

Slade Lane Children's Centre

Longsight

Daytime Bat Survey

2025



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Client **Manchester City Council**
Project Title **Slade Lane Children's Centre**
Project Reference **RHE.4313**
Project Leader **Simon Holden**

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at Slade Lane Children's Centre, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the potential for roosting bats at the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on bats. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The surrounding habitat is of low quality for foraging and commuting bats. The site offers low potential to support roosting bats due to the presence of a gap behind the soffit around the building.

Outcomes

The proposed development has a low risk of affecting bats, should these be present. Any localised repairs to the roof or soffit should be undertaken in accordance with reasonable avoidance measures.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd (RHE) was commissioned by Manchester City Council (the Client) to carry out a Daytime Bat Survey at Slade Lane Children's Centre (the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 87041 95142 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Site location (Bing Maps)

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for conversion to residential use.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to carry out a Daytime Bat Survey. The aim of the survey was to assess the potential of the site to support roosting bats, identify the requirement for any detailed surveys and inform mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1.1 The exterior of the building on site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars, a high-powered torch and a drone (DJI Mini-3). Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.1.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.1.3 The interior of the building, including the roof void, was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.
- 2.1.4 The site was surveyed to identify any other potential ecological constraints, e.g. Japanese Knotweed.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

- 2.2.1 Surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines¹. Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance^{1,2}.

2.3 Survey Information

- 2.3.1 The survey was undertaken by Simon Holden *BSc (Hons), MCIEEM* on 10 December 2025. Simon has 20 years' professional experience and holds a level 2 licence to disturb bats (licence ref. 2025-86308-CL18-BAT). Conditions during the survey were dry, sunny and 11°C.

¹ Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 4th edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 No constraints affected the survey, and a high degree of confidence is placed on the results.

3.2 Habitat Appraisal

- 3.2.1 The site is located in an urban area with Slade Lane to the west and the railway to the east. The site is set in a garden including several mature trees. Surrounding habitats offer low quality bat foraging habitat. Small numbers of Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* are likely to use these habitats.

3.3 External Survey

- 3.3.1 The site is a detached single-storey brick building built in the 1980s (see Figure 1). The windows are all boarded; no gaps behind boards were present.



Photograph 1. Showing the southeast elevation

- 3.3.2 The roof is hipped and covered with concrete tiles (see Photograph 2). No gaps in the roof covering were identified.



Photograph 2. Showing the roof

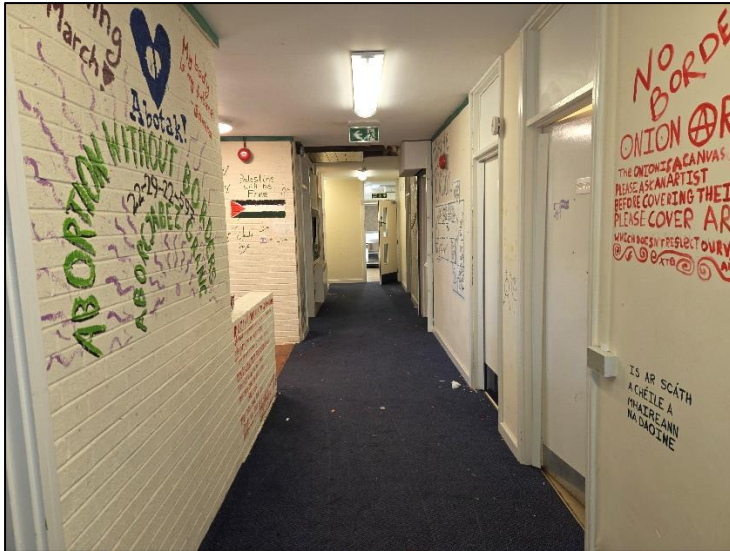
- 3.3.3 A wooden soffit is present; a gap behind the soffit is present around the entire building (see Photograph 3).



Photograph 3. Showing typical gap behind soffit.

3.4 Internal Survey

- 3.4.1 Internally, the site is a disused children's centre, with various rooms and facilities (see Photograph 4).



Photograph 4. Showing the interior

- 3.4.2 A roof void is present; the roof is trussed and lined with a breathable membrane. Fibreglass insulation is present on the floor (see Photograph 5).



Photograph 5. Showing the roof void.

- 3.4.3 No evidence of use by bats was recorded.

3.5 Grounds

- 3.5.1 The grounds surrounding the site comprise hardstanding, modified grassland, ornamental shrubs and mature trees, including Sycamore *Acer pseudoplanatus*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula* and Leyland Cypress *Cupressus x leylandii* (see Photograph 6). No potential roost features were identified on any of the trees.



Photograph 6. Showing habitats in the grounds

- 3.5.2 No non-native invasive species, e.g. Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* were recorded.
- 3.5.3 No evidence of or potential for any other notable species was identified.

4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

- 4.1.1 The presence of gaps behind the soffit offers suitable access points and may allow bats to access the wall cavity. The surrounding habitats are of low quality for bats, and the site is considered unlikely to support a maternity (breeding) roost. In accordance with current guidelines the site is assessed as offering low potential to support roosting bats (could be used by individual or small numbers of bats).

4.2 Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 The proposed development is understood to comprise internal refurbishment and remodelling. The roof and soffits may be subject to localised repairs.
- 4.2.2 Potential impacts may include damage to, or obstruction of a roost and disturbance or harm to individual bats, should these be present.
- 4.2.3 As no habitats will be affected the proposed development there is no requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 Given the low risk of impacts to bats, should these be present, it is not considered proportionate to undertake further detailed surveys.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 To minimise the risk of impacts, it is recommended that any works affecting the roof or soffits are undertaken in accordance with the following reasonable avoidance measures:

- A licensed ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to contractors to aware they are aware of the legal status of bats, where they may be found and what to do should they be encountered.
- Any removal of soffits or roof tiles will be undertaken carefully by hand.
- Roof coverings and potential roost features will be dismantled carefully by hand.
- Should any bats be encountered during works, work will pause and the licensed ecologist will be contacted to attend.
- The gap behind the soffit will be maintained.

General Precautions

- 5.2.2 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) 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 187 and 193, shown below:

- 187. 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 193. 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 reasons⁷⁰ 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.

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.

