

**DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AND ECOLOGICAL
SCOPING SURVEY
OF
LAND AT 27A CIRCULAR ROAD,
WITHINGTON, GREATER MANCHESTER
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2019 by Ludlam Associates to carry out a daytime bat survey and ecological scoping survey of land at 27a Circular Road, Withington, Greater Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of a residential property with associated access, parking and landscaping.
- 1.2 The site is located south of Circular Road, Withington, Greater Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84558 92266 - see Figure 1). The site comprises a single-storey residential property with an overgrown area to the north. The habitats briefly comprise continuous scrub, tall ruderal herb, ephemeral vegetation and scattered trees and scrub.

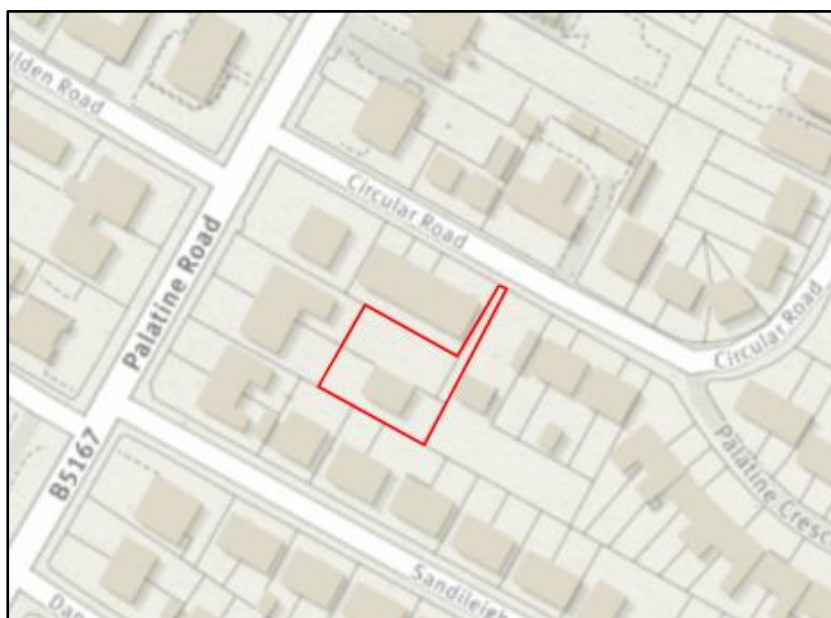


Figure 1 showing the red-line boundary of the site

- 1.3 The site is situated within an urban area and is entirely surrounded by similar residential developments with small gardens.
- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the existing structures will be destructive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species which could potentially utilise the buildings and wider site.
- 1.5 All bat species are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the building on site at 27a Circular Road was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present within the structures.
- 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 buildings 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.
- 2.5 In addition to the daytime bat survey, an ecological scoping survey was also carried out, to search for evidence of other protected species, such as Badger. This included a search for invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.6 Joe Walters (Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 29th October 2019. Joe is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys. The weather on the day of the survey was mild and overcast.

Survey constraints

- 2.7 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The buildings could be accessed internally and externally. There were negligible constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS – DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

- 3.1 The site comprises a single-storey residential development with a pitched roof.

External Survey

- 3.2 The external walls are constructed from brick (see Photograph 1). The brickwork is in excellent condition with no missing or damaged bricks. The mortar is also complete and in excellent condition. The upper courses of the gable ends are rendered and support Tudor style wooden cladding. There are no potential access points or crevices created by these features. The windows and doors are uPVC throughout and are flush to the brickwork. A small cavity exists where the wooden panel cladding meets the tops of the windows (see Photograph 2). These gaps are shallow and heavily cobwebbed.



Photograph 1 showing the eastern gable end



Photograph 2 showing the gap between the cladding and the window

- 3.3 An exposed extraction vent is present on the building (see Photograph 3). A disused bird's nest was found within the vent. No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings were found within the vent or on the wall outside. It is unlikely that this is used by bats for roosting or as access into the property.



Photograph 3 showing the vent

- 3.4 Wooden soffit and bargeboards are present on the roof edges (see Photograph 4). These are in excellent condition and flush to the brickwork. Small vents are present on the boards, these are all in good condition and do not provide a potential access point for bats.



Photograph 4 showing the wooden soffit boards

- 3.5 The roof of the property is pitched and covered with clay tiles (see Photograph 5). All the tiles are in position and flush to the surrounding tiles. There are no missing or slipped tiles. The ridge tiles are equally in good condition. All the tiles are in place and sealed with mortar to the tiles beneath. Lead flashing is present around the chimney stack. This is flush to the brickwork and the tiles.



Photograph 5 showing the roof of the building

Internal Survey

- 3.6 The ground floor rooms are finished spaces, currently lived in and do not provide suitable bat roosting habitat. A single roof void covers the whole property (see Photograph 6). This is a small space used for storage. The wooden support beams are in good condition, with no cracks or crevices

created where the beams meet. The roof has been lined with breathable roof membrane which is flush to the tiles above with no tears or sagging. The internal walls are constructed from breeze blocks which are in good condition and do not support any crevices that could be exploited by roosting bats. Rockwool insulation is present, but the vented soffits make the void cold. No access points for bats are present. No evidence of bat activity or crevices suitable for roosting bats were found within the void.



Photograph 6 showing the roof void

RESULTS – ECOLOGICAL SCOPING SURVEY

- 3.7 The site is composed of two areas separated by fencing. One is dominated by bare ground, the other is dominated by continuous scrub and tall ruderal herb. The first area comprises hardstanding around the building (see Photograph 7). Ephemeral vegetation has started to grow up on the edges of this habitat and species include Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*, Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum* and Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*. Around the site boundary are brick-built introduced shrub beds. These are filled with *Fatsia* var., Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Ferns and Ivy *Hedera helix*.



Photograph 7 showing the hardstanding and introduced shrub

- 3.8 The area to the north of the site is unmanaged and overgrown, dominated by tall, ruderal vegetation and continuous scrub (see Photograph 8). The remains of a structure can be seen within the southern corner of this area. The scrub is composed of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*. The tall ruderal vegetation is composed of Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*.



Photograph 8 showing the scrub and tall ruderal herb

- 3.9 The access track onto the site leading from Circular Road is composed of bare ground with ephemeral vegetation.

- 3.10 No invasive, non-native species were recorded on site.
- 3.11 The habitats on the site are of limited ecological value. No evidence of other protected species, such as Badger *Meles meles* activity or Badger setts are located on the site.
- 3.12 A single Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus* sp. tree is present in this area along with saplings of Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The tree and any mature scrub were subject of a ground-assessment for potential bat roosting features, looking for flaking bark, rot holes and break-off scars. No such features exist.
- 3.13 The introduced shrub, tree, continuous scrub and scattered scrub offer suitable habitat for nesting birds. A disused bird's nest was also found within the vent on the building.
- 3.14 No ponds exist on site or within 250m of the site boundary. The scrub and tall ruderal herb habitats on site could provide suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt (GCN). However, given the lack of suitable breeding habitat in the locality and the urban situation of the site. GCN is not considered to be a constraint on the development.
- 3.15 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lies within the proposed development boundary or within 1.5km of the proposed development.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was located during the survey at 27a Circular Road, Withington. The building on site was fully accessible internally and externally. The building is in excellent condition and well-sealed. The external roof and brickwork are intact, with no cavities suitable for roosting bats found. Negligible opportunities were found for bats to enter or exit the building. No evidence of bat activity was found within the building. The building is surrounded by hardstanding with an area of scrub and tall ruderal herb to the north offering limited bat foraging and commuting opportunities. Given the results of the survey, it is considered that the building offers **negligible bat roost suitability**.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed development of the site at 27a Circular Road can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the limited potential of the building to support bats and the lack of bat evidence found. However, if the development works are 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 between roofing tiles. Therefore, it is recommended that all removal of roof tiles and ridge tiles is to be undertaken with care, with the features lifted instead of dragged where possible.
- 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 The introduced shrub, tree, continuous scrub and scattered scrub offer suitable bird nesting habitat. The building may also offer nesting opportunities. All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is recommended that work to the vegetation takes place outside the nesting season (which is generally March to August) or, a nesting bird survey is undertaken immediately prior to work commencing.
- 4.6 No evidence of protected species was found on the wider site, and there are no protected species constraints. The habitats present are of limited ecological value.
- 4.7 No invasive, non-native species were found on/immediately adjacent to the site.

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