

Preliminary Roost Assessment

& Nesting Bird Check

8-12 Priory Street

Wrexham

LL11 1SU

For

Saleem Architects



Gritstone Ecology

Contents

- 1. Introduction2
- 2. Methods4
- 3. Results6
- 4. Evaluation8
- 5. Impact assessment9
- 6. Required actions9
- 7. References10
- 8. Appendix 1 – Photographs11



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Saleem Architects. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 8-12 Priory Street, Wrexham, on 6th September 2023. The survey report will be used to provide supporting information for a planning application, at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats (with the exception of greater & lesser horseshoe bats) in all counties of Wales under licence number SO87045/1. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Proposed development

The development proposals are for the conversion of the building to residential apartments, including construction of an additional floor, and changes to the exterior coverings of the building.

1.5. Site context

The building is located on Priory Street, Wrexham, LL11 1SU, GR SJ 33361 50308, in Wrexham Town Centre. The building is adjacent a retail park, and a busy road junction in the centre of Wrexham. The road has high level lighting, and the site is subject to constant disturbance from light, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

The site includes a three storey height commercial building, with commercial premises operating on the ground floor, and unoccupied units above. The front of the building opens onto the pavement, there is a small area of hardstanding to the rear.

Habitat within 50m of the building includes; shops and commercial buildings, and busy well-lit roads.

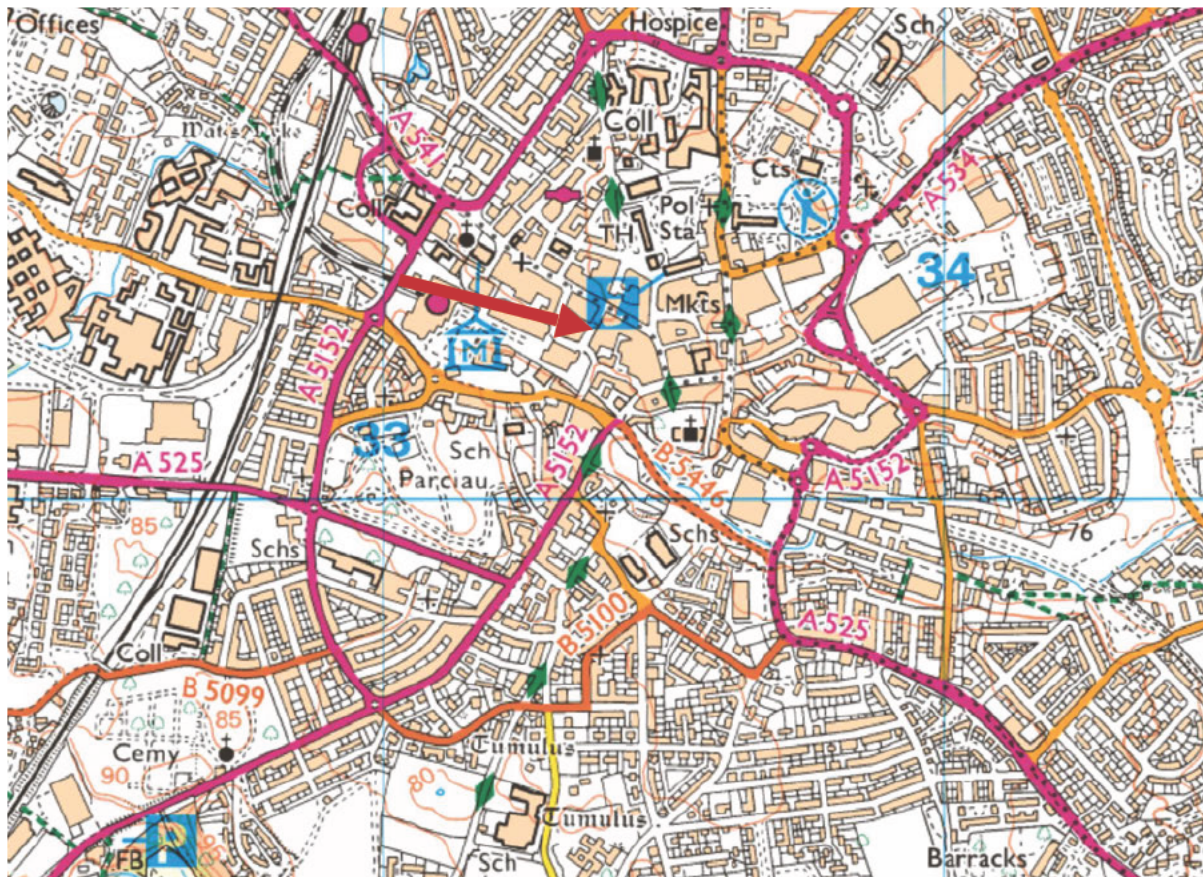
Habitat within 500m includes, commercial buildings, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, small areas of open green-space, and mature trees.

There are no areas of open green space, or linked back gardens, adjacent the site, and the area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

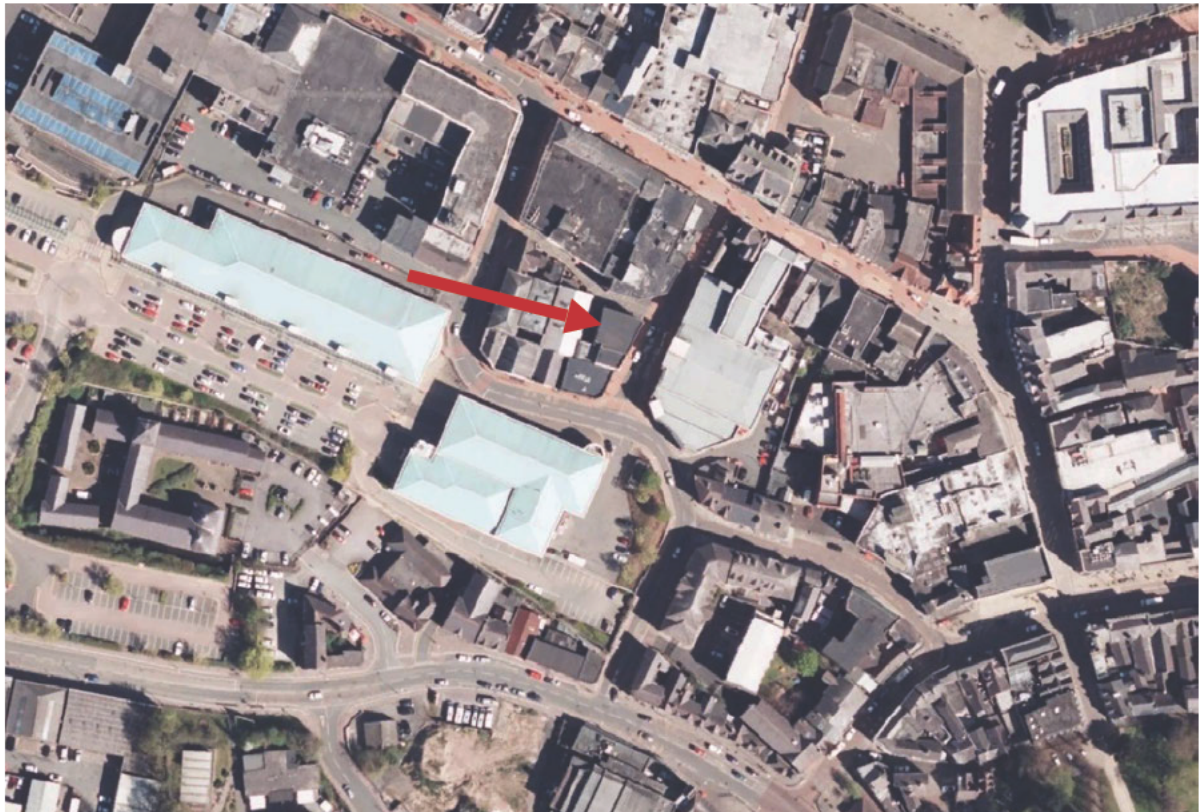
The site and surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats, with higher quality habitat to the east along the canal.



1.6. Site location



1.6a – 8-12 Priory Street - Wrexham – site location.



1.6b – 8-12 Priory Street - Wrexham – aerial photograph.



2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 16th September 2023. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, warm, and dry, with a temperature of 26°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordinance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.



Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in early September, when bats are active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are more likely to be evident, if present.



3. Results

3.1. External inspection



3.1a – The front of the building from Priory Street.

Nº8-12 priory Street, Wrexham, is a three storey building, with commercial premises on the ground floor, and unoccupied units above. It has a flat felt-covered roof, with brick palisade walls, covered with concrete capping stones. Timber fascia boards are fitted at the rear.

There are no chimneys, and no lead flashing is fitted. Walls are solid brick, with a painted cement render to the front. Lintels are concrete, sills are UPVC. Window and door frames are UPVC; all glass is intact.

The building is well maintained, and in good condition. The roof is in good condition with no gaps between materials. Capping stones on the palisade walls are fixed tightly with no gaps. Walls are in good condition, with no missing mortar or cracks.

There are no features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was present during the inspection.

No nesting materials or other indications of use by nesting birds were present externally.



3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – The upper floor of the building.

The building has a flat roof with no enclosed roof voids. The upper floors of the building were in use until recently, and are filled with natural light through the windows. The ground floors are in operation as commercial premises.

The building is in good condition, and there are no gaps which could give access to roosting bats, or nesting birds.

The building has no cellar, and there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

No nesting materials or other indications of use by nesting birds were present during the survey.

3.4. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is well maintained, in good condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection.



4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, although bats are likely to be present locally.

Small areas of open green space, and linked back gardens in the wider area may provide limited foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is heavily fragmented by light and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. The building is situated on a busy road junction with high level lighting, which provides poor quality habitat for bats. Additionally, the building is well-sealed, and has no features which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is well maintained, and in good condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; there is no roof void, and the building has no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no indications of use were found during the inspection.

The lack of any indications of use inside the building, such as droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the building, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

Roofing materials are in good condition, with no gaps between materials. Coping stones on the parapet walls are fixed in place with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

The walls are solid brick with no insulating cavity. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with cement, or sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the buildings is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

No nesting materials, or other indications of use by nesting birds were present during the building inspection.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat



5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats or bat roosts were present in the building, the works would likely result in an offence being committed.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the conversion of the building to residential apartments, including construction of an additional floor, and changes to the exterior coverings of the building.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on nesting birds.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.

No further survey or mitigation work is required for nesting birds.



7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8. Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The front of the building from Priory Street.



2 – The rear of the building and yard from the roof.





3 – Fascia boards at the rear are in good condition with no suitable gaps.



4 – Parapet walls are sealed with coping stones with no gaps between materials.





5 – Lintels are concrete, and are fixed into the walls with no suitable gaps.



6 – Brickwork and render are in good condition with no suitable gaps.





7 – Window and door frames are sealed tightly into brickwork with no suitable gaps.



8 – There are no roof voids and the building is filled with natural light.





9 – The building is in a busy town centre location.



10 – The roof is in good condition with no gaps between materials.

