

Ecological Method Statement

In Support of Listed Building Consent For Wrexham Cemetery, 140 Ruabon Road, Wrexham.

November 2014

Aims

- To establish the scope of any further survey work
- To devise a working method statement where further survey work is not required
- Advise on timings of the proposed works to ensure no long term impacts on ecology.

Methodology

A daytime survey of the buildings to be affected was undertaken by Wrexham Council Ecologist Emma Broad on 25th November 2014. The survey involved looking for signs of bats and nesting birds such as droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks, urine stains, and actual sightings, as well as potential access points and roost sites such as holes, cracks and crevices. Torches and binoculars were used to inspect any areas of interest, particular attention was paid to any crevices or other features of the building which might be used.

Limitations

Although November is outside the ideal time for survey work, it is considered acceptable to produce an initial assessment during this period.

Description of proposed works

- 1) Cemetery Chapels: Internal alterations to incorporate records room and staff areas and formation of internal vestibules. Repointing of damaged and eroded areas and works to repair roof and guttering (urgently required).
- 2) Cemetery Lodge: Demolition of lean-to extension and log store and internal alterations to relocate kitchen.
- 3) Demolition of curtilage listed toilet block.

Results

General site description

The Cemetery and associated buildings are located on the edge of Wrexham, in a semi built-up area on the main road to Ruabon. There are numerous species and ages of trees on site which along with the semi improved grassland will provide fairly good foraging habitat for bats. Ancient semi natural woodland which forms part of the Erddig County Wildlife Site is located across the road less than 70m from the Cemetery buildings.

Cemetery Chapels

The building consists of a stone archway at the base of a tower with two flanking chapels (see photograph 1). Roofs are traditional slate and all relevant areas could be seen on inspection. The central tower and spire have been infested with pigeons. Previous experience has found that the presence of feral pigeons in a building usually indicates that bats will not be present. There were no signs of bats internally within the chapels or externally. There is some potential for single male bats to use some of the loose lead flashing or roof tiles as occasional day time roosts in the summer months. It is also possible that areas of guttering and down pipes could be used as the occasional daytime roost. There are a number of areas where the mortar has eroded and resulted in significant cavities within the stone work (photograph 2). At least one of these cavities had been used by a nesting passerine bird, but others have potential to be used by bats roosting during the summer or even as winter hibernation roosts. It should be noted that there was no sign of droppings or staining around any of the cavities indicating regular bat use, but there is undoubtedly a potential.



Photograph 1. showing the Cemetery Chapel



Photograph 2 showing one of the crevices in the stone work.

Toilet Block

The toilet block is a stone building with a flat roof (photograph 3). The mortar joints are in good order and although there is a small amount of ivy coverage there is no potential for the building to support bats or birds.

Cemetery Lodge

The lodge is a stone built building with a slate roof and terracotta cresting and finials (Photograph 4). It is currently used as an office area for cemetery staff. In the rear courtyard is a log store (proposed for removal), and 2 flat roofed out buildings (proposed for re-roofing). Parts of the courtyard wall and the lodge itself are covered in thick ivy growth. No evidence of bats was seen during the inspection but the building has numerous roosting opportunities and can be classed as having a

medium-high potential of supporting bats. Several small birds' nests were seen in the court yard, particularly in the log store. A small relatively recent extension is also proposed for removal, although no obvious entrance points for bats were present the extension does possess a slate roof.



Photograph 3. showing the Cemetery Chapel Toilet (to be demolished).



Photograph 4. Cemetery Lodge, showing roof and ivy coverage.

Bat Roost Descriptions

Hibernation roost (October-March) - Depending on the weather and food availability, bats tend to move to hibernation sites from October. Hibernation roosts can vary greatly in terms of the number of individuals and the diversity of species that occupy them. However, they tend to have a constant cool temperature and high humidity, which allows the bats to use less energy regulating their temperature. Bats will wake occasionally during hibernation to drink and feed.

Day roost (March-November) - These roosts are used during the day to rest in. Males of most British species spend the summer roosting alone or in small groups with other males in such roosts. Bats may regularly use a number of day roosts, switching between them on a daily basis, though conversely they may occupy the same roosting site for several weeks.

Recommendations

Cemetery Chapel – The urgent works to repair and make safe the building to continue using a Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS). Artificial nest boxes and bat roost boxes should be erected within the cemetery. A licenced bat worker is employed to inspect the cavities with an endoscope if the presence of bats cannot be ruled out one way bat excluders should be installed. They should cover the crevice from mid March and should left in place until mid April 2015 (weather dependant) and the cavities temporally filled to prevent bird nesting.

Toilet Block – Removal using RAMS.

Cemetery Lodge – Further survey work is required. As no work is proposed until post 2017, undertaking emergence and summer activity surveys should be carried out according to Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines in summer 2016 or 2017 dependant on funding confirmation.

Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement

- Installation of 2 Schwegler 1FF Bat Boxes, 2 Schwegler 2F Bat Boxes and 4 1B Schwegler Nest Boxes as compensation for potential lost habitats.
- All workers to be given a Tool Box Talk by Ecological Clerk of Works ECoW.
- ECoW to be on site during removal of loose cresting and lead flashing.
- Roofers to continue removing tiles and inspecting them, remaining vigilant to the presence of bats.
- Removal of guttering by hand in the presence of ECoW following inspection.
- If bats are discovered on site, all work to stop and the ECoW and then Natural Resources Wales to be contacted.
- Any disturbed bats should only be handled by an appropriately licenced ecologist.

Building	Proposed work	Mitigation Activity Required	Timing
Cemetery Chapel	Remedial works to roof	Erection of bat and bird boxes on trees around the site	Winter 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Remedial works to roof	Appointment of ECoW to give Tool Box talk and be present on site at the removal of loose cresting.	Winter 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Repair to stone work	Investigation of crevices with endoscope	Winter 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Repair to stone work	If crevices can be adequately viewed and contain no bats or evidence of bats they should be temporarily filled.	Winter 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Repair to stone work	If crevices contain bats or evidence of bats a licence is required from NRW.	Winter 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Repair to stone work	If required exclusion of bats from crevices following successful licence application and temporary fill.	March – April 2014
Cemetery Chapel	Removal of guttering	In presence of ECoW	April – May 2014
Cemetery Chapel Toilet Block	Removal of building	Using RAMS	No timing requirements
Cemetery Lodge	Removal of ivy to expose brick work	Work carried out during winter months to avoid nesting birds	Winter (September – March)
Cemetery Lodge	Works to roof	Bat surveys required 3 dawn/dusk activity surveys.	May-August 2016 or 2017 dependant on funding
Cemetery Lodge	Removal of log store	Avoidance of nesting birds, following check by ECoW	September - March
Cemetery Lodge	Re Roofing flat roofed stores	Avoidance of bird nesting season following check by ECoW	September March
Cemetery Lodge	Removal of extension	Bat surveys required 3 dawn/dusk activity surveys.	May-August 2016 or 2017 dependant on funding

Legislation.

Legal Protection for bats

All UK bats and their roosts are protected by law which gives strong legal protection to all bat species and their roosts. For all countries in the UK the legal protection may be 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 will most likely have).*

Defences include:

1. Tending/caring for a bat solely for the purpose of restoring it to health and subsequent release
2. Mercy killing where there is no reasonable hope of recovery (provided that person did not cause the injury in the first place – in which case the illegal act has already taken place).

Penalties on conviction – the maximum fine is £5,000 per incident or per bat (some roosts contain several hundred bats), up to six months in prison, and forfeiture of items used to commit the offence, e.g. vehicles, plant, machinery.

NB Whilst the protection afforded to bats is virtually the same in all UK countries please refer to the specific legislation for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for the precise wording – the above is a brief summary only.

Licensing Procedures

Licences to permit illegal activities relating to bats and their roost sites can be issued for specific purposes by the relevant licensing authorities in each country. These are sometimes called 'derogation licences' or 'European Protected Species' licences. It is an offence not to comply with the terms and conditions of a derogation licence. If you carry out work affecting bats or roosts without a licence, you will be breaking the law.

In the case of development works 3 tests must all be satisfied before the relevant licensing authority can issue a licence:

1. A licence MAY be granted *'to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'*.
2. A licence may NOT be granted UNLESS the licensing authority is satisfied *'that there is no satisfactory alternative'*.

3. A licence CANNOT BE ISSUED unless the licensing authority is satisfied that the action proposed *'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'*.

The following people need to take particular note of the legislation:

- Property owners/householders who have a bat roost in their property
- Woodland owners/managers, and owners of individual trees
- Arboriculturalists and foresters
- Pest controllers
- Planning officers
- Building surveyors
- Architects
- Property developers
- Demolition companies
- Builders
- Roofers
- Ecological consultants

Legal Protection Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), whilst they are actively nesting or roosting. Section 1 of this Act, makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, and to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. It is also an offence to take or destroy any wild bird eggs.

In addition, bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act receive extra protection. The Act states that 'it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly(1) disturb any wild bird listed in Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at (or near) a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird'.