

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AT TALBOT MILL, ELLESMERE STREET, MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in February 2017 by Cinns Limited on behalf of Capital & Centric (Adored) Limited to undertake a daytime bat survey at Talbot Mill, Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the conversion of the Talbot Mill complex to create 114 residential apartments (Use Class C3), including rooftop extensions to Mill 1 and 2, and rear extension to Mill 1; demolition of Buildings A, B and C; retrospective application for demolition of Building E; erection of a 9 storey building plus 1 basement level, to provide 88 residential apartments (Use Class C3); and creation of new landscaped courtyard, lighting and other associated works.
- 1.2 Talbot Mill is located on Ellesmere Street, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ8270897269). The development site comprises two four-storey brick-built Mill buildings (referred to here as Mill 01 and Mill 02), with two attached buildings (A & B) to the north. Two buildings (C & D) exist in the centre of the courtyard. A separate building (E) has been demolished. All of the buildings are currently being used for light industrial purposes. The main mill buildings are split into individual units.
- 1.3 The site is surrounded by commercial and residential developments. A small canal basin exists to the west which is part of the Bridgewater Canal. This is of poor quality. There is limited commuting and foraging opportunities for bats in the locality.
- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the structures at the Talbot Mill will be intrusive and destructive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the property.
- 1.5 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environmental Damage Regulations 2009. It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost whether bats are present or not.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the buildings at Talbot Mill was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present 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.
- 2.3 The buildings were also searched internally for evidence of a bat roost, which included looking for the following signs:
 - live or dead bats
 - bat droppings
 - bat entry/exit points
 - bat urine staining
 - grease marks on any timbers
 - feeding remains such as insect wings
 - areas clear of cobwebs.
- 2.4 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and an endoscope were used (where required) to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.5 Joel Hacking and Kate Reed carried out the daytime bat survey on the 13th February 2017. Both surveyors are experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys, and Joel holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Reference: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was cool and dry.

Survey constraints

- 2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The engine room and part of the former garage in the courtyard were not accessible internally. There were negligible further constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

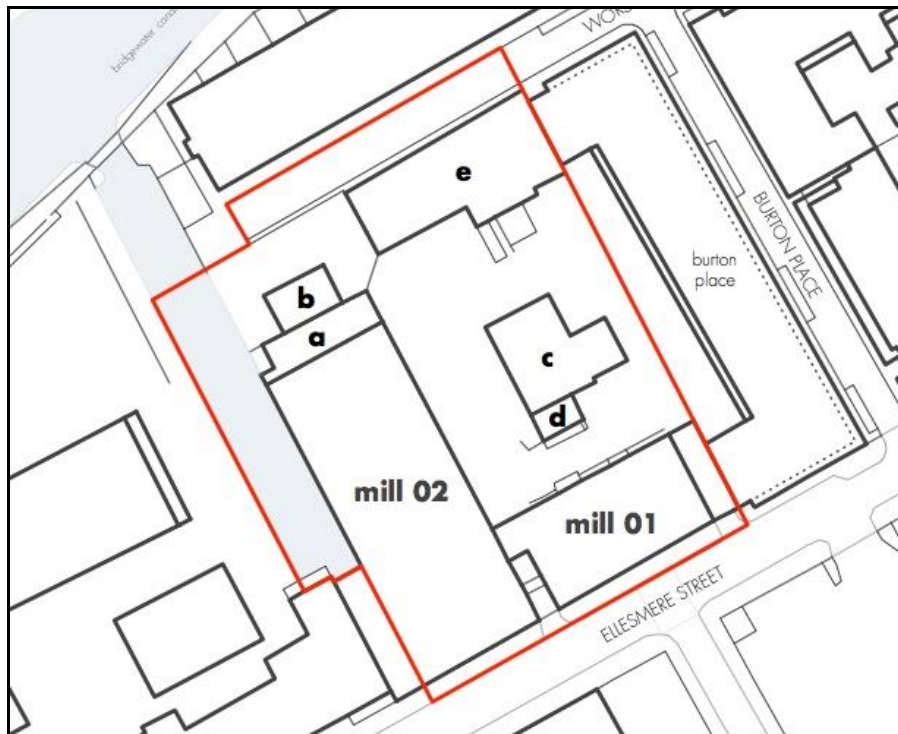


Figure 1 showing the site plan of Talbot Mill (taken from Shedkm existing site plan)

Mill 01 & Mill 02

External Survey

- 3.1 Mill 01 and Mill 02 comprise two attached four-storey mill buildings, constructed from brick, which have flat, felted roofs. The brickwork is largely complete throughout the side and front elevations (see Photograph 1 and the front cover of this report) but with some minor areas of damaged bricks and crumbling or missing mortar towards the upper levels, and at the roof edges. The window frames are all in-situ, with most window panes complete. Broken window panes are boarded up. The lintels above the windows are intact, with no noticeable gaps in the brickwork.



Photograph 1 showing the brickwork at the front elevation

- 3.2 The tower that sits on top of Mill 01 (housing the lift shaft) is constructed from brick, with most bricks in position, but with very small gaps where the roofing timbers penetrate the outer brick (see Photograph 2). These gaps were inspected and found to offer no suitable bat roosting cavities. The windows on the tower are boarded up. The tower is used as a communications mast.



Photograph 2 showing tower on top of the Main Building

- 3.3 The property has a flat, felted roof which is complete, well maintained and appears to be well-sealed (see Photograph 3). The concrete coping stones at the roof edges are complete, with only minor, negligible gaps between the stones, the brickwork and the roof felt (see Photograph 4).



Photograph 3 showing the flat roof of the property



Photograph 4 showing the roof edges

Internal Survey

- 3.4 Internally, Talbot Mill is split into many separate units. Some of the units could not be accessed on the day of the survey but all of the units are of similar construction.

- 3.5 The internal spaces are used commercially and are mostly well-lit with vaulted or panelled ceilings (see Photographs 5 and 6). The internal brickwork is complete throughout most of the units with only minor amounts of damage to the brickwork in some units. Negligible opportunities exist for bats inside the industrial units.



Photograph 5 showing the interior vaulted ceiling of one of the industrial units



Photograph 6 showing a panelled ceiling

- 3.6 The tower (lift shaft) is in use and open to the roof timbers (see Photograph 7). The roof timbers are in position, but showing signs of damp and rot due to their approximate age. The tower itself is

moderately sealed internally, with only minor gaps at the edges of the doorways leading out onto the roof. No evidence of bat activity and no potential cavities or voids suitable for bats exist within the tower.



Photograph 7 showing the wooden timbers of the tower

- 3.7 The property has extensive cellar spaces, which were fully inspected (see Photograph 8). The cellar spaces are cold and dusty, with daylight entering the cellars through gaps in the window boards. Minor gaps exist above the brickwork and the windows that lead onto the courtyard and road. No voids or cavities suitable for bats exist within the cellars. Only negligible opportunities exist for bats inside the cellar spaces. No evidence of bat activity was found within the interior spaces of Talbot Mill.



Photograph 8 showing one of the basement sections

Building A

- 3.8 Building A is attached to the main mill building at the north-facing elevation. This unit was not accessible internally. The external brickwork is mostly complete but with minor gaps in the brick at the front elevation (see Photograph 9). The window at the front is boarded up and the steel shutters are intact. A minor gap exists above the shutter. The coping stones along the roof edges are complete but with minor gaps between the stones.



Photograph 9 showing the exterior of Building A (Engine House)

Building B

- 3.9 Building B, attached to Building A, is a single-storey garage (see Photograph 10). The brickwork is intact and the metal shutter at the front appears to be complete, but with a minor gap above the shutter. The garage has a flat roof, which is well-sealed on all sides.



Photograph 10 showing the exterior of the garage attached to the Engine Room

Building C

- 3.10 Building C is a flat-roofed disused garage (see Photograph 11). The brickwork is complete throughout, and the flat, felted roof is well-sealed. Minor gaps occur around the edges of the metal shutters. Part of the garage has a sheet metal roof, which is well-sealed to the outer brickwork and offers no noticeable roosting cavities for bats.



Photograph 11 showing the exterior of Building C

Building D

- 3.11 Building D is a detached building of brick construction. No internal access was possible. The external brickwork is complete and without gaps or external cavities. The windows have been replaced with breezeblock or boarded up (see Photograph 12). The building has a pitched, tiled roof. The roof and ridge tiles are complete and in position, with no slipped or broken tiles (see Photograph 13). The coping stones at the roof edges are complete, with no missing mortar.



Photograph 12 showing the exterior brickwork of Building D



Photograph 13 showing the roof of the Building D

Building E

- 3.12 Building E was in a poor condition and it has been demolished under Section 81 of the Building Act 1984, which deals with defective and dangerous buildings and Schedule 17 part 6 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. Manchester City Council Building Control issued consent for this demolition on 15 December 2016. However, for completeness this application seeks retrospective planning permission for this demolition.
- 3.13 The remaining brick walls were inspected and offer no suitable cavities for bats between the damaged bricks (see Photograph 14).



Photograph 14 showing the remaining brick walls of Building C

Surrounding Land

- 3.14 The buildings on the site are situated entirely on hardstanding (see Photograph 15). Only two self-seeded trees exist on site, which offer no potential roosting features for bats. No invasive species were found on the site. The existing proposals do not impact on habitat of significant ecological value.



Photograph 15 showing aerial view of the courtyard

- 3.15 A canal basin sits adjacent to the Mill 02 and Buildings A & B (see Photograph 16). The canal basin is extremely shallow and shaded, and offers limited ecological value. Scrub, such as Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, grows at the edges of the canal. The existing proposals do not affect the canal and the ecological impacts of the proposed development on wildlife using the canal basin is therefore negligible. No evidence of protected species, such as Badger, was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site.



Photograph 16 showing the canal basin adjacent to Mill 02 and Buildings A & B

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity could be located at the Talbot Mill site. Within Mill 01 & Mill 02, only some of the units could be accessed but the units are of the same construction and therefore, an assessment could be made of the inaccessible units. No suitable roosting cavities were found, internally or externally within the mill. The cellars are damp, dusty and cold, limiting the potential of the site for bat hibernation. Minimal gaps exist within the mill building structure, with no obvious bat entry or exit points. The main mill building offers **negligible bat roost suitability**.
- 4.2 The other structures on the site (Buildings A-D) were only accessible externally but appeared to be well-sealed. Given the external survey results, these buildings offer **negligible bat roost suitability**. Building C was demolished at the time of the site visit.
- 4.3 No trees or shrubs exist on site which could provide suitable features for roosting bats.
- 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 structures 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.
- 4.5 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 panels. Conversion and demolition should be undertaken with care. It is recommended that a set of Reasonable Avoidance Measures is implemented during the works. These are outline below:

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

- If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to **stop** 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).
- Prior to conversion work commencing, the construction personnel are to be made aware of the RAMs with a toolbox talk and a copy of the RAMs to be kept on site at all times.
- If the roof tiles need to be replaced, these are to be 'soft stripped', with the tiles lifted instead of dragged.

- If any gaps are created to the upper floors during the works and these gaps will lead to an enclosed space such as a new roof void, the gaps are to be temporarily sealed overnight with tape, boards or expanding foam, to prevent any bats from entering the property.
- 4.6 It is possible that roosting and nesting Feral Pigeons exist on site, as many adult birds were seen during the survey. All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), therefore, it is recommended that the conversion work takes places outside of the bird nesting season (the nesting season is generally March to August) or a bird nest check be undertaken prior to work commencing. Alternatively, the Feral Pigeons can be dispersed outside of the nesting season and prevented from re-entering using netting.

REFERENCES

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

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