DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

FISHER HOUSE, RIVINGTON LANE, RIVINGTON, BOLTON

2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2021 by Mr and Mrs Kozera to undertake a daytime bat survey at Fisher House, Rivington Lane, Rivington, Bolton (O.S. grid reference: SD 62743 14462 – see Figure 1). The site currently comprises a large, detached house set in mature gardens. The property is surrounded by woodland and pastural farmland with a reservoir in proximity. The habitats immediately surrounding the site offer good bat foraging and commuting opportunities.

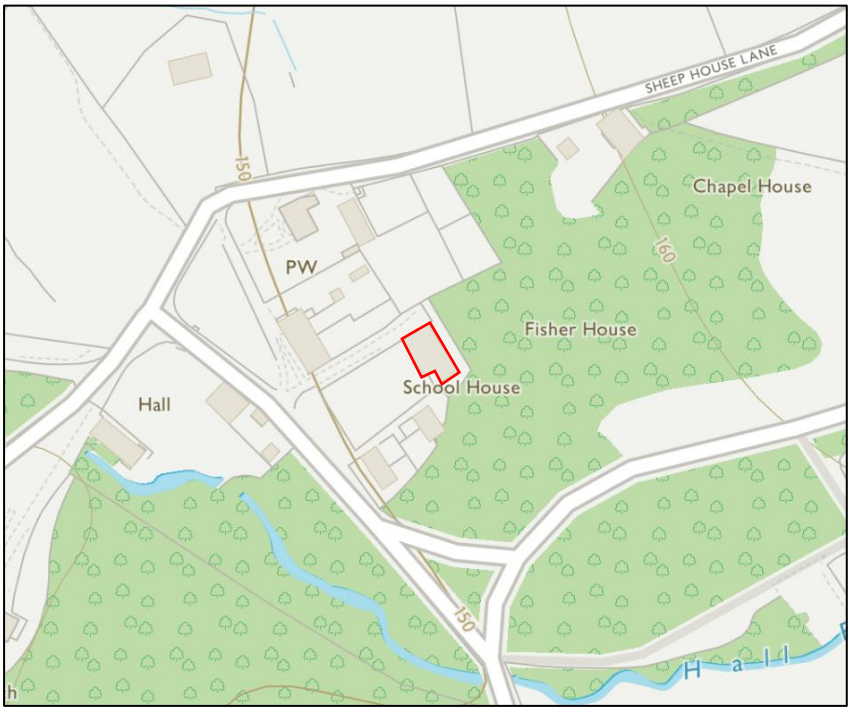

Figure 1 showing the location of the building

Description of Development

1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the extension and refurbishment of a Grade II Listed dwelling.

Biodiversity in Planning

1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Daytime Bat Survey

2.1 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost 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. An internal survey was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.

2.3 A pair of close-focussing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats externally.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

2.4 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat surveys on the 26th August 2021. Ben is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (ref: 2020-48541-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the surveys was mild and dry.

Survey Constraints

2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. Internal access to the building was available, except for a roof void space that could only be accessed via a external hatch. The hatch was out of reach and could not be surveyed internally.

3.0 RESULTS

Site Description

3.1 The building on site is set over three storeys with a basement, a garage and extension.

External Survey

3.2 The main part of the dwelling is rendered and painted white, with other sections of the building left un-rendered with exposed stone and brickwork present (see Photograph 1).

Photograph 1 showing the exterior of the building

3.3 The render, where present, is in excellent condition, free from cracks, crevice's and flaking features bats may exploit (see Photograph 2). The masonry, including the stone sills and lintels, is also in good condition and sealed with mortar with no missing or receded sections offering potential entry points (see Photographs 3 and 4).

Photograph 2 showing a section of the rendered exterior

Photograph 3 showing the exterior of the building

Photograph 4 showing the building's exterior

3.4 The timber window and door frames across the building are in reasonable condition and sealed to the surrounding masonry with no gaps crevices present (see Photographs 5 and 6).

Photograph 5 showing one of the timber window frames

Photograph 6 showing one of the timber window frames

3.5 The pitched and hipped roofs are covered with a combination of stone flags and slate roof tiles (see Photographs 7, 8 and 9). The tiles are largely intact and fitted flush to one another. However, many of the stone flags and a few of the slate roof tiles are lifted offering potential entry points for bats.

Photograph 7 showing the stone flag section of the roof

Photograph 8 showing a slate covered section of the roof

Photograph 9 showing the garage roof

3.6 The roof edges are finished with mortar (see Photographs 10, 11 and 12). The mortar is in good condition, effectively sealing the point to roof tiles and flags meet the gable walls.

Photograph 10 showing one of the gable ends of the building

Photograph 11 showing one of the gable ends of the building

Photograph 12 showing the Garage gable end

3.7 The south-western facing, front elevation of the main dwelling has a relatively large box guttering feature. This is not fitted flush to the rendered wall and offers multiple potential entry points into the roof void space (see Photograph 13).

Photograph 13 showing the box guttering

Internal Survey

3.8 The internal spaces of the building consist of typical rooms found in dwelling, such as bedrooms, living rooms, hallways bathrooms, kitchen, etc. These spaces are all finished to a high standard and do not offer any habitats associated with roosting bats (see Photographs 14, 15 and 16).

Photograph 14 showing the interior of the building

Photograph 15 showing the interior of the building

Photograph 16 showing the interior of the building

3.9 Two roof void spaces are located above the dwelling. One, above the extension of the main dwelling, could not be accessed due the height of the external access hatch (see Photograph 17).

Photograph 17 showing the external access hatch to the roof void space

3.10 The second roof void space could easily be accessed via an internal hatch and ladder. The roof void space is spilt with brick partition walls. The partition and gable walls are in reasonable condition and sealed with mortar (see Photograph 18). The floor is covered with fibreglass insulation and the underside of the roof is lined with roofing felt. The felt is in good condition, however, a small number of rips are present offering

potential entry points (see Photograph 19). The roof timbers are free from cracks and crevices.

Photograph 18 showing the roof void space

Photograph 19 showing one of the rips in the roofing felt

3.11 Concentrations and scattered bat droppings were found across the roof void spaces (see Photographs 20 and 21). Samples of the droppings were taken to be sent off for DNA analysis.

Photograph 20 showing bat droppings found in the roof void space

Photograph 21 showing bat droppings found in the roof void space

3.12 A basement/cellar is accessed via an internal staircase. The room is cool and in good condition (see Photograph 22). The stone and concrete block walls are sealed with mortar and painted white. No potential entry points were located, and no evidence of bat activity or occupancy was found. Therefore, the basement is considered to off negligible bat roost suitability.

Photograph 22 showing the basement

3.13 The garage consists of ground floor and first-floor spaces. The ground floor consists of garden maintenance equipment (see Photograph 23). The brick and stone walls are rendered and painted white. The render is in good condition offering no potential roosting habitat. The roof timbers are in good condition, free from gaps and cracks bats may exploit.

Photograph 23 showing part of the ground floor of the garage

3.14 The first-floor space is accessed via an internal staircase. This space is currently empty and open to the underside of the roof (see Photograph 24). The roof is lined with felt. The felt is in reasonable condition and free from tears or folding features. The gable wall is free from gaps or cracks bats may exploit. A small number of scattered bat

droppings were found on the floor of the first-floor space (see Photograph 25). Samples of the droppings were taken to be sent off for DNA analysis.

Photograph 24 showing the first-floor space of the garage

Photograph 25 showing the scattered bat droppings found in the garage

Surrounding Land

3.15 The building is enclosed by hardstanding and mature gardens with woodland in the vicinity in all directions. No evidence of other protected species was found on the site. Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* is located directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, spreading further northwards.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evidence of bat activity in the form of bat droppings was found in the roof void space of the main part of the dwelling and in the first-floor space of the garage. Multiple entry points are located across the roofs and underneath the box guttering of the main dwelling. A roof void space could not be accessed in one part of the dwelling.

4.2 It is considered the dwelling offers high bat roost suitability and the garage offers moderate bat roost suitability. If the proposed extension and refurbishment works are to result in the destruction/disturbance of these potential bat roosts (including works to the buildings roofs, box guttering, roof void spaces and the first-floor of the garage), then further bat survey work is required to determine if an active roost is present in the building, and if so, the species of bat and the type of roost present. It is recommended that two dusk emergence surveys and one dawn re-entry survey are undertaken on the dwelling and a minimum of two dusk emergence surveys/dawn re-entry surveys are carried out on the attached garage at an optimal time of year (between May and September).

4.3 The results of the surveys will determine the type of bat mitigation and compensation habitat required. This could be, for example, a dedicated bat loft or a few bat boxes.

4.4 If a confirmed bat roost is present, a bat mitigation licence will be required prior to the commencement of works. The licence can be sought following the granting of planning permission.

4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, were found within the building. Should any vegetation be removed, it is recommended that removal take place outside of the bird nesting season (generally March-August). If vegetation is removed during the nesting season, it is recommended that a nesting bird survey be undertaken prior to removal.

4.6 Himalayan Balsam is located directly adjacent to the site. This is an invasive, non-native species listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is recommended this species be eradicated from the site/adjacent to the site if possible, using a recognised methodology.

5.0 REFERENCES

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