

DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AT THE FORMER WHITE LION PUBLIC HOUSE, BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE

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RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY

Bowden Hall, Bowden Lane, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire. SK6 6ND
Tel: 0161 465 8971

mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk
www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2017 by AJS Architecture to undertake a daytime bat survey of the former White Lion public house in Buxton. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the renovation of the property into residential dwellings.
- 1.2 The White Lion is located off Holker Road, Buxton, Derbyshire (O.S. grid reference: SK0613673566). The development site comprises a former public house building, including a large extension to the rear and an attached shippon and garages. The property is currently unoccupied.
- 1.3 The site is surrounded by similar residential and commercial properties, and sits adjacent to the Spring Gardens shopping precinct. The site is enclosed by development, offering limited commuting and foraging opportunities for bats.
- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the structure at the former White Lion will be intrusive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the property.
- 1.5 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environmental Damage Regulations 2009. It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost whether bats are present or not.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the former White Lion public house was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present within the buildings.
- 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.
- 2.3 The buildings were also 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.
- 2.4 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and an endoscope were used to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.

Personnel and Timing

- 2.5 Joel Hacking carried out the daytime bat survey on the 11th October 2017. Joel is an experienced bat worker, fully trained in protected species surveys, and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Reference: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather on the day of the survey was overcast dry and mild.

Survey constraints

- 2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The roof void was fully accessible. There were negligible constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

FORMER PUBLIC HOUSE BUILDING AND REAR EXTENSION

External Survey

- 3.1 The former White Lion pub is constructed from stone, and has multiple pitched and tiled roofs. There is a large extension to the rear also with a pitched roof. All the buildings external stonework is complete, and showing no areas of major damage or missing mortar (see Photograph 1). The stone chimney stacks are complete and intact. The window and door frames are sealed to the stonework. The stone window lintels area complete and without cracks or gaps that bats could exploit. Parts of the exterior are rendered (see Photograph 2) which is complete and without cracks.



Photograph 1 showing the side elevation of the property



Photograph 2 showing the front elevation of the property

- 3.2 All the roof tiles are in position and flush to one another (see Photograph 3). The ridge riles are complete, with no major gaps under any of the tiles that bats are likely to exploit. The lead flashing at the base of the chimney stack and where the roof meets the external stonework is flattened and does not appear to provide a suitable bat roosting cavity. Wooden bargeboards exist around the edges of the roof. The bargeboards are entirely flush to the external stonework, and do not provide suitable bat roosting space nor entry into the property interior.



Photograph 3 showing the roof of the former public house

- 3.3 The rear extension is in a similar state of repair with all stonework and mortar intact. The roof is complete with only minor damage to some of the tiles (see Photograph 4). The extension appears well-sealed from the exterior. The gable ends are sealed. Negligible roosting opportunities exist in the extension exterior. Attached to the rear extension is a small storage building (see Photograph 5). The exterior stone and brickwork is complete. The small pitched roof is complete with all tiles present. The storage building appears well-sealed. Negligible roosting opportunities exist for bats to enter the building.



Photograph 4 showing the roof of the attached rear extension



Photograph 5 showing the exterior of the small storage building attached to the rear extension

Internal Survey

- 3.4 Internally, the main former public house building no longer has a roof void, with all the property ceilings now absent (see Photographs 6 and 7). Internal works have been carried out in recent years. All of the roofing was inspected internally and found to be complete and in good material condition. Most of the roof is unlined with all tiling mortar complete. All of the rooms are well-lit. The wooden roof support beams are without gaps or cracks that bats could exploit. All the internal stonework is complete and without suitable bat roosting cavities. Many of the windows and lintels are cobwebbed, suggesting no recent bat access. No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, was found in the property interior.



Photograph 6 showing the timber beams in the roof void



Photograph 7 showing the upper floors with removed ceilings

- 3.5 The rear extension does not have a roof void and is plaster boarded throughout (see Photograph 8). The interior room is well-lit, and offers no suitable bat roosting habitat. No evidence of bat activity was found in rear extension.



Photograph 8 showing the interior of the rear extension

SHIPPON AND GARAGES

External Survey

- 3.9 Attached to the main former public house building is a shippon with attached garages. The shippon external stonework is complete, with no missing stones or cavities in the mortar. The roof edging mortar is complete (see Photograph 9). The door frames are sealed to the stonework. The stone window lintels are complete and without cracks.



Photograph 9 showing the exterior of the shippon

- 3.10 The shippon roof is in good material condition, with all roof and ridge tiles in position. The lead flashing is complete and flattened. The wooden bargeboards are flush to the external stonework. No potential

points of entry could be located, and negligible bat roosting opportunities exist in the shippon exterior.



Photograph 10 showing the roof of the shippon

- 3.11 The attached garages are in a similar state of repair (see Photograph 11). The roof is complete, with only one small slipped tile, but the gap is shallow and does not appear to lead into the garage interior. The garage doors are complete, and the frames are sealed to the stonework. Negligible bat roosting opportunities exist in the garage exterior.



Photograph 11 showing the exterior of the garages

Internal Survey

- 3.12 The shippon has one large roof void. The wooden roof beams are complete and without gaps or cracks. The roof is lined throughout with no tears in the lining (see Photograph 12). The roof void is not insulated. No daylight was visible at the roof edges suggesting the roof void is well-sealed. No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings was found in the shippon roof void.



Photograph 12 showing the roof void of the shippon

- 3.13 The garages do not have a roof void (see Photograph 13). The roof is lined throughout, with no tears in the lining. The roof beams are complete, and cobwebbed throughout. The gable walls are without areas of damage or missing mortar. No evidence of bat activity was found in the garages.



Photograph 13 showing the interior of the garages

Surrounding Land

- 3.14 The buildings are surrounded by hardstanding. No mature trees exist on the site. No evidence of protected species could be located on the entire site. The proposals do not affect any habitat of ecological value.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at the former White Lion public house site. The buildings are in good material condition. No suitable bat roosting cavities were found internally or externally upon full inspection. The roofing on all the buildings are complete and well-sealed. Given the results of the survey, the building is considered to offer **negligible bat roost suitability**.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the development can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the structure to support bats. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.
- 4.3 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged, for example.
- 4.4 **If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance.** This can be Rachel Hacking Ecology (0161 465 8971) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, were found within the buildings.

REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

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