

Juan and Nicola Crous,
4 Ringley Close,
Whitefield
Grt Manchester
M45 7HR

By email

Date 03/02/2025

Dear Barry/Juan,

Re: 4 Ringley Close, Whitefield Grt Manchester M45 7HR – Protected species survey for bats and birds.

All bats and their roosts are protected under UK law, all wild bird species, their eggs and their nests are protected by UK law, a summary of the legislation is provided in Appendix 1.

Envance ecologist Molly Meadows visited No.4 Ringley Close, Whitefield, Greater Manchester M45 7HR (the 'Site'), on 17/01/2025 to assess the potential of the Site to support bats and birds. This was requested by Bury Council ahead of proposals for the demolition the existing dwelling and construction of new dwelling. A standard survey methodology was employed¹ and weather conditions were good on the day of survey (dry, 5°C, no wind). All areas of the Site were readily accessible, including the exterior and interior of the Site building.

Site Description and Context

The Site is in Whitefield, Bury, Greater Manchester and is located within a housing estate. The wider area consists of urban development on all sides, largely residential dwellings and public buildings, beyond this to the north, north – west and south are Stand Golf Club and Whitefield Golf Course respectively. The Site has poor connectivity for commuting and foraging bats, with the only opportunities being between the interconnected residential gardens.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Methodology

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure that identifies any features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting/hibernating (Potential Roost Features (PRF)), and any signs of bats (e.g. droppings or other waste products, feeding remains, or dead individual bats). The aim of the survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and/or mitigation¹. A PRA of the dwelling within the Site was undertaken where all internal and external areas of the building were closely inspected using high powered lighting and binoculars.

Findings

The Site comprises a single residential dwelling. The dwelling is a two-storey brick-built structure with a pitch roof constructed from slate tiles and enclosed PVC fascia boards (**Photograph 1**). The slate roof was in good condition and no lifted slate tiles were observed, the fascia boards were in generally good condition, a gap was noted at the apex of the structure on the west aspect. The walls of the structure were in good condition,

¹ Collins, J. (Ed) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practise Guidelines (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

with no gaps in the mortar recorded (**Photograph 2**). The window frames were made of PVC and generally in good condition, no gaps were noted.

The building has a porch attached to the front that links to the garage creating a covered area. The porch is brick and mortar, with PVC window frames and fascia boards, no gaps were found in this structure. The building also has an attached garage with a flat roof, built in the style of the rest of the dwelling, full internal access could not be gained, but no features with the potential for use by bats were observed during the survey.

The interior of the building is divided into the ground floor and first floor. The entirety of the building has been stripped back to wooden panelling and plaster board, the ground floor presented no potential for roosting bats. The first-floor ceiling has been removed, exposing the wooden support beams and the attic space (**Photograph 3**). The attic roof consists of loft insulation and wooden beams (**Photograph 4**), the insulation material can create a space for roosting bats, but due to the good condition of the slate roof, and the removal of the ceiling between the first floor and attic space, the interior is considered to be largely unsuitable for significant numbers of roosting bats. No evidence that bats had previously used the internal structure for roosting (e.g. piles of droppings, urine staining, feeding remains, etc.) was found during the survey.

Birds

The Site is comprised of the dwelling, a small area of hard standing driveway and a small area of vegetated garden. The site is largely unsuitable to support significant bird populations or nesting birds, but the vegetated garden has species capable of supporting common species of nesting birds, including common hazel *Corylus avellana*, English Oak *Quercus spp.* and rhododendron (**Photograph 5 & 6**).

Other protected species

Due to the site being within a heavily developed residential setting, habitats suitable to support other protected species are absent.

Summary

The site comprises an existing two storey residential dwelling that is proposed to be demolition and re-constructed into a new residential dwelling. The dwelling to be impacted by the proposal has been assessed to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

This conclusion was drawn from the lack of potential features and suitable commuting and foraging habitat near to the structure. The assessment was further based on the limited suitability of the internal structure due to the removal of the dividing ceiling between the first floor and the attic space, the walls of the structure being in a good state of repair with no suitable access points to the interior visible, the slate roof being in good state of repair with no suitable access points to the interior visible and no evidence of bats using the interior (e.g. piles of droppings, urine stains, feeding remains, dead bats) being recorded during the PRA survey.

The site also lacks the potential to support anything more than small numbers of common birds and is unlikely to support nesting birds.

Recommendations –

Based on the results of the survey the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations: Bats

No further survey.

The dwelling presented negligible potential to support roosting bats, and the wider area is considered to offer low potential for foraging or commuting bats due to the lack of suitable habitat. As such, no further surveys are recommended, however if a bat was to be found during works at any stage, an immediate stop works notice should be issued and an ecologist contacted for further advice.

Recommendations: Birds

No further survey.

The dwelling presented negligible potential to support bird populations and low potential to support nesting birds, and the wider area is not considered to provide suitable habitat. As such, no further surveys are recommended, however if a bird's nest was to be found during works at any stage, an immediate stop works notice should be issued and an ecologist contacted for further advice.

Yours sincerely,

Molly Meadows

Email: Molly.meadows@envanceuk.com

Photographs



Photograph 1: Dwelling with fascia boards and PVC windows visible (western aspect)



Photograph 2: Northern aspect of the dwelling showing roof, fascia boards and soffits in good repair.



Photograph 3: Internal structure showing exposed plaster board and timbers.



Photograph 4: Exposed loft insulation and wooden support beams.



Photograph 5: Ornamental garden variety plant species in the dwellings attached garden



Photograph 6: Ornamental garden variety plant species in the dwellings attached garden

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy

All species of bats are protected in England.

A brief summary of legislation relevant to the protection of bats is given below. This does not constitute legal advice and is included for reference only. This has been taken from Reason and Wray (2023²), where further details can be found.

International law

The UK is a contracting party to the 1979 Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (commonly referred to as the Bern Convention). The Bern Convention has been described as the “European treaty for the conservation of nature”. Its provisions with regards to bats are transposed into law as follows:

- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Species listed within the Habitat Regulations are known as European Protected Species.

Legislation in England

All species of bat, their breeding sites and their resting places in England and Wales are protected through a ‘dual’ system of protections as shown below. The implications of both regimes must be fully understood.

Regulation (Reg.) 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- deliberately disturb bats (which includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong);
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat;
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat or part of a bat or anything derived from a bat or any part of a bat.

Under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection;

² Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used by a bat for shelter or protection;
- sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead bat or any part of, or anything derived from a bat (or be responsible for adverts suggesting the intention to do this).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (NERC Act)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires local and governmental authorities and departments to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity and a range of measures associated with public rights of way and other rural affairs.

Specific duties relating to the conservation of biodiversity are detailed in Section 40 while Section 41 details priority habitats and species for England.