

1 Drake Street,
Rochdale

Daytime Bat Survey
2025



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Client Paul Butler Associates
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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at 1 Drake Street, Rochdale, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

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

Ecological Interest

The site offers **low** potential to support roosting bats. This is of ecological importance at the site level.

Outcomes

Further survey work is required to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements. One dusk emergence survey must be carried out during the bat active season between May and August.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2025 by Paul Butler Associates to carry out a Daytime Bat Survey at 1 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1LU, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is an historic grade 2 listed building, originally built in 1810 and further developed in the 20th century. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 89757 13391 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site courtesy of © OpenStreetMap Contributors

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application to refurbish and convert the existing former coaching inn and snooker hall into a residential building comprised of 2 floors of apartments and 1 of HMO accommodation.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 Paul Butler Associates commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry an external and internal assessment of the building subject of the development proposals.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

- 1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:
- Assess the potential of the site to support roosting bats;
 - Identify the requirement for any further detailed surveys.
 - Inform impact assessment and mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The desk study included a 2km radius review of statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests and granted European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) records for bats held on magic.gov.uk database.
- 2.1.2 An assessment of the surrounding landscape structure was also completed using aerial images from Google Earth and OS maps.

2.2 Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.2.1 The exterior of the buildings was surveyed from the ground using binoculars, a high-powered torch and a camera drone. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry
- 2.2.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.2.3 The interior of the building, including the roof voids, where possible, was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.

2.3 Assessment Criteria

- 2.3.1 Surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines¹. Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance^{1,2}.

¹ Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 4th edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² 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 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 2.4.1 Lucia Ruiz Mut (Ecologist) and Matthew Bottomley (Ecologist) visited the site on 19th February 2025. Lucia and Matthew have over three years' professional experience carrying out similar surveys and are both Qualifying members of CIEEM and accredited agents under Simon Holden's Bats Survey Licence (2019-42937-CLS-CLS).

Weather

- 2.4.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cold and overcast. Weather conditions were suitable for a full assessment to be undertaken.



3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 Table 1 shows the constraint of the survey, and how this was mitigated.

Table 1. Survey constraints and response.	
Constraint	Response
The full roof space is not currently accessible due to a masonry wall.	The structure and components of the roof space are similar across the whole area. It is considered that the extent surveyed provided sufficient information to infer roosting suitability.

3.2 Desk Study

Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The Rochdale Canal, which is designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) runs east to southwest within a 2km buffer, at 1.15km southeast of the site at its closest point.
- 3.2.2 The site offers good quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats but is not directly designated for this reason.

EPSL Records

- 3.2.3 EPSL records refers to known bat roosts within the search area. No impacts to maternity roosts (breeding site) were found. The EPSL granted for bats are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Granted EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site		
EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Location/Distance
2015-8047-EPS-MIT	Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Daubenton's Bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	0.15km SW
EPSM2009-709	Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	0.6km SW
EPSM2011-2750	Common Pipistrelle Soprano Pipistrelle	0.65km SE

3.3 Habitat Appraisal

- 3.3.1 The site is in an urban area in the centre of Rochdale. Thus, offering poor foraging and commuting habitat for bats. However, it is within reach to good quality habitat, namely deciduous woodland habitat associated with Saint Chad's Parish Church present 0.15km south of the site and The River Roch runs 0.12km east, which links with deciduous woodland habitat within Roch Wood Nature Park.

3.4 External Survey

- 3.4.1 The site is a three-story building, built originally in 1810. The building features brick walls, with stone dressings, cornices between the floors, a modillion eaves cornice, and a slate, gable end roof. A two-storey building with an open hipped end roof was added in the 20th Century.
- 3.4.2 Within the elevation facing Smith Street, the lowest part of the façade appeared in good condition with no obvious access points (see Photograph 1). The façade at the corner of the street offers potential access for bats through gaps behind the bargeboard and a hole in the brickwork (see Photographs 2 and 3).



Photograph 1 showing the newest part of the façade facing Smith Street.



Photographs 2 (left) and 3 (right) showing gaps under barge board and hole in brickwork, respectively.

- 3.4.3 At the Drake Street elevation, external access points are not obvious. However, the modillion cornice and window frames are dated and may offer small cracks and crevices which would lead into the roof space (see Photographs 3 and 4).



Photographs 4 (left) and 5 (right) showing modillion cornice and window frames.

- 3.4.4 At the rear, the fascia board appeared to be in state of disrepair, potentially providing access through crevices and gaps or comprising a Potential Roosting Feature (PRFs) on itself (see Photograph 6).



Photograph 6 showing a detail of the rear elevation.

- 3.4.5 The roof offers multiple access points with lifted ridge tiles and gaps behind lead flashing (see Photographs 7 and 8). These were closely inspected from the air using a camera drone which confirmed the presence of gaps and lifted tiles. These may also comprise PRFs as bats can find shelter underneath the tiles.



Photograph 7 (left) and 8 (right) showing potential access points.

3.5 Internal Survey

- 3.5.1 The roof void is open to ridge with wooden beams and partially covered by roof membrane and wooden cladding with no insulation (see Photographs 9 and 10). The roof space is partially sectioned with brick wall, but all parts accessed were connected, providing a large space with a height of circa 2m at the highest point.



Photographs 9 (left) and 10 (right) showing the interior of the roof space.

- 3.5.2 External access points were evident with daylight entering through cracks and gaps in brickwork, particularly along the gable ends (see Photographs 11 and 12).



Photographs 11 (left) and 12 (right) showing gaps along gable end and hole in brickwork, respectively.

- 3.5.3 There are several PRFs within the loft space such as behind the membrane, underneath the wooden cladding, holes and gaps with the brick wall edges, or between wooden beams (see Photographs 13, 14, 15 and 16).



Photographs 13 (left) and 14 (right) showing the interior of the roof space with wooden beams and membrane, and gap at gable end, respectively.



Photographs 15 and 16 showing the interior of the roof space showing wooden cladding and crack in brickwork, respectively.

- 3.5.4 The second floor is illuminated by windows. There were several PRFs in the form of cavities between walls and cracks in brickwork surrounding the window frames (see Photographs 17, 18 and 19). The space can be accessed from the loft through holes in the ceiling (see Photograph 20).



Photographs 17, 18, and 19 (left to right) showing PRFs within the second floor.



Photograph 20 showing broken ceiling giving access to the loft.

- 3.5.5 On the first floor the ceiling is in disrepair offering PRFs behind the wooden cladding (see Photograph 21 and 22), however there is no direct access from the exterior. It is also bright during the day towards Smith Street.



Photographs 21(left) and 22 (right) showing PRFs at the first floor.

- 3.5.6 The ground floor does not offer PRFs. The chimney access and boiler room are well sealed (see Photographs 23 and 24). This floor is not accessible from the outside.



Photographs 23 (left) and 24 (right) showing the interior of the chimney and boiler room, respectively.

- 3.5.7 The cellar showed some small cracks in the brickwork (see Photographs 25 and 26) but these were mainly superficial and the cellar is not accessible from the outside.



Photographs 25 (left) and 26 (right) showing the interior of the cellar.

- 3.5.8 No bats or evidence of bats such as droppings or feeding remains were found during the survey externally or internally.

4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

- 4.1.1 The immediate surroundings offer low quality foraging due to the urban context susceptible to high levels of disturbance, however, good quality bat foraging habitat is within reach for bats.
- 4.1.2 No evidence of bat activity was found during the survey. The presence of gaps behind the bargeboard at the gable ends and hanging tiles offer suitable access points and may allow bats to access the wall cavity. Internally there are numerous PRFs that may be used by bats
- 4.1.3 Whereas the site offers several access points and PRFs, given the location of the site and the lack of signs of bats observed, it is considered that the site offers **low** suitability for roosting bats.

4.2 Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 In the absence of mitigation, the proposed development could result in the destruction of a bat roost and the killing/injuring of individual bats, should these be present.



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 Further detailed survey is required to determine the status of roosting bats at the site. In accordance with current standard guidelines¹ one dusk emergence survey must be carried out during the bat active season (May to August).

5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 Mitigation requirements will be informed by the results of the further survey.

General Precautions

- 5.2.2 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 2024) 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 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. 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;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. 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.

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.

