



AGENT'S HOUSE, BRYMBO

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

DATE	ECOLOGIST	APPROVED	VERSION	COMMENTS
11/02/2020	Lucy Boyett	Keymar Wake	1	Original

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Report Ref EE.672.LB

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Executive Summary

Site	Agent's House, Brymbo , LL11 5AX SJ 29470 53475
Surveyors	Lucy Boyett
Proposed work	Renovation of the former Agent's house, to create an exhibition space.
Type of survey	Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)
Results of survey	• No evidence or signs of bats were found within the Agents House, during the PRA. • A number of potential roosting features were identified externally, including cracks and crevices in the stonework and gaps above boarded windows and behind corrugated metal fascias. • Internally there is a cavity between the external walls and the chipboard structure, which has been built inside; this cavity area is suitable for crevice dwelling bats.
Survey conclusions	• The surrounding area has 'highly suitable' habitat for commuting and foraging bats with good connectivity to further suitable habitat areas. • Considering potential roosting features identified, the high suitability of the surrounding habitat, the Agent's house is of moderate suitability for roosting bats. • No signs of previous bird nests were seen during the survey, however there is potential for nesting birds within the crevices in the stone work and behind the fascias.
Recommendations	• As the Agent's house was found to have moderate suitability for roosting bats, a minimum of two emergence surveys are required, which must be undertaken between May and August (inclusive) – in accordance with Good Practise Guidelines (Collins, 2016) • If a bat roost is identified, before any works can take place a licence for the works must be obtained from the species licensing body Natural Resources Wales (NRW). • There is potential for birds to be nesting on or in the building, therefore if works were to be conducted within bird nesting season (from March to September [inclusive]) then a thorough search for any nesting birds should take place immediately prior to the commencement of works.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Enfys Ecology Limited were commissioned by TACP Architects on behalf of Brymbo Heritage Trust, to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) of the Agent's House at The Brymbo Heritage Trust site, Brymbo.
- 1.2 The proposed works comprise the renovation of the former house, to create an exhibition space.
- 1.3 The house has been empty and in a derelict state for many years. In February 2017, due to concern over the structural safety of the roof and walls, emergency works were undertaken and the roof structure was replaced and covered with corrugated metal. In February 2018, a two-storey structure was constructed within the existing walls, using chipboard. This was to create a temporary useable space for storage and for use as office space, prior to the proposed renovation works.
- 1.4 The survey was commissioned to determine whether the proposed works would affect protected species: specifically bats and nesting birds. A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on 5th February 2020. This report is valid for a period of two years from this date in accordance with best practice.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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 comprised a two-storey high house on the site of the former Brymbo Steelworks.
- 2.2 The house is in a rural area approximately 250m of Brymbo village (approximate grid reference SJ 29470 53475) (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The wider area is a mixture of residential buildings, agricultural fields and a large network of linear broadleaved woodlands. The house has broadleaved woodland immediately to the rear (south), which runs east to west, connecting to further woodlands in the area. There are numerous small ponds within a 150m radius of the house.

- 2.3 There is one statutory designated site within a 1km radius, which is Brymbo Fossil Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This site is designated for its geological interest.
- 2.4 Mount Zion Wildlife Site and Brymbo Pony Fields Wildlife Site are two non-statutory designated sites within a 1km radius. These are not designated for bats.



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



FIGURE 2.2 AERIAL VIEW OF THE LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS. © 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 building inspection was carried out on the 5th February 2020 by ecologist Lucy Boyett (accredited agent under bat licence number S087351/1). Building and potential roost assessments were carried out following the guidelines set by the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). Photographic evidence was taken where necessary.

3.2 *Limitations*

- 3.2.1 The chipboard room structure was built within the existing external walls, with a small cavity between. It was not possible to inspect this cavity between the two walls or to inspect any potential space between the chipboard and the corrugated metal roof.
- 3.2.2 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 house comprised a two-storey high main section, with a small single storey lean-to on the eastern side (Photos 4.1 & 4.2).
- 4.1.2 The house was constructed of un-rendered stone, had a corrugated metal sheet roof and both corrugated metal and chipboard fascias. To the front of the house were seven windows and a doorway, which were boarded up with chipboard and sealed with expanding foam (Photo 4.1). To the rear were two small windows, which were also boarded up (Photo 4.2). There was a large wooden doorway on the western end of the house and a door into the lean-to on the eastern end of the house.



PHOTO 4.1 NORTHERN SIDE OF THE HOUSE



PHOTO 4.2 SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE HOUSE

4.2 *Internal*

- 4.2.1 Internally, the walls and ceiling were lined with chipboard, creating a large double storey height room, which was used for storage (Photo 4.3 & Photo 4.4). This was accessed through the large wooden door on the western side of the building (Photo 4.4). Two rooms had been created on the eastern side of the building, one on the ground floor and another on the first floor, reached by a wooden ramp (Photo 4.5).



PHOTO 4.3 & 4.4. WALLS LINED WITH CHIP BOARD TO CREATE A LARGE DOUBLE STOREY HEIGHT ROOM



PHOTO 4.5. FIRST FLOOR ROOM

5.0 Survey Results – Building Inspection

5.1 External

5.1.1 There were a number of deep cracks and crevices in the stone work, some of which were likely to have spanned the thickness of the wall and provided access into the cavity, but due to their position and/or height they could not all be inspected with an endoscope. There were large gaps underneath the corrugated metal fascias and above the boarding covering two of the windows.

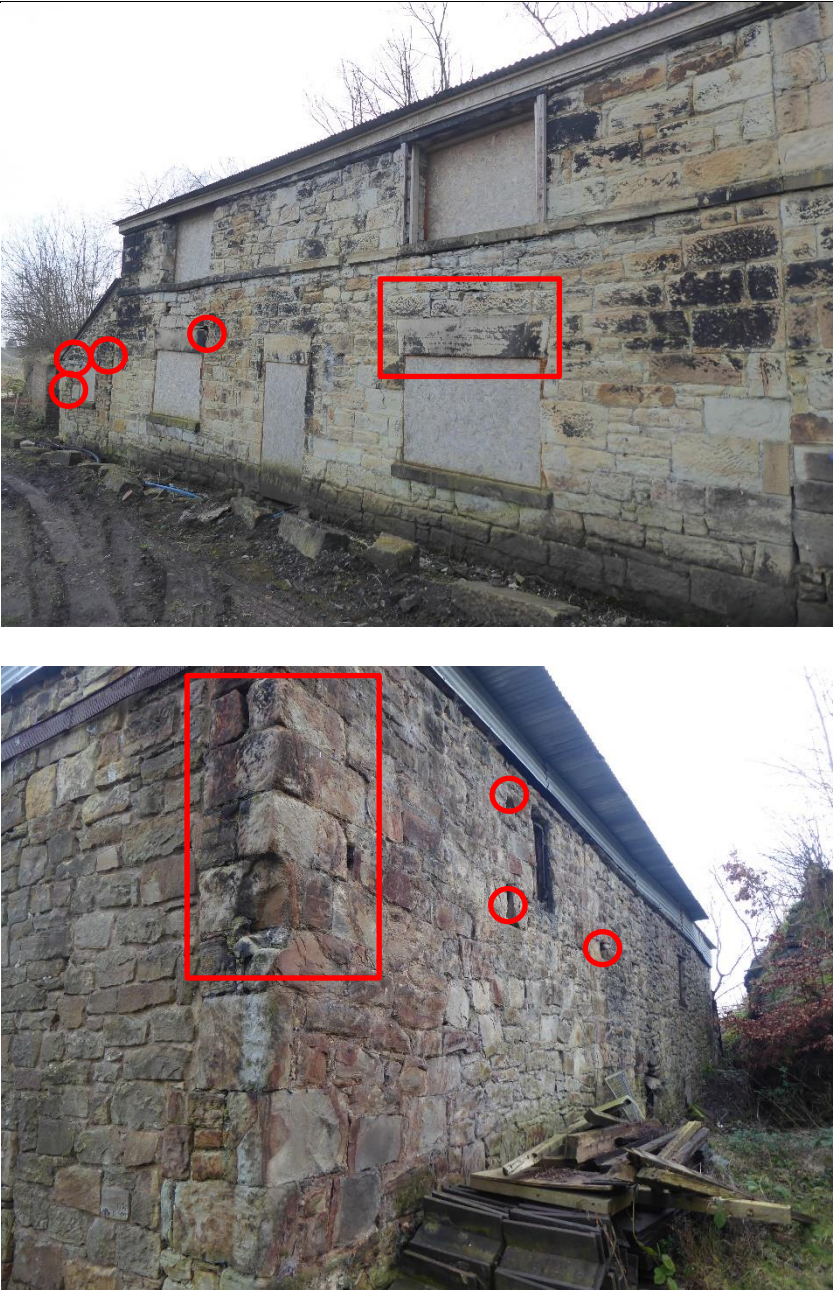
5.2 Internal

5.2.1 Internally the chipboard was well sealed, apart from the large doorway, which had a small gap at the top. From this doorway, the gap between the external wall and the chipboard was visible.

5.2.2 No bats or signs of bats were seen during the inspection.

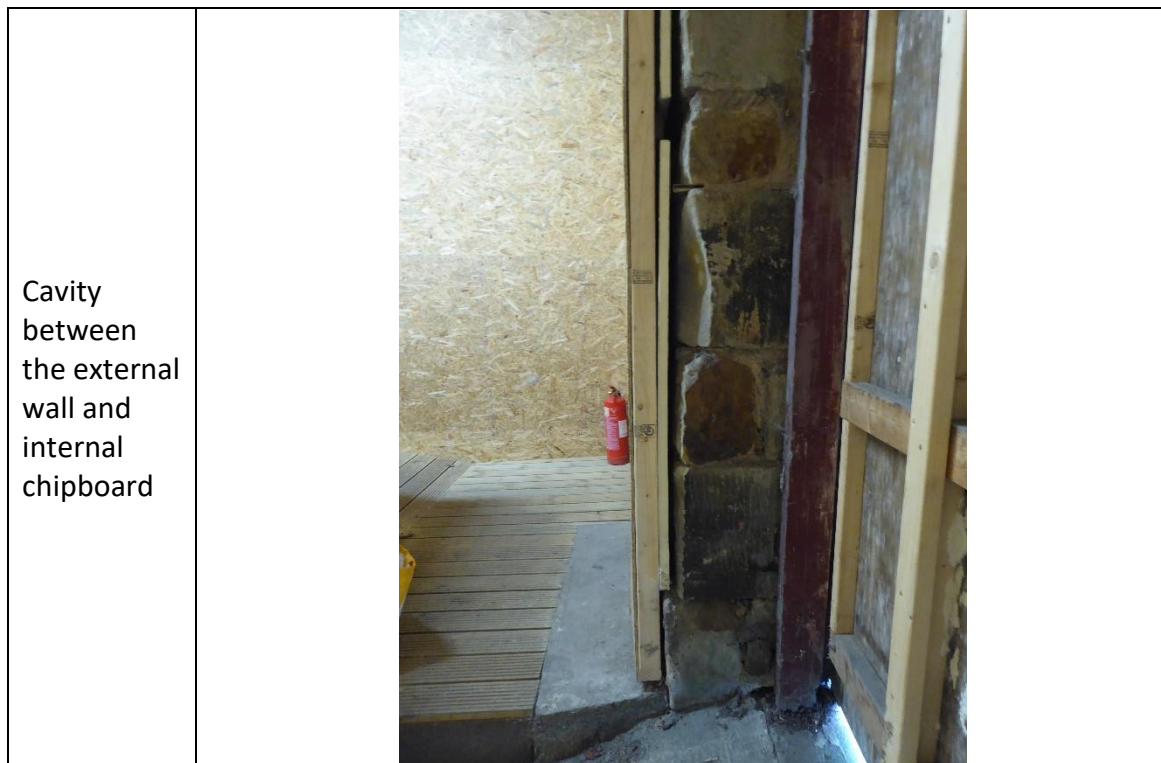
5.2.3 No signs of nesting birds were found within the building but during the survey there was, what sounded like, a bird that had become trapped in the cavity between the wall and the chipboard.

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

Description of Potential Roosting Features	Photo
Cracks and crevices in stonework	

Gaps under corrugated metal fascia	 The table contains two photographs of a stone building. The top photograph shows a close-up of the corner of the building, highlighting a gap under the corrugated metal fascia with a red box. The bottom photograph shows the front of the building with a red door, also highlighting a gap under the corrugated metal fascia with a red box. A person in a yellow high-visibility vest is visible in the background of the bottom photograph.
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Gaps above boarded windows	 A photograph of the exterior of a stone building. The wall is made of rough-hewn stone blocks. There are several windows that have been boarded up with greyish material. Above two of these boarded windows, there are small gaps between the stone and the roofline, which are highlighted with red rectangles. The ground in front of the building is dirt and debris.
Gap above door	 A photograph taken from inside a room, looking up at a gap above a wooden door. The walls and ceiling are made of light-colored wood paneling. The door is made of dark wood with vertical slats. Above the door, there is a gap between the door frame and the stone wall above it. This gap is circled in red. The stone wall above the door is made of rough-hewn stone blocks.



6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed works comprise the full renovation of the former house, to create an exhibition space.
- 6.2 Under the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J., 2016), the surrounding area has 'highly suitable' habitat for commuting and foraging bats with good connectivity to further suitable habitat areas.
- 6.3 Deep cracks and crevices within the stone work provide some potential for roosting bats, particularly on the southern side of the building, which faced the woodland. The cavity between the stone walls and the chipboard would provide suitable roosting space for crevice dwelling bats. It is possible for bats to access this cavity between the external wall and internal chipboard walls from a small hole in the door, and it may also be possible for bats to access the cavity from under the fascias and crevices in the walls; however it was not possible to confirm this during the PRA. Any spaces present under the corrugated metal roof and fascias are unlikely to be used by bats due to being subject to extreme temperature changes.
- 6.4 Although the inside of the main room, within the chipboard walls, would provide a suitable place to roost, no bats or signs of bats were seen during the survey and therefore it is not likely to have been used by bats in the recent past.

- 6.5 In accordance with the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J., 2016), considering the potential roosting features identified, the high suitability of the surrounding habitat, the Agent's house is of **moderate** suitability for roosting bats.
- 6.6 No signs of previous bird nests were seen during the survey; however there was a bird heard within the cavity between the walls and the chipboard during the survey so they are able to access this space, and there is potential for nesting birds within the crevices in the stone work and behind the fascias.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 In accordance with the Good Practise Guidelines (Collins, J., 2016), as the Agent's house was found to have moderate suitability for roosting bats, a minimum of two emergence surveys are required to assess if/how many/ what species of bats are using the building; these must be undertaken between May and August (inclusive).
- 7.2 If bats are found to be using the building, a licence for the works must be obtained from the species licensing body Natural Resources Wales (NRW) **before** any works can take place.
- 7.3 There is potential for birds to be nesting on or in the building, therefore if works were to be conducted within bird nesting season (from March to September [inclusive]) 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 or the hedge 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.

8.0 Legislation

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.

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.

Birds

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.

9.0 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