

MERTHYR VALLEY HOMES

PROPOSED ROOFING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS, PROPERTIES AT COUNCIL STREET AND URBAN STREET MERTHYR TYDFIL

BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY - ADDENDUM REPORT

AUGUST 2022



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CONTENTS

Summary

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Methodology

Bat survey – dusk emergence

3.0 Results

Bat survey – dusk emergence

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

References

Appendices

Appendix I Surveyor Location and Results Plan

SUMMARY

Soltys Brewster Ecology were commissioned by Merthyr Valley Homes (MVH) to undertake a daytime building inspection at several properties at Urban Street and Council Street, Pendydarren, Merthyr Tydfil in order to support an application for roofing repairs and improvement works in a Conservation Area.

The day time inspection of the 13 properties in Urban Street and 26 properties in Council Street was undertaken on the 10th February 2022 and found numerous potential access points for bats to the roofs as well as other parts of the building, including damaged fascia coverings, slightly raised tiles and raised lead flashing.

To supplement to the day time inspection, a dusk emergence survey of each street was undertaken with surveyors strategically positioned to capture bat activity around the streets.

No bats were observed emerging from any of the properties identified as having Low potential, and bat activity in the area was generally low with a few Common Pipistrelles commuting throughout the streets. As such, European Protected Species (EPS) Licence issued by Natural Resources Wales would not be required. It is recommended that a precautionary approach to repair works to the properties be adopted although no licensing requirements would apply unless a bat is discovered during works).

Several of the properties were identified as supporting nesting Swifts *Apus apus*, with nest position under the fascia board on the building frontages. Retention of these nest locations would be recommended with roofing works at relevant properties timed so as to avoid the nesting season for this species (i.e. to avoid the period between early May and early August). Where retention of nest locations is not possible, provision of surface mounted nest boxes should be considered.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Soltys Brewster Ecology were commissioned by Merthyr Valley Homes to undertake an external building inspection on 13 properties on Urban Street and 26 properties on Council Street, in the Penydarren area of Merthyr Tydfil. The two streets are in a Conservation Area and were built between 1895 and 1903. They are constructed of rough stone on the front elevations, terraced (on an incline) with pitched roofs, rear single storey extensions and back gardens.
- 1.2 The combination of desk study & site inspection surveys in February 2022 (SBE, 2022) established that there was no evidence of current or historical use by bats (or birds) at the properties surveyed. However, there were sufficient potential roosting features present and as such, the properties were collectively considered to have **low potential** to support roosting bats. Similarly, no evidence of historic use by nesting birds was identified during the February survey.
- 1.3 Under best practice guidelines (BCT 2016), structures of Low potential require a single emergence or re-entry survey to provide a robust appraisal of the likely presence/absence of roosting bats. To supplement the daytime inspection a single dusk emergence survey of each street was undertaken on 19th and 27th July with surveyors positioned to capture bat activity around the properties. This report provides the findings of the dusk emergence survey and provides additional recommendations with regards to bats & nesting birds. The current report should be read in conjunction with the day-time inspection survey report (Soltys Brewster 2022).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Bat survey – dusk emergence

2.1 The dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on 19 & 27 July at Council Street and Urban street respectively . by a team of suitably experienced ecologists, including a bat licence holder.¹ The bat activity survey aimed to identify:

- if bats are present within the building and, if so, which species are present;
- the type of roost (e.g. maternity roost, day roost used by males or non-breeding females, feeding perch, night roost, mating roost, occasional roost, hibernaculum);
- how bats use the buildings (e.g. location of roosting bats, flight paths and flight behaviour, exit and entrance points to the roost); and
- the intensity of use (e.g. likely number of bats, time and duration of use).

2.2 One dusk activity survey was undertaken on each street by a team of 4 (Council Street) or 3 (Urban Street) surveyors and commenced 15 minutes before sunset. Surveys were conducted using broad-band bat detectors (Peersonic, EM Touch & Bat Box Duet) and suitable recording equipment. All calls were recorded and bat species either identified in the field or using computer-based sonogram analysis software (e.g. Analook or Kaleidoscope). Surveyors were positioned so as to afford views along the frontage or rear of properties and gable ends where PRF features had been identified (see plan in Appendix I).

2.3 Weather conditions were not considered a constraint during either of the surveys with no rain, light winds and air temperatures remained above 17°C during both of the surveys.

¹NRW bat licence no: S091372/11

Merthyr Valley Homes

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[Bat Activity Survey Addendum Report](#)

E22108101 Doc 02

3.0 RESULTS

Bat survey – dusk emergence

- 3.1 A summary of findings are given below and further details of bat flight lines can be found in Appendix I. No bats were seen to emerge over the course of the surveys and levels of activity by foraging/commuting bats were low with some surveyors not recording any bat activity. A total of three bat species were recorded over the course of the surveys including Common and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*/*P. pygmaeus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*.

COUNCIL STREET		
DATE/SURVEY CONDITIONS	SURVEYOR LOCATIONS	RESULTS/COMMENTS
19-07-2022 22°C-start 18°C-finish Cloud cover 50% Rain-0% Wind-0 Start time: 21:05 Finish:22:50 Sunset 21:20	1,2,3,4	Surveyor 1 observed the first bat at 22:13, a Common Pipistrelle with 2 other passes of this species foraging bats moving east to west across Council I street. Surveyor 2 recorded no bat activity. Surveyor 3 heard the first bat, a Noctule at 21:43. 4 passes by Common Pipistrelle were recorded. No bats were seen. Surveyor 4 heard 2 bat calls, both Common Pipistrelle. No bats were observed. No emergences were observed during the survey. Bat activity was generally low and not associated with the properties.
Other observations:		Swifts were noted foraging over Council Street, Urban Street and District Street prior to and shortly after sunset. Nest locations were confirmed via observations of individual birds entering under the fascia at Property 21 and in the vicinity of Nos 40 – 42. The resident at No. 21 informed surveyor that the birds return every year.

URBAN STREET		
DATE/SURVEY CONDITIONS	SURVEYOR LOCATIONS	RESULTS/COMMENTS
27-07-2022 17°C-start 14°C-finish Cloud cover 70/80 % Rain-0% Wind-light wind-1 Start time: 20:55 Finish:22:40 Sunset 21:10	1,2,3	Surveyor 1 observed the first bat, a Common Pipistrelle at 21:49 which appeared from the northern direction and foraging around the street light. Individual Common and Soprano Pipistrelle were observed chasing/foraging around the gable end and rear garden of Property No. 24 between 21.58h & 22.07h although no emergence or re-entry was seen and the bats moved off to the west at 22.07h. Surveyor 2 reported 3 observations of Common Pipistrelle with the first bat seen at 21.33. An individual Common Pipistrelle was observed patrolling/foraging along the lane to the rear of the Urban Street properties at regular intervals between 21.37 & 22.15h Surveyor 3 recorded the first bat, a Common Pipistrelle at 21:47 commuting in an eastward direction. Two bats were seen foraging up and down the rear gardens of Urban street. No emergences were observed during the survey. Bat activity was generally low and not associated with the properties.
Other observations:		Swifts seen entering no. 29 and 31 Urban Street

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The combination of daytime inspection and dusk emergence survey of Council Street and Urban Street found no evidence of roosting bats in any of the properties. Bat activity levels were generally low with individual or small numbers of Common & Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule recorded over the two survey visits.
- 4.2 No licensing requirements are required although a precautionary approach to the work is recommended as detailed in section 4.4 and described in the day-time inspection report (SBE 2022). In the unlikely event a bat were discovered during the works to any of the properties, works will stop immediately and either a suitably qualified ecologist or NRW be contacted in the first instance.
- 4.3 Swifts were noted nesting in the fascia's of properties 21 & 40 – 42 Council Street and 29 & 31 Urban Street. Swifts are listed on the UK Red Data List. For the properties where nests have been identified, timing of works should aim to avoid the nesting season for this species which is typically early May – August. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) all wild birds are protected against killing or injury and their nests against damage or destruction whilst they are in use or being built. For the properties where nesting has been identified, the nest location should be retained if possible as part of the re-roofing works – field observations suggest that the nests are located beneath the fascia boards where the uneven nature of the stone wall creates a suitable void which the birds can use to access the wall tops.

Recommendations/Enhancements

- 4.4 The following recommendations are considered appropriate to the proposed roofing improvement works. Provision of bat boxes would represent a local enhancement and Swift boxes could be used both as mitigation (if existing nest locations cannot be retained) or enhancement (i.e. provide additional nesting opportunities):
- i. The provision of 4 no bat boxes on the properties (bat boxes on building could be surface mounted) - e.g Beaumaris Woodstone Bat box at gable ends of Nos. 24, 17 and rear elevation of No.43 Urban Street or to gable ends at No. 22, 23 Council Street. Boxes located at 4 – 6m height on gable ends or at eaves level,)
 - ii. Immediately prior to improvement works, contractors briefed on the possibility that bats could be present and, in the event that a bat were discovered, all works would cease immediately and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) or the project ecologist contacted for advice on how to proceed;
 - iii. Any proposed roofing membrane should be Bitumen 1F that is a non-woven short fibred construction.

- iv. Where possible a 2cm (20mm) gap to be left between the fascia coverings and the walls. The internal side of the fascia (the side against the wall) will need to be 'roughened' to allow bats to grip onto them. This can be done using sandpaper.
- v. The provision of 6 swift nest boxes to be installed on gable ends or at eaves level on 3no. properties on Urban Street and 3no. on Council Street. Boxes should be positioned so as not to be directly above doors or windows. Boxes at a minimum height of 5m

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX I SURVEYOR LOCATION & RESULTS PLAN



— Site Boundary

Bats

★ Surveyor position or static

Bat Flight Path

→ C Pip

Bat Foraging

● C Pip

Google Satellite

client
Merthyr Valley Homes

project
Roofing improvemnet works at Council & Urban St

drawing no.
E22108101

drawing title
Surveyor Location and Bat Activity
Surveys

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KG

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MW

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PRELIMINARY PLANNING DESIGN TENDER CONSTRUCTION

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