

Brewery House, 5 Netherly Road,
Knowsley

Bat Survey Report

2024



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Client	Smith Young
Project Title	Brewery House, 5 Netherley Road, Knowsley
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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at Brewery House, 5 Netherley Road, Tarbock Green, Knowsley, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the status of roosting bats at the site 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 supports a day roost for a small number of Common Pipistrelle. Previously recorded evidence indicates the site also supports a feeding perch for Brown Long-eared bat. These species are common and widespread and the roosts are important at the site level.

Outcomes

A mitigation licence is required to avoid the risk of an offence. Mitigation measures will ensure risk of harm to bats is minimised and roosting opportunities are maintained in the long term.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by New Smart Homes via Smith Young to carry out bat presence/absence survey of the barn at Brewery House, 5 Netherley Road, Tarbock Green, Knowsley, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 46023 87687 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site courtesy of Bing Maps

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application (ref. 23/02740/FUL) for the refurbishment and change of use from agricultural use to children's care facility together with associated training and staff facilities (use class c2 residential institutions).

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.3 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd conducted an Ecological Appraisal of the site in November 2023¹. The building was identified as offering potential to support roosting bats.

¹ Ecological Appraisal, Brewery House, 5 Netherley Road, Knowsley_2023_Rachel Hacking Ecology

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake a bat presence/absence survey.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

- 1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to establish the status of roosting bats at the site and inform mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Presence/Absence Surveys

2.1.1 Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines². The surveys were undertaken by three surveyors with two Nightfox Whisker infra-red cameras to ensure complete visual coverage of the building. The emergence surveys began at least 15 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 90 minutes after sunset. The surveyors used Echometer Touch 2 Pro, Batlogger M2 and Anabat Scout bat detectors to record ultrasonic bat calls.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

2.2.1 Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance³.

2.3 Site Visit Information

Survey Details

2.3.1 The details of each survey and each surveyor are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey details			
Date (sunset)	Start	End	Surveyors (licence numbers)
22/07/24 (21:22)	21:07 Dry, overcast, still, 16°C.	22:52 Dry, overcast, still, 16°C.	Matthew Bottomley, Joel Crosswaite, and Joe Samuels. All surveyors are appropriately trained in the undertaking of bat presence / absence surveys.
12/08/24 (20:44)	20:29 Dry, partly cloudy, still, 18°C	22:14 Dry, overcast, still, 17 °C	Mark Ashton, Joel Crosswaite, and Joe Samuels. All surveyors are appropriately trained in the undertaking of bat presence / absence surveys.

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

³ 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.



2.3.2 The locations of surveyors and infra-red cameras are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 showing the surveyors, cameras, and field-of-view

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 No constraints were present during the survey – the site was fully accessible, all elevations were visible and conditions were appropriate for survey.

3.2 Habitat Appraisal

- 3.2.1 The site is located in a semi-rural area. The immediate site comprises amenity grassland, hedgerows, and scattered trees. Offsite, patches of broadleaved/mixed woodland are present within 200m, providing good quality bat foraging habitat.

3.3 Dusk Emergence Survey

Survey 1

- 3.3.1 Five emergences of Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were recorded from a broken window on the east facing elevation were recorded between 21:28 and 22:02. The first two emerging bats re-entered the building. It is possible the following emergences included these two individuals. Upon inspection of the building towards the end of the survey, two Common Pipistrelles were observed within the building.
- 3.3.2 Common Pipistrelle were observed regularly foraging along the east and northeast of the building between 21:28 and 22:36
- 3.3.3 A single foraging Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and one commuting Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* was observed at 21:50 and 22:02 respectively.
- 3.3.4 Natterer's Bat *Myotis nattereri* was recorded at 21:48 and 22:10, but not seen.

Survey 2

- 3.3.5 Common Pipistrelle were observed sporadically foraging and commuting along the east side of the building between 21:10 and 22:02.
- 3.3.6 Two Common Pipistrelle were recorded emerging and then re-entering the building from the same window used during the first survey at 21:15 and 21:20. No other bats were observed within the building.
- 3.3.7 Two Noctules were recorded but not seen at 21:13 and 21:48.



- 3.3.8 Individual Natterer's bat and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* were recorded but not seen at 21:26 and 21:40 respectively.



4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

- 4.1.1 The survey results indicate that the building on site is in use as a day roost for small numbers of Common Pipistrelle bat.
- 4.1.2 Evidence recorded during the preliminary survey indicates the site is also used as a feeding perch by Brown Long-eared bat.
- 4.1.3 Both these species are common and widespread and the roosts are of importance at the site level.
- 4.1.4 Surveys were robust and a high level of confidence is placed in the results and the characterisation of bat usage of the site.

4.2 Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 In the absence of mitigation, the proposed development could result in small numbers of bats being killed or injured, should they be present. A day roost and a feeding perch will be destroyed.



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 No further surveys are required.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 A licence is required before work is undertaken at the site to avoid the risk of an offence. The site meets the criteria for registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence. Licensed mitigation measures will include:

- Contractors to be briefed on the legal status of bats, where they may be encountered and what to do should they find a bat during works.
- Prior to works with the potential to affect bats (e.g. pointing gaps in brickwork and re-roofing works) a licensed ecologist will undertake a detailed inspection to identify whether any bats are present.
- Any bats present will be captured by the licensed ecologist and transferred to a bat box installed on a suitable nearby tree or building.
- Works to be undertaken with due caution and if a bat is encountered, work to stop in that area until the licensed ecologist can attend. All works will be supervised by the licensed ecologist.
- Roosting opportunities to be maintained by either retaining suitable roosting features or installing crevice-type bat boxes on completion.

5.3 Enhancement Opportunities

- 5.3.1 The proposed development offers an opportunity to enhance the value of the site for bats. Integral bat boxes could be installed within the fabric of the building to enhance roosting opportunities. Bat boxes should be installed on southeast to southwest elevations at eaves height, but not directly above windows or doorways.

General Precautions

- 5.3.2 This report is considered to be valid for two years for planning purposes. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.
- 5.3.3 For licensing purposes, this report is valid until May 2025. Licence applications generally require survey data from the current or most recent survey season.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) 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 (i.e. Natural England) prior to work commencing.

