



BEECH COTTAGE, MINERA

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT EMERGENCE SURVEY AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

DATE	ECOLOGIST	APPROVED	VERSION	COMMENTS
29/07/2020	Lucy Boyett	Rhian Hughes	1	

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Executive Summary

Site	Beech Cottage, Minera, LL11 3YT; GR: SJ 27518 52479
Surveyors	Lucy Boyett, with an assistant for the emergence survey
Proposed work	Internal works to convert a small store building, into a space for commercial use.
Type of survey	Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), emergence survey and nesting bird survey
Results of survey	• Gaps identified behind the bargeboards at both gable ends, which led through to the inside of the building, however, much of these gaps were covered by cobwebs. • With a window at both ends of the room, internally, the room was quite light, with limited dark areas suitable for roosting bats. • There were no bats or signs of bats or nesting birds seen externally or internally during the inspection. • During the emergence survey, no bats were seen emerging from the building and there was limited activity by common pipistrelles recorded.
Survey conclusions	• The building, had low potential for bats and the emergence survey showed it is not currently being used as a bat roost. • The building has limited suitability for nesting birds, no nesting birds were seen during the survey.
Recommendations	• As the building is not used by bats to roost, no further surveys, specific mitigation or reasonable avoidance measures are required. • To prevent birds from using the gaps above the gable walls to nest, it is recommended that they are blocked up prior to the works and outside of bird nesting season (from March to September [inclusive]). If works were to be conducted within bird nesting season then a thorough search for any nesting birds should take place immediately prior to the commencement of works. • Boxes are recommended to enhance the site for bats and birds

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Enfys Ecology Limited were commissioned by Claire Ellis, to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA), emergence survey and nesting bird survey of a small store building at Beech Cottage, Minera.
- 1.2 The proposed works are to convert a building, currently used for storage, into a space for commercial use.
- 1.3 The survey was commissioned to determine whether the proposed works would affect protected species: specifically bats and nesting birds. A Preliminary Roost Assessment, and nesting bird survey, followed by an emergence survey was undertaken on 15th July 2020. This report is valid for a period of two years from this date in accordance with best practice.
- 1.4 All British bats (and roost sites) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). In addition, all bats are classified as European Protected species by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation, it is an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat, or to destroy any place used as a shelter by bats.
- 1.5 Should evidence of bats be found and it is deemed likely that they will be disturbed by the proposed works; a licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be obtained.

2.0 Site description

- 2.1 The building was single storey, with a slated pitched roof and a single internal room.
- 2.2 The building is in a rural area approximately 500m to the north east of Minera village and 500m to the north of Coedpoeth (approximate grid reference SJ 27518 52479) (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The wider area is predominantly agricultural fields with urban areas to the south. Many of the roads and field boundaries are lined with mature hedgerows and trees and the nearest woodland is along the River Gwenfro, approx. 300m to the north. The southern wall of the building was adjacent to Gegin Rd, which was lined with scattered mature trees and hedgerows.
- 2.3 Under the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J., 2016), the surrounding area had 'moderately suitable' habitat for commuting and foraging bats with some connectivity to further suitable habitat areas.
- 2.4 There are no statutory or non-statutory designated site within a 1km radius of the building.



FIGURE 2.1 AERIAL VIEW OF THE LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS. THE SURVEYED BUILDING IS SHOWN IN RED. BASEMAP © GOOGLE 2020

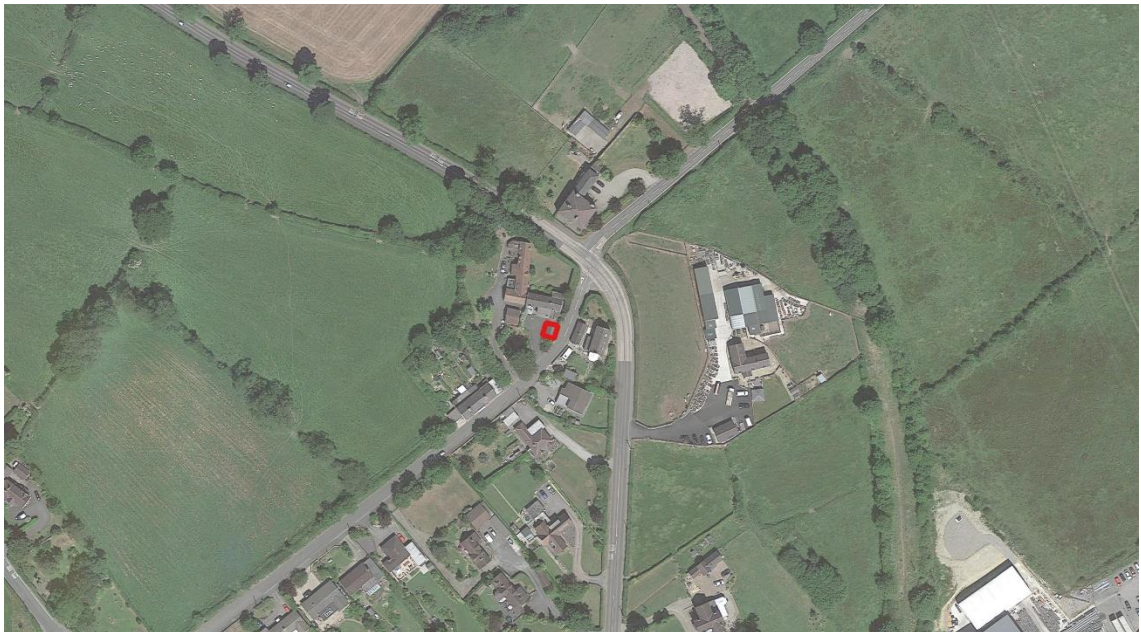


FIGURE 2.2 AERIAL VIEW OF THE LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS. BASEMAP © GOOGLE 2020

3.0 Methodology

3.1 *Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA)*

- 3.1.1 The building was assessed 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 building was examined.
- 3.1.2 The PRA was carried out on the 15th July 2020 by ecologists Lucy Boyett (accredited agent under NRW bat licence number S087351/1) and Annie Williams. This was carried out following the guidelines set by the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). Photographic evidence was taken where necessary.

3.2 *Dusk emergence survey*

- 3.2.1 Following the PRA, a dusk emergence survey was carried out on the same evening (15th July 2020), which falls within the peak bat survey months of May to August (inclusive).
- 3.2.2 During the emergence survey, the building was monitored by two surveyors. Records were taken of any bats observed emerging from the building, and of any other bat activity taking place in the area during the survey. The surveyors used Batbox Duet detectors and Anabat Express bat detectors were positioned around the building to record any bat calls for further analysis. As per the guidelines the dusk emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 90 minutes after sunset.

3.3 *Limitations*

- 3.3.1 Bats are a difficult group to survey, and as they are highly mobile animals, it is possible that they could move into a building after the survey has occurred. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that bats will not move into the building following the survey.

4.0 Building Description

4.1 *External*

- 4.1.1 The store comprised a single storey, stone built building, measuring approx. 6m x 6m (Photos 4.1 & 4.2). It was constructed of un-rendered stone, with a small window at both gable ends and a doorway on the southern gable end. The pitched roof was slated, with wooden fascias and bargeboards and no soffits.



PHOTO 4.1 NORTH WESTERN CORNER OF THE BUILDING



PHOTO 4.2 SOUTH WESTERN CORNER OF THE BUILDING

4.2 *Internal*

- 4.2.1 Internally, the building comprised a single room, which was open to the roof (Photo 4.3). The stone walls were white washed and in good condition. The roof looked to be relatively new with an exposed ridge board, rafters and breathable membrane beneath the slates (Photo 4.4). The beams looked to pre-date the rest of the roof structure. The room was in use for storage.



PHOTO 4.3 SOUTHERN GABLE END



PHOTO 4.4. EXPOSED ROOF STRUCTURE

5.0 Survey Results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 5.1 The stone work was in very good condition with no gaps or cervices present and the roof was also in very good condition, with no missing, slipped or raised slates. The windows and door were intact and well-sealed and there were no gaps present at the eaves. Behind the bargeboards at both gable ends, there was a gap between the top of the gable wall and the

roof, which led through to the inside of the building. There was a fair amount of cobwebs present covering the majority of the gaps.

- 5.2 With a window at both ends of the room, internally, the room was quite light, with limited dark areas suitable for roosting bats.
- 5.3 There were no bats or signs of bats or nesting birds seen externally or internally during the inspection.
- 5.4 Table 5.1 gives a description of the potential roosting features identified.

TABLE 5.1 DESCRIPTION AND PHOTOS OF POTENTIAL ROOSTING FEATURES (SHOWN IN RED)

Description of Potential Roosting Features	Photo
Small gaps behind the bargeboards, between the roof and the top of the northern and southern gable walls, which led through to the inside of the building. There were a fair number of cobwebs covering the majority of the gaps.	



6.0 Survey Results – Dusk Emergence Survey – 15th July 2020

6.1 Table 6.1, provides details of the dusk survey, including timing and weather conditions.

TABLE 6.1 SUMMARY OF SURVEY DETAILS

Start time	Sunset time	End time	Temp. at start	Weather
21:01	21:31	23:01	14°C	Damp, moderate breeze

- 6.2 No bats were observed emerging from the building at any stage during the emergence survey.
- 6.3 The first bat activity was a common pipistrelle at 21:30, commuting north to south to the west of the building. Brief commuting passes by common pipistrelles were heard again at 21:44, 21:55, 22:31 and 22:34. Passes were concentrated along the hedgerow to the north of the site and also among the trees and shrubs to the south. No other species of bat was seen or heard during the survey.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposed works are to convert the store building, into a space for commercial use. The works will be internal only and the roof or roofline, will not be affected by the works.
- 7.2 Under the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J., 2016), the surrounding area had ‘moderately suitable’ habitat for commuting and foraging bats with some connectivity to further suitable habitat areas. The building itself, had low potential for roosting bats (Collins, J., 2016).

- 7.3 During the PRA, no bats or evidence of bats was identified and during the emergence survey, no bats were seen to emerge. This has shown the building is not in use by bats for roosting and no further surveys are required.
- 7.4 Although no nesting birds were seen during the survey, there is potential for birds to nest within the gaps above the gable walls and behind the barge boards.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 As the building is not used by bats to roost, no further surveys, specific mitigation or reasonable avoidance measures are required.
- 8.2 To prevent birds from using the gaps above the gable walls to nest, it is recommended that they are blocked up prior to the works and outside of bird nesting season (from March to September [inclusive]). If works were to be conducted within bird nesting season then a thorough search for any nesting birds should take place immediately prior to the commencement of works. If any active nest is recorded then all works to that section of the building would have to cease until the chicks have fledged. It is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built with unlimited fines and/or imprisonment.
- 8.3 To enhance the site for bats, it is recommended that at least one bat box is erected. The box should be suitable for a crevice dwelling bat as only common pipistrelles were recorded in the area, during the survey. The box should be placed ideally at least 4m above the ground and sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day (usually south, south-east or south-west). We recommend the use of woodcrete or woodstone boxes, as these will last longer with limited maintenance. The box must only be checked by a licensed bat worker.
- 8.4 In order to enhance the site for birds, it is recommended that at least one bird box is erected. Ideally, this box should be mounted on to a building (except the open fronted box), however if this is not possible then it should be securely mounted on a tree. The box could include:
- A box with a 32mm entrance (sparrow boxes),
 - for smaller birds (25-28mm), or
 - An open fronted box but this should be placed in cover.

The bird box should be inspected annually in October. Defective or damaged boxes should be replaced like for like at this time. The box should be inspected and cleaned with warm water before being returned to situ. The box must remain undisturbed at all other times.

9.0 Legislation

9.1 Bats

9.1.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) forms the key legislation protecting habitats and species in the UK. All UK bat species are fully protected under the 1981 Act through inclusion on Schedule 5. All bats are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive into UK law. In combination, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly take, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a place or structure used by bats for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; or
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb bats while occupying a roost.

9.1.2 Bat roosts are protected under these laws whether the animals are present at the time of survey or not. Under both laws the Welsh Government and D.E.F.R.A. are empowered to issue licences to carry out work to bat roosts for reasons of overriding public interest. It is not illegal to tend to a disabled bat pending recovery.

9.2 Birds

9.2.1 In addition, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way, 2000, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected during the breeding season (typically March to August inclusive). This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injury or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built.
- Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

10.0 References and Useful Information Sources

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1

Mitchell-Jones, A. J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, Natural England