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Report Addendum – Update PRA at Mayfield Yard

Dear Toni,

An update Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of Mayfield Yard, Summerhill, LL11 4SR was undertaken on the 31st May 2024 by Keymar Wake (licenced agent on NRW bat licence S092545/1). Planning permission was granted for the alterations and extensions to a commercial premises in 2018 (P/2018/0187), and then the demolition of the existing buildings and outline development of two dwellings in 2019 (P/2019/0699). No works have been carried out at the site and re-application for planning permission has been submitted for latter proposal. As the previous bat surveys are now considered out of date, the planning authority responsed '*An addendum ecology report is needed as the one submitted is over two years old. Please also provide up to date photographs with the report*' (*Pers. Comms.* Ellie Jones Wrexham County Borough Council 15.05.24). The previous surveys were carried out in 2020 by Enfys Ecology (Report Ref: EE.688.LB) and found the open to garage to have negligible potential for bats, and the workshop to have low potential. This update report addendum is designed to be read alongside the original report and therefore full site descriptions will not be included.

Preliminary Roost Assessement (PRA)

The PRA comprised an inspection of the building for any signs of bats; these include droppings, feeding remains, and other indicative marks, plus features of potential use to bats such as crevices, cracks and other holes, and any potential access points into the building. High-powered torches were used to inspect any identified features, and an endoscope was used to investigate any gaps or crevices, (where appropriate). Both the interior and exterior of the buildings were examined.

The site comprised two adjoining buidlings, an open garage and a workshop building, as per the original report (EE.688.LB, Enfys Ecology 2020). Both buildings were still as described in the original report, in terms of design and construction. The condition of both buildings has diminished over time, particularly the roof of the workshop that was in a state of disrepair with large holes and was no longer watertight; the roof had been propped up by wooden supports to prevent collapse in the centre. The buildings as they currently stand are shown in Figure 1 below.



FIGURE 1.1: A+B) THE OPEN GARAGES AND EASTERN ELEVATION OF THE WORKSHOP; C)THE WESTERN ELEVATION OF THE WORKSHOP; D) INTERNAL AREA OF WORKSHOP SHOWING THE ROOF CAVING IN

The PRA showed the same results as the previous survey (EE.688.LB, Enfys Ecology 2020), with available access into both buildings for bats and birds, via the open elevation of the garage and gaps above doorways and holes in the roof of the workshop. Internally however, there were very limited potential roosting features (PRF's) for bats, with no available cracks, holes or crevices in the open garage and the environment being very light, draughty and exposed. The internal areas of the workshop were significantly darker, but had moderate airflow levels from the gaps and holes in the roof, and were extremely damp following water ingress from the roof and gaps in the tops of the walls. There were limited roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats in the form of a small number of gaps in the external brickwork, and space between the wooden beams and exposed slates on the underside of the roof; all of these PRF's were considered shallow, exposed and could be inspected with a torch. There was no evidence of bats in either building.

The buildings were accessible to birds and provided suitable nesting bird habitat. There were remnants of nest (characteristic of swallows) within the garage building. No birds were observed nesting in the buildings during the survey.

Conclusions and Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

Bats

As per the most recent Bat Conservation Trust's Guidelines (Collins, 2023), the site is considered to have negligle potential for bats. This is defined as '*No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats….defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering…'…This*

category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage…but it is unlikely that they actually would…'. While there is available access for bats into the buildings, the lack of suitable roosting features and environments within the buildings render them unlikely to host roosting bats. It can not be discounted that buildings could be used as night roost by free hanging bats such as brown long eared or lesser horseshoe, but there was limited connectivity to the site (as per EE.688.LB, Enfys Ecology 2020) and there was no evidence of bats having used the buildings in either the 2020 or 2024 surveys. The PRF's that were available could be fully inspected with a torch to determine they are unoccupied.

The proposed works will not have a negative impact on bat populations within the area. Bats are not using the buildings for roosting and the intended works will not affect any roosts in the neighbouring buildings or the neighbouring foraging areas for the bats. Therefore, no further surveys will be needed and a licence is not required; the works can be carried out at any time of year (subject to nesting bird constraints – see below).

Bats can move into a building at any time and the wider habitat was suitable for bats so they are likely active in the surrounding area; therefore, RAMs to reduce the risk to bats that may be in the area are detailed below:

- As there were some areas with limited potential for bats, an internal check and inspection of the PRF's will need to be carried out to ensure no bats are present before the roof removal and subsequent demolitions of the buildings are carried out.

- All roofing materials, including slates, fascias and bargeboards (where applicable) must be removed by hand. This must be done carefully, whilst at the same time checking behind the material for the presence of bats before fully removing it.

- The corrugated metal roof sheets must be removed by hand. The underside of the sheets should be checked before full removal, paying particular attention to where they meet the top of the wall and areas where they attached to the wooden roof structure.

If, in the unlikely event, bats are encountered at any point during any works, all works must immediately stop and a licenced ecologist must be called. A licence will then be required from Natural Resources Wales before works can continue.

Birds

As the buildings provided suitable nesting bird habitat and there was evidence of previous nesting activity, the demolitions should take place outside of the nesting bird season (which is March to September inclusive). If it proves necessary to work during the breeding season then a check must be carried out immediately prior to works starting (no more than 48 hours beforehand) to ensure that no active nests will be affected. If active nests are found then work must be delayed until all chicks have fledged.

Enhancements

In line with Planning Policy Wales, and following the Environment Wales Act (Section 6) and guidance provided in the recent letter by the Chief Planner in Wales, there is a requirement to ensure that **a net benefit for biodiversity** is provided in all application for planning in Wales; and applications are to be refused if they cannot show an overall increase in the provision for biodiversity.

To enhance the site for bats, at least two bat boxes (one on each proposed property) should be incorporated into the proposed development plans. Inbuilt bat boxes installed into the houses would be preferable as they are more protected, durable and require less maintenance, but external woodcrete or woodstone bat boxes can also be mounted within the site. They should be positioned as close to the eaves as possible, on southerly, easterly or westerly elevations, away from any doors or windows. The ecologist should advise on bat box design and locations.

To enhance the site for birds, and compensate for the loss of nesting habitat in the removal of the buildings, at least two bird boxes (one on each proposed property) should be installed within the site. Woodstone next boxes are more durable and require less maintenance than wooden boxes. The boxes should be erected on a northerly or easterly elevation, at least 3m high and not above any windows or doors

As the surrounding habitat is stuibale for swifts, the site should be enhanced by the provision of swift boxes. At least 2 multi-cavity swift nest boxes should be erected at least 5m high on the new builds; on the same elevation but at least 1m away from each other. They will need to be attached securely so as not to be moved by any strong winds. To increase the chances of swifts using the boxes they should contain an internal egg cup so the eggs do not move around within the box. There are different types of nest boxes available but the HabiSabi double swift box is recommended as it is multicavity and can be opened up to insert a nest cup before it is erected onto the wall. Ready-to-insert egg cups are available online; it is recommended that an egg cup is used in each of the two cavities of each of the nest boxes.

If there are any questions please do get in touch, I would be happy to help.

Kind regards,

Keymar Wake
Ecologist
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References:

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN - 978 - 1 - 7395126 - 0 - 6