



Leigh Ecology Ltd

Protected Species and Habitat Surveys

Community Building,
Darlands Lane,
Rossett,
Flintshire.

On behalf of ILEX Project Management

Bat Scoping Survey Report

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CONTENTS

	Important Information to Readers	2
1	Summary.....	4
2	Introduction	5
	2.2 Legislative Framework.....	6
	2.3 Site Description	8
3	Methodology.....	12
4	Results.....	14
	Internal and external inspection	14
5.	Recommendations.....	17

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The applicants plan to demolish the target building and develop the site into residential housing (approx. grid Ref SJ 373580).
- 1.1.2 The building is a single-storey community/hall building, located within a town environment.
- 1.1.3 Therefore, in order to facilitate the works on the building and to inform the planning application, a survey for protected species, namely nesting birds and *Chiroptera* was undertaken.
- 1.1.4 No signs of bat presence were recorded during the survey.
- 1.1.5 No invasive plant species were noted on site during the survey.
- 1.1.6 Given the results, it is suggested that the planned demolition and subsequent works can proceed without constraints.
- 1.1.7 Some post-works enhancements have been suggested in this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 A building has been identified for demolition in order to facilitate a number of new builds on the same footprint. A protected species survey was required, namely bat species (*Chiroptera*), in order to inform the planning application.
- 2.1.2 For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of protected species, and therefore the need of a survey is a material planning consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of protected species, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding site or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation methods.
- 2.1.3 For any development to proceed lawfully at a site where protected species are present, a licence issued by NRW, under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended) may be required. Information gathered during the surveys is used to inform such a licence application.
- 2.1.4 The objective of the study was to identify the presence or potential presence of bat species and nesting birds within the building identified on site.
- 2.1.5 A preliminary roost survey and nesting bird survey, consisting of an internal and external survey of the target building, was conducted on the 28th July 2021.
- 2.1.6 This report provides the output from the protected species survey undertaken.

2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Bats

- 2.2.1 There are 17 species of bats in the UK, all of which suffered a decline in population size and distribution during the 20th century; even those species regarded to be the most common suffered a 70% decline between 1978 and 1993 (Mitchel-Jones and McLeish, 2004).
- 2.2.2 All species of bats are listed under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore afforded special protection. It is an offence to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat;
 - Intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; and
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.
- 2.2.3 Bats are further protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which make it an offence to:
- Capture or kill a bat;
 - Significantly disturb a bat (in any location); and
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.
- 2.2.4 If bats are present on a development site and, as a result of the development there is a likelihood that a roost may be damaged or destroyed, or where there is considered to be a reasonable possibility that bats occupying a roost may be significantly disturbed, or where there would be a requirement to significantly disturb a bat irrespective of its location, the development can only proceed if an European Protected Species (EPS) license is issued by Natural Resources Wales.
- 2.2.5 In Wales, the Environment Act 2016 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the determination of all types of planning applications. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the convention. The strategy contains action plans for species considered to be of conservation priority at a national (under Species Action Plans (SAP) and local scale (under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

- 2.2.6 The UKBAP lists seven bat species considered as priorities, the relevant LBAP and SBAP (Flintshire) lists several bat and bird species, including Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*) on its habitat based plan.

2.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.3.1 The proposal site is a community centre building constructed of brick and tile, with PVC windows and doors.
- 2.3.2 The building is in very good condition with the PVC soffits and facias well-sealed against the external walls.
- 2.3.3 The site grid reference is SJ 373580.
- 2.3.4 The proposed development will see the building demolished in order to facilitate a residential development.
- 2.3.5 The site map below shows the scope of the survey and maps the position of the target building.
- 2.3.6 The following figures and narrative provide a description of the target building.



Fig 1; The target building is shown in red above.



Fig 2: The target building, showing the front elevation. The building is circ <20 years old and in very good condition.



Fig 3: The building is set on hard standing and bounded by laurel, privet hedges.



Fig 4: The fascia boards and soffits are all in good condition sealed to the exterior walls.



Fig 5: The rear elevation is in good condition; the yard/garden area is dominated by commoner succession grasses and weeds. No invasive species were noted.



Fig 6: The side gable is well sealed; the wooden fascia board is weathered but well sealed. Also, the overlapping tiles are fitted tightly against the board.



Fig 7: The frontage is also well sealed; the fascias are well sealed against the external wall and the roof.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The internal and external roost survey was undertaken by Mr Roy Leigh – NRW licence 58580-OTH CSAB -2014 and Natural England licensed surveyor NE licence 2015/15883-CLS.

3.1.2 Survey methods were based-upon the standard and specification detailed in the BCTs Bat Surveys- Good Practise Guidelines (BCT, 2016). The building was inspected internally and externally on 25th July 2021.

External Inspection

3.1.3 The objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:

- Bat droppings;
- Feeding remains;
- Grease staining/ urine marks;
- Corpses or skeletons;
- Potential access points to internal roosts.

3.1.4 The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of the building. The following areas were searched using binoculars:

- Ground floor casing;
- Rendering;
- Any cracks/ holes in brickwork/ woodwork;
- Between wall cavities at window points;
- On external brickwork.

Internal Inspection

3.1.5 Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces/open roof configurations (see below), which were searched as a priority for any bat field signs:

- Dividing walls;
- Beneath hip joints and junctions;
- Staining above/ around gaps;
- Within cobwebs;
- Staining around tile gaps;
- In cavities of walls within the roof wall joints;
- Timber / wall joints.

3.1.6 The internal building survey covered all rooms, both ground and upper floors.

3.1.7 The surveys were undertaken using a 168-lumen flashlight and 10x42 Swarovski binoculars.

3.1.8 Ladders were used to access elevated areas with potential for bat signs.

Survey limitations

3.1.9 All areas of the building were fully accessible, and care was taken, therefore the survey was considered comprehensive.

4 RESULTS

Internal and external inspection

- 4.1.1 The single-story community building is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats; the structure is well maintained and sealed, offering no features typically associated with bat roosts.
- 4.1.2 The building is located adjacent to the Darland Lane and Lavister Walk, with street lighting.
- 4.1.3 No invasive plant species were noted in the garden/yard during the surveys.



Fig 8: The ground floor is configured into an open assembly hall.



Fig 9: The remainder of the building is configured into corridors and small rooms; no signs of bats or birds were noted.



Fig 10: The roof void is configured into a complex A frame support structure.



Fig 11: The loft space was searched for any signs of bat usage, none where noted.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1.1 Given that the building offers negligible bat roost potential, some enhancements of the proposed new builds are recommended to enhance the building through the use of purpose-built bat bricks. These could be incorporated into the brickwork, such as 1FR/2FR Schwegler Bat brick (see below).



- 5.1.2 It is also suggested that given the bat friendly surrounding habitat, the rooves of all proposed structures should be lined with bat friendly membranes.
- 5.1.3 Where lighting is necessary in areas of tree/shrub planting, this will be low wattage, directional, low level and/or shaded to minimise light spill (<1Lux) onto potential flight lines and foraging habitat to ensure that the overall impact caused by lighting the site is negligible. The lighting scheme will be designed with regard to guidance such as the Bat Conservation Trust Statement on the impact and design of artificial light on bats, and the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes, to minimise disturbance to bats and other wildlife due to artificial lighting.

REFERENCES

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