
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

246 PALATINE ROAD, DIDSBURY,
GREATER MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Adele Lock to undertake an updated daytime bat survey at 246 Palatine Road, Didsbury, Greater Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 83484 90853 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a detached, two-storey dwelling. A mature garden is present at the rear with parking to the front.

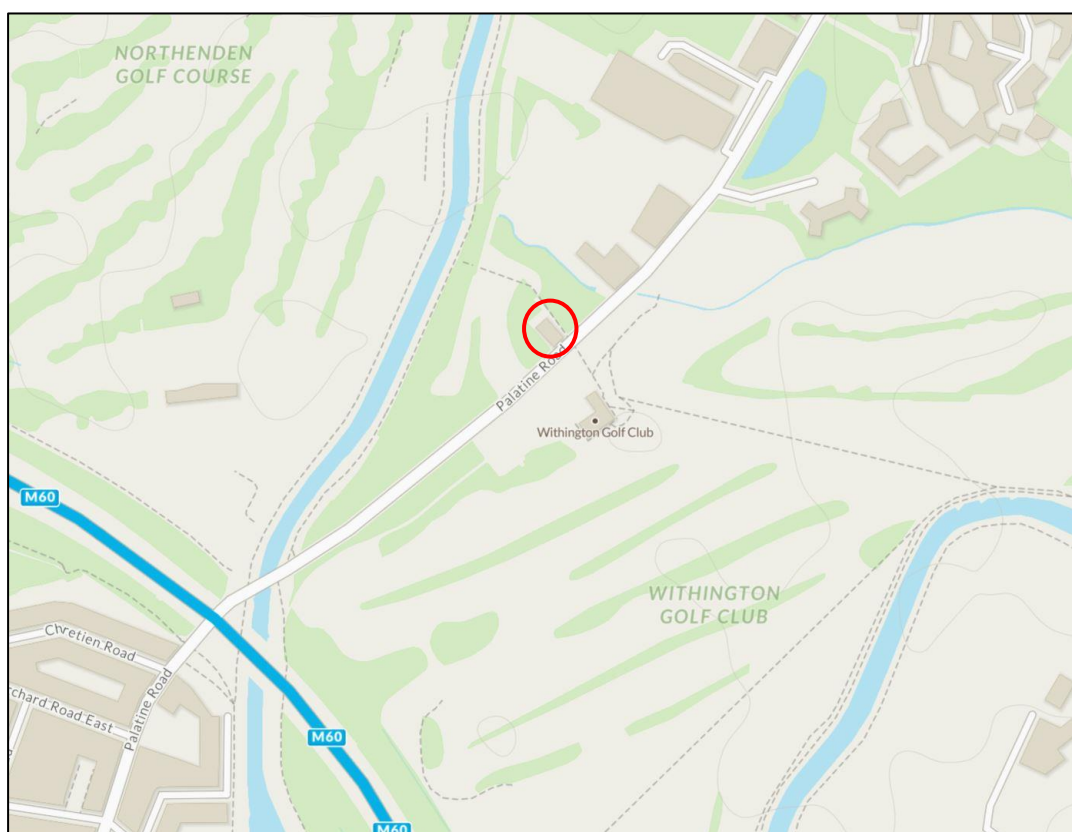


Figure 1 showing the site location circled in red

- 1.2 A previous daytime bat survey was undertaken at the site in 2019 (see *Daytime Bat Survey at 246 Palatine Road, Didsbury 2019* – Rachel Hacking Ecology). No evidence of bats was found and the property was considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability.

Description of Development

- 1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the existing property and the construction of a new dwelling.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities 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.



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

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 building.
- 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, an endoscope and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Sam Harmer (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 21st April 2022. Sam is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Class 2 Survey Licence for bats (ref: 2020-49406-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was dry and calm.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The structure could be surveyed fully internally and externally, therefore there were no constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

Site Description

- 3.1 246 Palatine Road comprises a detached residential dwelling, constructed from brick, with a pitched, tiled roof.

External Assessment

- 3.2 The exterior of the building is mostly rendered, with no cracks or gaps in the render for bats to exploit (see Photographs 1 and 2). Where brickwork is exposed, e.g. the chimney stack, this is intact with no missing mortar or bricks. The uPVC door and window frames are all intact and well-sealed to the surrounding masonry. The rear elevation has glass and uPVC conservatory, and this is well-sealed to the property exterior. A small amount of lead-flashing occurs at the base of the chimney stack, and this is flat and flush to the brick and tiles.



Photograph 1 showing the render at the rear of the house



Photograph 2 showing the side elevation of the house

- 3.3 The roof of the property is pitched, with clay tiles (see Photographs 3 and 4). The tiles are all in position, with no slipped or visibly broken tiles. The ridge tiles are complete, and flush to one another, offering no suitable gaps for bats. The roof edge mortar is complete, providing a good seal to the roofing materials. The Velux windows are well-sealed to the surrounding tiles. The soffits are bargeboards are flush to the render and

are in excellent condition. No potential bat entry or exit points could be seen on the exterior of the dwelling.



Photograph 3 showing the roof of the property



Photograph 4 showing the roof and soffits

Internal Assessment

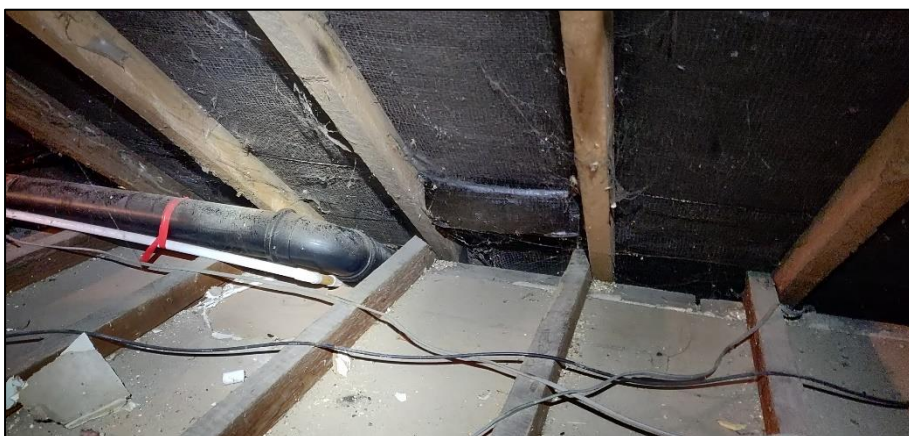
- 3.4 The internal living spaces are in use, well-maintained and do not offer suitable bat roosting habitat. The property roof void has been mostly converted into living spaces, with reduced roof voids present in the eaves of the roof only. The roof voids are small and enclosed (see Photographs 5 and 6). The wooden roof joists are complete and without gaps or cracks for bats to exploit. No daylight is visible at the roof edges, suggesting the roof void is well-sealed (see Photograph 7). The voids are extremely dusty and covered in cobwebs, with filaments from roof apex to the floor. A few scattered rodent droppings were found within the roof voids. No evidence of bat activity was found.



Photograph 5 showing the roof timbers



Photograph 6 showing another part of the eaves void



Photograph 7 showing the edge of the roof

Surrounding Land

- 3.5 The property has a mature garden to the rear, consisting of amenity grassland, two mature trees and introduced shrubs. The trees were inspected from the ground and were found to not support Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) for bats. No evidence of protected species could be found on the wider site.



4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at 246 Palatine Road, Didsbury. This is the same result as in 2019. The property is well-maintained and well-sealed, with no potential bat entry points located. The roof voids are small and sealed, with multiple cobwebs throughout. Given the results of the survey, the property is considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability.
- 4.2 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. 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.
- 4.3 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 panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.
- 4.4 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).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, was found within the building. However, the mature trees and shrubs within the gardens offer suitable bird nesting habitat. All bird species are protected at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is recommended that any vegetation removal takes place outside of the bird nesting season (the nesting season being generally March to August) or a bird nesting survey is undertaken first by a suitably experienced ecologist.



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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