

THE TYRER PARTNERSHIP



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**17 Manley Road, Wrexham LL13 8HD
Inspection and Assessment in Relation to Bats**

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1.0 Introduction & Reason for Survey

- 1.1 As part of a proposed development at 117 Manley Road Wrexham an inspection and assessment was undertaken in relation to bats. Blueprint Architectural Services, on behalf of their client, (Mr S Stocker) commissioned the inspection and report. It is understood that the proposals involve extensive works to the existing dwelling including its conversion into apartments. As part of the Local Authority's Planning Policies ecological surveys are generally required, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present and could be affected by the proposals for which the Application seeks consent.
- 1.2 The aim of the inspection was to initially ascertain if any of the structures which will be affected are of value to bats; if any were found to be suitable for bats or signs of use were located then more detailed surveys would be recommended i.e. dusk/dawn emergence/re-entry surveys during the main active season of bats which is May – August. If bat/s or their roost/place of rest/shelter is subsequently affected by the work then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence would be required to legally proceed with the development.
- 1.3 The optimum time to investigate any structure for evidence of a bat roost is May – August, however that is not to say they cannot be inspected and assessed outside of that time and frequently the results can be conclusive, which can save time and expense for Planning Applicants. It should be borne in mind that equally the inspection can be inconclusive.

2.0 Protected Species

- 2.1 All British bats and their **roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2010 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the existing Planning Policy Guidelines. (PPG's) In relation to wildlife PPG 9 was one of the documents to which Planning Authorities referred to, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present and will be affected by a development for which a Planning application seeks consent. The aims of the NPPF in relation to species and habitats are that it places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage on the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity' in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependant upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species.

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When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles

If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused

Guidance is contained in Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note: 5: Nature Conservation and Planning 2009 on the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. Furthermore TAN 5 PPS9 paragraph 3.4.2 states the Local planning authorities may adopt Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide more detailed, locally relevant guidance for:

Ways in which the planning system can deliver Local Biodiversity Action Plans objectives and the targets of Habitat and Species Action Plans.

- 2.3 Use of Buildings by Bats
 - a) Summer breeding roost.
 - b) Hibernation.
 - c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to “a *breeding site or resting place of such an animal*” and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

3.0 Bat Species in North Wales

- 3.1 Up to 11 bat species have been recorded in North Wales most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties, for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus*) and its abundant status in North Wales is reflected throughout the UK.

4.0 Survey Methodology

- 4.1 The survey was conducted on Thursday 3rd of April 2014 when the building proposed for demolition was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats and if evidence of use was present. Any exterior elevations were investigated from ground floor level, with the aid of close focussing binoculars and a torch for places that are frequently used by bats. Where accessible, interior loft spaces, were investigated with the aid of high powered torchlight for evidence of use by bats; in addition an assessment for its/their suitability to provide roosting opportunities for bat species was also conducted.

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- 4.2 The initial assessment was conducted by Ms K Swift, an experienced surveyor who currently holds a Class one Natural England bat licence and is in the latter stages of obtaining a Natural England Class 2 bat licence. Ms Swift is an accredited agent on a Class 2 Natural England and NRW bat licence. (51880:CSAB:2014 Mr S Irwin) The inspection was undertaken at a time when bats are outside of their breeding season but will have completed hibernation.
- 4.3 The results, conclusions and recommendations are based on a number of factors i.e.
- Practical experience of surveyor
 - Knowledge of bat species relevant to the site location and geographical distribution
 - Nature of the immediate and surrounding habitat in relation to foraging opportunities
 - Condition of the buildings
 - Presence/absence of a loft space
 - Presence/absence of roost potential
 - Value of roost potential – if present
- 4.4 During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

5.0 Constraints

- 5.1 The inspection was undertaken at a time when bats are out of hibernation but not entered their breeding season. As a result the presence of bat droppings or other markings on external elevations tends to be more unlikely.
- 5.2 Access to the loft was restricted as only one loft hatch was present from which only one compartment could be accessed.
- 5.3 Access to the rear of the property was restricted due to security measures in place.
- 5.4 Access to the interior of the outbuildings was not achievable due to both access considerations and safety concerns due to their condition.
- 5.5 Taking into consideration the above it is considered that although survey constraints were present they were not to a sufficient level that would prevent the gathering of information on which to base conclusions and recommendations.

6.0 Results

- 6.1 17 Manley Road is a large detached dwelling located at the end Manley Road which is a quiet residential road on the peripherals of Wrexham town centre at an approximate distance of 500 metres. The inspected buildings are set back from Manley Road within their own mature gardens.
- 6.2 The area immediate to the property is primarily residential dwellings with associated gardens, commercial units and a public car park. To the south east and west trees and green space are particularly sparse although immediately north there is a small area of woodland to which linkages are present in the form of small linear patches.
- 6.3 Notable features within 2 kilometres of the site include the River Gwenfro at 500 metres south east, Bellevue Park at 900m south west. To the north less than 1.5 kilometres from the site a large section of broadleaved woodland in the form of Lewis Wood is present; this patch of woodland connects to further extensive broadleaved woodland and the River Clywedog.

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All of the previously described habitats will provide suitable habitat for the species that the survey was undertaken i.e. bats. Where such habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats, increases given that roost opportunities are available and vice versa.



Location of 17 Manley Road car park immediate landscape

- 6.4 17 Manley Road is a large detached two storey former residential dwelling. The building is of red brick construction with a complex roof structure comprising of two slate pitched roofs and a flat roofed section between the two. To all elevations of the building extensions and outbuilding are present to the original property. At the west elevation a two storey tall flat roofed extension is also evident and is of red brick construction with one rendered side elevation.
- 6.5 The remaining elevations are surrounded by a single storey mono pitch roofed extension, which is also red brick construction with the roof constructed from a variety of corrugated materials along with a large garage/warehouse to the east of the same construction but with a flat roof. Out of the two identified potential loft spaces within the multi pitched roofs only one hatch was present. The loft space accessed from this hatch was found to be of a limited nature as the partition walls create a multi compartmental loft space in which only one could be accessed, which was found to be dark and draught free. The roof is of purlin and rafter construction and underfelt is present beneath the slates; insulation is present although extremely littered with detritus. Throughout the search of this compartment no evidence of use by any bat species was found but evidence of crevice dwelling bats is not always present in loft spaces.
- 6.6 The exterior elevations of the dwelling were found to be absent of features often utilised by crevice dwelling bat species such as soffit/barge boards. Numerous opportunities were however noted at the ridge of both pitched roofs where the mortar has perished or is absent. Where lead flashing is present around the chimneys several areas have, over time, raised sufficiently to allow bat access.

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- 6.7 On the exterior of the outbuildings areas offering potential access for bat species were noted under the fascia boards on the two storey building. Although the interior could not be accessed it is apparent there is potential for crevices to be present at wall plate level and within the brick work. Opportunities are largely absent on the other outbuildings as they are in a very deteriorating condition.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 From the survey results it can be concluded that at 17 Manley Road there is low to moderate bat roost potential.
- 7.2 Opportunities for loft/void dwelling species such as the Brown Long Eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) are largely absent due to the loft being separated into small compartments that do not provide a key element for this species, which is generally a large space that allows free flight. Furthermore the area immediate to the site does not contain the habitat features required to meet this species specific foraging requirements. A combination of the above factors means that the proposed works are unlikely to impact on this species.
- 7.3 Numerous opportunities are present throughout the structures for crevice dwelling bat species such as Pipistrellus. Crevice dwelling species favour roosting in small dark spaces often between two suitable materials which can protect them from the elements as well as predators. Numerous areas capable of potentially meeting these requirements have been identified at 17 Manley Road therefore the works may impact on these species.

8.0 Recommendations & Implications

- 8.1 In relation to bats the level of potential identified during the survey will instigate recommendations for surveys to be carried out at the site during the active season of bats (i.e. generally between the months of May - August). It is recommended that due to the complexity of the building two dusk and two dawn surveys are carried out to establish if bats are using the structure and if so how.

Bats, particularly Pipistrelle bats often alternate between roosts and do not necessarily use one roost over their active season thus dusk and/or dawn surveys need to be spaced between those months.

(See Figure1: Extract from Bat Conservation Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines)

Table 8.5 Minimum number of presence/absence survey visits required to provide confidence in negative preliminary roost assessment results from buildings, built structures and trees in summer

High roost potential	Low to moderate roost potential	Low roost potential
3 dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during May to September Optimum period May – August	2 dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during May to September Optimum period May – August.	1 dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry survey during May to September Optimum period May – August.
If bats are discovered emerging from any of the buildings during surveys, the survey schedule should be appropriately adjusted to increase the survey effort so that sufficient information can be collected. Note: two surveys carried out within the same 24 hour period constitute 1 survey		

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- 8.2 It should be noted that where bat/s or their roost/place of rest/shelter will be affected by the proposed works, then the work at the site will be delayed until such time that a Welsh Assembly Development licence is applied for and granted to allow the work to legally commence. Notwithstanding the granting of a licence works that would affect a roost cannot take place if a maternity colony is in occupation.

A licence is needed if the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010. A licence should be applied for if offences are unavoidable and the work should not commence until a licence is obtained.

NB: Where more detailed bat surveys are recommended, following an initial investigation, then Local Authorities on the advice of their ecological advisors, are unlikely to determine the application until such time that all relevant information is gathered, i.e. by conducting dusk/dawn surveys. The advice that is provided by the ecological advisors is also in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Therefore it would be prudent to make enquiries to the relevant departmental Planning Officer before submitting a Planning Application that includes an ecological survey report that recommends more detailed surveys.

APPENDIX I



Rear elevation of 17 Manley Road



Side elevation of 17 Manley Road

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Front elevation of 17 Manley Road



Front of the garage at 17 Manley Road

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Absence of soffit boards on main house structure



The inspected loft space at 17 Manley Road

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Areas identified on two storey out building



Complicated roof structure with restricted view at 17 Manley Road Wrexham