

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Rebecca Owens
From: Matt Davies (Ecologist)
Ext: 5278

Memo number: 1

Date of previous memo: -

Date: 10/07/2024

SUBJECT: P/24/0158 | Conversion of first and second floors to 12 self contained flats and associated external alterations | 68 High Street Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8AE

Abandoned storeys above shop units. Nearby grassland, scattered trees and garden habitats constituting links via stepping-stone features to nearby habitat of value for wildlife (e.g., wooded river corridor to the west and woodland and parkland to the east/north east).

Designated sites within 500m of the application site:

- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – x1 (Afon Taf, c.248m from site);
- Buglife B-Lines Area – x1 (c. 100m from the site)

Priority and protected species within 500m of the application site:

- Birds (including Schedule 1¹ and Section 7² species);
- Invertebrates (including records for marsh fritillary butterfly, c.1182m from site and other Section 7² species);
- Bats (closest roost record for soprano pipistrelle, c.146m from site);
- Otter;
- Hedgehog;
- Amphibians (including great crested newt, closest record c.557m from site)

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats and nesting birds of the site (undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist) is required. This must provide sufficient information for the local planning authority to assess any potential adverse impacts of the proposed development on priority and protected species and/or habitats, or to identify what further information is required before a full assessment is possible.

The results of the PRA will be used to inform whether further surveys are required, or to establish the need for and extent of any mitigation and compensation measures required as part of the proposed development.

A BARB+ data search required from SEWBRcC.

¹ Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

² Environment (Wales) Act 2016

There will need to be enhancement of the site in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The commissioned ecologist must take new Planning Policy Wales (PPW 12), Chapter 6 into account where relevant to this application.

The main changes to policy (that are or may be relevant to this application) are as follows:

Green Infrastructure: *stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure, the submission of a proportionate green infrastructure statement with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards.*

Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach: *further clarity is provided on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step. The use of the green infrastructure statement as a means of demonstrating the stepwise approach is made explicit. A simplified diagram of the policy approach has been developed (which will be further refined in the consolidated version of PPW12). The importance of strategic collaboration to identify and capture larger scale opportunities for securing a net benefit for biodiversity is recognised.*

Protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest: *strengthened approach to the protection of SSSIs, with increased clarity on the position for site management and exemptions for minor development necessary to maintain a 'living landscape'. Other development is considered unacceptable as a matter of principle. Exceptionally, a planned approach may be appropriate where necessary safeguards can be secured through a development plan*

Trees and Woodlands: *closer alignment with the stepwise approach, along with promoting new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place.*

NB it is noted that a GIS has been submitted. This will be assessed following receipt of the results of the required bat survey work.