

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY & NESTING BIRD SURVEY AT LAND OFF SWAN STREET, MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2019 by Cinns Limited, to undertake a daytime bat survey and nesting bird survey of a site off Swan Street, Manchester. The site has existent planning permission for the demolition of the existing structures and construction of new tower comprising 103 residential apartments (Ref: 109840/FO/2015/N1). This report updates the previous ecological survey on the site and was required prior to removal of the structures on the site and any remaining vegetation.
- 1.2 Swan Street is located in Manchester City Centre (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84556 98806). The proposed development site comprises two brick buildings and hardstanding. The site is surrounded by urban development, comprising commercial and residential properties.
- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the property will be destructive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the property.
- 1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 1.5 All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the structure was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the structure.
- 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 building was 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 to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.
- 2.5 The structures and vegetation to be removed were surveyed for active bird nests and bird nesting behaviour, such as alarm-calling and birds carrying food or nesting material.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.6 Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 15th June 2020. Joel is an experienced bat worker, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Reference: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was cool and bright.

Survey Constraints

- 2.7 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The whole property could be surveyed externally, with only one of the buildings accessible internally. There were negligible further constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

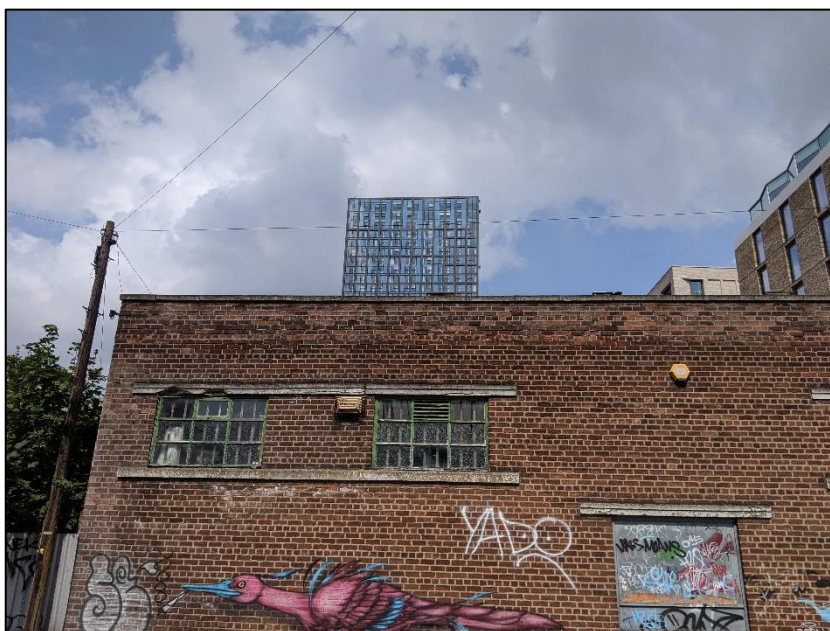
- 3.1 The structures on the site at Swan Street are constructed from brick and have pitched, cement roofing.

Building 1 (off Cross Keys Street)

- 3.2 The external brickwork on is complete and intact, offering limited bat roosting opportunities behind or between the bricks (see Photographs 1 and 2). The metal doors are sealed to the brick. The cement roof is intact, offering limited scope for bats to roost behind. The cement panels are firmly attached to each other. The wooden window frames on the side elevation are sealed to the brickwork. The stone window lintels are complete and without gaps for bats to exploit.



Photograph 1 showing the front elevation of the structure



Photograph 2 showing the side of the structure

- 3.3 No signs of bat activity could be located externally. One Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* was roosting on top of the brick wall on the west-facing elevation, though no signs of nesting behaviour were observed during the survey. No birds entered or exited the property during the survey. No internal access was possible at the time of the survey.

Building 2 (off Mason Street) – External Survey

- 3.4 Building 2 is constructed from brick and has a pitched, cement roof (see Photographs 3 and 4). The external brickwork is complete, offering no suitable bat roosting opportunities. The roof is firmly attached to the brick walls, and all roofing panels are complete and intact. The metal shutters and wooden render on the front elevation are intact and sealed. Vegetation is penetrating the upper sections of the walls.



Photograph 3 showing the front and side elevations



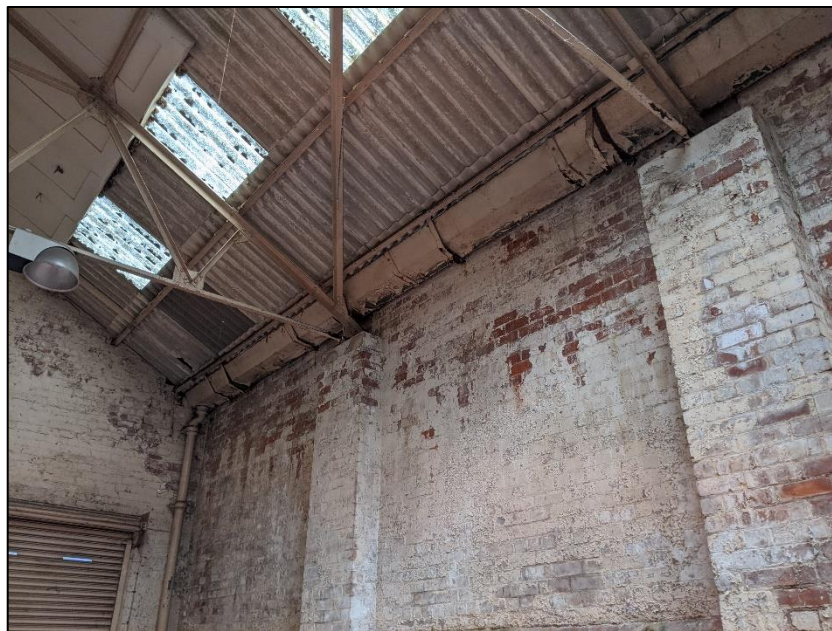
Photograph 4 showing the brickwork on the side elevations

Building 2 - Internal Survey

- 3.5 Internally, the structure large and open to the roof (see Photograph 5). No separate roof void exists. The interior is well-lit. The internal brickwork is complete, offering no suitable bat roosting cavities (see Photograph 6). No evidence of bat activity was found inside the building. The roof edges have been protected with wire mesh to prevent potential bird access. No signs of bird nesting were found inside Building 2.



Photograph 5 showing the interior of Building 2



Photograph 6 showing the internal brickwork

Surrounding Land

- 3.6 Parts of the site are overgrown with self-seeding shrubs and trees, including Butterfly Bush *Buddleia* sp. and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (see Photographs 7 and 8). The vegetation was surveyed for nesting birds. No signs of bird nesting behaviour, such as adults carrying food or nesting material, was observed during the site visit.



Photograph 7 showing the overgrown vegetation



Photograph 8 showing the self-seeded Sycamore trees

- 3.7 The remainder of the site consists entirely of hardstanding.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found on the site at Swan Street. No suitable bat roosting cavities exist at the structure. The wall and cement roof are well-sealed. The structure has poor thermal capacity due to the construction materials. Given the results of the survey, the site is considered to offer **negligible bat roost suitability**.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the demolition can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the buildings 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, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.
- 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 (0845 1300 228).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, was found within the site boundary. The structures on the site and the vegetation surrounding the structures was surveyed for nesting birds, with no nests found or nesting-behaviour observed.
- 4.6 If a bird nest is found during demolition work, all work is to stop, and an Ecologist called for advice. A buffer zone of 4m should be erected around the nesting site, with no works undertaken in the buffer zone until the nest has been checked, and the chicks have fledged.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

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