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Protected Species Survey, including completion of Preliminary Bat Survey for:

1 to 6 Westwood Cottages, Raby Street, Manchester, M14 4ST

OS grid reference:
SJ 8392 9567

Commissioned-by:
Robbie Mannion

for
One Manchester

Survey Date: 30/10/19
Preliminary day-time bat survey - 19/11/18
Bat dusk emergence survey - 24/9/19

Report Date: 4/11/19
Preliminary day-time bat survey report - 21/11/18
Bat dusk emergence survey report - 7/10/19

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1. Summary.

(This summary should be read in conjunction with the conclusions and recommendations.)

This terrace of 6 x grade 2 listed cottages, set in gardens, was the subject of a preliminary bat survey in **November 2018**, with some access limitations to the rear of the property at the time. The survey did not include other protected species, though comment was made with respect to nesting birds.

Although the site is urban there's a good network of trees leading from the site to provide a feeding resource for pipistrelle bats, and this species was active in the grounds at a dusk emergence survey in **September 2019**.

At this survey access was available to the outstanding areas, allowing the preliminary bat assessment to be completed and the whole site to be assessed for use by other protected species. In additional drone photographs taken of the roof and chimneys were available to assist assessing the roosting potential of those areas for bats.

The likelihood of some roosting by bats taking place was initially assessed as moderate. A reassessment of the networks of trees available to bats off-site, and the number of newly identified potential roosting places associated with the roof and chimneys of the cottages, suggest an assessment of high risk might have been more appropriate. However the roosting potential associated with trees has been re-assessed as low.

Some of the cracks associated with chimneys could potentially allow a maternity colony of pipistrelles to roost here. As only one bat activity survey has been undertaken and good practice recommends that there be three for buildings at moderate risk of roosting, with two between the months of May and August inclusive; two more bat activity surveys should be undertaken during this time frame.

The fact so much of the roosting potential associated with the roof cannot be observed directly from the ground, and currently self-seeded saplings in the rear yards inhibit the view of the rear of the property, reinforces the need for 2 more surveys.

However, if self-seeded saplings are to be removed from rear yards, while normally this would not be done until the bat survey work was complete, in this case it would be much easier to assess the building for roosting at a dusk or dawn survey if the larger specimens had been removed prior to the survey. There are sufficient trees on and around the site otherwise, that this small-scale removal would be unlikely to deter bats from roosting here if roosts were present.

If roosting were to be confirmed, the remedial works planned would inevitably impact directly on the roosting sites. An appropriate licence from Natural England would be needed to cover the work.

In addition there are a range of crevice situations where individual pipistrelles could hibernate within the structure and trees. Bats could potentially be endangered by remedial work to the chimneys and roof during this period.

A Method Statement needs to be written upon completion of the bat survey work to ensure the risk to bats throughout the year is minimised. However, as I understand Grant Funding requires an earlier start to the work, it should be possible to undertake some internal works to the building prior to the outstanding survey work, so long as the roof,

chimneys and walls are unaffected directly. No out-houses, out-riggers or garden walls should be worked-on however without the input of the bat consultant.

Any work to be done prior to the bat survey work being completed, should be covered by a separate Method Statement.

In the longer term, every attempt should be made to retain bat roosting potential in association with the building into the future. This can be supplemented with bat boxes in trees.

Any roosting provision made must not be exposed directly to artificial lighting. The proposed lighting scheme, including security lighting, may need revision to ensure it is of an appropriate type, appropriately placed and appropriately shielded to maintain darkness around potential roosting sites and to allow bats a dark corridor via which to access them and leave the site.

As bats were feeding on the site at dusk, the landscaping should also take this into account.

Apart from nesting birds, the site is unlikely to support protected species.

No survey work has been undertaken during the nesting season, but the only species recorded during the two day-time surveys have been common species, not registered as priority species or species of conservation concern. There is a possibility of nesting in shrubbery by the dunnock in particular however, which is registered as both.

As some nesting will inevitably occur on site, there should be no clearance works during the main nesting season of May to August inclusive. As birds could also nest in some of the defects associated with the building, the absence of nesting needs to be confirmed before any work commences during this period.

The Method Statement needs also to include retaining/recreating nesting habitat for birds, especially any priority species and species of conservation concern confirmed to be present at a later date. Breeding bird survey work can be carried-out in 2020, but landscaping can be planned on a pro-active basis so the needs of these species would be covered in any case. The availability of nesting sites can be retained for some species by putting up bird boxes in trees.

The impact of any additional proposed lighting on both birds and feeding bats needs to be considered.

This report should be read in conjunction with the preliminary bat survey report of November 2018.

2. Introduction

A preliminary bat survey was undertaken here on **19/11/18.** There was no access to the rear gardens however, and although comments were made incidentally with respect to nesting birds, a formal protected species survey was not undertaken. This report should be read in conjunction with the report of that survey. The Summary of the Report read:

"This property was surveyed as far as possible prior to refurbishment. Access needs to be provided to the rear of the properties to allow the survey to be completed.
This is an urban location unlikely to be frequented by bat species other than the common pipistrelle. Numbers are likely to be relatively low due to the limited access to good feeding habitat in the area. There is feeding habitat immediately available on site however, increasing the risk of bats making use of the roosting opportunities available.
There was no evidence to suggest bats had been in the safely-accessible roof-voids and the likelihood of such evidence being present in the remainder is low.
Externally there are a wide variety of potential roosting places for bats and given the immediate access to feeding habitat in the grounds, I consider the risk of some roosting taking place to be moderate. This applies also to the trees, of which at least 3 were found to contain trunk cavities, with access gaps at least large enough to allow roosting by the pipistrelle bat.
Good Practice Guidelines suggest even low risk buildings should have a bat activity survey (emergence at dusk or to return-to-roost at dawn) when the findings of the initial survey were negative. Those at moderate risk should have two.
As bats use buildings in different ways over the course of the season, often changing roost, and to accord with good practice; if more than one survey is necessary it is my usual practice to undertake one in both the first and second half of the accepted bat survey period of May to September inclusive, and to separate them by at least a month. This also reduces the chance of missing a pipistrelle mating roost, if present, in the later part of the summer.
Most of the identified tree cavities could be inspected by fibrescope at follow-up visits. Although the absence of bats at any given time wouldn't confirm absence at other times, it would be advisable to have them checked in this way, including over winter if they are under threat of removal. Trees with cavities can also be included in the bat activity survey work.
Irrespective of the findings of future survey work, appropriate management of the trees will be necessary with full involvement of the bat consultant. Those with cavities should be retained if possible, even if only as "monoliths". Otherwise compensatory bat provision should be made to accord with the biodiversity objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
Similarly, the opportunity should be taken to maintain/enhance the biodiversity value of the site as far as possible with respect to bats when remedial works are undertaken, both via ensuring potential roosting places remain available and via appropriate landscaping.
Bird species noted in the course of the survey were blackbird, robin, blue tit and magpie, with an old magpie/crows' nest evident in one of the trees. Dense holly and shrubbery are likely to be used by nesting birds also. The nesting needs of birds should be given consideration in attempting to maintain or enhance the biodiversity value of the site. Any site clearance works should be done outside the bird nesting season unless breeding bird survey work has confirmed as far as possible the absence of nesting at the time.
Irrespective of the findings of future survey work, a precautionary Method Statement will be needed to minimise the risk of impacting directly on roosting bats, especially when at their most vulnerable, and to ensure bat roosting potential remains available upon completion of the work. Any proposed on-site lighting should take into account the needs of bats.
There should be no work done to the building and no landscaping-work undertaken until the survey work has been completed and the Method Statement written.
Additional recommendations will be made as appropriate in the course of further survey work."

In addition a bat dusk emergence survey was undertaken on **24/9/19**. The Summary of the Report read:

"This row of 6 cottages, constructed in 1876, was surveyed as far as possible in October 2018, prior to refurbishment.
Not all lofts were safely accessible and there is an extensive undercroft that wasn't entered. Access needed to be provided to the garden area to the rear of the properties to allow the external survey to be completed. This is still the case.
No evidence of roosting by bats was found in any area surveyed, but external features were thought to have a moderate risk of some use by bats. This applied also to a small number of perimeter trees. It was recommended that these be surveyed with a fiberscope in winter, if under threat of removal. The undercroft could be re-assessed with respect to potential suitability for use by hibernating bats in winter, though the species that typically use cave-like places for hibernation are unlikely to frequent the vicinity of the building.
No bats were thought to have emerged at the dusk emergence survey but the lack of access to the rear garden and the presence of well-grown trees in that area, limited the view of the rear of the property.
To accord with good practice, a second survey is needed in favourable weather conditions, at dawn, in the first half of the accepted May-to-September-inclusive bat survey season.
Further recommendations will be made based on the findings. However, it is unlikely any roost will be found that would preclude the obtaining of an appropriate licence from Natural England."

In order to satisfy a pre-planning condition, I have now been asked to undertake a formal protected species survey of the site; with the ultimate aim of advising on the protection of the habitat of any species identified.

Access was provided to the rear gardens, allowing the external inspection for bat roosting potential to be completed at the same time.

In addition photographs of the roof, taken by drone, were available to allow closer inspection of features that could not be visualised well from the ground.

The site, about 0.2 hectares in area, comprises of a terrace of 6 x Grade 2 listed cottages, with a communal garden to the front and sides, and individual - now very overgrown - yards to the rear:

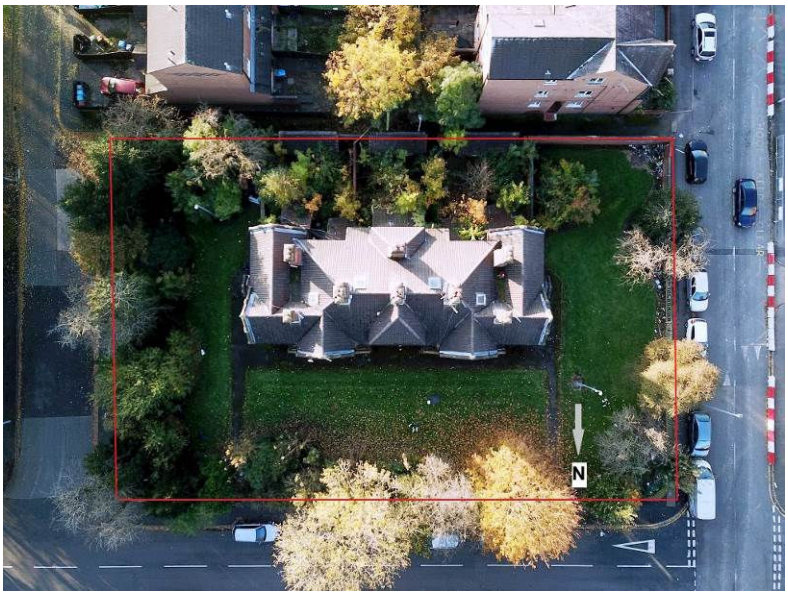
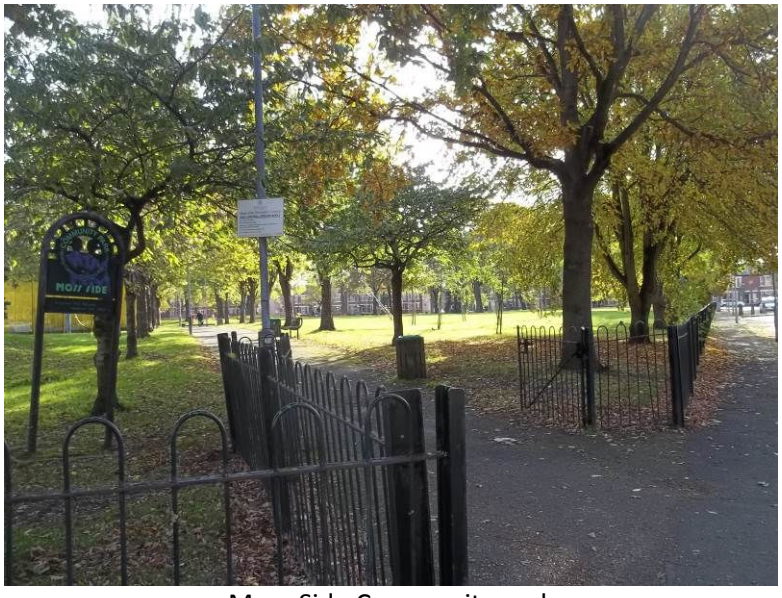


Fig. 1. Site boundary shown in red.
Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions

Although the area is urban and the land to the north, west and south is developed, there are multiple areas of amenity grassland with trees in the vicinity, including Moss Side Community Park immediately to the east, a limb of Alexandra Park within 100m to the west and Whitworth Park about 750m to north-east.



Fig. 2. Location of site indicated by red circle


Moss Side Community park



Example of the network of trees in the wider area, as seen looking north-east
Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions

The property is shown below:





Eastern and front (north) elevations and western and rear elevations

3. Survey

Access was provided to the rear yards, allowing the external inspection for bat roosting potential to be completed.

In addition photographs of the roof, taken by drone, were available to allow a much better assessment of the roosting potential at height, than could be obtained via inspection from the ground alone.

The potential nesting bird situation was reassessed, including with respect to birds of conservation concern (1). I also noted the habitat types on the site and made an assessment of their ability to support protected and priority species and species of conservation concern. This focused mainly on great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) and badgers (*Meles meles*). The hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) - a biodiversity priority species - was also given consideration.

Incidentally, I also looked for non-native invasive species.

4. Limitations of the survey

Although access was available to the rear yards, two were very densely over-grown, limiting the extent of the inspection.

This was a preliminary assessment for protected species, to allow an over-view of the habitats and species on site to be reported, and intended to flag any issues that need further investigation.

A re-assessment was made with respect to nesting birds, but it should be noted both this survey and the preliminary bat survey in 2018, were undertaken outside the bird nesting season.

5. Findings

Figure 3 below shows the building, communal gardens to the front and sides, and individual rear yards numbered 1 to 6:



Fig. 3. Site showing individual rear yards numbered 1 to 6

Bats.

The rear yards have all been colonised by self-seeded trees and shrubs to a greater or lesser degree, with the worst - yard 3 - shown below:



An overgrown rose bush prevented access to this yard.

Otherwise, it was possible to get close enough to the rear of the cottages to confirm bat access was possible behind fascia boards:



Each cottage has a single-storey lean-to, and a single-storey out-house attached to the rear wall. Roosting potential exists where there are gaps into walls, there are gaps behind fascias, tiled roofs have defects, and there is ivy cladding to roofs and walls. Examples are shown below:



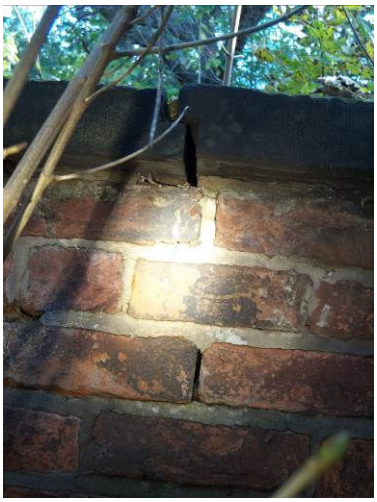






Walls between yards, and lintels in the wall over the rear gates also have some roosting potential:









Drone photographs showed a wide variety of potential roosting places associated with the cottage chimneys and roofs:



Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions
Example potential roosting places are illustrated in red



Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions
Example potential roosting places are illustrated in red



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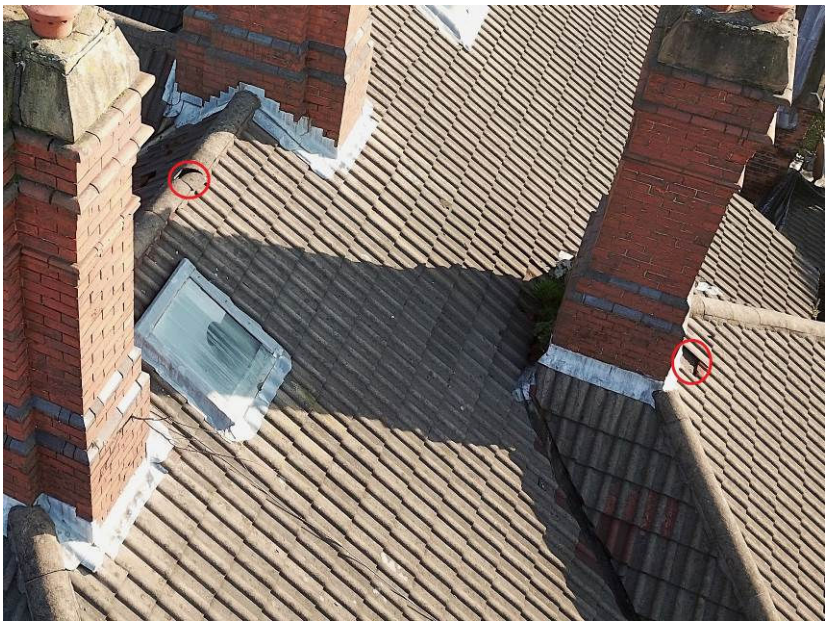


Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions
Example potential roosting places are illustrated in red



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Photo courtesy of Jason Lock Productions
Example potential roosting places are illustrated in red



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Example potential roosting places are illustrated in red

Air bricks potentially allow access for bats to the undercroft:





Rear elevation



Front elevation

Other protected species.

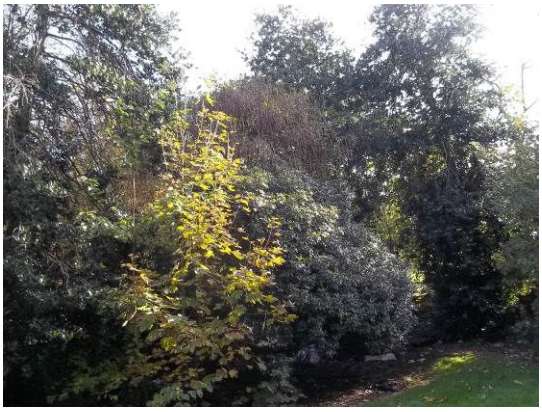
Self-seeded tree and shrub species present in the rear yards comprise mainly buddleia, sycamore, ash and birch, with some cherry and willow. There is some ivy to walls and an occasional overgrown ornamental shrub. All yards are self-contained with high walls and gates that are reinforced with metal sheeting to ground level. This had been removed to provide access but was to be reinstated again. Accordingly access for protected/priority species other than bats and birds is extremely limited.

Some defects in the building, as illustrated above, could potentially be used by nesting birds such as the blue tit, pied wagtail or possibly house sparrow - a species of conservation concern; but there was no evidence seen to confirm past nesting on the photographs.

Otherwise shrubbery and trees provide potential nesting habitat for species such as the robin, wren, blackbird and dunnock - a priority species of conservation concern. House sparrow could be another possibility, also a priority species of conservation concern. Examples of the shrubbery which, apart from a grouping to the west of yard 1, is mainly along the northern and eastern boundaries, are shown below









As noted in 2018, an old magpie/crows' nest was seen in a tree. Magpie, blackbird, robin and blue tit were recorded on site at that visit.

At this visit a small group of long-tailed tit was recorded, 2 x robin - both singing, and magpie x 2. Wood pigeon, black-headed gull and herring gull flew over.

Although there are areas of shrubbery, there has been much human activity on site and much of the ground is heavily littered:





There was no evidence to suggest the presence of badgers, and the disturbance limits the likelihood of the presence of hedgehogs. In addition the surrounding habitat is a limiting factor for both species.

There are no water bodies within 500m. Accordingly the likelihood of great crested newts occurring on the site is minimal.

Incidentally, no obvious signs were seen of non-native invasive species.

6. Conclusions/Discussion

Bats.

The likelihood of some roosting taking place here was initially assessed as moderate. A reassessment of the networks of trees available to bats off-site, and the number of newly identified potential roosting places associated with the roof of the cottages, suggest an assessment of high risk might have been more appropriate. However the roosting potential associated with trees has been re-assessed as low.

Some of the cracks associated with chimneys could potentially allow a maternity colony of pipistrelles to roost here. As only one bat activity survey has been undertaken and good practice recommends that there be three for buildings at moderate risk of roosting, with two between the months of May and August inclusive; two more bat activity surveys should be undertaken during this time frame.

The fact so much of the roosting potential associated with the roof cannot be observed directly from the ground, and currently self-seeded saplings in the rear yards inhibit the view of the rear of the property, reinforces the need for 2 more surveys.

However, if self-seeded saplings are to be removed from rear yards, while normally this would not be done until the bat survey work was complete, in this case it would be much easier to assess the building for roosting if the larger specimens had been removed prior to the survey. There are sufficient trees on and around the site otherwise, that this small-scale removal would be unlikely to deter bats from roosting here if roosts were present.

If roosting were to be confirmed, the remedial works planned would impact directly on the roosting sites. An appropriate licence from Natural England would be needed to cover the work.

In addition there are a range of crevice situations where individual pipistrelles could hibernate within the structure and trees. Bats could potentially be endangered by remedial work to the chimneys and roof during this period.

A Method Statement needs to be written upon completion of the bat survey work to ensure the risk to bats throughout the year is minimised. However, as I understand Grant Funding requires an earlier start to the work, it should be possible to undertake some internal works to the building prior to the outstanding survey work, so long as the roof, chimneys and walls are unaffected directly. No out-houses, out-riggers or garden walls should be worked-on however without the input of the bat consultant.

Any work to be done prior to the bat survey work being completed, should be covered by a separate Method Statement.

In the longer term, every attempt should be made to retain bat roosting potential in association with the building into the future, but this can be supplemented with bat boxes in trees.

Any roosting provision made must not be exposed directly to artificial lighting. The proposed lighting scheme, including security lighting, may need revision to ensure it is of

an appropriate type, appropriately placed and appropriately shielded to maintain darkness the roost entrance and to allow bats a dark corridor via which to access and leave the site.

As bats were feeding on the site at dusk, the landscaping and lighting proposals should also take this into account.

Other protected species.

Apart from nesting birds, the site seems unlikely to support protected species.

No survey work has been undertaken during the nesting season, but the only species recorded during the two day-time surveys have been common species, not registered as priority species or species of conservation concern. There is a possibility of nesting in shrubbery by the dunnock in particular however.

As some nesting will inevitably occur on site, there should be no clearance works during the main nesting season of May to August inclusive. As birds could also nest in some of the defects associated with the building, the absence of nesting needs to be confirmed before any work commences during this period.

The Method Statement needs also to include retaining/recreating nesting habitat for birds, especially any priority species and species of conservation concern confirmed to be present at a later date. Breeding bird survey work can be carried-out in 2020, but landscaping can be planned on a pro-active basis so the needs of these species would be covered in any case. The availability of nesting sites can be retained for some species after remedial works have been undertaken to the building, by putting up bird boxes in trees.

The impact of any additional proposed lighting on birds need to be considered.

7. Recommendations

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the conclusions above.

Protected species issues on this site relate only to bats and nesting birds.

Two more bat activity surveys (emergence-at dusk or return-to-roost-at-dawn) are needed between the months of May and August inclusive.

Some small-scale removal of self-seeded saplings from rear yards would improve the view of the building and facilitate the bat activity survey.

If roosting were to be confirmed, an appropriate licence from Natural England would be needed to cover the work.

Irrespective of the findings of the survey work, a Method Statement will be needed to minimise the risk to bats. If internal works are to be done in advance of the bat activity survey work, this should be covered by a separate Method Statement.

There should be no ground clearance works during the main nesting season of May to August inclusive. As birds could also nest in some of the defects associated with the building, the absence of nesting needs to be confirmed before any work commences to the structure during this period.

The Method Statement will cover the needs of nesting birds as well as bats.

Landscaping should recreate a garden suitable for use by bats for feeding, and birds for feeding and nesting, making use of species native to the area as much as possible.

The potential impact of any proposed lighting on bats and other wildlife should be given due consideration.

8. References

1. Eaton, M. A. et al (2015). Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108: 708-746.
2. Ed. by Collins, J. (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines - Third Edition. Bat Conservation Trust.

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