

Project:	Merthyr Tydfil Lower High Street		
Our Reference:	UK-WSP-70122512-RED-74-XX-RP-L-0001		
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Subject:	Internal Inspection Report		

Introduction

Redstart was commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) to carry out internal inspections of buildings within the site of proposed redevelopment to identify if bats are roosting within the buildings. The buildings are located within a site of the proposed redevelopment of Merthyr Rails Station and surrounding areas on High Street, Merthyr (approximate Central Grid Reference (CGR): SO 04960 05970).

Proposed works include re-development of the area to improve access between the rail and bus station and improving public space and buildings within the area. Proposed works include demolition of the structures (see Figure 1).

For the purposes of this report the area of proposed demolition site will be referred to as “the Site.” The Site is split into three previous commercial properties which will be referred to by their previous shop names “Monique’s”, “Peacocks” and “Red Cross” (see Figure 1 for locations).

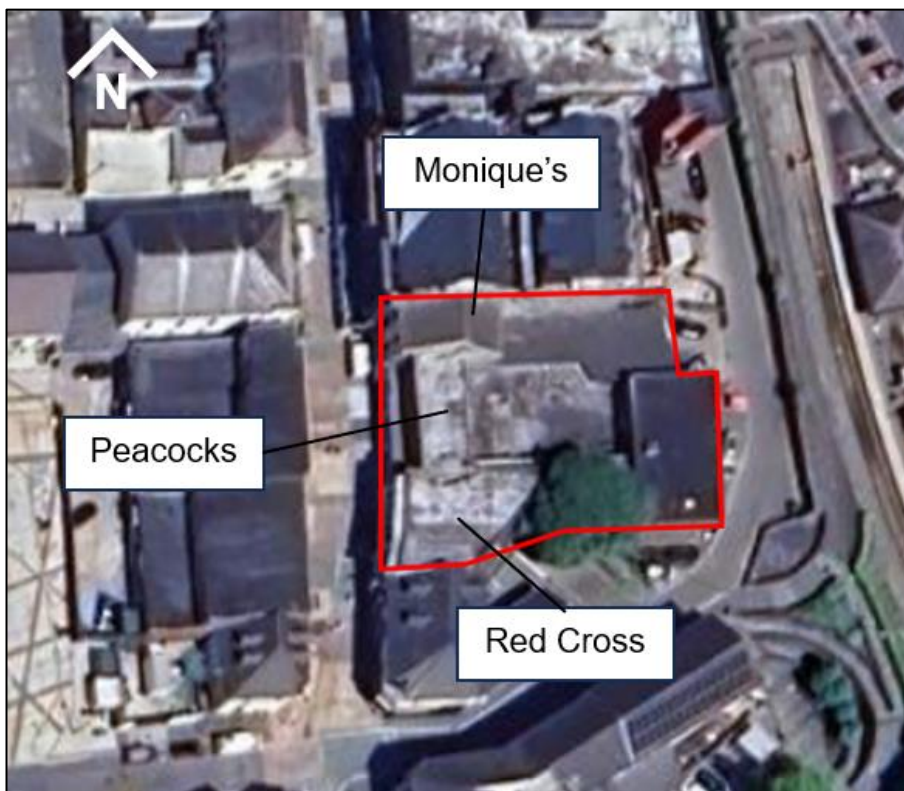


Figure 1: Location of buildings surveyed for proposed demolition highlighted in red. Adapted from Google Earth (Google Earth, 2024).

Methodology

Redstart ecologists, Richard Poole (Principal Ecologist) and Megan Watts (Ecologist) undertook an internal inspection of the three buildings on 16 September 2024. Surveyors thoroughly searched the internal property for signs of bats including live bats, dead bats, droppings and distinct smell as per Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) survey guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Six static bat detectors were deployed across the Site on the day of the survey to record bat calls and help identify whether bats were using access/egress points previously noted at the three commercial properties (Redstart, 2023). Locations and the types of detectors used are listed in Table 1. The static detectors were in position for 7 nights and collected on 23 September 2024 and the data recorded was analysed using sound analysis software by Megan Watts.

Full spectrum sound files from Anabat Swifts were analysed in Anabat Insight using the Bat-Classify Auto ID program. All data was manually checked for bat calls.

Zero-crossing sound files from Anabat Express were analysed in AnalookW. All recorded sonograms were manually checked.

Table 1: Locations and types of static detectors deployed on the Site.

Number	Location	Detector type
1	First floor Red Cross back of property	Anabat Express – zero-crossing
2	First floor Red Cross front of property	Anabat Express – zero-crossing
3	First floor Peacocks	Anabat Express – zero-crossing
4	Ground floor Peacocks	Anabat Express – zero-crossing
5	First floor Monique's	Anabat Swift – full spectrum
6	Attic of Monique's back of property	Anabat Swift – full spectrum

Limitations

Any ecological survey can only identify what was present on site at the time it was conducted, and habitat use by species can change over time. The length of time survey data remains valid will depend on a case-by-case basis, but typically if a development or proposed works do not commence within 2 years of the date of the survey, an update may be required (CIEEM,2019).

Potential roosting locations were present within the buildings that were not accessible to surveyors for inspection. However, tactical deployment of static detectors ensured that any bats present within the structure would be recorded.

Results

Internal Inspection

Access and egress points were noted across the Site from the front (High Street side) and back of the properties, including a broken window that was not previously noted (Redstart, 2023). Access/egress points included, open windows, broken windows and gaps in the roof line (Monique's).

No signs of bats were identified in any of the properties across the Site at the time of survey.

Static Detector Deployment

Six static detectors were deployed across the Site. No bat calls were recorded during the deployment period on any of the static detectors.

Discussion and Recommendations

As no evidence of bat use or presence and no bat calls were recorded at the Site it is considered that bats were not using Site for roosting at the time of survey.

Bats are mobile animals and as there were PRFs there is potential for bats to use the Site on an ad hoc basis when transitioning between roost sites or in unexpected adverse weather. Therefore, prior to demolition an additional inspection of the Site is required to confirm no bats are present at the time of demolition. This inspection should be undertaken no earlier than 24 hours prior to demolition.

Additionally, during the initial demolition work internal features must be soft-stripped under ecological supervision to check for the refuge of bats and avoid any bat being disturbed, injured or killed.

In the unlikely event that bats are found during demolition works, all work at the location must cease until a European Protected Species (EPS) licence is obtained from NRW.

References

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th ed)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Environment (Wales) Act, 2016.
- Google Earth (2024).
- Redstart (2022) Merthyr Tydfil Rail
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).