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Report of late summer site visits and final Bat Method Statement for:

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

OS grid reference: SJ 8392 9567

Commissioned-by:
MC Construction

For
One Manchester

Date: 14/9/20

Recent site visit dates 28/8/20 & 9/9/20
Previous surveys/site visits:
dawn - 29/5/20, dusk - 24/9/19; site visit - 18/2/20 (at time of drone survey of roof)
day-time - 24/10/18 & 30/10/19 (previously inaccessible parts of the exterior)

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1. Summary

This Bat Method Statement relates to a known roost of a single common pipistrelle bat. Unfortunately it was not possible to undertake a third bat activity survey to accord with good practice. Other potential roosting places exist and it must be remembered that some of these could also be used by bats at times.

The known roost is in a chimney of a Grade 2 listed building, split into 6 cottages, which is being redeveloped for modern residential use.

The Bat Method Statement must be approved by the Planning authority prior to remedial works commencing to the exterior of the property. It must then be kept on site by the contractors and followed.

The bat consultant must be involved as out-lined:

- Tool box talk to be given to work-force before any remedial work to the external structure begins.
- Chimney with roost in to be work-on first in the presence of the bat consultant.
- No raking-out of mortar-work to any chimney to be done prior to that.
- Gaps in other chimneys to be retained/reinstated will be marked at same visit.
- Bat consultant will visit as work to chimneys is nearing completion to check provision has been made as intended.
- Bat consultant to be present as work starts to coping-stones/slates to ensure contractors have understood the need for care and to stop and seek further advice if they find a bat or bat droppings.
- Bat consultant to be present if rear fascia needs to be removed. Existing size gap to be retained between rear fascia and rear elevation when/if replaced.
- Bat consultant to be present as bat boxes put up in trees. Boxes to be put up by a tree climber. Bird boxes also to be put up.
- Any new lighting proposed will be kept to a minimum and appropriately positioned and shielded to prevent light-spill that might impact bat roosts or flight-lines.

Mitigation and enhancement measures must be implemented as indicated.

2. Introduction.

These Grade 2 listed cottages are being redeveloped for modern, residential use.

As grant funding had already been obtained and only one bat activity survey had been undertaken at the end of the recognised season in 2019, it was agreed that a preliminary Method Statement would be written to allow limited works to start in advance of the outstanding bat activity survey work in 2020. See Appendix 2.

In February 2020 drone images of the roof and chimney were made available and it became obvious the level of roosting potential was greater than at first believed. The ensuing Method Statement therefore outlined that two more surveys were needed, though I always review the perceived level of risk after each survey.

A return-to-roost at dawn survey was carried-out on **29/5/20**. A bat emerged from a chimney and the need for a third survey was confirmed. Unfortunately, due to the impact of Covid 19 and a change in personnel at One Manchester, this was not commissioned; and the contractors proceeded without reference to the preliminary Method Statement, and without further bat activity survey work having been undertaken.

Scaffolding had already been erected around the building by the time I was asked for further input. This made undertaking a third bat activity survey impossible without the dismantling of the scaffolding.

As scaffolding was already in place the opportunity was taken to look at the defects in the chimneys at close quarters, with the aim of planning mitigation with respect to bat roosting activity.

The gap apparently used by the roosting bat was identified. It will be possible to keep this gap open. Accordingly a licence from Natural England will not be necessary. A plan to keep some of the other gaps open was devised, and to retain gaps behind fascias. This accords with the biodiversity objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the bat conservation intentions of Natural England.

The contractors must keep a copy of this Method Statement on site during the work.

3. Objectives of the Bat Method Statement.

n.b. All bats and their roosts have legal protection. It is illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a known bat roost without a licence from Natural England. Bats themselves are protected from both harm and disturbance.

There were 4 objectives in writing this Method Statement:

1. To ensure the work is done in accordance with the law relating to bats.
2. To ensure contractors take into account that previously unidentified bat roosting sites may be present.
3. To ensure the existing bat roost is maintained and roosting places are retained/created to maintain/enhance the biodiversity value of the site with respect to bats.
4. Incidentally to consider the needs of nesting birds on the site.

1. Ensuring work is done within the law relating to bats.

- The contractors will keep a copy of this Method Statement on site for the duration of the work.
- Any bat or bats present at the time will be put at risk by the work being undertaken if it is not conducted in an appropriate manner.
- A tool-box talk by the bat consultant is necessary before any remedial work is undertaken with respect to the exterior of the property.
- It is necessary to maintain the existing roost entrance as currently.

- It is necessary to maintain the existing roosting site as currently.
- It is necessary to be aware that a bat or bats could be present when the work is being done.
- Accordingly the bat consultant will be in attendance when any work is being done to the chimney in question.
- This chimney will be worked-on first.
- At the same time the bat consultant will mark gaps in other chimneys to be retained. See below.
- New external lighting will be kept to the minimum and appropriately shielded/timed to minimise any impact on bat flight lines to and from the roost and other potential roosts. (1)

2. Possibility of previously unidentified bat roosts being present.

- The investigative survey work was not completed before scaffolding was erected so this is a real risk that must be given due consideration by contractors.
- Bats could roost in other gaps at chimneys, gaps between bricks and coping stones, under raised slates and behind fascias, at any time of year.
- As each chimney provides bat roosting potential, an exit/entrance gap will be provided in each to ensure bats are not incarcerated by the work.
- No raking-out of mortar-work to any chimney will be done until the chimney containing the roost - see Fig. 1 - has been repaired, in the presence of the bat consultant.
- The bat consultant will be present as other remedial measures commence i.e. repairs to the roof, coping stones and fascias to ensure contractors have understood the degree of care needed and what to do if they find a bat or signs of a bat.
- Gaps in the fabric of the building that provide access for bats to potential hibernation sites that are hidden from view will not be sealed in winter unless the absence of bats can be checked by the bat consultant, with the aid of a fibrescope if necessary. (Bats may well not rouse from torpor in time to escape.)
- Contractors will be aware at all times to be vigilant for signs of disturbance to bats.
- In the absence of the bat consultant, if at any time during the work, a bat or droppings that may have come from a bat are found, work **must** stop immediately. Further advice **must** then be sought before work continues in that area, even if the bat has flown off.
- Contractors will not handle any bat found unless it appears injured and is easily accessible. In that case the bat will be picked-up in a gloved hand or soft cloth and transferred into a secure box - preferably either cardboard with lid that can be taped in place, containing air-holes, or a deep plastic container with smooth sides that the bat can't crawl up, and that can be covered with a cloth. The bat should be given cloth or paper in which it can hide and if possible a small container such as a bottle top containing water**. However it is important the bat consultant is contacted as soon as possible.**
- If the bat is uninjured when found it should not be disturbed further. Work will cease overnight to allow the bat to leave of its own accord. Work will only continue when the bat consultant can be present.

3. **To ensure the existing bat roost is maintained and roosting places are retained/created as an enhancement measure.**

- The chimneys have been numbered as shown in Fig. 1 below:

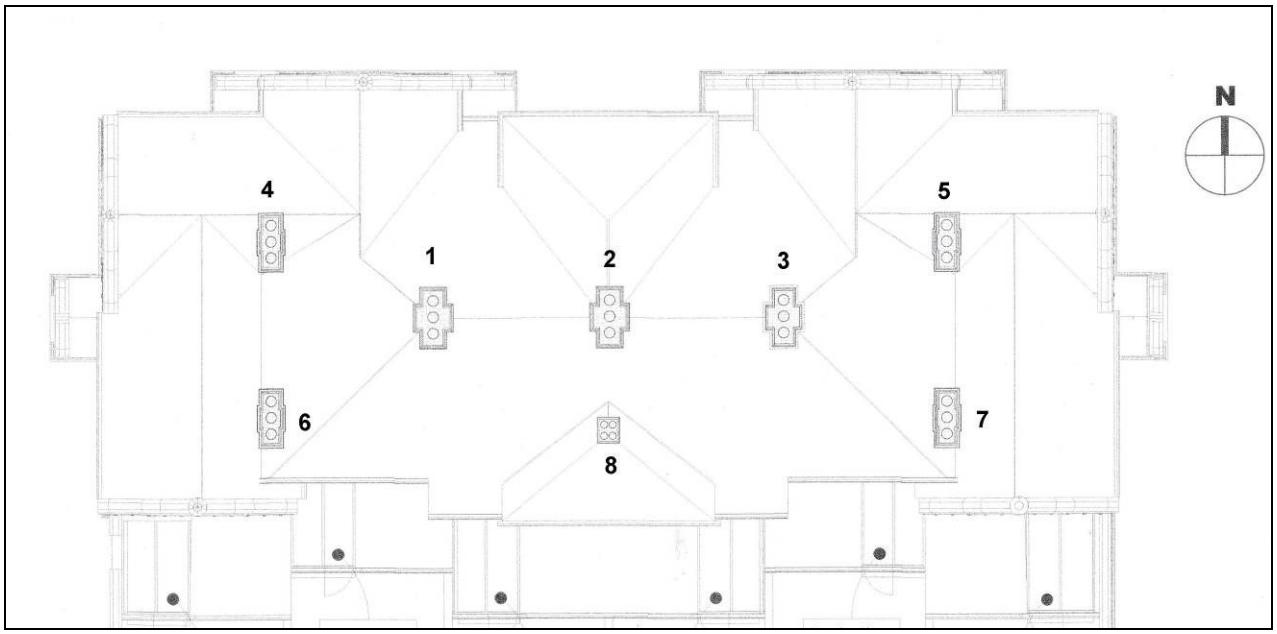


Fig. 1. Chimneys numbered 1 to 8

- The known roost is in the north face of chimney 8. See Plate 1 below:



Plate 1. Gap used by roosting bat.

- It will be acceptable to reinstate mortar to some of this gap, but the gap will be retained to its full width for a length of no less than 6cms. The base of the opening can be angled to prevent water ingress. See illustration in Appendix 1.
- Not all chimneys could be fully inspected at the last site visit, but appropriate gaps for retention were identified in chimney 1 (north and south faces) and chimney 3 (east and west faces). Examples of the sorts of gaps to be retained are shown in Plates 2 to 5 below:



Plate 2



Plate 3

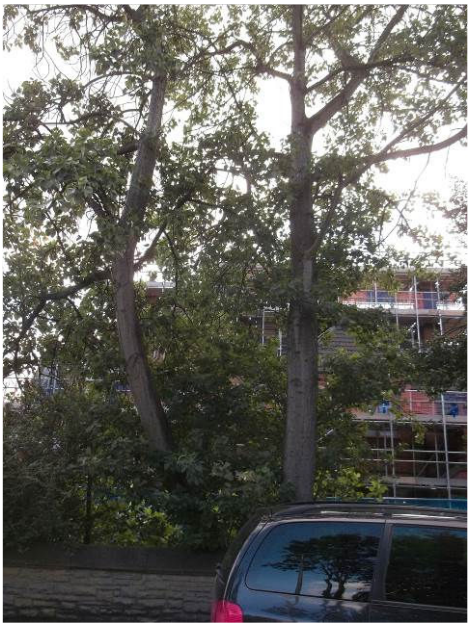


Plate 4



Plate 5

- As chimney 8 will be repaired first, the gaps to be left in all other chimneys will be marked at that visit.
- No raking-out of mortar-work will be done until chimney 8 has been repaired in the presence of the bat consultant.
- If the rear fascia needs to be removed temporarily or replaced, the bat consultant will be present as it is removed.
- It will be reinstated with the same size gap between it and the wall as currently.
- The bat consultant will advise on the types of bat boxes to be ordered. No alternatives will be used unless agreed by the bat consultant. There will be 6, to be divided between two trees along the front boundary, facing a range of directions:





- The bat consultant will be present as they are put up by a tree-climber.
- Two blue-tit and two robin boxes will also be put up as directed by the bat consultant.
- Any new external lighting will be kept to a minimum and appropriately placed/shielded/timed. It will be ensured that potential bat-roosting-features associated with the building and trees, and potential bat flight lines, will not be subjected to new light-spill. Security lighting will be activated by motion-sensors, to be illuminated for a short period of time. The bat consultant should be contacted if this advice needs to be elaborated-upon.

4. References

1. Bat Conservation Trust (2018). Guidance Note 8/18: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK.

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Appendix 1 - Illustration of Bat Access

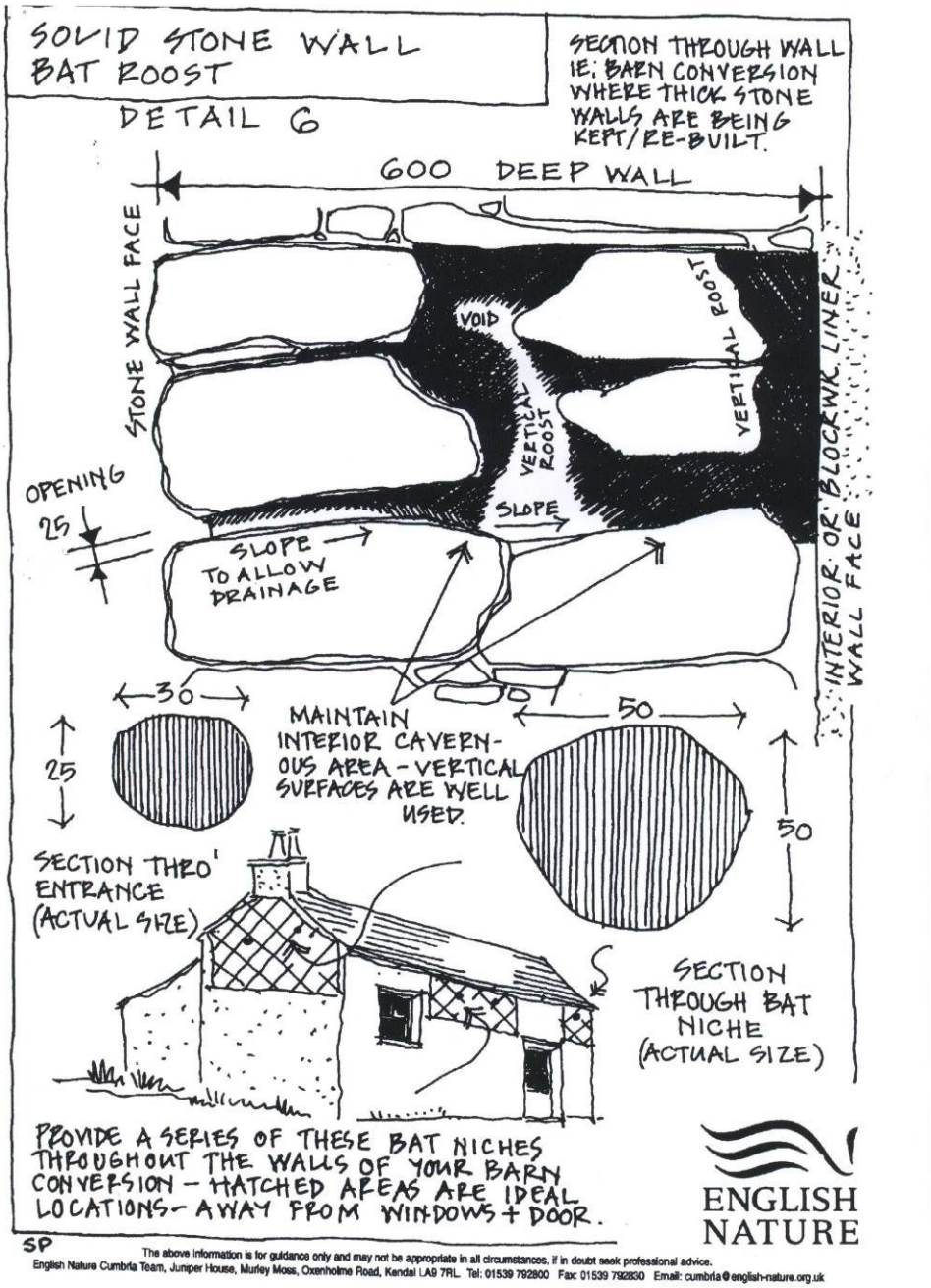


Illustration of sloping bat access to avoid water ingress

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Bat Method Statement

Robbie Mannion,
One Manchester Limited
Lovell House
Archway 6
Hulme
Manchester
M15 5RN

21/2/20

Preliminary Method Statement following site visit to 1 to 6 Westwood Cottages, Raby Street, Manchester, M14 4ST
OS grid reference: SJ 8392 9567
Site Visit Date: 18/2/20

Dear Robbie,

Following the site meeting with yourself and Neil Hamlett on 18th February, I am summarising what was agreed with respect to biodiversity below:

1. After seeing photographs of the roof taken by drone on **30/10/19**, the likelihood of some roosting by bats was assessed to be high, with a degree of risk of use by a maternity colony with dependent young in summer.

2. Only one bat activity survey has so far been undertaken, on **24/9/19** - outside the bat maternity colony period, and the view of the rear of the property was impeded by lack of access to the rear yards and the extent of self-seeded tree growth in the yards.

3. To accord with good practice, two more surveys are needed between the months of May and August inclusive. No structural work to the exterior should be done before this has been completed.

4. It has been agreed that the largely self-seeded vegetation in the rear yards can be removed prior to the bird nesting season (generally considered to be 1st March to 31st August), or in the first two weeks of March if the ecological consultant is happy that nesting does not seem to be taking place.

5. Internal works to the building can also be commenced, starting with the upper storey. However, after the end of April, any internal works that continue will be scaled back in terms of work-force and use of power tools, to ensure internal works taking place will not cause sufficient noise/vibration to deter bats for roosting in association with the roof. It is intended that continued internal work after the end of April will be done at ground-floor level only.

6. The level of work acceptable after April will be assessed by the bat consultant before the end of April.

7. No scaffolding will be erected until the bat survey work has been completed.

8. No trees will be removed from the front of the property, though three are currently proposed to have some reduction work undertaken. It has been assessed that this will not impact on bat roosting potential. This should be done prior to the bird nesting season, or in the first two weeks of March if the ecological consultant is happy that nesting does not seem to be taking place.

9. It proposed to ensure there are sight-lines from the road to the property. This will involve removal of some self-seeded saplings. It is however very important that the loss of any dense, shrubby vegetation where birds might nest, be kept to a minimum and be compensated-for with new equivalent planting elsewhere on the site.

10. About 12 to 20 house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) were present on the roof and in the shrubbery at the time of the site visit, and a dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), was singing in one of the shrubs. Both these species are classed as species of conservation concern and listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) as species “of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. Both nest in dense shrubbery. It is hard to provide for the dunnock in particular via artificial nest boxes, and in this case the option to fix sparrow terracing to the side of the building is unlikely to be acceptable from a heritage point of view. Retention/recreation of dense shrubbery is therefore of vital importance.

11. It has been agreed that there is potential for some existing gaps into walls/chimneys and under coping stones for example, to be retained at least partially without impacting on the integrity of the building. This will maintain bat roosting potential in association with the building. Bat boxes will also be put in trees. A more detailed plan for these mitigation/compensation measures will be produced when the bat survey work is complete and before structural repairs to the building commence. This will include putting-up boxes for bird species such as blue tits and robins in trees.

12. If a bat roost has been confirmed in the building an appropriate licence from Natural England will be obtained.

As I understand it, the current plan is to:

1. Remove self-seeded vegetation, especially from the rear yards, and necessary surgery to trees, to be done as a matter of urgency prior to nesting taking place by birds.

2. Start internal stripping-out on the top floor of the building and continue with this until the end of April.

3. During April the bat consultant will attend site to assess the degree to which works need to be scaled-back after April to avoid any disturbance to areas where bats might roost, prior to necessary bat activity survey work being undertaken between the months of May and August inclusive.

4. Upon completion of the bat survey work, a detailed plan for bat provision will be produced.

5. If a roost has been confirmed the necessary licence from Natural England will be obtained to cover the work.

6. Landscaping will ensure no overall loss of dense shrubbery on the site for the benefit of nesting house sparrows and dunnocks. Boxes for species such as blue tits and robins will be provided in trees.



c.c. Neil Hamlett