42 Bloom Street,

Manchester

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2025

RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY

Client	Views Ltd
Project Title	82-84 Market Street, Manchester
Project Reference	RHE.4461
Project Leader	[redacted]
Contact Details	

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Report Contents

Executive Summary 3

1. Introduction 4

2. Methods 6

3. Results 7

4. Assessment 12

5. Recommendations 13

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation 14

Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at 42 Bloom Street, Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the potential for impacts to ecology (limited to roosting bats) at the site and assesses the potential impacts of the development on them. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site comprises a large former warehouse building. No other habitats are present. The site offers low potential to support roosting bats. Evidence of previous use by Feral Pigeon was recorded.

Outcomes

One emergence survey should be undertaken between May and September (bat survey season) to establish the status of roosting bats.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd (RHE) was commissioned in 2024 by Views Ltd to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal at 42 Bloom Street, Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is a four-storey detached red brick building constructed in the 1800s. The site is located at O.S. grid reference SJ 84142 98412 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site (blue line = Rochdale Canal)

Description of Development

1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the following:

- The lower ground floor (basement), ground floor, 1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor, and 4th floor are to undergo renovations and associated works to accommodate the conversion from existing conditions to residential apartments.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to undertake an external and internal assessment of the site.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:

- Assess the potential of the site to support roosting bats (and nesting birds);
- Identify the requirement for any further detailed surveys.
- Inform impact assessment and mitigation requirements.

2. Methods

2.1 Daytime Bat Survey

2.1.1 The exterior of the building was surveyed from the ground using binoculars, a high-powered torch and a DJI Mini 4 Drone. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.

2.1.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points. This is unlikely to be recorded during Winter.

2.1.3 The interior of the building was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.

2.1.4 Signs and/or evidence of nesting birds were searched for within the interior space of the building.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

2.2.1 Surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines[1]. Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance[1,2].

2.3 Survey Information

2.3.1 Details of the survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Information

Date and Time	Weather	Surveyor Information
03/02/2025 10:00	9 degrees Celsius Dry, mild, partly cloudy	**Simon Holden** BSc (Hons), MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist) – Holds over 19 years' professional experience and holds a Level 2 class survey licence for bats (ref: 2019-42937-CLS-CLS). **Samuel Adshead** BSc (Hons), MSc (Hons) (Ecologist) – Holds over 2 years' professional experience undertaking similar surveys.

[1] Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines. 4th edn.* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

[2] Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 There were no constraints regarding this survey. A full assessment was undertaken.

3.2 Habitat Appraisal

3.2.1 The site is located in Manchester City Centre and is immediately surrounded by commercial properties, car parks, and ongoing development. Occasional scattered trees are present adjacent to the northeast and south. Rochdale Canal is present within 70m of the site. The site and its surroundings will be subject to high levels of artificial light. The immediate surroundings of the site offer limited foraging habitat for bats.

3.3 External Survey

3.3.1 The site is a commercial unit constructed in the 1800's (grade II listed) and is comprised of red brick, stone and rendered brick (see Photograph 1).

Photograph 1 showing the south-east elevation of the building

3.3.2 The roof is double-pitched and covered with slate tiles. Stone parapets and skylights are present. Features on top of the roof are well sealed including the roof and ridge tiles, windows and brickwork. (see Photograph 2).

Photograph 2 showing the roof of the building

3.3.3 PRF's on the roof were limited to occasional missing slate tiles on the roof towards the southwestern end of the building (see Photograph 3) and a gap in brickwork that likely leads into the lift shaft of the building (see Photograph 4).

Photograph 3 showing the missing tiles

Photograph 4 showing the gap in the brickwork

Potential roosting features on the side elevations of the building were limited to gaps between window frames and brickwork on two windows on the southeast and northeast elevations (see Photographs 5 and 6).

Photograph 5 showing the gap in masonry on the northeast elevation

Photograph 6 showing the gap in masonry on the southwest elevation

3.3.4 No other relevant features or PRFs were identified.

3.4 Internal Survey

3.4.1 No PRFs or access features were observed regarding the basements of the building that consisted of of a mix of well-lit storage rooms and an ex-nightclub (see Photograph 7).

Photograph 7 showing a section of the basement

3.4.2 See Table 2 for a summary of the internal inspection.

Table 2. Internal Inspection of the building	
Internal Survey – Upper ground floor – 3rd floor	
Description	*Photograph/s*
The upper ground floor is comprised of empty office space and unused rooms with a wooden ceiling. The second floor leading up to the third is similar to the 1st floor. However, the ceilings are supported by steel beams and numerous windows expose the floor to sunlight. The 4th floor is similar to the previous floors and is present in lieu of a roof void. No insulation is present. The roof tiles are underlined with bitumen felt in places and the ceiling is covered in plasterboard. Some breaks in windows that offer access to birds are present on the 4th floor which is evident by the extent of Feral Pigeon *Columba livia domestica* guano on the flooring. The internal spaces of the building do not provide suitable features or conditions for roosting bats. No PRF'S, or evidence of bats were identified during the internal inspection.	

4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

4.1.1 The site is surrounded by poor-quality bat foraging habitat in Manchester City Centre that will be consistently exposed to high levels of artificial light, meaning it is very unlikely bats would make use of the site. However, given the nature of the features, there is very low potential that individual or small number of bats such as Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* could make use of the PRF's

4.1.2 This site is assessed as offering low potential to support roosting bats.

4.1.3 Evidence of previous use by Feral Pigeon was recorded.

4.2 Potential Impacts

4.2.1 The proposed development has the potential to result in impacts to bats and nesting birds, should they be present.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

5.1.1 One dusk emergence survey should be conducted on the building during the bat survey season (May-September inclusive) to establish the status of roosting bats.

Nesting Birds

5.1.2 Feral Pigeons can nest at any time of year. This species can be controlled under a general licence. It is recommended that a suitably qualified pest control contractor is commissioned if nesting pigeons are encountered.

General Precautions

5.1.3 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are three years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old. Please note, for licensing purposes, survey data should generally be from the current or most recent survey season.

5.1.4 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 187 and 193, shown below:

- 187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
    - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
    - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
    - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
    - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
    - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
    - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
    - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
    - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments),

should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.