

Albert's Restaurant, Rochdale

Bat Emergence Surveys

2023



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Client	Cinns Limited
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Executive Summary

Development Details

A planning application has been made for the extension and alteration of Albert's Restaurant, Edenfield Road, Norden, Rochdale (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

This report describes the status of roosting bats at the site and assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development on bats. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Outcomes

The site supports a day roost used by Common Pipistrelle bats and a feeding roost used by Brown Long-eared bat. The proposed development has the potential to result in impacts to bats and their roosts.

Recommendations

A bat mitigation licence will be required to avoid the risk of an offence.

Mitigation measures are identified to ensure the proposed development can be undertaken with minimal risk to bats.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by Cinns Limited to undertake two bat emergence surveys of Albert's Restaurant, Edenfield Road, Norden, Rochdale, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD848150 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for *Erection of extensions on front and side elevations, alterations to entrances and fenestration and extension to raised terrace, formation of new internal access road and overspill car park and other associated works following demolition of existing extensions to front and side elevations* (planning reference 23/00621/FUL).

Relevant Survey History

- 1.1.3 A Daytime Bat Survey was undertaken in January 2022¹. Potential access points and a small quantity of bat droppings and feeding remains were recorded in the roof void.

¹ Rachel Hacking Ecology (2022) Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey Albert's Restaurant, Edenfield Road, Norden, Rochdale. Rev A.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out two bat emergence surveys.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:

- Establish the status of roosting bats at the site.
- Inform mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Emergence & Re-entry Survey

- 2.1.1 Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016). For the surveys, three surveyors and thermal cameras monitored the building, to ensure complete visual coverage. The emergence surveys began 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 90 minutes after sunset. The surveyors used Echometer Touch 2 Pro, Anabat Scout and Batscanner bat detectors to record the echolocation calls of bats.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

- 2.2.1 Interpretation of survey findings was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance^{2,3}.

2.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 2.3.1 The surveys were undertaken Joe Cooper, Kate Reed (Senior Ecologists), Matthew Bottomley (Junior Ecologist) and Steve Smith (Assistant Ecologist) on 31st May 2023 and 14th June 2023. All surveyors are experienced and trained in nocturnal bat surveys.

Site Conditions

- 2.3.2 The weather at the time of the first survey was dry and partly cloudy with a light breeze. The average temperature was 13°C.
- 2.3.3 The weather at the time of the second survey was dry and clear with a gentle breeze. The average temperature was 16°C.
- 2.3.4 The site conditions were appropriate for a full assessment to be undertaken.

² Collins, J. (Ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 3rd edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

³ Reason, P.F and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

2.4 Surveyor Locations

2.4.1 Figure 2 shows the location of the surveyors and infra-red cameras during the surveys.



Figure 2 showing the locations of the surveyors (yellow stars) and cameras (red stars)

3. Results

3.1 Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.

3.2 31st May 2023

- 3.2.1 Ten bats emerged from various points around the building. Eight of the bats were positively identified as Common Pipistrelle. Two of the bats did not echolocate but given the time of emergence and flight pattern it is concluded that these were also Common Pipistrelle.

3.3 14th June 2023

- 3.3.1 Six bats emerged from various points around the building. Three of the bats were positively identified as Common Pipistrelle. Three of the bats did not echolocate but given the time and place of emergence and flight pattern it is concluded that these were also Common Pipistrelle.



Photograph 1 showing some of the emergence locations on the southern elevation



Photograph 2 showing some of the emergence locations from the eastern elevation

- 3.3.2 Moderate levels of bat activity were recorded during the surveys, Common Pipistrelle were recorded foraging and commuting around the building and the site during both surveys. A single Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bat was also recorded foraging nearby during the first survey.

4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

- 4.1.1 The survey results indicate that the site supports a day roost used by 10 Common Pipistrelle bats. A day roost is used by male and non-breeding female bats during the summer but is unlikely to support bats during the night. The surveys were undertaken during the optimum period and no evidence indicating the presence of a maternity roost (where female bats gather to give birth and raise young) was identified.
- 4.1.2 The bat droppings and feeding remains recorded during the Daytime Bat Survey indicate that the site also supports a feeding roost used by (probably one) Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*.

4.2 Evaluation

- 4.2.1 Common Pipistrelle is a common and widespread species throughout the UK. A day roost is of importance at the site level (Reason and Wray, 2023).
- 4.2.2 Brown Long-eared is a fairly common and widespread species throughout the UK. A feeding roost is of importance at the site level (Reason and Wray, 2023).

4.3 Potential Impacts

- 4.3.1 The proposals include erection of extensions on the front and side elevations, alterations to entrances and fenestration and extension to the raised terrace. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in the disturbance to small numbers of Common Pipistrelle, should these be present. Works such as pointing, sealing gaps and roofing works could result in small numbers of Common Pipistrelle being killed or injured, should these be present. A day roost used by 10 Common Pipistrelle could be damaged or destroyed. If works include changes to the roof void, this is likely to result in the loss of a feeding roost used by (probably one) Brown Long-eared bat.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1.1 In order to avoid the risk of an offence, any works likely to result in impacts to bats or their roosts must be carried out under licence from Natural England.
- 5.1.2 A licence can be applied for once planning permission has been granted. The site meets the criteria for registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence.
- 5.1.3 Once a licence is obtained the Named Ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to the contractors to ensure they are aware of the legal status of bats and the conditions of the licence. The Named Ecologist will check suitable areas to be affected by works for bats and if present, any bats will be captured by hand and transferred to a bat box on an unaffected building or tree on site.
- 5.1.4 Where possible, bat access points will be retained in the building to enable bats to continue to use the site after works are completed.
- 5.1.5 Should it not be possible to retain suitable roosting features, bat boxes suitable for crevice-dwelling species will be installed the building on completion of the works.
- 5.1.6 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 174 and 180, shown below:

- 174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a. protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c. maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d. minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; etc...
- 180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a. if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b. development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;



- c. development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d. development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires that the Secretary of State must publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats.

Legislation

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



Appendix 2: Survey Data

Table 1. Results from the first dusk emergence survey				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
Emergence	31/05/2023	13°C	21:23	Partly cloudy and dry
Results				
Common Pipistrelle recorded emergence from the roof on the right side of the building (north side) towards the front of the building at 21:46				
Common pipistrelle recorded emergence from the middle window on the second storey of the left gable end on the left side of the building (south side) at 21:55				
Common Pipistrelle recorded emergence from the corner of the eave at the left side of the left gable end on the left side of the building (south side) at 22:04.				
Two Common pipistrelle recorded possible emergence from the roof of the small low building to the far left of the left side of the main building (south side) at 22:07				
Two Common pipistrelle recorded possible emergence from the second story of the right-hand side of the left side (south side) of the building at 22:11				
Common pipistrelle recorded emergence from the Gable end of the lower building to the right-hand side of the left side (south side) of the main building at 22:33.				
Two non-echolocating bats recorded emerging from the roof on the right side of the building (north side) towards the front of the building at 22:35.				
Noctule heard but not seen in surrounding area of the site at 21:38				
Intermittent foraging activity and social calling from several Common Pipistrelle bats between 21:45 – 22:39				



Table 2. Results from the second dusk emergence survey				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
Emergence	14/06/2023	16°C	21:33	Clear, calm, and humid
Results				
Non-echolocating bat emerged from the corner of the roof on the left side on the front (east side) of the main building at 22:02.				
Non-echolocating bat emerged from roof tiles on the corner on the left side of the front side (east side) of the main building at 22:05				
Non-echolocating bat emerged from the gable at the right-hand side of the left side of the building (south side) at 22:10				
Common pipistrelle recorded emergence from the second story of the right-hand side of the left side (south side) of the building at 22:25				
Common pipistrelle recorded emergence from under the roof line of the lower building to the right-hand side of the left side (south side) of the main building at 22:32				
Common Pipistrelle recorded emergence form the corner of the eave at the left side of the left gable end on the left side of the building (south side) at 22:33				
Intermittent foraging activity and social calling from several Common Pipistrelle bats between 22:10 – 22:48				

