DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

83 MELLOR BROW, MELLOR, BLACKBURN

NOVEMBER 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Campbell Driver Partnership to undertake a daytime bat survey of a dwelling and detached garage at 83 Mellor Brow ("the site"). The site is situated off Mellor Brow, Mellor, Blackburn (O.S. grid reference: SD 64393 31064 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a two-storey dwelling with a single-storey extension. The detached garage is single-storey and resides in the rear garden space. The site is surrounded by residential development and agricultural land in all directions. In a wider context, the village of Mellor lies in a semi-rural setting with agricultural land and larger cities and towns surrounding the village being situated between the city of Preston and town of Blackburn. The habitats immediately surrounding the site offer suitable bat foraging and commuting habitats.

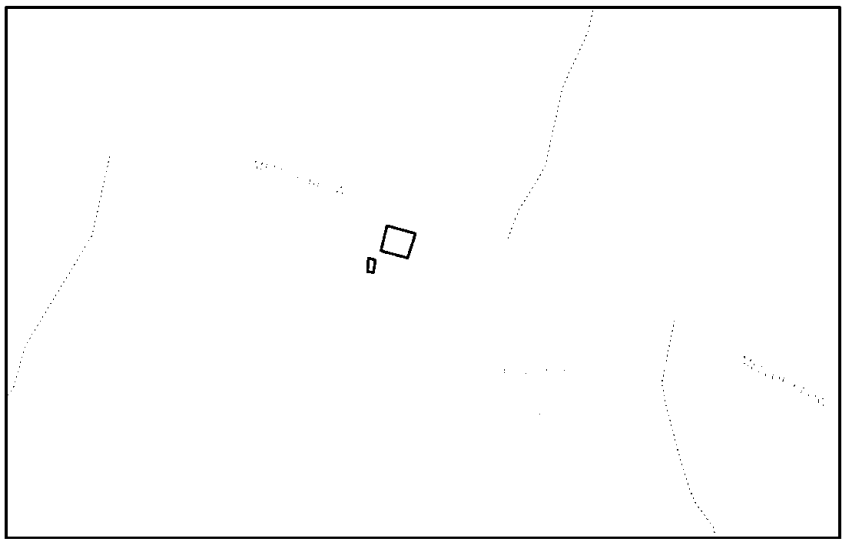


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the refurbishment of the existing building and demolition and erection of a new warm roof.

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 is 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 (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 of the roof void was not possible on the day of survey due to roof structural concerns. All other internal spaces were subject to survey, with particular focus on gaps in walls and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.

2.3 A pair of close-focusing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats externally.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

2.4 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on 1st November 2022. Ben is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys. Ben holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Licence for bats (licence ref: 2020-48541-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and dry.

Survey Constraints

2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. Full access was available to all areas of the building and garage. There were no constraints to the survey.

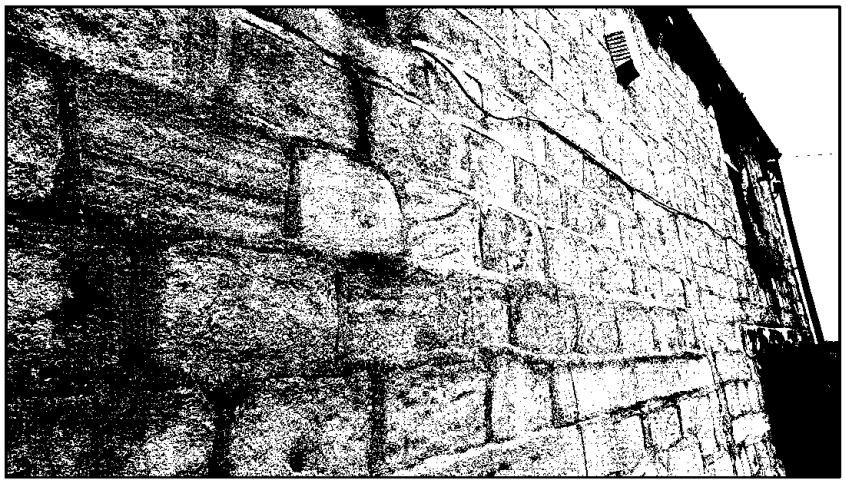
3.0 DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

Site Description

3.1 The site contains a two-storey dwelling with a double pitched tiled roof and a single-storey detached garage with a flat roof lined with felt. The dwelling is an end terraced property and contains a single-storey extension on its gable. The building is constructed of traditional stonework and mortar and is adorned in render on the gable and rear elevations. The garage is constructed from prefabricated concrete and is adorned by pebble-dashed rendering on the exterior. The roof of the garage contains no roof void and is flat and covered in bryophyte covered felt. The dwelling and garage are surrounded by hardstanding paths around the perimeter with car parking.

External Assessment (Main Dwelling)

3.2 The external stonework on the front elevation is in excellent condition with no evidence of crumbling mortar or crevices for bats to exploit (see Photograph 1). The render on the gable and rear elevation is in moderate condition with a large area of missing render on the rear elevation. The missing render does not lead to any cavities which are exploitable by bats, however (see Photograph 2).

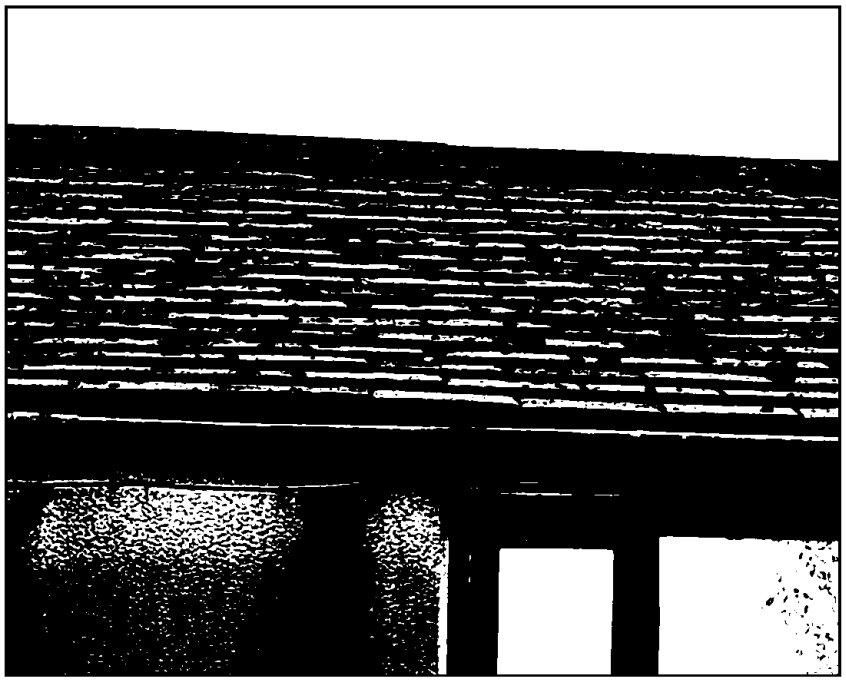


Photograph 1 showing the stonework

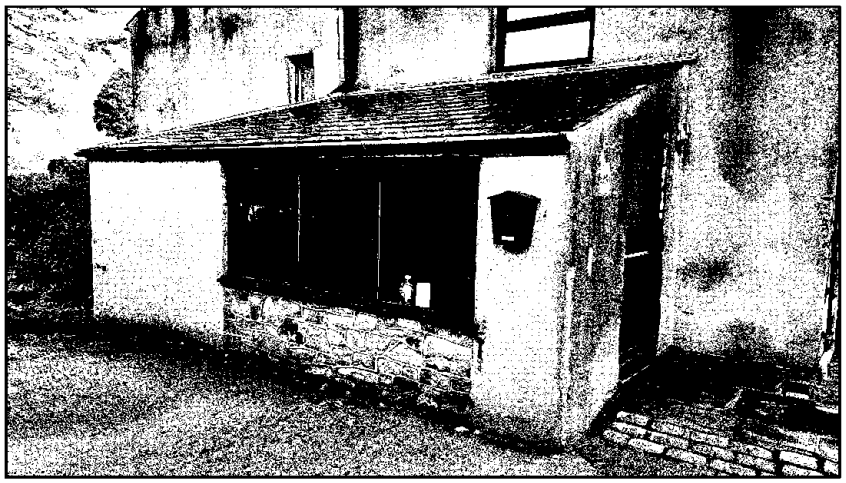
Photograph 2 showing the render with missing section

3.3 The wooden framed windows and doors are in good condition and fitted tight to the surrounding masonry (see Photograph 3). The slate tiled double pitched roof appears to be in good condition with no missing or slipped tiles or exploitable spaces between them (see Photograph 4). The ridge tiles on the roof appear to be in good condition, with no missing or slipped tiles (visible in Photograph 4 below). The roof of the single-story extension is constructed from slate tiles (see Photograph 5). The roof of the extension is in good condition and provides no exploitable spaces for bats. Lead flashing is present around the edge of the extension (visible in Photograph 5 below) and at the roof valleys and base of the chimney stack (see Photograph 6). This is intact and well-sealed to the surrounding tiling/render.

Photograph 3 showing a window



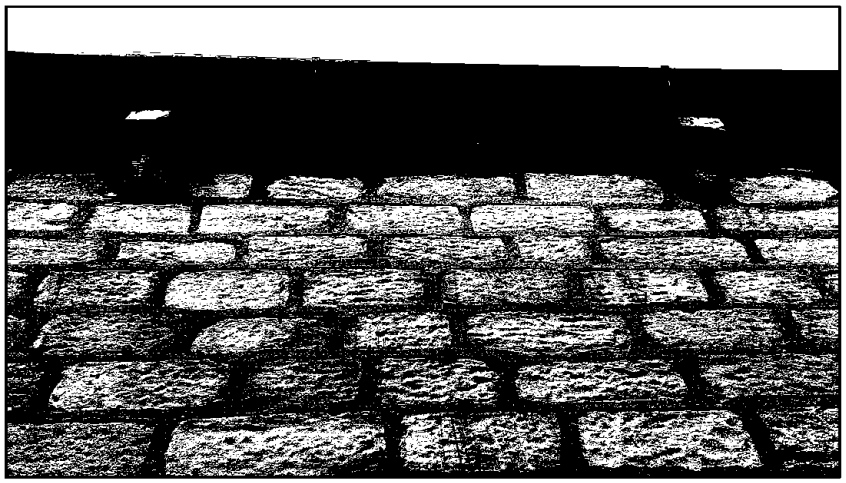
Photograph 4 showing a section of the roof



Photograph 5 showing the single-storey extension

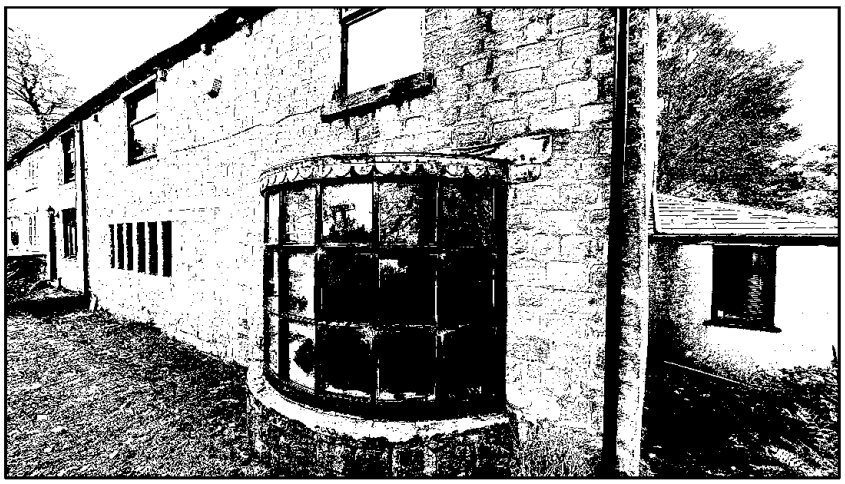
Photograph 6 showing the lead flashing at the base of the chimney stack

3.4 The soffits and bargeboards are in good condition but do not appear tightly sealed to the surrounding masonry (see Photograph 7). There is a large space between the bargeboards and masonry which appears wide and unlikely to offer suitable roosting opportunities.



Photograph 7 showing the bargeboards

3.5 Bay windows are present on the front and rear elevations of the dwelling (see Photograph 8). The window frames of the bay windows are well-sealed to the surrounding masonry and render. Lead flashing is present at the top of the bay windows and masonry/render. This is in moderate condition but does not offer exploitable spaces for bats (see Photograph 9).



Photograph 8 showing a bay window

Photograph 9 showing the lead flashing on the rear bay window

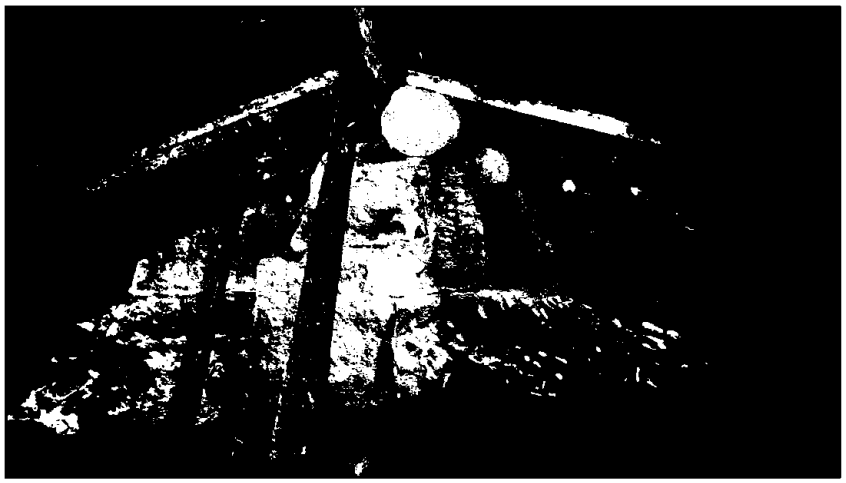
Internal Assessment (Main Dwelling)

3.6 The interior of the dwelling contains well-lit, unfinished spaces, with stripped-out ceilings and walls (see Photograph 10). The stripped-out ceilings offer direct access to the property for bats. No evidence of bat use in the property was found. The unfinished nature of the property provides an airy and cold space unfavoured by roosting bats. The ceiling joists are in good condition with no cracks present exploitable by bats (visible in Photograph 10 below).

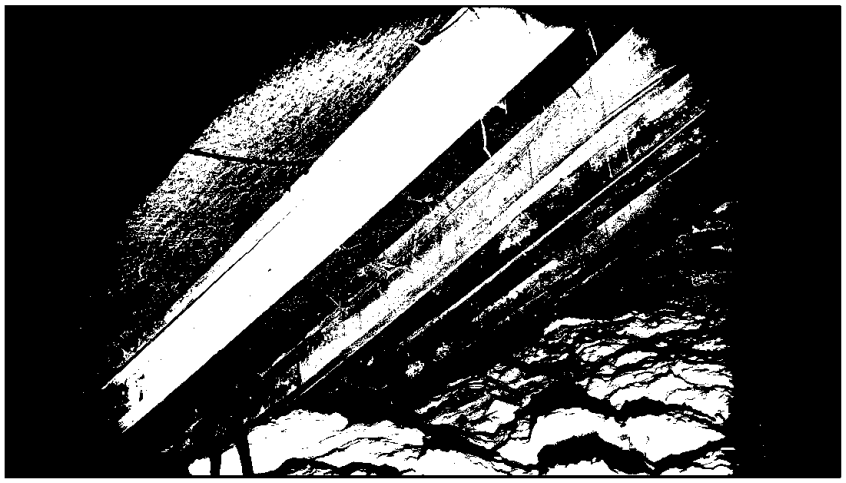
Photograph 10 showing the stripped-out ceilings

3.7 The roof void of the dwelling is in good condition. The wooden roof beams and joists are in good condition with no cracks for bats to exploit (see Photograph 11). The exposed brickwork is sealed with no daylight visible from outside. There are small areas on the brickwork where there is missing mortar, but no evidence of bats found (see Photograph 12). The roof lining is in good condition with no tears present (see Photograph 13). The void is heavily insulated with no evidence of roosting bats such as feeding remains or droppings found.

Photograph 11 showing the roof joists



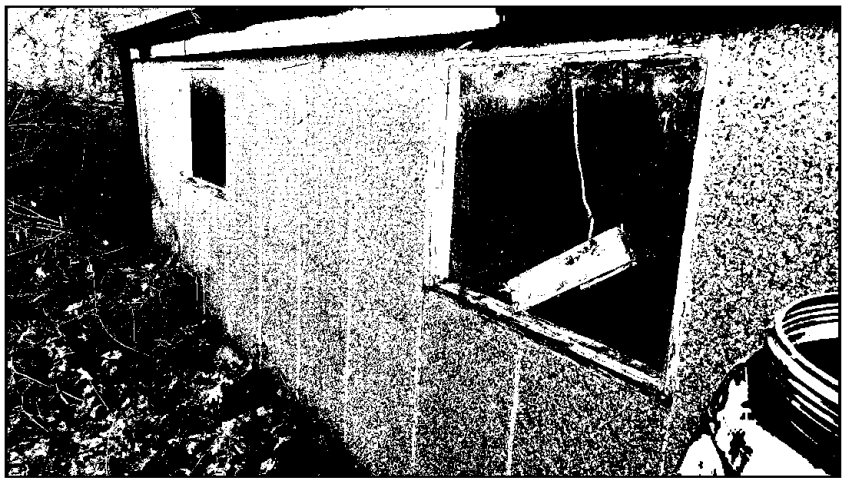
Photograph 12 showing an interior space of the single-storey extension



Photograph 13 showing the roof lining

External Assessment (Garage)

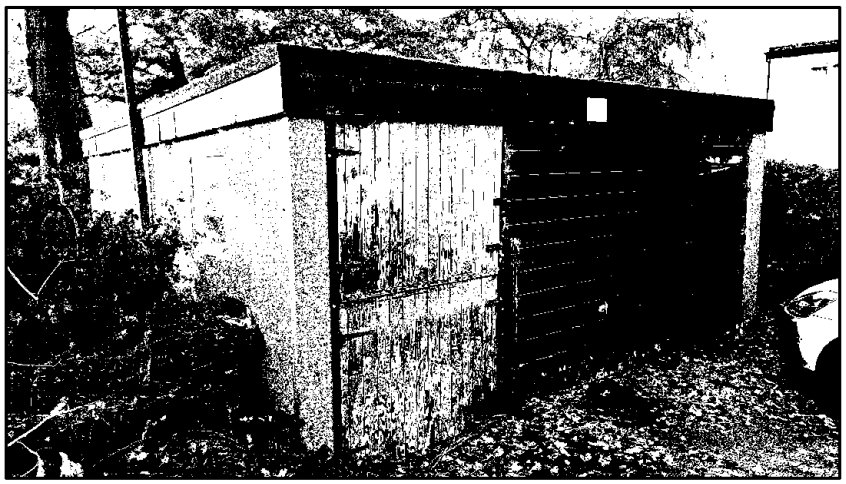
3.8 The pebble dashed exterior render of the garage is in good condition with no missing render or crevices for bats to exploit (see Photograph 14). The flat roof is lined with felt and covered in bryophytes (see Photograph 15). The coverage of bryophytes is not considered dense enough for a bat roost.



Photograph 14 showing the exterior of the garage

Photograph 15 showing the roof of the garage

3.9 The wooden framed windows are in moderate condition with paint peeling on some areas of the frame (visible in Photograph 14 above). The frames are flush to the surrounding render however, offering no potential access for bats. The garage door is similarly in good condition and is flush to the surrounding render (see Photograph 16).



Photograph 16 showing the garage doors

3.10 Bargeboards are present around the roof edges and lie flush to the roofing felt (visible in Photograph 16 above). Small exploitable spaces are present between the bargeboards and external rendering (see Photograph 17). These areas were inspected, and no evidence of bat use was found.

Photograph 17 showing the space under the bargeboards

Internal Assessment (Garage)

3.11 No roof void is present in the garage (see Photograph 17). The interior space is well-lit and contains a poor thermal capacity. The roof joists and ceiling boards are in good condition with no cracks or crevices bats could exploit (see Photograph 18). No evidence of use by bats such as feeding remains or droppings was found in the garage.

Photograph 17 showing the space under the bargeboards

Photograph 18 showing the ceiling boards and joists in the garage

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

4.1 No evidence of bat activity or occupancy was found during the external or internal survey of the main dwelling or detached garage. The building is in good condition and well-sealed. No potential roost features or access points were found. The flat roof of the garage results in no formal roof void space. Full access was possible all internal areas of the site so a thorough survey could be performed. It is considered unlikely that the site supports a bat roost of high conservation concern due to the absence of potential access points on both the dwelling and garage. The site is assessed as offering **negligible** potential to support roosting bats.

Recommendations

4.2 Whilst no further nocturnal surveys are considered necessary, as no access was available to inspect the roof void, it is recommended that a Precautionary Method Statement is followed during the proposed development.

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 roof tiles. Care should be taken during the roof strip, with tiles lifted off rather than dragged.

4.4 If during any stage of the 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 (0345 1300 228).

4.5 If works are delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.

5.0 REFERENCES

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