

Preliminary Roost Assessment and Survey for Evidence of Nesting Wild Birds

at Tower View, Alma Road, Froncysyllte, LL20 7PY

March 2024

1 Introduction

With regard to the proposed redevelopment at Tower View, Alma Road Froncysyllte, LL20 7PY, ECO TECH Ecological Consultancy was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment in relation to bats and a check for nesting wild birds, in order to assess potential impact on, and legal obligations for, these species groups.

This report provides details of the method, results and conclusions of the requested assessment.

In summary, the works are understood to comprise refurbishment and extension of the existing dwelling and associated detached garage.

2 Survey Methodology

2.1 Method

General

The location of the buildings subject to survey and their immediate surrounds is shown on Map 1 below. The property is located at National Grid Reference SJ270412.

Bats

On the 8th March 2024, the buildings were subject to a preliminary roost assessment (PRA), including search for droppings and other signs of bat use (such as corpses or skeletons, oily marks from fur, and feeding remains). Binoculars, a high-power torch and an endoscope were used as required.

The surveyor was Robert Mileto who has 30 years of experience of bat survey.

The survey was undertaken essentially as per the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition), 2023 – "the guidelines."

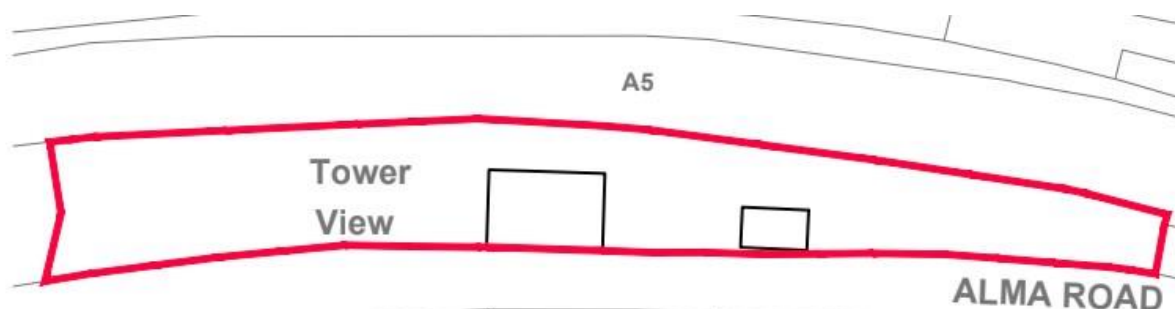
Wild Birds

A visual search for nests or signs of nesting was undertaken whilst undertaking the bat preliminary roost assessment.

2.2 Constraints to survey

No significant constraints to survey were encountered.

Map 1 Location of the buildings subject to assessment/survey (outlined in bold black, dwelling to left, detached garage to right)



3 Results

Bats

Preliminary roost assessment

Dwelling

The two-storey detached dwelling is primarily built of stone with some aspects fully rendered. It has two double pitched rooves, one with an east-west aspect, the other with a north-south aspect. Both are slated, but both have also been covered in plastic tarpaulins, tightly sealed with batons to the walls. It is understood that these tarpaulins have been in place for some time, estimated as since 2010. Two chimneys are also present, one brick, one stone - some of which is rendered. See photos 1 to 4.

The east-facing aspect has an L shaped single storey lean to that is built of stone, brick, timber and glazing with single pitch corrugated onduline type material and corrugated galvanised steel roofing, some of which has also been felted. See photos 4, 7 and 8.

Externally, the dwelling walls are in good condition with no significant cracks or gaps in the pointing. There are no soffits. The roof is effectively sealed against bat ingress by the tightly fitted tarpaulins. The chimneys are good condition with no missing mortar seen and the flashing around all of the chimney base appearing gap free.

No evidence of bats was seen on the outside of the dwelling at the time of survey.

Internally, the two loft spaces are 'cobwebby', showing no recent passage by flying bats has occurred. Below the slates there is no membrane. There was no visible light ingress. No evidence of bats was seen in the roof void at the time of survey. Given the good access for survey, lack of membrane, and the clear views of the ceiling tops, any bat droppings would have been very visible, had they been present. See photos 5 and 6.

Overall, the dwelling was considered to be of negligible potential for bat use, as per Table 4.1 of the guidelines. This was largely due it being mostly well maintained (walls and chimneys) and with no apparent ingress potential to the roof voids. The lean to were well lit and draughty and so also of negligible potential for bat use,

In keeping with the guidelines, given the building has been classified as having negligible suitability for bats, no further survey is required.

Detached garage

This is built of blocks with large timber doors. The roof is flat and felted. There are negligible opportunities for roosting on the outside of the garage and no evidence of bats was seen on its outside at the time of survey. See photos 1 and 9.

Internally, there is no loft space. The only possible ingress was a gap that was so tightly filled with vegetation that ingress was considered highly unlikely. No evidence of bats was seen inside the garage at the time of survey. Given the good access for survey any bat droppings would have been very visible, had they been present.

Overall, the garage was considered to be of negligible potential for bat use, as per Table 4.1 of the guidelines. This was largely due it being mostly well maintained (walls) and with no apparent ingress potential to the inside.

Wild Birds

No evidence of previous nesting was seen in either building.

Photos



Photo 1 – shows the east and north-facing elevation of the garage and the dwelling



Photo 2 – shows the west and north-facing elevations of the dwelling



Photo 3 – shows south-facing roof of the dwelling

Photos (cont.)



Photo 4 – shows the east-facing elevation of the dwelling with the lean-tos



Photo 5 – shows one of the two 'cobwebby' roof voids



Photo 6 – shows the second 'cobwebby' roof void

Photos (cont.)



Photo 7 – shows the corrugated 'onduline' like material roof of part of the lean to



Photo 8 – shows the corrugated galvanised steel roof of part of the lean to



Photo 9 shows the detached garage

4 Outline Legislative Background

Bats

The English government advice regarding legislation pertaining to bats can be found at the following webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences> (accessed March 2024). The same law applies to Wales.

Therein, the law is summarised as follows:

“You’re breaking the law if you do certain things including:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill bats
- damage or destroy a breeding or resting place
- obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places
- possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it’s in a structure or place of shelter or protection

Either or both of the following could happen if you’re found guilty of any offences:

- you could be sent to prison for up to 6 months
- you could get an unlimited fine.”

Birds

The English government advice regarding legislation pertaining to birds can be found at the following webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences> (accessed November 2023). The same law applies to Wales.

Therein, the law is summarised as follows:

“You’re breaking the law if you:

- intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds
- intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild bird’s nest while it’s being used or built
- intentionally take or destroy a wild bird’s egg
- possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of them, or their eggs
- sell wild birds or put them on display for sale
- use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds

...You could get an unlimited fine and up to 6 months in prison for each offence if you’re found guilty.”

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Bats

It is considered that the survey undertaken adequately established that buildings are unlikely to currently be used as a place of breeding, resting, shelter or protection by bats (=roost) and has negligible suitability for such use. Hence no significant impact or offence in regard to this species group is predicted if the proposal is permitted.

Given this, no mitigation is required. However:

- An informative may be appropriate suggesting due diligence by contractors during the works period. For example, in the very unlikely event that bats, or evidence of bats, are encountered during any part of the development, then works should cease immediately, or an offence may be caused. A consultant ecologist and/or Natural Resources Wales should be consulted before works recommence;
- Serious consideration should be given to the use of bituminous roofing felt that does not contain polypropylene/polyethylene filaments. Such filaments can be pulled out by roosting bats and pose an entanglement (and this death or injury) threat to bats. Non-bitumen-coated roofing membranes are not obligatory under any Building Regulations. Ventilation, regardless of the roofing felt used, is still required (see British Standard BS 5250:2011). See <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/things-to-consider-when-planning-works/roofing-membranes> for more information (accessed November 2023).

By way of enhancement and in keeping with local and national policies, one 'woodstone' bat box (or direct equivalent) should be provided in the locality of the application. An example can be found [here](#) (accessed November 2023). Further information about the erection of boxes can be found [here](#) (accessed November 2023).

5.2 Wild Birds

It is considered that the survey undertaken adequately established that buildings are unlikely to currently be used as a nesting site for wild birds

Given this, no mitigation is required. However:

- An informative may be appropriate suggesting due diligence by contractors during the works period. For example, in the very unlikely event that an active wild bird nest is encountered during any part of the development, then works should cease immediately, or an offence may be caused. A consultant ecologist and/or Natural Resources Wales should be consulted before works recommence;
- One 'woodstone' sparrow terrace (or direct equivalent) should be provided in the locality of the application. An example can be found [here](#) (accessed November 2023). Further information about the erection of boxes can be found [here](#) (accessed November 2023).

6 Reference

Collins, J. (ed.), 2023: Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.