

**BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY AT
WESTMINSTER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
GWERSYLLT, WREXHAM**

2014



RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY

52 Church Lane, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 7AW

Tel: 0161 427 3548 Mob: 07734 296424

mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk

www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2014 by Whitley Brothers to undertake a bat activity survey of several commercial buildings at Westminster Industrial Estate, Gwersyllt, Wrexham (O.S grid reference: SJ315538). The site will be the subject of a planning application to demolish the existing commercial properties and provide a new residential development.
- 1.2 Prior to the appointment of Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken by J W Ecological Ltd which was based on a site survey undertaken on the 31st July 2014. The report stated that the commercial properties had low potential to support roosting bats and recommended that a single dusk or dawn survey should be undertaken of the site to confirm absence of bats roosting in the site buildings.
- 1.3 Westminster Industrial Estate is bound by a belt of woodland planting surrounding the site and in the immediate landscape residential developments to the east and west of the site, commercial properties to the south and green space to the north.
- 1.4 There are six existing commercial properties which will be subject to planning permission, the properties are described as follows (taken from descriptions in J W Ecological report and from RHE visit):
 - Building 1 is a commercial building constructed of breeze block and corrugated sheet.
 - Building 2 is a single-storey office/workshop building constructed of prefabricated panels and with a flat roof. The building has fascia boards around the edge of the roof.
 - Building 3 is a large single-storey industrial building constructed of corrugated steel sheet.
 - Building 4 is a small single-storey brick building with a dilapidated pitched steel sheet roof.
 - Building 5 is a large workshop building constructed of brick and corrugated sheet with a pitched corrugated sheet roof. The building is open to the roof on the interior.
 - Building 6 is a small single-storey brick office building with a flat felt roof. The building has timber fascia boards around the edge of the roof.
- 1.5 Following liaison with Wrexham Borough Council's Nature Conservation Officer, Emma Broad, it was agreed that a single dusk survey in September at the site would suffice to determine if the buildings were used by bats.

- 1.6 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) and included on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost whether or not there are bats present. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration in planning.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A site walkover and further external inspection of the buildings was undertaken on the 25th September 2014 and it was considered that buildings one and five had features which were likely to be used by roosting bats, therefore the emergence survey concentrated on these buildings.
- 2.2 A single dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 25th September 2014. Although this is a sub-optimal time of year to undertake activity surveys, the weather in September 2014 was particularly warm and dry and bats have been active throughout the month.
- 2.3 For the emergence survey two surveyors monitored Building 1 and three surveyors monitored Building 5 (see Photograph 1). The surveys began 30 minutes before dusk and continued for 90 minutes after dusk. Further to this, each surveyor used an Anabat bat detector or Batbox Griffin to record the echolocations of any emerging bats so that the calls could later be identified to species or genus level.



Photograph 1 showing buildings and approximate positions of surveyors (yellow stars) during emergence survey

Timing and Personnel

- 2.4 The emergence survey was undertaken on 25th September 2014, by Anthony Nickson, Andy Harmer, Joel Hacking, Ivor Edwards and Sam Harmer. All surveyors are experienced in undertaking emergence surveys.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 The results of the emergence survey are as follows:

Sunset at 19:03

Time	Notes
19:31	First bat (Common Pipistrelle) recorded foraging along site boundary west of building five
19:42	Common Pipistrelle recorded foraging along site boundary north and east of building one

3.2 No bats were observed emerging from either of the buildings during the emergence survey. Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats were frequently recorded foraging along the belt of woodland planting surrounding the site.

3.3 The weather during the survey was recorded and is presented in the following table:

Date	Weather
25 September 2014	Low of 11°C, dry and calm

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No bats were observed emerging from either Building 1 or Building 5 during the emergence survey undertaken on the 25th September 2014. This suggests that the neither of the buildings are presently supporting roosting bats.
- 4.2 It is the author's opinion that the redevelopment of the site should proceed as the surveys suggests there should be no significant concerns or constraints in relation to roosting bats in the proposals and there is no requirement for an EPS licence in respect of bats.
- 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 gaps between corrugated asbestos cement roofing sheets.
- 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 427 3548) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).
- 4.5 Due to the presence of foraging Common Pipistrelle bats along the boundary of the site it is recommended that any proposed lighting as part of the new development and especially along tree lines complies with the requirements of the principles and design considerations outlined in the Bat Conservation Trust's artificial lighting and wildlife interim guidance. This includes no direct lighting of tree belts or hedgerows or other linear landscape feature which bats may use to forage along.

REFERENCES

Hundt, L. 2012. *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust.

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

Westminster Industrial Estate, Gwersyllt Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey,
J W Ecological Ltd, 25/08/2014