

The Enterprise Centre

Wythenshawe

Daytime Bat Survey

2023



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Client Wythenshawe Community Housing Group

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Report Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methods	6
3. Results	8
4. Assessment	13
5. Recommendations	14
Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation	



Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing demolition of The Enterprise Centre, Benchill Road, Wythenshawe, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. Ecological features of interest include the potential for nesting birds within the ornamental hedgerow and scattered trees around the site boundary.

Outcomes

The site offers negligible potential to support roosting bats. No further survey work is required. Should works include removal of the hedgerow/scattered trees this should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive). If this is not possible a survey for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to inform mitigation requirements. Measures to avoid the spread of Hollyberry Cotoneaster should be included within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP).

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group to carry out an Ecological Appraisal at The Enterprise Centre, Benchill Road, Wythenshawe, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 8260 8838 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Map showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application including demolition of the existing building.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.3 No previous planning applications were identified at the site.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:

- Undertake a survey of the site to identify and record the habitats present.
- Assess the site for its potential to support notable species.
- Undertake a desk study to identify any statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.
- Identify the requirement for any further surveys or mitigation.



2. Methods

2.1 Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1.1 The exterior of the building on site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. 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.
- 2.1.3 The interior of the building was not surveyed as a suspended ceiling was present and no access was obtained.
- 2.1.4 Trees on site were subject to a ground based inspection to identify any potential roosting features (PRFs). PRFs may include woodpecker holes, frost cracks and knot holes.

2.2 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 The habitats within the site were recorded in accordance with standard methodology¹.
- 2.2.2 The potential for any notable species was assessed using professional judgement.

2.3 Desk Study

The Magic Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites. The Impact Risk Zones for any SSSI within 5km of the site was checked to determine whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult with Natural England.

2.4 Assessment Criteria

- 2.4.1 Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance^{2,3}.

¹ JNCC (2010). *Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

² Collins, J. (Ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 3rd edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

³ Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

2.5 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 2.5.1 The survey was undertaken by Simon Holden BSc (Hons), MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist). Simon has 18 years' professional experience of undertaking similar surveys and holds a level 2 class survey licence (Reference 2019-42937-CLS-CLS).

Site Conditions

- 2.5.2 The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and dry, with an average temperature of 12°C. The site conditions were appropriate for a full assessment to be undertaken.

2.6 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.6.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. Measures during the construction phases should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP). This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:
- Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
 - Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
 - Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
 - Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

3. Results

3.1 Constraints

- 3.1.1 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 3 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.

3.2 Daytime Bat Survey

- 3.2.1 The site is a detached single-storey building constructed circa 2000. The walls are brick and the roof is hipped and covered with interlocking concrete tiles (see Figures 2 and 3). There are wooden soffits; these are close-fitting (see Figure 4).



Figure 2 showing the front of the site



Figure 3 showing the rear of the site



Figure 4 showing the wooden soffit

3.2.2 Ridge vents are present. These are fitted with mesh.



Figure 5 showing the ridge vents

- 3.2.3 The site is located within a housing estate. The closest area of suitable bat foraging habitat is a linear woodland adjacent to the M56 approximately 500m northwest of the site.

3.3 Habitat Survey

Buildings and Hardstanding

- 3.3.1 The building is surrounded with hardstanding used for car parking and access.

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3.2 Small areas of close mown amenity grassland are present. Species include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Daisy *Bellis perennis*.

Hedgerow

- 3.3.3 An ornamental hedgerow is present around the northwest and northeast boundaries. Species include Bay Laurel *Laurus nobilis* and Hollyberry Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster bullatus*. The hedgerow is regularly trimmed with an average height of 1m and width of 1.5m.



Figure 6 showing the ornamental hedgerow

Scattered Trees

- 3.3.4 Two small Cherry *Prunus avium* trees are present within the hedgerow.



Figure 7 showing one of the Cherry trees

3.4 Designated Sites

3.4.1 The desk study provided information on the designated sites listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Sites			
Name	Status	Location/distance	Interest
Wythenshawe Park	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1km northwest	Woodlands and wildflower meadows
Gatley Carrs	LNR	1.5km northeast	Woodland, scrub and ponds.

4. Assessment

4.1 Daytime Bat Survey

- 4.1.1 The site is not located close to good quality bat foraging habitat. The building on site offers negligible potential to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features.
- 4.1.2 The scattered trees on site offer negligible potential to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features.
- 4.1.3 The proposed development is not likely to result in any impacts to bats or their roosts and no further survey or mitigation is required.

4.2 Habitats

- 4.2.1 The habitats on site are of negligible ecological importance. Their loss does not require any specific mitigation.

4.3 Species

Birds

- 4.3.1 The hedgerow and scattered trees on site offer suitable nesting habitat for a range of common and widespread bird species.

Invasive Species

- 4.3.2 Hollyberry Cotoneaster is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild. The proposed development could potentially result in the spread of this species through the transfer of soil or arisings from cut vegetation.

4.4 Designated Sites

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is not likely to result in any impacts to any statutory designated sites due to the distance between the site and any protected sites and the absence of any impact pathways.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 No further surveys are recommended.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 Due to the presence of suitable habitat for nesting birds, any removal of hedgerows or trees should be timed to avoid the nesting season (March to August inclusive). Should this not be possible a nesting birds survey will be required no more than 48 hours in advance of works. Should any active nests be identified they would need to be protected by a suitable buffer until nesting is complete.
- 5.2.2 It is not necessary to remove the Hollyberry Cotoneaster from the site but the presence of this species and appropriate precautions should be included within a CEMP to minimise the risk of spreading it offsite.

5.3 Enhancement Opportunities

- 5.3.1 Any new buildings constructed on the site could incorporate integral bird boxes and bat boxes.
- 5.3.2 Any soft landscaping should aim to include a range of species to provide pollen and nectar for invertebrates.
- 5.3.3 Features such as bee bricks or insect houses could be included in suitable sunny areas of the site.

General Precautions

- 5.3.4 It is not generally possible to prove absence of roosting bats. Bats can roost in suitable features opportunistically and are not always identified during surveys. It is recommended that roof coverings are removed with due caution. Should a bat/bats be identified at any time, work should stop in that area and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted to attend site and advise how to proceed.
- 5.3.5 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 2021) 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 174 and 180, shown below:

- 174. 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; etc...
- 180. 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

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires that the Secretary of State must publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats.

Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make it 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.