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# DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

## LAND ADJACENT TO 1 MELLOR ROAD, NEW MILLS, DERBYSHIRE

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**RACHEL  
HACKING  
ECOLOGY**

Bowden Hall,  
Bowden Lane,  
Marple, Stockport  
SK6 6ND  
0161 465 8971

[www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk](http://www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk)  
[mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk](mailto:mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk)



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2021 by Wellfield Property Limited, via A.E. Planning Consultants, to undertake a daytime bat survey of a structure on land adjacent to 1 Mellor Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire (O.S. grid reference: SK 00216 86136 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a detached shed surrounded by hardstanding and scattered scrub. The site is in a semi-rural location, nearby to other residential properties and backs onto open agricultural land.

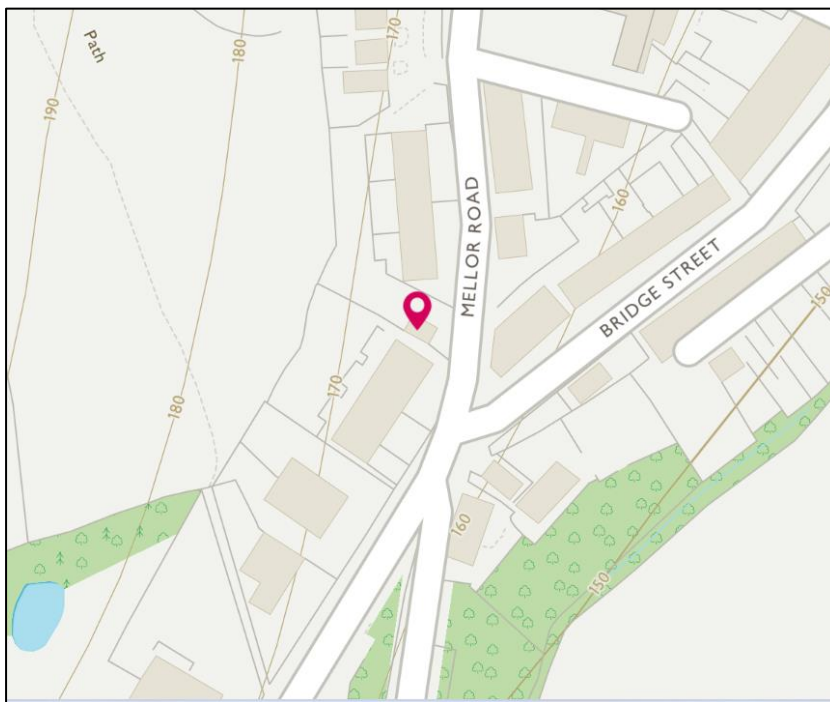


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

### Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the shed and the construction of a residential dwelling.

### Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

### Legal Context

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the building.
- 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. An internal survey was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.3 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, an endoscope and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats.

### Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Joel is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (ref: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was mild and dry.

### Survey Constraints

- 2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The property was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



## 3.0 RESULTS

### Site Description

- 3.1 The land adjacent to 1 Mellor Road consists of a detached shed and an open space of hardstanding with scattered scrub and overgrown amenity grassland.

### Shed

- 3.2 The shed exterior is clad with timber panels. The timber panels are complete, though showing signs of disrepair. The window and door frames are in position (see Photographs 1 and 2). All gaps were searched with an endoscope and no evidence of bat usage was found.



*Photograph 1 showing the exterior of the shed on the site*



*Photograph 2 showing the rear and side of the shed*

- 3.3 The roof of the shed is constructed from a variety of materials. The roof at the front of the property has sunk. The sheet-metal in the centre of the shed is not flush to one another and is raised in places. The rear of the roof is lined and appears to be in relatively good condition (see Photograph 3).



*Photograph 3 showing roof at the centre and the rear of the shed*

- 3.4 Internally, the shed does not support a roof void (see Photograph 4). The building does not contain any insulation. The roof joists are in poor condition and are rotting in places (see Photograph 5). They are damp and offer no suitable bat roosting cavities. The ceiling is collapsing in places (see Photograph 6). The roof and walls are not sealed, making the interior cold, draughty and well-lit (see Photograph 7). No evidence of bat activity was found inside the shed and no suitable bat roosting cavities were found. No evidence of nesting birds was found.





*Photograph 4 showing the interior of the shed*



*Photograph 5 showing the damaged roof joists*





*Photograph 6 showing the ceiling*



*Photograph 7 showing the state of the walls*

### Surrounding Land

- 3.5 The land on the site comprises of overgrown amenity grassland, scattered scrub, and hardstanding (see Photograph 8). No evidence of other protected species, such as Badger, could be found on the site. No mature trees exist on site.



*Photograph 8 showing the grassland and hardstanding on site*



## 4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found within the shed on land adjacent to 1 Mellor Road, New Mills. The small shed on the site offers no suitable bat roosting cavities. It is dilapidated, damp throughout and well-lit inside. The construction materials offer poor thermal capacity. Given the results of the survey, the property 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 building 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.
- 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 building.
- 4.6 The site offers negligible ecological value and no habitats exist on site that could support protected species. The development should aim to increase the ecological value of the site and this can be easily achieved through the planting of a variety of flowering species and the provision of a bird and/or bat box on the new property.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

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