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# DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

## ECCLESTON HOUSE & ASPINALL HOUSE, PRESCOT, LIVERPOOL

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Remstone Property Management Limited to undertake a daytime bat survey at Eccleston House and Aspinall House, both on Aspinall Street, Prescott, Liverpool (O.S. grid reference: SJ 46819 92692 - see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises two flat-roofed single-storey structures, joined by a small link structure. The site is situated south of the A57 and approximately 150m north of Cables shopping park. It is in an urban setting, surrounded by buildings, car parks and busy roads, with limited suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat.



Figure 1 showing the location of the two structures (plan courtesy of Owen Ellis Architects)

### Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the two buildings and the construction of 18no. flats.

### 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 Sam Harmer (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Sam is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (ref: 2020-49406-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was cold and dry.

### Survey Constraints

- 2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The property was mostly accessible with only part of the exterior to the rear difficult to access due to dense scrub.



## 3.0 RESULTS

### Site Description

- 3.1 Both Eccleston House and Aspinall House are currently used as offices. There is parking to the north and to the south of the buildings, and both have separate entrances but with a small hallway joining them. In front of the buildings is a patch of amenity grassland, and to the rear is a strip of scrub. The buildings are described separately below as their structures are different.

### Eccleston House

- 3.2 Eccleston House is a single-storey, steel-framed building, constructed from wooden panelling, which is moderately degraded with peeling paint and rotten wood found throughout the exterior. The windows and doors are all intact and flush to the external panels. The building has a flat, felted roof which is in good condition, with minimal damage to, or lifting of, the felt lining. While the outside of the building is generally well sealed, there are a number of air vents found on all sides (see Photograph 1). These gaps were inspected for droppings and an endoscope was used to probe internally for bat evidence. Due to lack of bat evidence and a large amount of built-up debris such as dust and spider webs, the ventilation gaps appear to be unused by bats.



*Photograph 1 showing the front elevation of the building*

- 3.3 In places, a wooden lip/overhang exists (see Photographs 2 and 3). This was thoroughly inspected and found to be flush to the other panels and damp. No evidence of bat activity was found on the property exterior.



*Photograph 2 showing the side elevation*



*Photograph 3 showing the rear of Eccleston House*

- 3.4 Internally, the building is divided into rooms, which are well lit and in use (see Photograph 4). A floating ceiling exists, which houses lighting, and this lies very close to the flat roof. No roof voids exist. Upon lifting a ceiling tile, no daylight was visible in the small gap. No evidence of bat activity was found within Eccleston House.





*Photograph 4 showing an internal room at Eccleston House*

### Aspinall House

- 3.5 Aspinall House is a single-storey building constructed from brick (see Photograph 5). The external brickwork is in excellent condition, with no missing mortar or bricks. The windows are intact and the window and door frames are flush to the brickwork. It has a flat, felted roof which is in good condition (see Photograph 6). The stone lintels at the roof edges are intact. The building is well sealed, with no notable fissures or cracks leading to cavities and no evidence of bat activity was found externally.



*Photograph 5 showing Aspinall House*



*Photograph 6 showing the roof of Aspinall House*

- 3.6 Inside, the building is divided into offices, with high ceilings and no roof voids (see Photograph 7). Skylights exist across the roof. The rooms are well lit and well sealed. Accessed externally is a boiler room that provides access to the roof. This room is partially open to the elements due to a grille on the door. Inside, it is well sealed with no bat roosting opportunities (see Photograph 8). No evidence of bat activity was found within Aspinall House.



*Photograph 7 showing part of the interior of Aspinall House*



*Photograph 8 showing the interior of the boiler room*



## 4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found in either Eccleston House or Aspinall House. The interiors of both buildings are well sealed, well lit and in use. The exteriors are well-sealed, with intact flat roofs. No roof voids exist internally in either building. The habitats immediately surrounding the site are not considered to be favourable for bats due to minimal foraging opportunities and limited connectivity to the wider landscape. Given these results, both Eccleston House and Aspinall House are 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 buildings 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, for example with roof felt lifted rather than dragged.
- 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, was found within the buildings.
- 4.6 In order to enhance the biodiversity value of the site, it is recommended that two integrated bird boxes are incorporated into the new building.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

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