists around the chimneys and where the extensions meet the main building. This is flush to the tiles and brickwork.





Photograph 8 showing the roof of the property

- 3.13 The ground, first and second floor rooms are well-finished and well-lit by daylight through the windows. No potential access points for bats are present. The roof voids in extensions on the south-west and eastern elevations are open to the ground floor. The underside of the roof is lined by a combination of roofing membrane and wooden boards (see Photograph 9). Both types of lining are intact and no access points for bats or cavities that could be used by bats are present.



Photograph 9 showing the roof of the conservatory extension

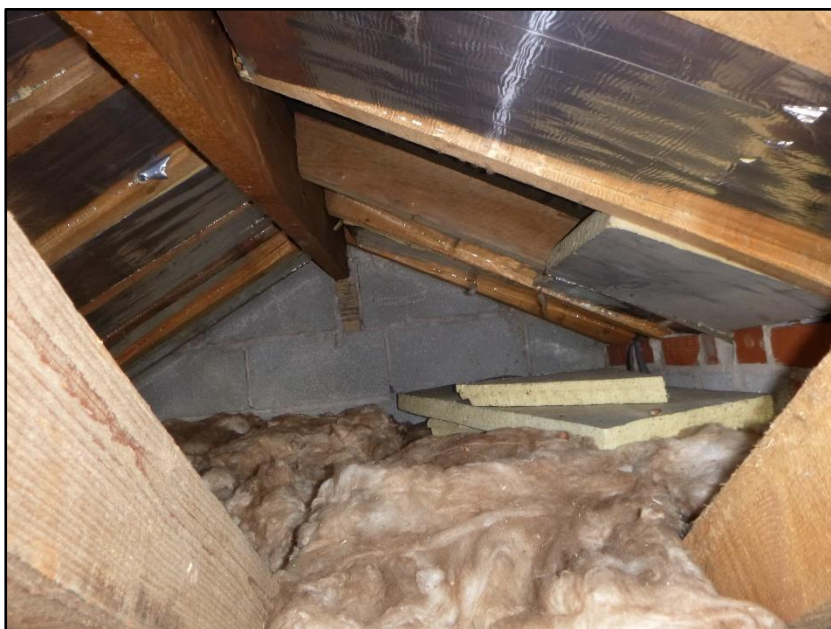
- 3.14 Roof voids are present above the main section of the building and above the extension on the north-western elevation. The loft space in the hipped roof is well-sealed (see Photograph 10). The wooden roof timbers are complete and do not provide crevices

for roosting bats. The roof is lined by insulation boards. This is partly missing, revealing the roofing membrane. This is in good condition, with no tears.



Photograph 10 showing the roof void above north-western extension

- 3.15 The roof void in the main building is comprised of the same materials and is the same condition as the extension (see Photograph 11). Some daylight is visible through the roof plate however, this is cobwebbed. The interior brick and breezeblock walls are intact and provide no crevices for roosting bats. No bats or evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, were found in the building.



Photograph 11 showing the roof void above the main building

- 3.16 A basement is present under the main building (see Photograph 12). The basement is well-sealed, damp in parts and no access points for bats were found. No evidence of bat use was found in the basement.



Photograph 12 showing the basement in the main building

- 3.17 A shelter is present to the south of the building (see Photograph 13). This is an open structure constructed from wood with a sheet plastic roof. The structural beams and wooden cladding are in good condition, providing no crevices for roosting bats.



Photograph 13 showing the shelter

- 3.18 The interior of the shelter provides no cover for bats due to the open construction (see Photograph 14). The plastic roof is in good condition and allows light into the space. No

crevices are present internally and no evidence of bat activity was found within the structure.



Photograph 14 showing the interior of the shelter

- 3.19 No bat roosting features, or evidence of bat use could be found associated with any of the trees on site. Bats use linear landscape features for foraging and commuting and it is possible that bats forage and commute over the site, particularly the hedgerows and tree lines along the site boundaries.

Badger

- 3.20 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.21 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.22 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.23 The trees, shrub beds and hedgerows on site provide suitable nesting habitat for birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.24 No non-native, invasive species as listed as on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are present on site.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.25 No statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Eight statutory protected sites are located within 4km of the site:
- Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields Didsbury LNR lie 1.7km south of the site, separated by the suburb of Didsbury.
 - Chorlton Water Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies 1.8km west of the site, separated by residential development and associated infrastructure.
 - Heaton Mersey Common LNR lies 2.1km east of the site, separated by the suburb of Didsbury and infrastructure including the A34.
 - Mersey Vale Nature Park lies 2.7km south-east of the site.
 - Wythinshawe Park LNR lies 2.9km south-west of the site.
 - Gatley Carrs LNR lies 2.9km south of the site.
 - Abney Hall LNR lies 3.2km south-east of the site.
 - Chorleton Ees & Ivy Green LNR lies 3.4km west of the site.
- 3.26 The site does not lie within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone. If present this would list types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby.
- 3.27 No non-statutory protected sites exist on or adjacent to the site. The closest non-statutory protected site is Wrengate Wood Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which lies 1.1km south of the site and is separated from the site by a residential area including main roads.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site offers limited ecological value. Most of the site supports bare ground and low-growing vegetation which offers little cover for wildlife and a limited source of nectar and pollen for invertebrates. The introduced shrub and trees are the most ecologically valuable habitats. These provide a nectar source, cover from predation, foraging and overwintering opportunities. The trees, introduced shrub and hedgerow also offer nesting habitat for birds.

Development Context

- 4.3 The proposed development will involve the loss of introduced shrub, amenity grassland, hedgerows and several trees. The trees along the site boundaries are proposed to be retained. Given the low-impact nature of the proposals, no specific habitat mitigation is considered to be necessary. The proposals include provision of garden space and tree planting which will enhance the ecological value of the site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds exist on the site. No waterbodies exist within 250m of the site. The site offers suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt within the introduced shrub beds and hedgerow bases. The majority of the habitats on site are unsuitable for newts. Due to the lack of connectivity to breeding habitat, Great Crested Newt is not considered a constraint on development at this time and no further survey is required.

Bats

- 4.5 All buildings on site have been the subject of a daytime bat survey. No evidence of bat use was found across the site. The public house building is in good condition externally apart from two missing tiles on an extension. No evidence of bat use was found associated with this damage and the room under the missing tiles is well-lit with no roof void present. The main roof void is well-sealed apart from a small gap at the roof plate. No crevices are present in the roof void and no evidence of bat use was found in the building; therefore, the building is concluded to hold *negligible* suitability for a bat roost. The structure to the south of the public house is open on all sides and the roof composition allows light into the structure, providing no cover for bats. No crevices are present; therefore, it is concluded to hold *negligible* suitability for a bat roost.
- 4.6 The trees on site were not found to support potential bat roosting features. All trees have been assessed as having *negligible* bat roost suitability. Bats use linear landscape features to commute and forage along and may use the hedgerows and tree lines along the site boundary.

Badger

- 4.7 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was found. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.8 The site supports suitable nesting habitats for birds within the introduced shrub beds, hedgerows, and trees. Nesting birds can be mitigated for by allowing no works to potential nesting habitats to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.9 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site or immediately adjacent to the site. Eight statutory protected sites lie within 4km of the site boundary. The nearest statutory protected site (Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields Didsbury LNR) lies 1.7km from the site and the closest non-statutory protected site (Wrengate Wood SBI) lies over 1km from the site. The protected sites are all separated by adequate buffer habitats including roads and residential development.
- 4.10 The site lies outside any SSSI Impact Risk Zones. With no habitat connectivity to protected sites and the low impact nature of the development, it is considered that the proposed development will have no deleterious effect on the protected sites.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the introduced shrub, hedgerows or trees needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Protected Species

- 5.2 If any protected species, such as bats or evidence of bat activity, is found during the demolition and development works, then work must stop, and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
- 5.3 If the structures are not demolished within two years of the date of the daytime bat survey, then a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.4 During soft landscaping design, the following measures are recommendations to enhance the biodiversity value of the site:
- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
 - Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the new buildings or retained trees where possible.
 - Trees of native species should be planted where practically possible.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

