

Hough Hall, Moston

Bat Survey Report

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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of Hough Hall in Moston was commissioned by Adeniyi Omole on 24th April 2024.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to undertake emergency stabilisation works, including significant dismantling and recording of the Grade II listed Hough Hall.
- 1.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection, undertaken on 3rd May 2024.
- 1.1.4 No signs of bat presence were recorded during the inspection, however, the surveyed building was considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.
- 1.1.5 In order to confidently determine the presence/absence of roosting bats, a single further nocturnal survey is required. The nocturnal survey should be undertaken during the bat activity season (peak period: mid-May to August) (Collins, 2023), with the site building to be covered by two surveyor positions.
- 1.1.6 The requirements for bat roost mitigation and licensing have yet to be confirmed.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of Hough Hall in Moston was commissioned by Adeniyi Omole on 24th April 2024.
- 2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to undertake emergency stabilisation works, including significant dismantling and recording of the Grade II listed Hough Hall.
- 2.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection.
- 2.1.4 The surveyed building was located off Hough Hall Road in Moston, a suburb of Manchester, approximately 3 miles northeast of the city centre.

3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 Hough Hall was located in an unmanaged plot of land, including scrub, scattered tree and grassland. The wider area comprised a city suburb with scattered trees, gardens and some playing fields. There was extensive artificial lighting on nearby streets.
- 3.1.2 The nearest area of extensive prime bat foraging habitat comprised Boggart Hole Clough, located c. 495 m north of the site, which included extensive ancient woodland, Boggart Hole Brook and a large waterbody.
- 3.1.3 It was considered likely that bat species using the local area for roosting or sustained foraging would be likely to be limited to common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and/or soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The density of bats was expected to be at a low level. Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed building.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Hough Hall, Hough Hall Road, Moston, Manchester, M40 9NJ			
OS Grid Ref. SD 86716 01859		Altitude. 89 m	
Local Planning Authority: Manchester City Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	School to south and residential housing main land use locally
River bordered by trees			River Irk 1.3 km west of site
Standing water			Large waterbody 600 m north at Boggart Hole Clough
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Associated with River Irk
Trees	✓	✓	Present in grounds of Hough Hall
Woodland			Ancient woodland of Boggart Hole Clough 495 m north of site
Grassland		✓	Grassland adjacent to building

Figure 1. Surveyed building, as indicated by red circle



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- The presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Bat roosting areas and access/egress points into the building.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the building.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the building if present.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

- 4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken, with bat records for locations within 2 km of the site requested from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. Bat records collected by South Lancashire Bat Group are held by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

- 4.2.1 The internal and external visual inspection was undertaken on 3rd May 2024 by Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS).
- 4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the surveys in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023):
- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.
 - An extensive examination of all parts of the building both inside and out to record structural features and condition and to record features that may be suitable for roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps between beams and joists and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below beams, among a number of other factors. All signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
 - An assessment of the building's bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).
- 4.2.3 In addition, any signs of nesting bird usage of the buildings were recorded.
- 4.2.4 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:
- Clulight
 - Binoculars
 - Endoscope
 - Ladders
 - Camera

4.3 Survey Limitations

- 4.3.1 It was not possible to access the interior of the building due to safety issues, however, much of the interior could be viewed through holes in the wall, allowing an understanding of construction details. It was not however possible to undertake an extensive search for evidence of bat roosting in the interior.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

- 5.1.1 A total of 122 bat records were received from GMEU. No bat records were received for the site itself (see Appendix 1). Bat species positively identified in the records included common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. Other bat records were attributed to an unidentified *Myotis* species, an unidentified *Pipistrellus* species, or an unidentified bat species. The closest set of bat records comprised six records collected from a location 90 m southeast of the site and included a record of a common pipistrelle roost (one bat), collected in 2017, and a bat of an unidentified *Myotis* species, also recorded commuting in 2017.
- 5.1.2 A search of MAGIC showed that no bat EPS mitigation licences appear to have historically been issued for locations within 2 km of the site.

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

- 5.2.1 No signs of bat presence were recorded during the inspection, however, the surveyed building was considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.
- 5.2.2 No evidence of nesting birds was recorded from the surveyed building.

Plate 1. Northeast elevation of Hough Hall, enclosed by scaffold



Description

- 5.2.3 The surveyed building comprised a former farmhouse, sections of which appear to date back to early 17th Century. This two storey timber-framed building was in a state of partial collapse at the time of survey with large sections of the southeast, southwest and northwest elevations open-sided due to the collapse of walls. The building included gables facing northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest. The roof was multi-pitched with roof coverings comprising a mix of Welsh slate with clay ridge tiles and

corrugated cement-asbestos roof sheets. Remaining sections of wall were constructed from brick infilled sections between the framework timbers, with a stone-built chimney visible through a collapsed section of wall adjacent to the northwest gable. All windows were missing. Scaffold was enclosing the northeast elevation of the Hough Hall, where it fronted Hough Hall Road.

Plate 2. Southeast elevation



Plate 3. Northwest elevation



Internal inspection

- 5.2.4 The interior of the building could not be accessed, however, much of it was visible to some degree through missing sections of wall and window openings.
- 5.2.5 The roof was found to be unlined and suspended on a ridge beam, broad timber trusses, purlins, rafters and battens. A roof void had been present but the ceiling had been largely destroyed.
- 5.2.6 Across the building lath and plaster coverings on the interior of many of the walls had been stripped off, exposing external brickwork. Extensive wood cladding was also visible within internal rooms, with this panelling also damaged.
- 5.2.7 No bat droppings or other evidence of bat presence was recorded from either the interior or exterior of Hough Hall.

Bat roost potential

- 5.2.8 A range of potential bat roosting features were recorded from Hough Hall. Potential roost features on both the exterior and interior were considered together, given the ease with which bats can access the interior of the building. Potential roost features included the following:
 - Missing ridge bedding mortar.
 - Open joints between bricks in external walls, access onto brick wall tops and into space between brick skins (Plate 5).
 - Desiccation fissures (Plate 6) and open mortice and tenon joints associated with roof timbers.
 - Gaps behind wooden panelling on interior of structure.
 - Open joints within stone chimney breast.
- 5.2.9 Taking into account the building location, condition and the range of potential roost features present, Hough Hall was considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

Plate 4. First floor



Plate 5. Crevice spaces between bricks in external wall



Plate 6. Desiccation fissures/cracks in purlin



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No historic bat records relating to roost presence were obtained in relation to the site itself from GMEU.
- 6.1.2 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded during the visual inspection of the building, however, Hough Hall was considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 6.2.2 It is an offence to:
 - Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
 - Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
 - Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
 - Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.
- 6.2.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.
- 6.2.4 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, “to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. It notes that “conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat”. Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.
- 6.2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2023. This document states that plans should ‘promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’.

6.3 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

Bats

- 6.3.1 In order to confidently determine the presence/absence of roosting bats, a single nocturnal survey is required.
- 6.3.2 The nocturnal survey should be undertaken during the bat activity season (peak period: mid-May to August) (Collins, 2023), with site buildings to be covered by two surveyor positions and the survey led by a licensed bat surveyor. It is considered unnecessary to cover the northeast elevation, which fronts Hough Hall Road, given that both the adjacent street lighting and enclosure with scaffold, reduce its suitability as a potential roosting area. Infra-red lit video cameras should be used to assist surveyor observations.
- 6.3.3 The requirement for bat roost mitigation and licensing have yet to be determined.

6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded during the visual inspection of Hough Hall. This building was however considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability. One nocturnal survey is therefore required to confidently determine bat roost presence/absence.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust.

Appendix 1. Greater Manchest Ecology Unit – Bat Records

