
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY & NESTING BIRD SURVEY

FRASER HOUSE, 36 CHARLOTTE
STREET, MANCHESTER

NOVEMBER 2022



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Fred Kong to undertake a daytime bat survey and nesting bird survey at Fraser House, 36 Charlotte Street, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 84249 98009 – see Figure 1). The site comprises a five-storey, Grade II listed building situated within Manchester city centre. The site is surrounded by other commercial premises, office buildings and residential units.

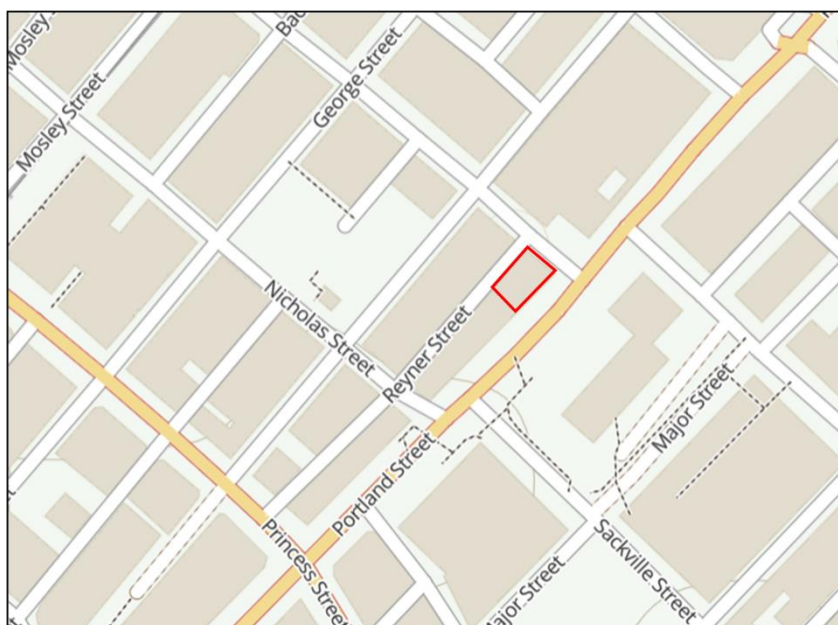


Figure 1 showing the location of the site edged in red

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the commercial and residential development of the building. The upper (three) floors will be converted into residential apartments and the lower floors (three/ four floors) will be converted into commercial premises.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 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

- 1.4 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to intentionally:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the buildings.
- 2.2 An external survey was carried out, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges. An internal survey was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.3 A pair of close-focussing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats internally and externally.

Nesting Bird Survey

- 2.4 The building was surveyed for evidence of and potential for nesting birds. A pair of close-focusing binoculars were used to survey the site for signs of active nesting, including birds carrying nesting material, alarm calling or adults returning to the nest to feed young.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.5 Hollie Ainley and Rachel Watkins (Ecologists) carried out the surveys on the 22nd November 2022. Both are experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys. Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year and the weather at the time was overcast and cold.

Survey Constraints

- 2.6 The roof of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey and was not visible from the ground. The internal spaces were however fully accessible and the uppermost floor did not have a roof void which meant a thorough assessment could still be made.

3.0 RESULTS

Daytime Bat Survey

Site Description

- 3.1 Fraser House is a large, multi-story 1850s commercial warehouse building sitting within Manchester city centre (see Photograph 1). The building is constructed from brick with a stone dressing, with arched windows on the elevations that stretch across Portland Street and Charlotte Street and loading bays across Rayner Street. The hipped roof has three rows of windows across the centre and a tall, panelled parapet extending around the edge of the building. The building extends five stories from ground level and extends across several lower basement levels.



Photograph 1 showing the building from the corner of Charlotte St and Portland St

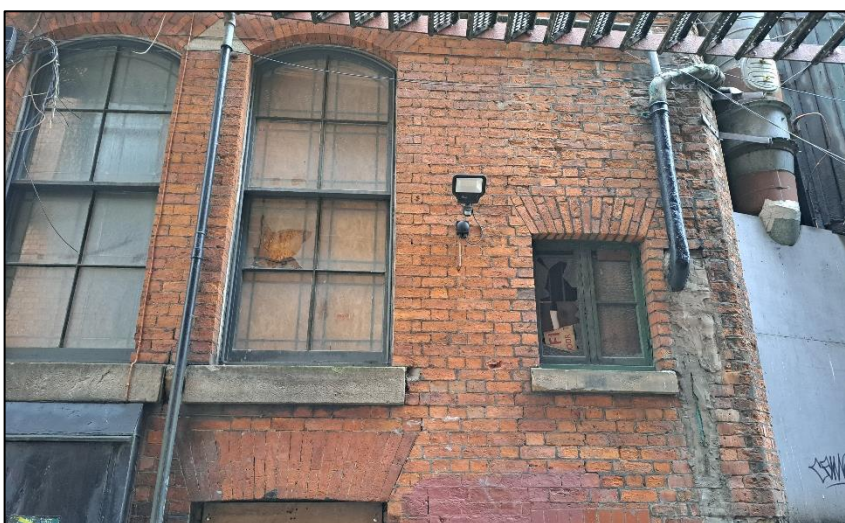
External Assessment

- 3.2 The brickwork and stone dressing appear in fair condition overall. There are however some holes in the brickwork that lead into the internal spaces. There are also gaps on the main front door and gaps on the doors of the loading bays that provide opportunities for bats to enter the building, albeit at lower levels. Photograph 2 shows the brickwork condition and loading bay entrance towards the rear of the property.



Photograph 2 showing condition of the external brickwork

- 3.3 The windows are single glazed, those that are in place are well sealed, however several have been broken and are boarded up at lower levels (see Photograph 3). There are small gaps where the boards are fixed in place.



Photograph 3 showing boarded up windows to the rear of the property

- 3.4 The roof of the building was not accessible and was not visible from ground. An aerial view from aerial maps shows a hipped roof with three windowed mono-pitched roofs in the centre, surrounded by a panelled parapet.

Internal Assessment

- 3.5 The uppermost floor of the property is open to the roof (see Photograph 4). The iron frame and wooden beams are exposed and show no cracks or crevices. The beams have been well maintained with several areas having been replaced (see Photograph 5). The space is well-lit by the skylights in the roof.



Photograph 4 showing the uppermost floor of the property



Photograph 5 showing replaced beams

- 3.6 The skylights and windows are single glazed, most are well sealed (see Photograph 6). Three skylights are missing glass and are boarded with wood, these are not well sealed, and gaps are visible that lead directly outside (see Photograph 7). A hole was also identified in the door that leads to the exterior stairs (see Photograph 8).



Photograph 6 showing the skylights and windows of the upper floor



Photograph 7 showing a gap leading to the exterior

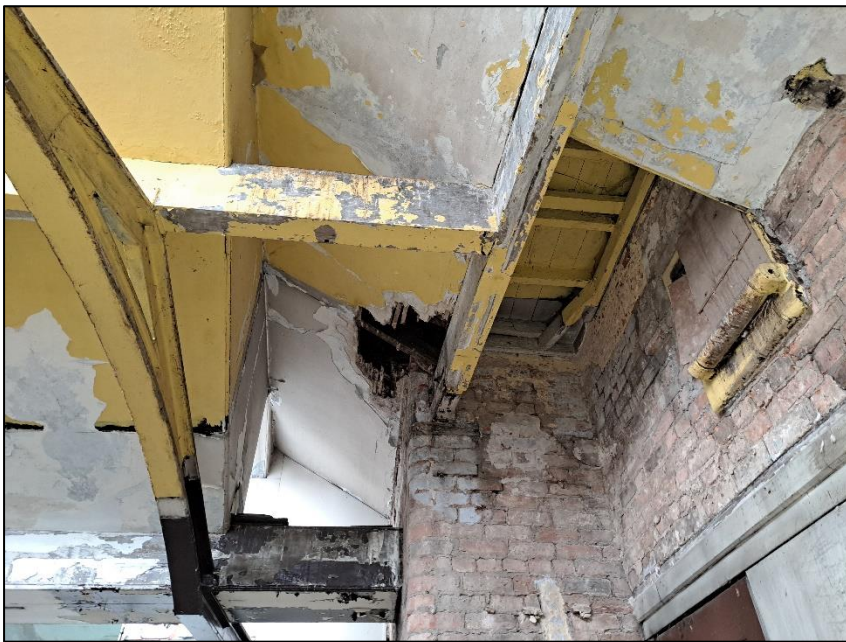


Photograph 8 showing a hole in the door that leads to the external staircase

- 3.7 A false ceiling is present within the hipped roof sections of the roof, that leads to a small roof void (see Photographs 9 & 10). The void was too small for the surveyors to access and assess but sections of ceiling are missing where wood has rotted and a number of large potential bat entry points were identified. Where visible, the roof lining is in place and in good condition.



Photograph 9 showing the roof void of the hipped roof



Photograph 10 showing the roof void of the mono-pitched roof section

- 3.8 The internal brickwork and walls of the upper floor are in a poor and derelict condition (see Photograph 11). There are significant areas of missing mortar and large gaps that lead to crevices where bats could roost (see Photograph 12). Numerous gaps in the brickwork provide access to the cavity wall (see Photograph 13). Gaps were identified along the wooden floor beams that provide direct access to the lower stories.



Photograph 11 showing damage to the wall (the cavity wall can be seen)



Photograph 12 showing a missing brick

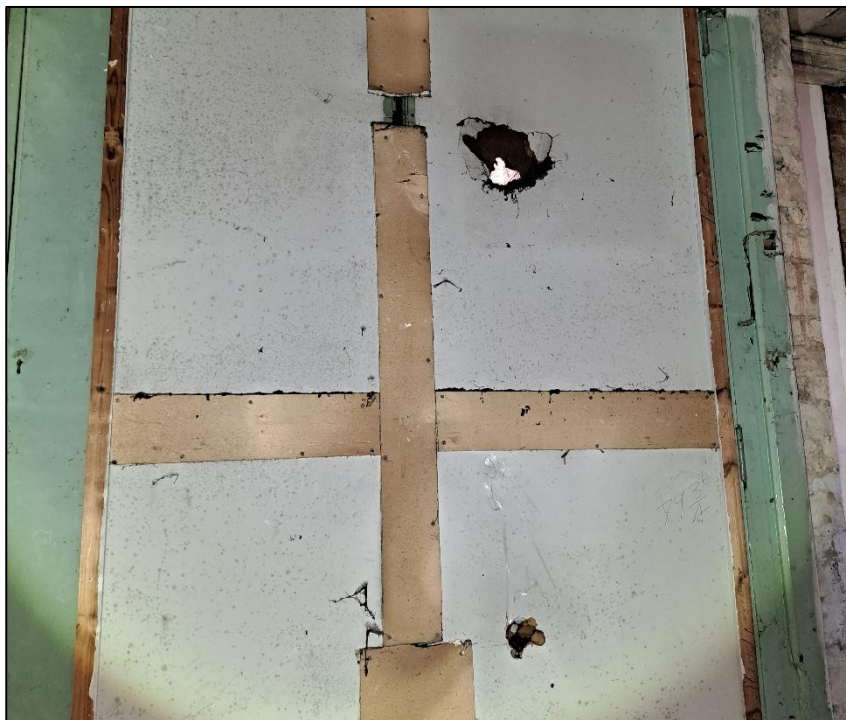


Photograph 13 showing a gap leading to a significant cavity

- 3.9 The floors below are in similar condition (see Photograph 14). Gap exist within the brickwork that lead directly to the exterior with significant gaps leading to the cavity wall. On the 4th floor, several holes are present in one of the walls which lead to the exterior (see Photograph 15).



Photograph 14 showing the internal area of the 4th floor



Photograph 15 showing gaps leading to the exterior

- 3.10 The basement of the property consisted of several rooms (see Photographs 17 and 18), across several levels. These spaces were in a derelict condition, with large amounts of building waste with areas of missing brickwork offering voids and crevices.



Photograph 17 showing one of the basement rooms



Photograph 18 showing one of the basement rooms

- 3.11 No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, feeding remains, oil staining or urine staining, was found in any of the internal spaces.

Nesting Bird Survey

- 3.12 Evidence of bird nesting activity was identified within the upper floors. This included feathers, droppings, and an old nest with a broken egg (see Photograph 19). The owner of the site provided anecdotal evidence that Feral Pigeons are commonly seen within the building.



Photograph 19 showing an old bird nest

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found within Fraser House, Manchester. The building is unused. The exterior features are mostly in good repair, with some features offering potential bat access points. The interior floors support cavities and gaps, behind plasterboards and where bricks are missing. The building is well-lit and airy. The basement provides darker spaces with gaps within the internal brickwork.
- 4.2 The building does not sit adjacent to any potential bat foraging habitats, such as canals, rivers or train lines, making bat presence less likely. This part of the city is well-lit.
- 4.3 Given no evidence of bat activity was found and the location of the building, the building is evaluated as having **negligible/low potential** to support bats. The impact to the building will be low, with the upper floors converted. No work is proposed to the roof.

Recommendations

- 4.4 Whilst no evidence of bat activity was found, the building offers potential roosting features such as small gaps. A proportionate approach to the development is to recommend a precautionary working method statement be implemented, rather than further bat emergence survey effort (given the added fact that the roofline is not visible from the ground). Therefore, the following approach should be implemented:
- Prior to work commencing, a toolbox talk should be given to the site personnel to explain how to identify bats and bat evidence, relevant legislation and what to do if a bat is found.
 - If a bat, or evidence of a bat, is found during works, work must temporarily cease and a suitably licensed and experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.
 - Site personnel should not handle bats.
- 4.5 Evidence of nesting birds was identified during the visit. If any work is to proceed to the building within the bird nesting season (which is generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work. This should be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist.
- 4.6 Biodiversity enhancement of the site can be achieved by the incorporation, where possible, of small bat bricks and bird nesting boxes.

5.0 REFERENCES

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

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