

Zalman Hanovitch MSc

Assistant Town Planner

EA Town Planning Ltd.

Date: 19th September 2020

For the attention of: Zalman Hanovitch, Assistant Town Planner

Dear Zalman,

Re: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment: Singleton Court, Bury Old Road, M25 0FW.

PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a daytime inspection for bats at the above site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential issues in relation to bats resulting from the proposed roof conversion in each of the three buildings. The sites grid reference is SD 8296 0243 and the location is shown below;

Site location plan for Singleton Court.



1. Desk Top Study:

A desk top consultation study with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit was not undertaken for this study. However, searches for statutory sites and European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) were undertaken as follows;

Statutory Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no statutory protected wildlife site within 500m radii of the site. The nearest sites are Kersal Moor Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and The Cliff/Kersal Dale LNR which are located approximately 1km west of the site.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences:

Details of EPSML for bats was sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no EPSML in relation to bats within 500m radii of the site. The nearest EPSML for bats is located 1.7km south-west within Higher Broughton, near to the Cliff. The licence in relation to a common pipistrelle roost expired in 2014.

2. Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their roosts¹ are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2017 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 in relation to species and habitats, places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity' in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependent upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (NPPF, 2019):

¹ The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

If significant harm 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.

Use of Buildings by Bats:

- a) Summer breeding roost.
- b) Hibernation.
- c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Up to ten bat species have been regularly recorded in Greater Manchester most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Greater Manchester is reflected throughout the UK. All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2017 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Survey Methodology:

A daytime survey was conducted on 15th September 2020. The property was inspected externally only for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. The exterior elevations were investigated from ground floor level, with the aid of close focusing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers. All elevations were visually accessible.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Robert Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist. The results of the survey were discussed with Mrs Kylee Wilding, a highly experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat license (CLS -14227). Mrs Wildings evaluation of the site and conclusions concur with those of Mr Leatham's.

During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

Constraints:

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the multi-occupancy of the buildings, an internal inspection of the building was not undertaken on the grounds of health and safety. The assessment provided within this document has been based on the external inspection only. This is not considered a constraint to the survey as the external inspection was considered sufficient to provide an accurate potential roost assessment of the building.

There are therefore no constraints to the survey.

Results:

Singleton Court comprises three blocks of flats. All three buildings are of brick construction with a concrete tile pitched roof. The buildings are currently occupied as residential dwellings. The buildings are generally in good condition however, multiple features suitable for bat roosting have been recorded and include:

A recurring feature on all three buildings is a gap between the fascia boards and the brick work on the gable north west and south east elevations. In particular, the furthest north building has large gaps between the fascia boards and the brick work allowing potential access to the wall cavity via the wall plate.

Generally the soffits on the south western and north eastern elevations of the buildings were tightly sealed and in good condition.

There appears to be some gaps between the lead flashing around a couple of chimney breasts, however these were discounted as features as they lay on top of the concrete roof tiles which by design are tightly sealed and do not provide access to any meaningful cavities.

The site is located in a largely urban area and is surrounded by busy roads with street lighting. The immediate surrounding habitat is sub-optimal for use by bats.

It is considered that roost potential overall for buildings is **Moderate**.

Recommendations:

Since the buildings are concluded to possess potential for crevice dwelling bats, it is recommended that dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry surveys should be undertaken. Surveys are required to establish whether or not bats are using the building and if present how they are using it.

The surveys will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats i.e. between May – August. Two dusk/dawn surveys are accepted as being a reasonable level of survey effort where moderate potential has been identified. The surveys must be spaced between those months, at least 2 weeks apart. In addition, a data search of local bat records could be sourced to compliment the dusk emergence surveys.

Figure 1: Extract from Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Survey Guidelines 2016 3rd Edition

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^b	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b

^a Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis (see Section 5.2.9). If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species are present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

^b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period (see Table 7.1) as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least two weeks apart, preferably more. A dawn survey immediately after a dusk one is considered only one visit.

Following the completion of these surveys further recommendations will be made in respect of any issues in relation to bats.

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Robert N. Leatham

Robert N. Leatham, BSc. (Hons.) P.dip. Ecological Consultant.

(see photographs on following page)

Site Photographs: September 15th 2020



Eastern aspect of the three buildings. Photograph taken from Bury Old Road.



Facia board and repaired gaps in roof tiles along the northern elevation of the middle building.



Western elevation of the most northern building. All three buildings of similar construction and layout.



Fascia boards on most northern building. Significant gap between brick work and fascia board allowing access to internal cavity.



Northern elevation of most northern building. Obvious gaps between fascia board and brick work.



Southern elevation of the most southern building. Gaps between fascia board and brick work and also loose lead flashing around chimney breast.