# DAYTIME BAT SURVEY OF 65 PRINCESS STREET, MANCHESTER

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2020 by Shenton Group Limited to undertake a daytime bat survey of 65 Princess Street in Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the conversion of the property into a hotel premises.

1.2 The building is located at 65 Princess Street, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 83957 98088). The site comprises a large commercial property that is no longer occupied. The site is surrounded by residential and commercial development offering limited foraging and commuting habitat.

1.3 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/intrusive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the building.

1.4 All bat species are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A daytime bat survey of 65 Princess Street was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the building.

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.

**Personnel and Timing**

2.5 Joel Hacking and Kate Reed (Senior Ecologists) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 9th March 2020. Both surveyors are experienced ecologists and Joel holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Ref: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was cool and dry.

**Survey constraints**

2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The property was fully accessible and could be surveyed internally and externally.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### External Survey

3.1 The property is constructed from brick and has a pitched, tiled roof. The external brickwork is complete and intact on the front elevation, with no significantly damaged bricks or recessed mortar. The wooden window frames are flush to the surrounding masonry (see Photograph 1). The brick lintels are complete and intact. The ground floor has a large shop window, which is sealed to the brickwork.

**Photograph 1 showing the front elevation of the property**

3.2 The roof is pitched and tiled with slate tiles (see Photograph 2). The roof tiles are all in position and flush to one another, with no slipped or broken tiles. The ridge tiles are complete and intact. The brick chimney stacks are complete, with no damaged bricks present. Lead flashing occurs at the base of the chimney stack and where the roof meets the brick walls of the adjacent building. The lead flashing is flat and does not provide a suitable bat roosting cavity. The property has wooden bargeboards present at the roof edges, and these are flush to the upper brick courses.

**Photograph 2 showing the roof of the property**

3.3 An extension occurs at the rear of the property (see Photograph 3). The extension is rendered, with no cracks or gaps in the render. The roof is pitched, with all of the slate tiles in position and flush to one another.

**Photograph 3 showing the roof of the rear extension**

**Internal Survey**

3.4 The interior of the property is split over several floors and is currently unoccupied. The ground floors and most of the remaining floors offer no suitable bat roosting habitat. A large, open roof void exists, covering the expanse of the roof. The wooden roof joists are complete and without gaps or cracks for bats to exploit (see Photograph 4). The roof is lined throughout, with no major tears or rips in the lining.

**Photograph 4 showing the roof structure of the upper floor**

3.5 The internal brickwork is complete and intact, offering no damaged bricks or recessed mortar for crevice-dwelling bat species to occupy (see Photograph 5). The roof void is well-sealed internally, with no daylight present at the roof edges. The roof void is dusty and cobwebbed throughout, suggesting no recent bat access. No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, could be located in the roof void.

**Photograph 5 showing the internal brickwork**

3.6 The rear extension has a small, shallow roof void. This is a constricted space. The wooden roof joists are complete and without gaps or cracks to exploit (see Photograph 6). The roof lining is intact, with no major rips or tears. The roof void is well-sealed. No evidence of bat activity was found in the extension roof void.

**Photograph 6 showing the small, shallow roof void above the extension**

3.7 The property has an extensive cellar space (see Photograph 7). The space offers no suitable bat roosting spaces. The brick walls are complete. No evidence of bat activity was located in the cellar space.

**Photograph 7 showing the cellar space**

**Surrounding Land**

3.8 The property is entirely enclosed by hardstanding. No mature trees exist on the site. No evidence of other protected species could be located.

## 4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at 65 Princess Street, Manchester. Internally, the building is in good material condition, and no suitable bat roosting spaces were found. The building is also isolated from any bat foraging and commuting habitat. Due to the lack of evidence found, and the above reasons, the property is considered to offer **negligible bat roost suitability**.

4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed 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 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 renovation 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).

## 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.