

Subject	Brief PRA of a chimney at 30 and 30A Victoria Street, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil
Site Name	30 and 30A Victoria Street
Title / Description	Proposed change of use from A1 to A3 planning class with external vent terminal and alterations
Client	Mr Harry Boughan
BE Ecological Ltd Ref	30 and 30A Victoria Street

Issue	Stage	Author	Checked	Approved	Date
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TECHNICAL NOTE

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Brief PRA

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This technical note is intended to provide a brief preliminary roost assessment of the building, focussing on the existing chimney works as a result of the installation of the flue as requested by the planning ecologist (**Figures 1 & 2**).

BE Ecological Ltd was asked by Mr Harry Boughan to attend site, inspect the building in respect of bats and to provide an assessment as to whether the installation of the flue is likely to affect roosting bats. A site visit was therefore undertaken on 05.02.21.

1.2 Site description

The property is a presumably brick/block built structure beneath a slate roof. Due to the height and the location of the property, not a lot of the roof line nor chimney is visible from the road, excluding the rear of the building from the south. The chimney the client wishes to install a vent within is on an extension to the rear of the main buildings. The slates appear to be relatively tight fitting, there is some potential for bats beneath barge boards on the gable end of the extension and beneath ridge tiles. The area visible to surveyors that immediately surrounds the chimney does not appear to support with any obvious potential, the slates are tight fitting, the lead flashing is tightly fitted and there were no obvious holes with the chimney being well pointed.

The site is set within a wholly urban environment, however, there is suitable foraging and commuting potential further afield. The location is relatively lit by the presence of street lights.

1.3 Proposed work

It is understood that there will be a change of use to the property along with refurbishment. As part of that refurbishment, a new flue will be installed within one of the existing chimneys. It is this installation that may disturb bats.

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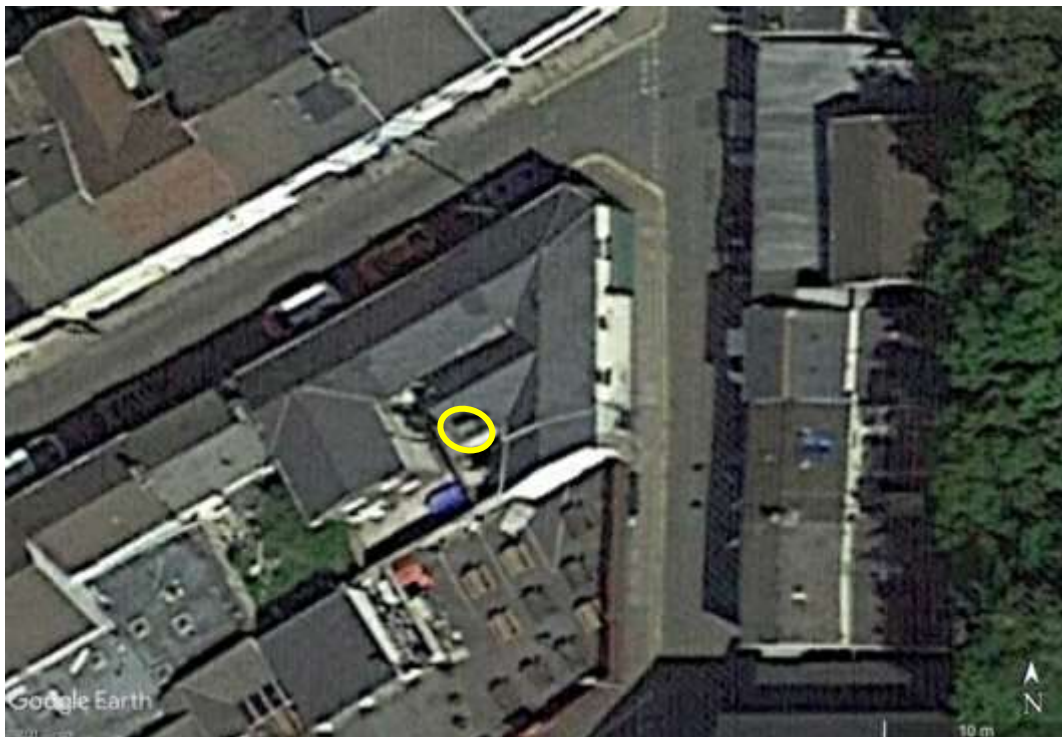
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Figure 1 – site location (circled in red)



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

Figure 2 – Chimney to have flue installed circled yellow



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

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2 ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

The proposed work requires the installation of a flue into a disused chimney.

A summary of relevant legislation is provided at **Appendix A**.

2.1 Bats (building)

The chimney that requires the installation of the flue is situated on an extension to the south of the property. The area to be impacted by the installation of the flue (chimney and surrounding area) generally appears to be in good order with no obvious missing or slipped slates. The lead flashing is tight and the chimney appears to be well pointed with no obvious gaps. The survey was however limited by the fact that much of the building from the eaves up is not visible from the road. There are gaps beneath the ridge tiles and some limited gaps beneath the barge boards of the extension gable. These will remain in situ and unaffected by the proposed works.

Internally, there is no large roof space, just a small void above the ceilings. There is no safe access to the area directly beneath the chimney. The chimney has been blocked off at ground and first floor levels. Please note BE Ecological Ltd did not inspect the first floor due to tenants being present and covid 19 restrictions.

No bats or evidence of bats was found on the exterior nor ground floor of the building.

2.2 Birds

It is possible that birds will also use the chimney for nesting. Installation of the flue must be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September) unless it is checked by a suitably qualified ecologist confirming no presence of nests.

3 FURTHER ACTIONS (BUILDING)

Externally areas to be affected by the proposed work do not appear to offer bats with any obvious roosting potential. As the roof is to remain untouched and the work is only to install a flue within a disused chimney, it is considered that no further survey effort is required providing that the installation of the flue is undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

4 ENHANCEMENTS

A bat box will be installed on the western gable of the extension that houses the chimney to have the flue installed <https://www.nhbs.com/eco-bat-box>.

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5 CONCLUSION

Externally the building does not offer any obvious roosting potential for bats within the areas to be affected by the proposed flue installation. As the plans are for the installation of a flue only, it is considered that further surveys are not necessary providing that the installation is carried out in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

6 METHOD STATEMENT

1. A suitably licenced and experienced ecologist will be on site/call for the duration of the works.
2. Before any work begins on site, a briefing for contractors and other site-staff 'toolbox talk' will be given by an ecologist. The briefing will cover the issues in respect of protected species they may encounter on site, where they might find them, methods of working, and what they need to know to avoid committing an offence. Every briefing attendee will be provided with a copy of a Method Statement and the contact details of an ecologist and Natural Resources Wales.
3. Before any work commences, the working area will be checked for the presence/evidence of bats.
4. All materials surrounding the chimney will need to be removed by hand (plaster board, any bricks to install the flue etc and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist.
5. Once the chimney is exposed, any cavities and the chimney will be checked for the presence of bats and birds using an endoscope.
6. Only when the onsite bat ecologist is happy that there is no further potential for bats, may he/she leave and the works continue with no supervision. A licensed bat ecologist will be on call for the remainder of the works. In the unlikely event that bats are found during a period that the licensed bat ecologist is not present on site, all works must cease and the licenced bat ecologist engaged.
7. If bats or their signs are found, all works will cease and Natural Resources Wales will be consulted, further surveys and a EPS licence may be required before works can legally resume.

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APPENDIX A –SITE PHOTOS



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APPENDIX B – LEGISLATION

CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES 2017 (as amended)

Prior to the 31st January 2020, European Union legislation required that member states designate sites for the protection of habitats and species included in the annexes of both Council Directive 92/43/EC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). This legislation was implemented in the UK by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitat Regulations”). This results in sites being designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas respectively (SPAs).

Following the UK’s exit from the European Union on 31st January 2020, the law responsible for continuing to implement this legislation through the transition period is The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU EXIT) Regulations 2019. All legislation within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 still apply within the UK under the amendment to the 2017 regulations until otherwise notified.

Working in protected sites or disturbing protected species is possible as long as consent has been issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) or Natural England (NE)

It is possible to undertake damaging activities under the auspices of a Protected Species Licence issued by NRW or NE which provides a derogation from the Regulations, meaning that an otherwise illegal operation carried out under licence is lawful.

WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the legislation for England and Wales for nature conservation, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb, kill or injure a bat either in or out of a place of shelter (roost);
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost or otherwise disturb it; and
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a roost.

ENVIRONMENT WALES ACT 2016