



305 Middleton Road, Manchester

- Dusk Survey Results in Relation to Bats -

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A report for

architecture:m

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1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1 As part of proposals in respect to the demolition of the property at 305 Middleton Road, Manchester, Pennine *Ecological* were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), following this survey the property was assessed and categorised as offering 'moderate' roost potential in respect to bats, in accordance with BCT guidelines. This conclusion was reached due the presence of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) which includes:-

- Gaps behind fascia boards on all elevations.
- Gaps / holes in decorative wooden hipped roof structure on eastern elevation and a hole in the soffit at wall plate level.
- Gaps / holes associated with hanging tiles on western rear elevation.
- Gaps under roof tiles on single storey building on western and southern elevation.
- Gap/hole above window head on western elevation.
- Gaps beneath roof ridge tiles offering potential access for bats.
- Gaps under lead flashing on western and southern elevations.
- Gaps in missing mortar on stepped brickwork feature on eastern / southern elevation.

1.2 Due to this assortment of PRFs and moderate categorisation relative to bat roost suitability, the report states the following:-

"Since the property is concluded to possess moderate potential for crevice dwelling bats, it is therefore, recommended that in order to establish whether or not bats are using the building and if present how they are using it, dusk emergence or/and dawn surveys should be undertaken. The surveys will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats i.e. between May – August as bats, particularly Pipistrelle bats often alternate between roosts and do not necessarily use one roost over their active season. 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 and preferably 3 weeks or more apart. In addition a data search of local bat records could be sourced to compliment the dusk emergence surveys."

1.3 Therefore, PENNINE *Ecological* were subsequently commissioned to undertake bat emergence surveys at 305 Middleton Road during May 2020.

1.4 The initial dusk survey in relation to bats was undertaken on 7th May, whilst the second was conducted on the 21st May. The results, conclusions and consequent recommendations following the surveys are contained within this report.

2.0 Bats - Legislation & Policy

- 2.1 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the existing Planning Policy Guidelines. (PPG's) In relation to wildlife, PPG 9 was one of the documents to which Planning Authorities referred to, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present and will be affected by a development for which a Planning application seeks consent. The aims of the NPPF in relation to species and habitats are that it places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage on the 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.

2.2 Use of Buildings by Bats

- Summer breeding roost.
- Hibernation.
- 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.

**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.

3.0 Bats in Greater Manchester

- 3.1 Up to ten bat species have been recorded in Greater Manchester, most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties, for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and its abundant status in Greater Manchester is reflected throughout the UK.

4.0 Dusk Survey Results

4.1 BCT Good Practice Guidelines 2016 3rd edition state:-

“The guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience. It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of survey carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate. The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.”

Relative to the above the survey protocol has been determined using the collective and long standing experience of the surveyors and the specific nature of the site.

4.2 The timing of the inspection of the surveys is within the main active period and breeding season of bats when maternity colonies have formed / returned to summer roosts and bats are in a highly active and social stage.

Dusk Survey Results

4.3 Dusk emergence observations were respectively undertaken on the 7th and 21st May 2020 by a total of six highly competent surveyors, with three surveyors being present during any one survey. Surveyor credentials were as follows:-

Table 1: Surveyor credentials

Name	Years of Experience as of May 2020	Description
Mr. H. Green	30+	Highly experienced bat surveyor who has professional surveying experience spanning many years - Class 2 Natural England Bat Licence (CLS-03290)
Mr. M. Smith	5	An experienced bat surveyor
Ms. H. Taylor-Boyd	6	A highly experienced bat surveyor with several years' experience.
Mr. D. Boyd	6	A highly experienced surveyor currently working as a sub-contractor.
Mr. G. Harrison	8	A seasonal ecological consultant with experience of undertaking professional bat surveys
Ms. E. Saxon	2	A seasonal ecological consultant with experience of undertaking professional bat surveys

The number of surveys and surveyors were adequate relative to the roost potential that was identified i.e. 'moderate'.

4.4 **Survey Protocol:** When considering the survey protocol the decisions about whether dusk or dawn surveys are selected are based on the extensive experience of the surveyors, the nature of the building and species that can be anticipated as being present either at the property or in the locality and how complex a building is relative to observations. In this case the bat roost potential that exists at building presents no problems for dusk observations, if a building is complex or observations were restricted or species that are difficult to detect at dusk are suspected then dawn surveys would be conducted. At this site, there is no evidence to suggest the presence of such species. It should also be noted that at dawn temperatures are usually lower than at dusk as a result bat activity can, in some locations, be less frequent.

Where singular/small numbers of bats are present and there are no survey constraints then dawn surveys are of no more value than dusk surveys; singular bats can and do return to a roost before dawn and as a result a dawn survey would not record them anyway. Dawn surveys are more productive when “back tracking” bat to a roost from foraging grounds.

Survey protocol should not be determined by parties who are 1) not familiar with the site 2) do not have a sufficient level or experience in relation to the undertaking of dusk/dawn bat surveys.

- 4.5 Surveyors were located in positions that allowed unrestricted views of the identified roost potential. The surveys were aided with Anabat electronic bat detectors that enable the locating and recording of the high frequency calls that are emitted by bats; echolocation calls were then analysed with computer software to verify field observations.

Table 2: Survey results

Times of Survey	Date	Weather Conditions
Dusk survey 2030 - 2220	7 th May 2020	Sunset: 2054: Dry with some rain between 2050-2100, Light Air, 95% cloud cover Start temp: 22 ° C End temp: 15 ° C
Dusk survey 2050 - 2235	21 st May 2020	Sunset: 2113: Dry, Light Breeze, 0% cloud cover Start temp: 17 ° C End temp: 14 ° C

Table 3: Survey results

Dusk Survey	Time	Activity
7 th May 2020	2030 - 2220	Summary: No emergence from the building during observations. No activity during observations.
21 st May 2020	2050 - 2235	Summary: No emergence from the building during observations. 2140-2155 hrs: One common pipistrelle bat came onto site and foraged across back gardens of properties to the south of the survey area. Foraging activity was sporadic to occasional for the duration of the survey.



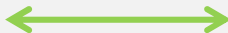
Key			
	Building position		Foraging activity
	Surveyor Positions		

Figure 1: Summary of bat activity during May dusk surveys (©Google Maps)

5.0 Dusk Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 From the two 2020 dusk survey results, it can be concluded that whilst using best practice survey methodology, emergence of bats was absent at 305 Middleton Road, Manchester.
- 5.2 As bats are a highly transient species and can use buildings at any time of the year, it should be noted that if bat(s) is/are, or evidence of use is located during the proposed work (see Figure 2 below) or at any other time, then as a legal requirement the work at the site should immediately cease and a bat ecologist contacted for further advice. If bat(s) or their roost will be affected then a Natural England Mitigation licence will be required to legally continue with the work. Notwithstanding the granting of a licence works that would affect a roost cannot take place if a maternity colony is in occupation.



Figure 2: Bat droppings (left) and pipistrelle bat (right)

- 5.3 Notwithstanding bat/s absence it is recommended that provision for bats is incorporated into the new development; subject to site proposals being made available suggestions for this purpose can be provided by the ecologist and will help to meet the LPA criteria in respect to Local Biodiversity Policies. A number of options for enhancement are given below:

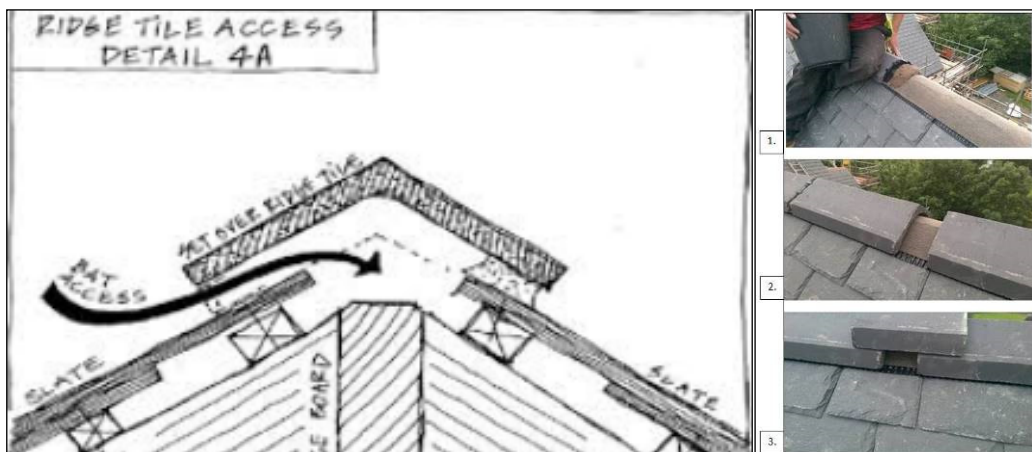
Integrated bat box

The Habitat Bat Box is a solid box made of insulating concrete with internal roosting space. The box blends seamlessly into brick-built properties and may be incorporated into the fabric of buildings, being best placed on gable elevations.



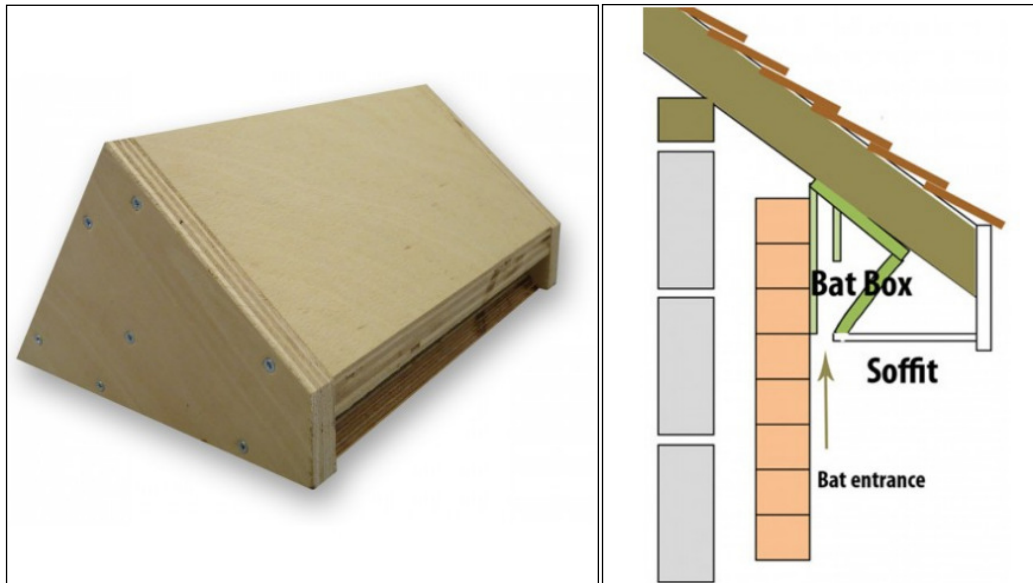
Ridge access

Where appropriated, ridge tile access should be made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles. Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.



Soffit access

Where soffits are instated, roost provision may be instated in the form of a soffit bat box with internal roosting space.



Externally fitted boxes

A large number of externally fitted box models for bats exist for buildings and trees. Suitable models for both buildings and trees may include the Eco Kent Bat Box .

