BAT SURVEY AT PARTINGTON CARE HOME, NORTH ROAD, GLOSSOP, DERBYSHIRE 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2012 by Edward Mellor Estate Agents to undertake a bat survey at Partington Care Home, North Road, Glossop (OS Grid Reference SK032951). The care home will be the subject of a planning application to convert the existing structure into four dwellings. The surrounding hardstanding will be landscaped into gardens and parking spaces.

1.2 Partington Care Home is a large, two-storey detached building, which is no longer in use. The building is just over a century old and is constructed from stone with slate tile roofs. It has been well maintained.

1.3 The proposals for the building will include internal structural modifications but none of the existing roof spaces will be built into and there are no extensions to the building planned. However, if a bat roost is present within a building, even if the roost is not being directly affected, disturbance to the bats is likely. Therefore, a bat survey was requested.

1.4 The building is situated east of Howard Park, north of Glossop town centre. To the south is residential development. Mature tree belts border the site to the west, north and east.

1.5 All bat species are European Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They are also fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Daytime bat survey

2.1 A daytime bat survey was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present within the former care home. The building was 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.

2.2 An external survey was also carried out, which included, for example, looking for gaps within mortar or brickwork, gaps between window frames and the walls and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges.

2.3 Two heterodyne bat detectors were carried throughout the survey to detect echo-location and/or chattering and a high-powered torch and an endoscope were used to look into gaps both internally and externally.

Emergence (dusk) survey

2.4 An emergence survey was undertaken using a number of surveyors to watch various aspects of the building. Heterodyne, frequency division and time expansion bat detectors were used. Infra-red cameras were also positioned along certain elevations of the building.

Timing and Personnel

2.5 The daytime bat survey was conducted on 17th August 2012. The weather during the daytime inspection was overcast and dry. The emergence survey was conducted on 29th August 2012. The weather during the emergence survey was overcast and dry with a light breeze and a temperature at dusk of 14°C. August is an optimum time of year to survey for bats.

2.6 Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist) and Andy Harmer undertook the daytime bat survey. Both surveyors have over ten years experience of protected species surveys, including undertaking many building inspections for bats. Both surveyors, plus two trained assistants, undertook the emergence survey.

3.0 RESULTS

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

External survey

3.1 Partington Care Home is a very well maintained building (see Photographs 1 and 2). The walls are constructed of stone brickwork and the roofs are slate-tiled. The windows are all in a good state of repair.

Photograph 1 showing exterior of the building at the front entrance

Photograph 2 showing northern side of building and good condition

3.2 There were limited gaps within the brickwork and mortar. Small gaps exist between the brickwork and the guttering, the roof overhang and the soffit boards. These were covered in cobwebs, indicating no recent use by bats. The chimney breasts are well maintained with no missing brickwork.

3.3 The roof is in a good state of repair (see Photograph 3). The tiles are intact with the odd tile having slipped, creating a small gap. The lead flashing is intact and flush to the tiles. The roof apex tiles are all intact.

Photograph 3 showing the typical condition of the roof

3.4 To the rear of the building were small single-storey extensions. These were inspected and found to be in a good state of repair. At the rear are a number of alcoves (see Photograph 4). The wooden sloping soffit boards are flush to the walls here and covered in cobwebs. A number of bird nests were located beneath the eaves here. Two bat droppings were located on the windowsills at the rear of the building.

Photograph 4 showing single-storey extension to rear and alcove to the right in the picture

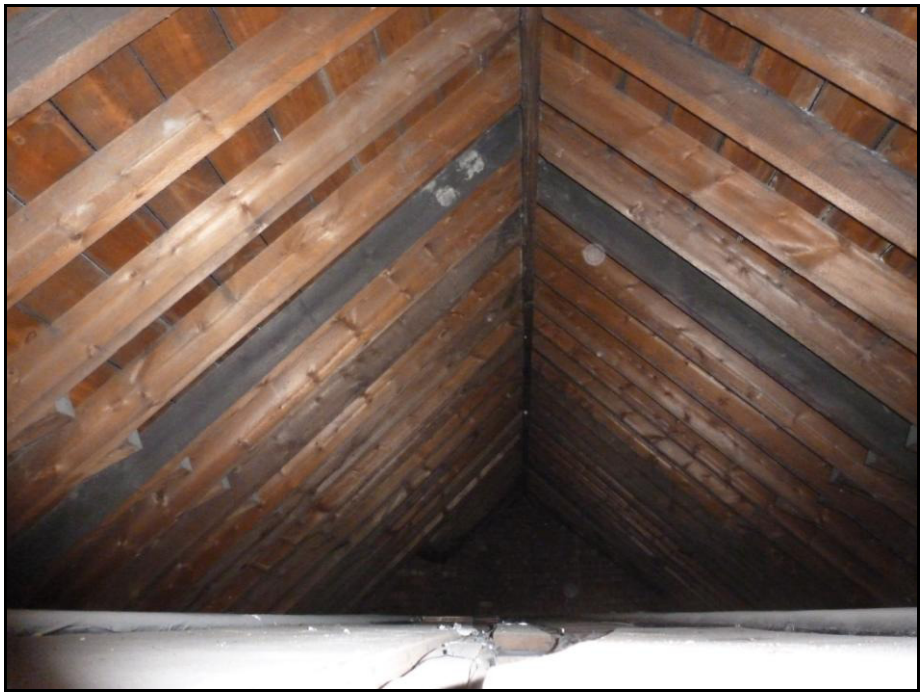
3.5 During the external survey, Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* was located within an alcove outside the western elevation of the building (see Photograph 5). Japanese Knotweed is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to allow the species to spread into the wild. It is classed as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Photograph 5 showing Japanese Knotweed growing out the flags along the western edge of the building (near to cellar entrance)

Internal survey

3.6 Partington Care Home has a number of roof voids. These were all accessible through loft hatches and were all thoroughly inspected. Some of the roof voids are large with full head height. Others are shallower and smaller. The pitched roofs cover the whole of the building but on the single-storey rear rooms, there are no roof voids.

3.7 All of the internal roofs are in a good state of repair (see Photographs 6 and 7). It appears that the timber joists and roof lining are relatively new. The roof lining is either felt lining or timber boards and is flush to the timber joists. There are no tears or gaps in the lining. Insulation is laid to the floor in the roof voids. No daylight could be seen in most of the roof voids. Where ventilation pipes exit through the roof, small gaps were evident but these were inspected and found to be covered in cobwebs.



Photograph 6 showing internal roof structure in large roof void

Photograph 7 showing good condition of felt roof lining and timber joists

3.8 Where the roof joists and main beams meet, the joints were inspected and found to be covered in cobwebs. Exposed brickwork within the larger roof void (see Photograph 8) was closely inspected and found to be covered in cobwebs.

Photograph 8 showing exposed brickwork in the large roof void

3.9 No bats, bat droppings, staining or feeding remains could be found in the roof voids. There is very little opportunity for bats to enter the voids as they are well sealed.

3.10 The main rooms within the building are well maintained, although damp due to lack of use. The window frames are intact and no glass panes are missing. The ground floor windows are boarded up for security reasons.

3.11 A small cellar exists where the ground drops away along the western edge of the building. This was accessed and found to consist of three small interconnecting rooms which house boilers and pipe-work. The rooms are also used for storage. At the time of the survey, the cellar was flooded due to a burst pipe. The rooms are plastered and well sealed (see Photograph 9).There is very little opportunity for bats to enter the cellar.

Photograph 9 showing the sealed rooms and ceilings of the cellar

Surrounding landscape

3.12 Partington Care Home is bordered to the west by Howard Park, a large park which comprises mature trees and water features. Mature tree belts form the boundaries of the site to the west, north and east. To the south is residential development. Within some of the mature trees bordering the site are cavities, which have the potential to be used by bats.

EMERGENCE SURVEY

3.13 No bats were seen to emerge from any part of Partington Care Home at any time during the dusk survey. Bats were seen and heard foraging along the tree belts. Both Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* were recorded. Table 1 lists the bat activity recorded and the timings.

TABLE 1. BAT ACTIVITY AT WELLCROFT		
TIME (HRS)	**SPECIES**	**COMMENTS**
20.41	Common Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
20.44	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along western edge of building
20.58	Common Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
20.59	Common Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
21.10	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along western edge of building
21.11	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
21.22	Common Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
21.47	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along western edge of building
21.49	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along western edge of building
21.52	Soprano Pipistrelle	One pass along northern tree belt
22.04	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
22.08	Common Pipistrelle	Foraging along southern boundary
22.09	Soprano Pipistrelle	Foraging along western edge of building

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of a bat roost could be located during the daytime survey of Partington Care Home. The building has been well maintained. No bats, bat droppings, feeding remains or staining could be located during the internal survey. No echo-location or chattering was picked up on the bat detectors. The roof voids were thoroughly inspected and were well sealed and in a good state of repair. Cobwebs were evident on joists and brickwork. During the external survey, two bat droppings were located on a windowsill on the southern elevation of the building. These are likely to be due to the foraging activity along this elevation.

4.2 No bats were seen to emerge from the building during the dusk survey. Four surveyors watched all elevations. Bats were recorded foraging along the boundaries of the site.

4.3 The building is considered to have low potential to support a bat roost. However, it should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size. Bats are able to roost is extremely small spaces, such as between roofing tiles. However, it is the opinion of the ecologist that the conversion of the building can be conducted without the need for further survey or for bat mitigation. If bats are found during any part of the development, **work must stop immediately** and an ecologist be contacted.

4.4 If any mature trees, along the northern or western boundaries, need to be felled or treated, a bat survey of any cavities will need to take place, as close to the timing of the tree works as possible. It is also recommended that any tree works are carried out outside of the bird nesting season, which is considered to be March – August. If this is not possible, a bird nest check will be required prior to tree works commencing.

4.5 It is recommended that the Japanese Knotweed is removed from the site prior to any building works commencing. It should not be allowed to spread throughout the site. There are many methods to remove Japanese Knotweed, including burial on site, digging out and removal off site or a course of herbicide application. A Japanese Knotweed management plan should be produced.