
BAT EMERGENCE SURVEYS

THE ROSSETT, 123 PALATINE
ROAD, DIDSBURY, GREATER
MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Great Places Housing Group to undertake bat emergence surveys at 'The Rossett', 123 Palatine Road, Didsbury, Great Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84329 91970 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site comprises two residential apartment buildings, which are link attached. The front building is a Victorian three-storey brick-built structure with a pitched roof, and the rear building is a modern, brick-built flat-roofed structure. Only the front building was the subject of the surveys. The site is surrounded by other residential properties with mature gardens. The habitats immediately surrounding the site offer sub-optimal bat foraging and commuting opportunities, with well-lit amenity land to the rear and fragmented tree belts along busy, well-lit roads.

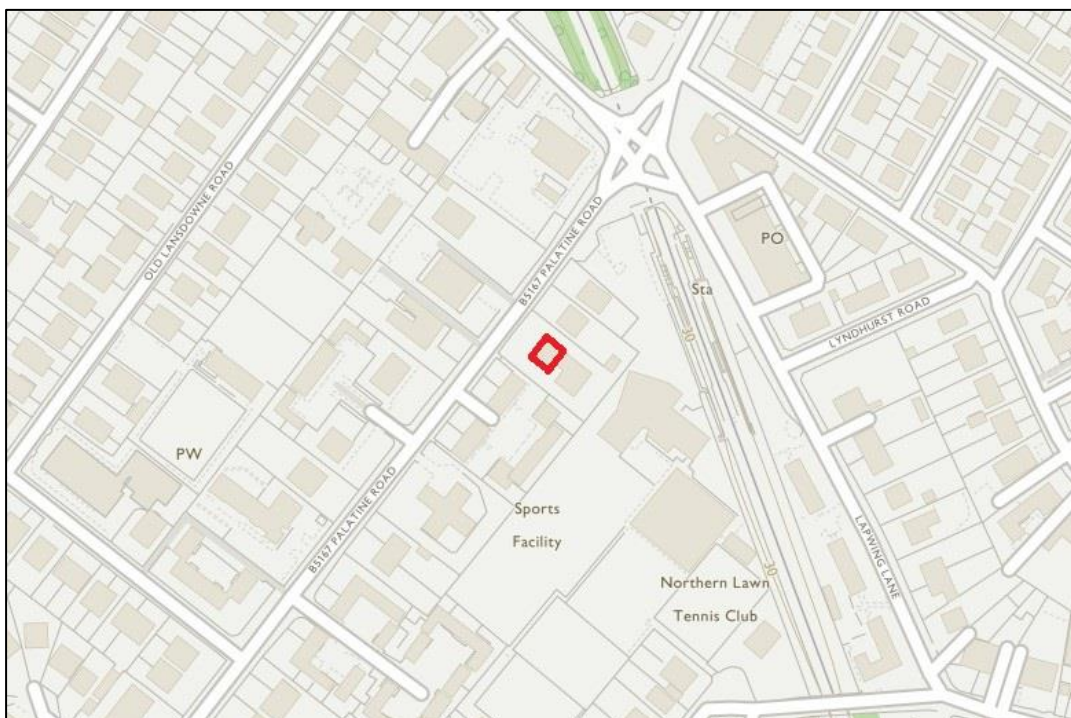


Figure 1 showing the location of the building surveyed at The Rossett

- 1.2 A daytime bat survey was undertaken at The Rossett in July 2021 (see *Bat Roost Assessment – Preliminary Building Inspections at 123 Palatine Road, West Didsbury – Amenity Tree Care*). The survey found no evidence of bat activity within either building and only one small loft void present within the front, older building, with the conclusion being that the interiors are unsuitable for a bat roost. The report concluded that further bat surveys were required due to the front building supporting a few slipped tiles and areas of lead flashing.

Description of Development

- 1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the rear flat-roofed building and the refurbishment of the front building.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Bat Emergence Surveys

- 2.1 Two dusk bat emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (2016). For the surveys, three surveyors, thermal imaging and infra-red cameras monitored the property, to ensure complete coverage for any emerging bats. The emergence surveys began 15 minutes before dusk and continued for 90 minutes after dusk. The surveyors used Anabat Scout and Echometer Touch 2 Pro bat detectors to record the echolocations of emerging bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.2 Dr. Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist), Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist), Sam Harmer, James Nolan, Steve Smith and James Owens (Ecologists) carried out the bat surveys on the 12th August and 26th August 2021. All surveyors are experienced and fully trained in nocturnal bat surveys. Joel and Sam hold a Natural England Class 2 Survey Licence for bats (respective licence reference no's: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS & 2020-49406-CLS-CLS). August is an optimum month within which to undertake emergence surveys.

Survey Constraints

- 2.3 The property was fully accessible and the surveys were carried out in appropriate weather and temperature. There were no constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

Surveyor Positions

- 3.1 Figure 2 shows the locations of the bat surveyors during the surveys and the location of the cameras.



Figure 2 showing the locations of the surveyors (red stars) and the location of the infra-red and thermal cameras (yellow stars)

Survey Results

- 3.2 No bats were recorded emerging from the property during the bat emergence surveys. Low levels of bat activity were recorded during the survey, with Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* recorded foraging intermittently over the building and along adjacent vegetation during the surveys.

Bat Activity Tables

3.3 Bat activity from the emergence surveys is recorded in Tables 1 and 2 below.

<i>Table 1. Results from the first dusk survey</i>				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset	Weather
Emergence	12/08/2021	17°C	20:45	Overcast, slight breeze, dry
Results				
Single Common Pipistrelle bats observed and recorded foraging intermittently (approximately every 20 mins) over the rear of the site and front trees between 20:55 and 22:06.				
Single Soprano Pipistrelle bats observed and recorded foraging at the rear of the site at 21:18 and 21:42.				
Noctule heard commuting overhead at 20:49.				

<i>Table 2. Results from the second dusk survey</i>				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset	Weather
Emergence	26/08/2021	13°C	20:16	Scattered cloud, calm, dry
Results				
Single Common Pipistrelle bats observed and recorded foraging along the site boundaries between 20:48 – 21:11.				
Soprano Pipistrelle bat observed and recorded foraging at the northern edge of the site at 20:31.				

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 4.1 No bats were recorded emerging from the property during the surveys. Low levels of bat activity were recorded during the surveys.
- 4.2 The surveys were undertaken during optimum weather conditions with no impediment to any of the visits. The temperatures were optimum prior to and during the surveys.
- 4.3 The daytime bat survey (Amenity Tree Care) found no evidence of bat activity within the buildings and concluded that neither building offered suitability internally for a bat roost. However, a small number of external features offered potential roosting points for bats. These features were surveyed twice with no bat emerging from them. Therefore, given the lack of evidence of a bat roost, the lack of emergence during the optimum survey season, the lack of recordings of 'silent' bats (such as *Myotis* sp.) and the fact that the building is well-lit at night, it can be robustly concluded the site does not currently support an active bat roost. No further survey visit (e.g. a third survey) is considered necessary.

Recommendations

- 4.4 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the development can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g., bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the building to support bats and lack of survey data. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.
- 4.5 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 in gaps between roofing tiles. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.
- 4.6 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).

5.0 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004) *3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

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