# DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AT GREENBANK SCHOOL, CHEADLE HULME, CHEADLE

# 2021


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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Walker Simpson Architects to carry out a daytime bat survey at Greenbank School building and surrounding land. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new building in its place. The site was surveyed in 2018 by Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd, and this report updates the findings from the 2018 survey.

1.2 The site is located off Heathbank Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle (O.S. grid reference: SJ 87113 86067 - see Figure 1). The section of building subject to a planning application is a single storey building with a large pitched roof. The building is adjoined to neighbouring buildings to the north and south.


**Figure 1 showing the red-line boundary of the site and the section of building subject to the planning application (blue)**

1.3 The site is bordered by residential development to the north. To the north west lie allotments. To the south and west lie parklands with multiple tree belts suitable for bat foraging and commuting. To the east lies a railway line which also provides linear commuting and foraging habitat.

1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the existing building will be destructive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species which could potentially utilise the building and wider site.

1.5 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and

Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A daytime bat survey of the school building was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present within the building.

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 building was 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 (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 1st June 2021. Joel is an experienced Ecologist and holds Natural England Class 2 Survey Licence for bats (Ref: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was hot and dry.

**Survey constraints**

2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The whole property could be surveyed internally and externally. There were negligible constraints to the survey.

## 3.0 RESULTS – DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

### External Survey

3.1 The external brickwork is complete and intact with no areas of damaged bricks or recessed mortar (see Photograph 1). Sections of the walls are wood clad which are well-sealed (see Photograph 2).

**Photograph 1 showing the external brickwork**


**Photograph 2 showing the clad gable**

3.2 Wooden soffit boards are present which are in good condition with the exception of one gap where the wood is degrading (see Photograph 3). All the windows and doors of the building are framed with UPVC and are well-sealed to the surrounding cladding/masonry (see Photograph 4).

**Photograph 3 showing peeling wood on the wooden soffit boards**

**Photograph 4 showing the window and door frames**

3.3 The roof is constructed from corrugated metal sheets which are all intact and in good. Ridge capping is present and in good condition. The capping is not corrugated resulting in gaps between the capping and the corrugated roof sheets. Metal gable capping is located on the north-western elevation. On the northern corner there is a gap between the capping and the roof.

3.4 A small single-storey flat-roofed extension exists on the north-western elevation (see Photograph 5). This feature has wooden cladding on all sides. The cladding is in reasonable condition with no gaps or cracks. The flat roof is covered with roof felt. The felt is intact and well-sealed.

**Photograph 5 showing the flat roof extension**

**Internal Survey**

3.5 The internal spaces comprise a ground floor which is in use as a school room, offices and toilet facilities. No habitat associated with roosting bats is present. Two roof voids are located above, one large and one small, separated by a partition wall.

3.6 The large roof void was fully accessible. The roof void is insulated with rockwool and the roof is unlined (see Photographs 6 and 7). The roof timbers are in excellent condition, free from cracks and crevices bats may exploit.

**Photograph 6 showing the roof void**

**Photograph 7 showing the roof void**

3.7 The smaller roof void is well-sealed (see Photograph 8) except for small sections of daylight visible at the edges of the roof. The space is insulated with rockwool insulation. The roof is unlined and the roof timbers are in excellent condition, free from cracks and crevices for bats to exploit. No evidence of bats was found in the roof void.

**Photograph 8 showing the smaller roof void**

## Surrounding Land

3.8 The building is enclosed by hardstanding (see Photograph 9), with introduced shrubs present near to the building. No evidence of other protected species could be found on the site.

**Photograph 9 showing the hardstanding on site**

## 4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bat activity was located during the survey at Greenbank School. The entire building could be surveyed. The property is in good condition, well-sealed, and has poor thermal holding capacity. Negligible opportunities were found for bats to enter or exit the property. The external roofs and brickwork are intact. No concealed loft voids exist in the building. Given the results of the survey, it is considered that the building offers **negligible bat roost suitability**.

4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the proposed demolition of the school building at Greenbank School can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the limited potential of the property to support bats and the lack of bat evidence found. However, if the development works are delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.

4.3 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 between roofing tiles. Therefore, it is recommended that all removal of roof slates and ridge tiles is to be undertaken with care, with the features lifted instead of dragged where possible.

4.4 **If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease 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).

4.5 The shrubs on the site offer bird nesting habitat.

4.6 All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

4.7 It is recommended that work to the vegetation and building takes place outside of the nesting season (which is generally March to August) or that a nesting bird survey is undertaken immediately prior to work commencing.

## 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.