



# Leigh Ecology Ltd

Protected Species and Habitat Surveys

22 Bridge Street,  
Chester,  
Cheshire.

On Behalf of Mr. Tony Swindells.

## Bat Scoping Survey Report

**Report number:** Bridge/01/23      **Author:** C. Leigh

**Date:** 01/09/2023      **Approved:** C. J. Evans.

Office

Directors R S Leigh & J J Leigh. 8 Hall Drive, Marston, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6DT

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO READERS

This report has been prepared for Mr. Tony Swindells in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment for a bat scoping survey. Leigh Ecology Ltd. cannot accept any responsibility for the use of, or reliance on the content of this report by any third party.

The advice contained in this report is based on the information available and/or collected during the period of study. We cannot completely eliminate the possibility of important ecological features being found through further investigation and/or by survey at different times of the year, or in different years.

Surveys and assessments are undertaken on the understanding that nothing in our reports will be omitted, amended or misrepresented by the client or any other interested party.

Please be aware that the information contained within this report is valid for a period not exceeding two years. After this time, data contained within will require updating.

This report and its contents remain the property of Leigh Ecology Ltd until payment has been made in full.

# CONTENTS

	Important Information to Readers .....	2
1	Summary.....	4
2	Introduction .....	5
	2.2 Legislative Framework .....	6
	2.3 Site Description .....	9
3	Methodology .....	15
4	Results.....	17
	Internal and external inspection .....	17
5	Conclusions and Recommendations .....	18
6	References .....	19

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The subject site comprises a number of buildings at 22 Bridge Street, Chester. The proposal buildings include a section of two-storey traditional brick to be removed, a flat concrete roofed building with corrugated shelter and another single-storey brick building; all are to be removed to facilitate the development work.
- 1.1.2 The buildings are all in good condition externally, with all roof tiles and ridge linings in good order, and the soffit and fascia linings all in good condition also.
- 1.1.3 Therefore, to facilitate the works on the buildings and to inform the planning application, a survey for bat species (Chiroptera) and an ecological assessment was undertaken on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2023.
- 1.1.4 No active signs of bats were located during the survey within any of the buildings on site.
- 1.1.5 The buildings are well-sealed with no access points for bats. The brick buildings have been maintained and active over time. The buildings are set within the dense commercial area of Chester city Centre, featuring many similarly composed buildings in the vicinity of the site.
- 1.1.6 No trees or amenity features are included within the proposal.

The two-storey building that will be partially demolished features an insulated lining beneath the roof and wooden boarding in other sections. An internal wall that is to be removed is also in fair condition. The single-storey brick building features a suspended ceiling.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 A section of a two-storey building, and several other smaller buildings have been identified for removal. A protected species survey was required, namely bat species (Chiroptera), in order to inform the planning application.
- 2.1.2 For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of protected species, and therefore the need for a survey is a material planning consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of protected species, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding site or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation methods.
- 2.1.3 For any development to proceed lawfully at a site where protected species are present, a licence issued by Natural England, under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended) may be required. Information gathered during the surveys is used to inform such a licence application.
- 2.1.4 The objective of the study was to identify the presence or potential presence of bat species within the buildings identified on-site.
- 2.1.5 A preliminary roost survey, consisting of an internal and external survey of the target buildings, was conducted on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

## 2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### Bats

2.2.1 There are 17 species of bats in the UK, all of which suffered a decline in population size and distribution during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; even those species regarded to be the most common suffered a 70% decline between 1978 and 1993 (Mitchel-Jones and McLeish, 2004).

2.2.2 All species of bats are listed under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore afforded special protection. It is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat;
- Intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

2.2.3 Bats are further protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which make it an offence to:

Capture or kill a bat;

Significantly disturb a bat (in any location); and

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.

2.2.4 If bats are present on a development site and, as a result of the development there is a likelihood that a roost may be damaged or destroyed, or where there is considered to be a reasonable possibility that bats occupying a roost may be significantly disturbed, or where there would be a requirement to significantly disturb a bat irrespective of its location, the development can only proceed if a European Protected Species (EPS) license is issued by Natural England.

2.2.5 In England and Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities to make material considerations to biodiversity conservation in the determination of all types of planning applications. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the convention.

The strategy contains action plans for species considered to be of conservation priority at a national (under Species Action Plans (SAP) and local scale (under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

- 2.2.6 The UKBAP lists seven bat species considered as priorities, the relevant SBAP (Cheshire) lists several bat species, Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctule*) and Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*).

### Tree Inspection

- 2.2.7 A ground level external inspection of the trees on the boundary was undertaken; the primary objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:

Bat droppings;

Feeding remains;

Grease staining / urine marks.

- 2.2.8 As tree roosts are extremely difficult to locate, it is prudent to note all potential roost entrances, cracks, cavities, woodpecker holes and fissures in order to undertake emergence surveys should there be an impact on the trees.

### Survey Limitations

- 2.2.9 The survey was unhindered by any limitation and was carried out without interruption.

### Landscape Assessment

- 2.2.10 Bats use regular commuting and foraging routes; these are usually linear features such as hedgerows and watercourse corridors. The loss and severance of such a feature may have an indirect impact on the bats. Therefore, it is important that if the development impacts on these features, they are assessed.

### Nesting Birds

- 2.2.11 An assessment of potential habitat for breeding birds was undertaken.

## Protected Mammal assessment

2.2.12 No suitable environment for other mammal usage is included within the site boundary.



## 2.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.3.1 The proposal site accommodates various buildings. One section of a two-storey retail building, found along bridge street, is included within the proposals, with several other smaller buildings. The subject buildings are found within Fig 1. Below.
- 2.3.2 The building is located atop hard standing, within a cluster of mixed residential and mainly retail units.
- 2.3.3 The site grid reference is SJ405661.
- 2.3.4 The proposed development will see the area undergo a full-scale renovation, The proposed development will see the removal and part removal of several buildings/sections of buildings. Beyond this work, proposal plans include the full renovation of the remaining unit.
- 2.3.5 The site map below shows the scope of the survey and maps the position of the target buildings, which are within the red line boundary.



Fig 1: Scope and location of the site named 22 Bridge Street, Chester.

(Monika.Studio – 2023)



Fig 2: View of target buildings (Labelled A, B and C).

(Google Earth, 2023)



Fig 2: A view of the roof of the section to be removed (labelled building A). The roof tiles and ridge lining was in good condition throughout.



Fig 3: A further view of the roof to be removed as part of the proposals.

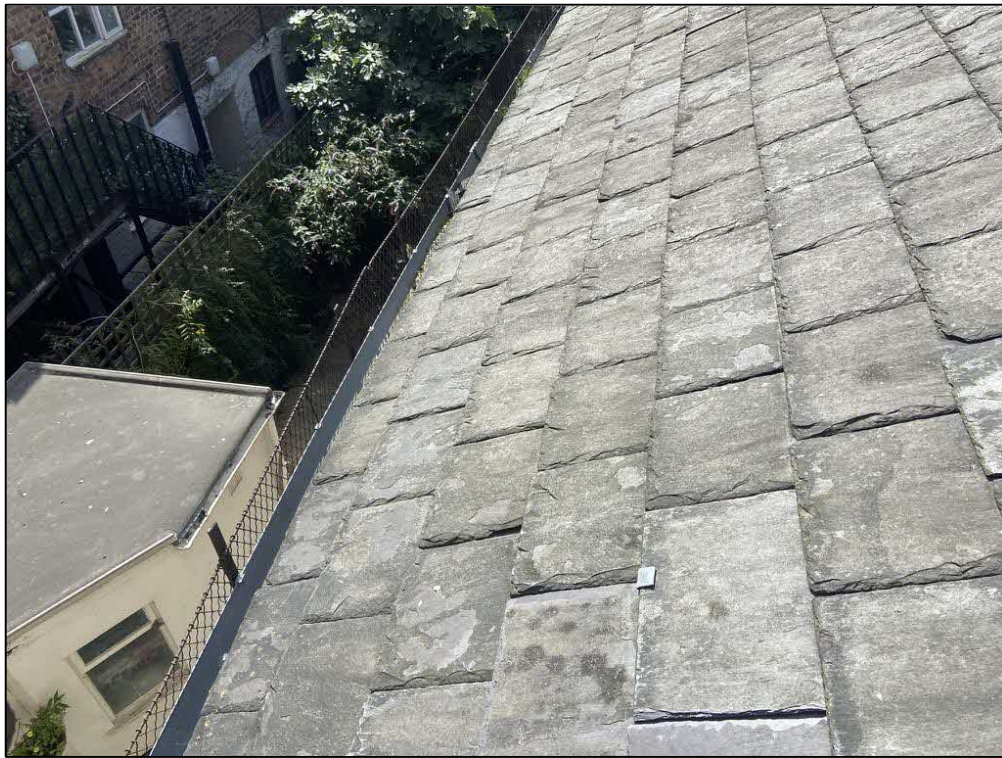


Fig 4: The fascia of this roof section features some netting, presumably anti-bird netting.



Fig 5: A view from an adjacent retail unit of a subject section for removal. The fascia lining and guttering is in good condition.



Fig 6: An internal view of the previously pictured section. The internal brick walls are narrow, with no access to any cavities noted.

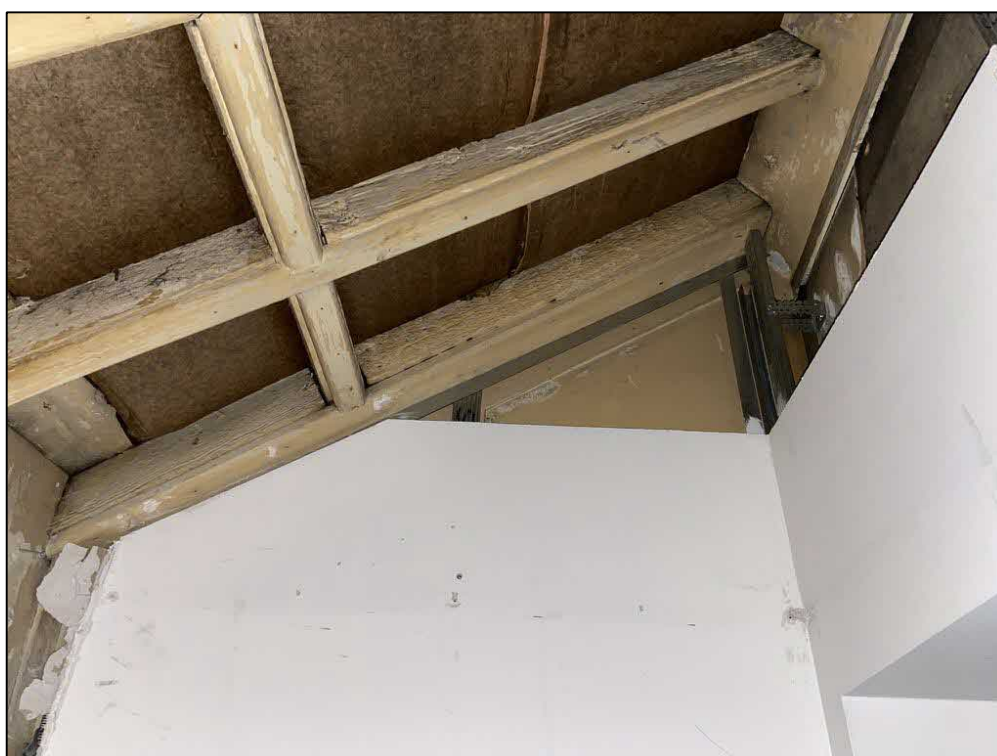


Fig 7: A further internal view of building labelled A. Wooden boarding features beneath the external roof tiles. This boarding is in good condition and features no signs of damage. No signs of previous bat usage were noted within the building section during the survey.



Fig 8: A view of another section to be removed (Building labelled B). This building comprises a single storey, with a standard slate roof. The building is relatively new, and this is reflected by its excellent condition throughout.



Fig 9: A further view of the building. The building features kitchen infrastructure for an active bar.



Fig 10: Another section that is to be removed (Building labelled C). The building is a timber construction with a corrugated tin roof. Again, erected not long ago to support the adjacent active bar, this building is utilised as an outdoor terrace shelter.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The internal and external roost survey and assessment was undertaken by Natural England Level 2 Bat surveyor Christian Leigh 2022-10863-CL18-BAT.

3.1.2 Survey methods were based-upon the standard and specification detailed in the BCTs Bat Surveys- Good Practise Guidelines (BCT, 2016). The buildings were inspected internally and externally on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

#### External Inspection

3.1.3 The objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:

Bat droppings;

Feeding remains;

Grease staining/ urine marks;

Corpses or skeletons;

Potential access points to internal roosts.

3.1.4 The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of the building. The following areas were searched using binoculars:

Ground floor casing;

Any cracks/ holes in steel sheet walls;

At door opening points;

Joint between walls and roof.



## Internal Inspection

3.1.5 Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces/open roof configurations (see below), which were searched as a priority for any bat field signs:

Beneath hip joints and junctions;

Staining above/ around gaps;

Within cobwebs;

In cavities of walls within the roof wall joints;

3.1.6 The internal building survey covered the whole of the area.

3.1.7 The surveys were undertaken using a 168-lumen flashlight and 10x42 Swarovski binoculars.

3.1.8 Ladders were used to access elevated areas with potential for bat signs.

## Survey limitations

3.1.9 All areas of the buildings were fully accessible, and care was taken; therefore, the survey was considered comprehensive.

## 4 RESULTS

### Internal and external inspection

- 4.1 The results of the bat scoping survey suggest that all buildings on site offer negligible bat roost potential. The larger building featured within figures 2-7 (Building A) has a traditional slate tiled roof with PVC fascia lining and guttering. The roof is in very good condition throughout, with no signs of bird or bat usage found. The second building is a single-storey brick building, again featuring a slate tiled roof with wooden fascia linings (Building B), and the final is a timber unit with a corrugated roof (Building C). These two buildings have been fairly recently erected to support the adjacent active bar.
- 4.2 The identified buildings are located within a dense cluster of predominantly retail units along Commonhall and Bridge Street. The buildings are directly attached to similarly composed buildings. Two of the buildings contain busy active bar terraces.
- 4.3 No signs of bat usage were noted within any of the buildings on site.
- 4.4 No signs of previous or active bird nesting were noted across any aspects of the buildings.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The results of the bat scoping survey indicate that the target buildings offer negligible bat roost potential. No signs of activity were located during the survey.
- 5.2 No vegetation removal is listed within proposal plans, but to safeguard from any direct impact to bird species, any removal/demolition required to facilitate the development should be done outside the breeding season. The scheme should monitor this and request advice if/when required.

## 6 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLiesh, A.P. (2004) Bat Workers Manual. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. JNCC, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

