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The Apollo Inn, Manchester

Inspection and Assessment in Relation to Bats

Prepared for:

OPH Properties Ltd
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 As part of a proposed Planning Application at The Apollo Inn, Varley Street an inspection and assessment was undertaken in relation to bats. The aim of the survey was to ascertain if potential existed for bats and if evidence of use was present. Should evidence of bats be located then a scheme for the protection of them and their roosts would need to be implemented which could involve the requirement for a European Protected Species Licence to be in place where they or their roosts would be affected. OPH Properties Ltd commissioned the inspection and report.

1.2 The optimum time to investigate buildings for evidence of a bat roost is May – August, however that is not to say they cannot be inspected and assessed outside of that time and frequently the results can be conclusive which can save time and expense for Planning Applicants but it should be borne in mind that equally the inspection can be inconclusive. If potential was found to be high or the results of the survey were inconclusive then recommendations would indicate the requirement for nocturnal observations to be undertaken at the site during the breeding season of bats. (May – August)

2.0 Bats and their Requirements

2.1 All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive as in need of protection. When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of regulation 6 of the Habitats Directive, and therefore has a statutory duty under regulation 3(4) to have due regard to the requirements of the Habitats Regulation in the exercise of its functions. Therefore the Directive's provisions are clearly relevant in reaching planning decisions and these should be made in a manner which takes them fully into account.

2.2 Guidance is contained in Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) on the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. Furthermore PPS9 paragraphs 5.34 & 5.35 identifies that bats are highly dependant upon built structures and new developments/conversions can take account of this by incorporating roosts into such structures. Furthermore where a European protected species may be affected by development then a licence to derogate from the Habitats Directive, 1994 Regulations would be required. Licences applications are processed and issued by Natural England subject to certain criterion being met.

2.3 Use of Buildings by Bats

a) Summer breeding roost.
b) Hibernation.
c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

3.0 Reason for Survey

3.1 A Planning Application is to be submitted to redevelop the site on which the Apollo Inn now stands; the building is redundant from its former purpose and is to be demolished. Due to its unsuitability it is not envisaged that the building will be brought back into the licensing trade and the redevelopment of the site is seen as the only viable option. Manchester City Council's Planning Policies include a requirement for surveys to be undertaken of buildings/structures where a protected species may be the present and in line with their current obligations request that the results of such surveys are submitted before Applications are determined.

4.0 Survey Methodology

4.1 The survey was conducted on 20 February 2009 by an experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England bat licence; the building was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats and if evidence of use was present. The interior, including the loft, was searched for signs of use, which mainly includes droppings or remains of discarded prey items. Additionally any gaps that may be used to access the loft were investigated for stains, which can be present when regular use of an ingress point is made. Exterior elevations were investigated, with the aid of close focusing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.

4.2 Although the survey was conducted at a time when bats will in be hibernation the results conclusions and recommendations are based upon surveyor experience and knowledge of bat ecology.

4.3 During the survey the surrounding habitat was assessed in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

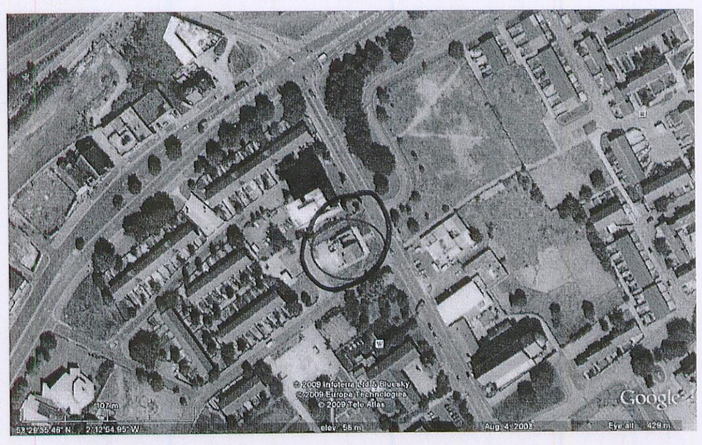
5.0 Findings

5.1 The Apollo Inn is located amid a mainly built up area close to Manchester City centre but within close proximity there is a sufficient amount of vegetation along with the Bridgewater canal that would support invertebrates for an average sized colony of Common Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) which is the most frequently occurring species in urban environments. Where such habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats, increases given that roost opportunities are available. By way of confirmation a small Common Pipistrelle roost has been recorded at a distance of approximately 1 kilometre from the site.

5.2 The building is brick built with a pitched tiled roof and a flat roof extension on one side elevation it is currently unoccupied and redundant from its former purpose but generally in good condition. A loft space is present but during the search it was noted that the roof is a truss design which will significantly reduce its value for loft dwelling bats; typically Brown Long Eared that show a preference for uncluttered lofts which allow unrestricted free flight. Additionally the immediate and surrounding habitat is unsuitable for this species specific foraging requirements. Throughout the search of the loft no evidence was found that would suggest recent or historic use by bats of any species. Also present is a cellar which is completely flooded which is of no value to bats and external access is not available.

5.3 During the external inspection typical features that are used by bats as a roost or for access into roost chambers were found to be absent apart from a single hole in the brickwork of one gable elevation which may give access to the cavity wall. However in the corresponding hole on the interior gable wall no bat droppings, which very often spill into the loft from a cavity wall roost, were present. The use of cavity walls is not confined to breeding but could also be used over the hibernation period if conditions within the cavity are cold and stable. All roof tiles are close fitting, mortar at ridge tiles is intact and along with the flat roof extension holds no opportunities for bats.

5.4 The surrounding properties are mainly occupied residential dwellings which represent the highest percentage of preferred maternity roosts of Common Pipistrelle as the warm dry conditions favour their needs, thus the residential dwellings are more likely to be selected by a Common Pipistrelle maternity colony than the unoccupied and cold Apollo Inn.



The Apollo Inn & Immediate Habitat

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 From the inspection of the Apollo Inn it can be concluded that the loft has not been used by bats, notably loft dwelling species, furthermore the loft and habitat is unsuitable for this species. Places for crevice dwelling bats, such as Pipistrelle, are significantly restricted and within close proximity to the site there more favourable roost opportunities for this species which is known to be present in the locality.

6.2 It can further be concluded that the redevelopment of the site would not result in the loss of high value bat roost potential and therefore nocturnal observations will not be recommended

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Although no evidence of bats was found and roost potential is low a precautionary approach is recommended in as much that before the building is demolished the hole in the gable elevation brickwork is inspected with the aid of an endoscope and conducted by a bat licensed person. Prior to this being undertaken the exterior brickwork would be investigated for the presence of bat droppings. In the event of a roost being found then, before any work could commence that would affect the roost, A European Protected Species Licence would be required which would include appropriate mitigation for the species concerned.

7.2 Contractors should always adopt a standard awareness of the possible presence of undetected singular or small numbers of bats which often use buildings at anytime of the year. If bats are found **or suspected** of being present then, as a legal requirement work should cease and further advice sought from a bat consultant or Natural England.

Stan Irwin: Ecology Consultant:

Holder of: Natural England Bat Scientific/Education and Conservation Licence.