

Xaverian College (Sunbury), Manchester

Dusk Emergence Bat Survey

2023



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Client	AA Projects
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Report Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methods	6
3. Results	8
4. Assessment	9
5. Recommendations	10
Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation	11
Appendix 2: Survey Data	13



Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing a planning application to demolish the Sunbury building at Xaverian College, Lower Park Road, Manchester, 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

No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey.

Outcomes

The proposed demolition of the Sunbury building is unlikely to result in any impacts to bats or their roosts and no further survey or mitigation are required.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by AA Projects to carry out a Dusk Bat Emergence Survey of the Sunbury building at Xaverian College, Lower Park Road, Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ853953– 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 for the demolition of the Sunbury building to enable construction of a new building.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.3 A daytime bat survey carried out by Rachel Hacking Ecology in April 2023 identified the presence of potential access points for bats. The site was assessed as offering low potential to support roosting bats, and the need for emergence surveys to determine bat presence was highlighted.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out a dusk emergence bat survey of the Sunbury building in line with Bat Conservation Trust Survey Guidelines.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

- 1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Dusk Emergence Survey

- 2.1.1 One dusk emergence survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016). Four surveyors monitored the building, to ensure complete coverage for any emerging bats. The emergence survey began 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 90 minutes after sunset. The surveyors used an Echometer Touch 2 Pro bat detector to record the echolocations of emerging bats.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

- 2.2.1 Interpretation of survey results was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance^{1,2}.

2.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 2.3.1 The survey was undertaken on the 25th May 2023 by a team of experienced surveyors led by Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist). Kate has 8 years of professional experience and her natural England bat survey licence number is 2022-10920-CL18-BAT.

Site Conditions

- 2.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was warm and mild, with an average temperature of 15°C. The site conditions were appropriate for the survey to be undertaken.

2.4 Surveyor Positions

- 2.4.1 Figure 2 shows the locations of the surveyors during the survey (yellow stars).

¹ Collins, J. (Ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 3rd edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.



Figure 2. showing location of surveyors

3. Results

- 3.1.1 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Low levels of bat activity were recorded during the survey; Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were recorded foraging and commuting around the site throughout the survey.



4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

- 4.1.1 No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the dusk emergence survey or the previous daytime bat survey. It is concluded that there are no bats roosts currently present. The proposed development is unlikely to result in any impacts to bats or their roosts and no further surveys or mitigation are considered necessary.

4.2 Constraints

- 4.2.1 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.



5. Recommendations

- 5.1.1 It is not always 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.



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.



Appendix 2: Survey Data

Table 1. Results from the dusk emergence survey				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset	Weather
Dusk emergence	25/05/23	15	21:18	Overcast, warm and dry
Results				
Common Pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging around site between 21:50 and 22:00				

