

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY OF SPORTS HALL AT MELLANDS SPORTS CLUB, LEVENSHULME, GREATER MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2020 by Ludlam Associates to undertake a daytime bat survey of a sports hall at Mellands Sports Club in Levenshulme. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the building.
- 1.2 Mellands Sports Club is located east of Mount Road, which lies east of the centre of Levenshulme, Greater Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 88162 95080 – see Figure 1). The site comprises a large, brick and corrugated metal sports hall, surrounded by bare ground and playing fields.
- 1.3 The sports hall features a brick-built building with a single-storey section featuring a sloped roof and a double-height section with a pitched corrugated metal roof. The site is surrounded in the wider environment by extensive residential development and Nutsford Vale Park providing some foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.
- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the building will be destructive, therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the buildings.
- 1.5 All bat species are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environmental Damage Regulations 2009.

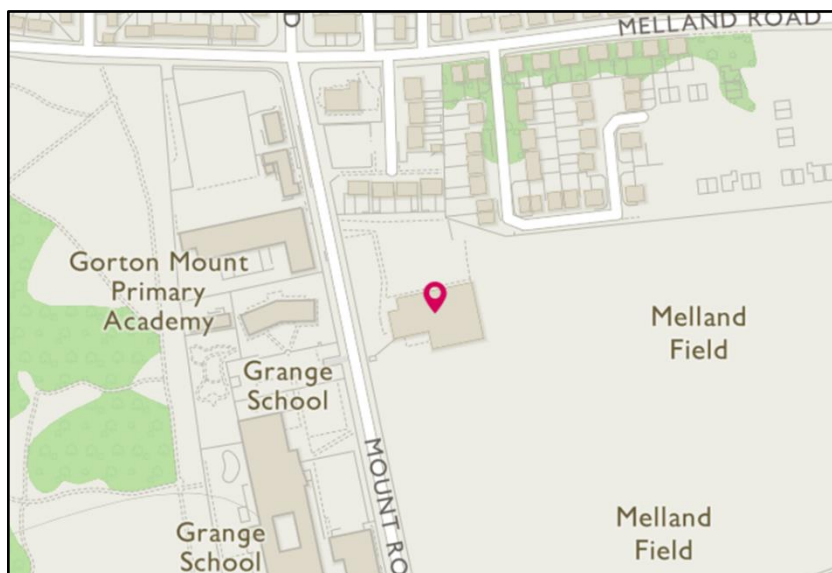


Figure 1 showing the location of the Sports Hall at Mellands Sports Club

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the sports hall at Mellands Sports Club was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for a bat roost to be present within the buildings.
- 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 structures were 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 (where required) to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.5 Joe Walters (Ecologist) carried out the survey on the 18th August 2020. Joe is experienced and fully trained in conducting protected species surveys. The weather on the day of the survey was temperate and overcast with intermittent rain.

Survey constraints

- 2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The sports hall was fully accessible and could be surveyed internally and externally.

3.0 RESULTS

External Survey

- 3.1 The building is brick-built and in excellent condition with no cracked bricks or recessed mortar (see Photograph 1). The double-height section also features corrugated metal cladding on the upper section which lies flush to the brick walls (see Photograph 2). The building features shuttered doorways and boarded windows which are well sealed to the surrounding masonry.



Photograph 1 showing the sports hall exterior



Photograph 2 showing cladding sealed to the masonry

- 3.2 The double-height section of the sports hall which features corrugated metal cladding is well-sealed at the roof and wall edges with metal capping (see Photograph 3). The single-storey, sloped roof section features a parapet wall on

some elevations which is in good condition (see Photograph 4). Some sections of the single-storey section feature metal roof capping at the roof edges. The roof edges lacking parapet walls are also well-sealed with wood and roofing felt.



Photograph 3 showing the roof capping on the double-height section



Photograph 4 showing the roof edges of the single-storey section

- 3.3 The roofs of the single-storey section are constructed from either corrugated metal or roofing felt and are in good condition. The double-height section features a pitched roof constructed from corrugated metal which is mostly in good condition with some damaged panels.

Internal Survey

- 3.4 Internally, the sports club is derelict and no longer in use. The single-storey section is built up to the roof which is lined with plywood in some places (see

Photograph 5). The internal masonry is all painted and in excellent condition. The metal roof beams are all intact and the single-storey section provides no potential bat roosting habitat.



Photograph 5 showing the interior of the single-storey section

- 3.5 The interior of the double-height section is built up to the roof and is damp and dark (see Photograph 6). The internal masonry and metal roof beams are in excellent condition, providing no potential bat roosting habitat. The underside of the roof is lined with panels and is insulated with rockwool (see Photograph 7). A number of panels are damaged with some leading to the outside of the building therefore letting in rain and small amounts of daylight.



Photograph 6 showing the interior of the double-height sports hall



Photograph 7 showing a damaged roof panel

- 3.6 No evidence of bat activity could be found in association with the sports hall at Mellands sports club.

Surrounding Land

- 3.7 The buildings are surrounded by hardstanding and playing fields. No trees are present on site. Bats use linear landscape features for foraging and commuting and it is possible that bats forage and commute over the site.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No bat droppings or other evidence of bat activity was found within the sports hall at Mellands Sports Club, Levenshulme. The building is mostly well-sealed throughout with only a small number of gaps in the corrugated metal roof of the double-height section. Due to the lack of suitable roosting space, good condition of the building, and lack of any bat activity evidence, the sports hall is considered to offer **negligible** bat roost suitability.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed demolition works 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 demolition work should be undertaken with care.
- 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 (0345 1300 228).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, was found during the survey.

REFERENCES

Hundt, L. (2016). *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust.

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