



24.03.22

Mr. Steve Jones
14 Lower High Street
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8EB

By e-mail

Our Reference: LT065-PRA

Dear Mr. Jones

Re: Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of 14 Lower High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8EB

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Little Wing Ecology (CYF) was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment of a structure known as, '14 Lower High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8EB.' The survey was undertaken to inform the client of any constraints, and associated planning requirements with regards to protected species, and to inform a planning application. For the purposes of this report, this structure will be referred to as, 'Building A.'

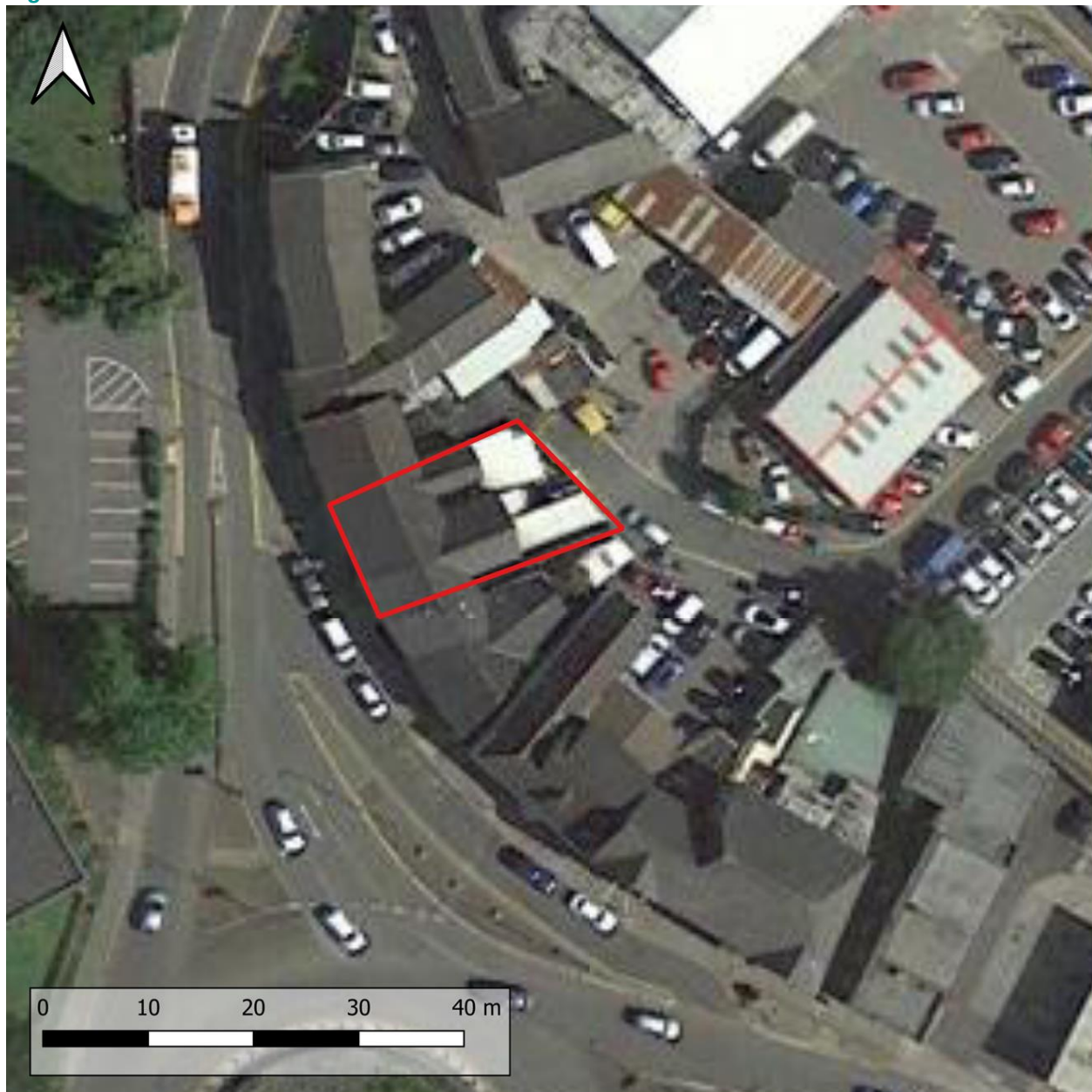
Building A is a mixed residential/commercial property and occupies an urban plot of approximately 21m x 13m and the structure represents a two storey, atone and brick built, late-19th Century mid-terrace property. The structure is situated on a main service road (Lower High Street), at the southern edge of Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. Building A is positioned at grid reference **SS 61035 93195** (Figure 1), 600m east of the A470 and ≈2.7km south of the A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road).

Planning permission is sought for the addition of solar panels on the western and eastern elevation of the main roof structure (excluding the rear extensions).

The purpose of this report is to determine if bat roosts are present or likely to be present in Building A, consider if nesting birds are present (either of which may be affected by the development proposals) and to gather sufficient information to be able to make appropriate recommendations, inform any constraints, and associated planning requirements.

This report contains the results from an examination of the interior and exterior of the structure and its associated habitat. Following this examination, an assessment of the likely impact that the proposed works will have on bat interest at the site was carried out.

Figure 1: A Site Plan



Key

 Site Boundary

Date: March 2023

Produced by: Little Wing Ecology

Job Reference: LT065-PRA

Author: N S Aldridge

QGIS Development Team, <2022>. QGIS Geographic Information System. Open-Source Geospatial Foundation Project.
<http://qgis.osgeo.org>. N.B. The area (highlighted in red) subject to Preliminary Roost Inspection

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SECTION TWO: THE SURVEY METHOD

Personnel & Survey Details

Survey Date(s): Wednesday 15th March 2023

Surveyor(s): N. S. Aldridge MSc., BSc., (Hons), PGCE.

Licence Details(s): Bat Licence: S091427/1 - 22nd July 2022 - 21st July 2024.

The Roost Inspection

A Preliminary Roost Inspection of Building A followed current best practice guidelines and entailed a internal and external inspection of the building. The inspection of the exterior of the building was undertaken to identify potential features for roosting bats, and potential bat entry or exit points. The interior was searched for evidence that would indicate the presence of bats such as feeding remains, bat droppings, oil staining, dead bats, and the bats themselves. The building surveyed would be classified on its potential likelihood of supporting a bat roost and this is based on the number and extent of potential roost features and entry/exit points to the building. The criteria for determining the potential of the building to support a bat roost is included in Table 1.

Nesting birds were also considered at the time of the survey, with the surveyor looking for signs of bird activity, nests, nest building, feeding at nest sites, and evidence of collections of bird droppings, feathers, or any other indications of use by birds.

Assessment	Roosting	Commuting and Foraging
Negligible	An inspected structure or tree which is considered to have no features of importance for roosting bats. No further constraints apply to the method or timing of proposed works.	Negligible habitat features on-site to support commuting or foraging bats
Low	A structure with at least one or more features suitable to support opportunistic individual bats. However, inadequate space, shelter, protection and conditions, and the low suitability of surrounding habitats means that it is unlikely to be used as a maternity or hibernation roost site. A tree of adequate age and stature to support potential roosting features, however, either no features, or only features of limited potential recorded from the ground.	Habitat with potential to support low numbers of commuting bats due to its quality and connectivity. For example, a gappy hedgerow or un-vegetated stream that is isolated from the surrounding landscape. Alternatively, suitable but isolated habitats suitable to support low numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are of adequate size, shelter and protection, with suitable conditions and surrounding habitat to support a bat roost not of high conservation status (with respect to roost type not individual species conservation status).	Linear habitat continuity connecting to the wider landscape offering potential to support commuting bats, such as rows of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat such as trees, scrub, grassland or a water-body with connectivity to the wider landscape offering foraging opportunities for bats.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by large numbers of bats on a regular basis and for long periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and the surrounding habitat.	Continuous high-quality habitat with strong connectivity to the wider landscape that is likely to be used by commuting bats on a regular basis, such as flowing water-bodies, hedgerows, rows of trees and woodland edges. High quality habitat with strong connectivity to the wider landscape that is likely to be regularly used by foraging bats, such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to, and connected to, known roost sites

Figure 1: National Guidance on Preliminary Roost Assessment
© Adapted from Collins, J (ed) (2016).

Limitations of the Survey Method

No access was possible to the interior of the two small rear extensions. No hatches were present and access was not possible from the main roof space.

The main roof space is divided into a northern and southern section by a partly wall. A full and complete inspection was made of the northern roof space but access was limited to the main southern roof space. This was due to a suspended ceiling which was fitted below the access hatch. The frame of this suspended ceiling allowed the hatch to be partially opened to the extent that, while it was possible to view the roof space from the entrance it was not possible to enter.

This being said, the roof void was surveyed as far as possible from the loft hatch using high power-torches. The survey was considered adequate to assess the suitability of the void for roosting bats and complete a partial search for bat evidence, thus this constraint is not considered to materially alter the conclusions drawn in this report. All other areas of the building were fully accessible.

The field survey was conducted outside of the bat breeding season, nonetheless, it is possible to assess the suitability of structures for roosting bats throughout the year and identify many species in some circumstances. No additional limitations were recorded during the field survey.

SECTION THREE: RESULTS

The findings of the preliminary roost inspection survey of the building are detailed in Table 2 (below).

Description	Potential Nest and Roost Assessment	Evidence	Assessment	Photographic Evidence
<u>Building A:</u> <u>14 Lower High Street</u> An occupied Structure – mixed residential/ commercial. A two-storey stone and brick built Victorian structure with a cement render, and traditional slate roof.	<u>External Inspection: Soffits and Fascias</u> No significant gaps were recorded on the exterior of the western or eastern elevation of the main building. All exterior fixtures were well sealed and in good order.	No evidence recorded of nesting birds or roosting bats.	Negligible (Bats) Negligible (birds)	
				

<u>Building A:</u> <u>14 Lower High Street</u> An occupied Structure – mixed residential/ commercial. A two-storey stone and brick built Victorian structure with a cement render, and traditional slate roof.	<u>External Inspection: Roofing Materials</u> No raised tiles were recorded. The slates and ridge tiles were well-maintained and in good order. Two slipped slates were identified on the western elevation but these had a low profile and provided no access points suitable for bats. Roof vents are present on the western and eastern elevation but these are fitted with a grill to deter wildlife.	No evidence recorded of nesting birds or roosting bats.	Negligible (Bats) Negligible (birds)	
				
<u>Building A:</u> <u>14 Lower High Street</u> An occupied Structure – mixed residential/ commercial. A two-storey stone and brick built Victorian structure with a cement render, and traditional slate roof.	<u>External Inspection: Flues and Chimneys</u> Flashing around the flue was in a good state of repair. No areas of lead were raised and no suitable gaps were visible. uPVC vents were present on the western and eastern elevations. Following an internal examination it was found that these were associated with an opening in bitumen lining membrane and provided ventilation to the interior of the roof space. While these provide a potential access point to the interior roof space and the gap between the membrane and the roofing slates, uPVC does not provide bats with the appropriate grip required to make this a suitable access point.	No evidence recorded of nesting birds or roosting bats.	Negligible (Bats) Negligible (birds)	

<u>Building A:</u> <u>14 Lower High Street</u> An occupied Structure – mixed residential/ commercial. A two-storey stone and brick built Victorian structure with a cement render, and traditional slate roof.	<u>External Inspection: Rear Gables</u> A gap was recorded between the barge board and the wall providing access to a void of unknown proportions. This offers a potential access point for bats to enter the roof space of the rear extensions and potentially gain access to the hyper-membrane cavity.	No evidence recorded of nesting birds or roosting bats.	Moderate (Bats) Negligible (birds)	
				
<u>Building A:</u> <u>14 Lower High Street</u> An occupied Structure – mixed residential/ commercial. A two-storey stone and brick built Victorian structure with a cement render, and traditional slate roof.	<u>Internal Inspection: Roof Spaces</u> The roofing structure consisted a traditional hand-cut roof with ridge-board. An intact bitumen membrane was in place between the rafters and the slate roofing slates. The only light penetration recorded into the roof space was at the uPVC vents below each of which a slit had been made in the roofing membrane. These vents are fitted with a grill to deter wildlife. No access was possible to the interior of the two small rear extensions. No hatches were present and access was not possible from the main roof space. The main roof space is divided into a northern and southern section by a partly wall. A full and complete inspection was made of the northern roof space but access was limited to the main southern roof space. This	No evidence recorded of nesting birds or roosting bats.	Negligible (Bats) Negligible (birds)	 Northern roof space

was due to a suspended ceiling which was fitted below the access hatch. The frame of this suspended ceiling allowed the hatch to be partially opened to the extent that, while it was possible to view the roof space from the entrance it was not possible to enter. However, the roof void was surveyed as far as possible from the loft hatch using high power-torches.			
      			

Table 2: Preliminary Roost Assessment

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats

No bat roosts were confirmed within Building A and no evidence of bats was found during the daytime survey. Overall the main roof of Building A was considered to offer negligible potential to support the roosts of crevice-dwelling bat species. The only access points recorded were at uPVC vents, all of which have grills fitted to deter wildlife. Due to the presence of gaps on the exterior of the rear extensions, notably behind the barge boards on the eastern gables, it is considered that these structures offer a moderate potential at supporting a bat roost. However, the likelihood of bats using these features for roosting is reduced due to the urban context of the building. The roads immediately to the west and east of the building are all lit by street-lamps this is likely to decrease the chances of bats using the building for roosting. In addition, there are likely to be better roosting locations within residential buildings close by.

As an additional constraint, Building A is located ≈120m north-east of The Afon Tâf (SINC - A Site of Importance for Nature Conservation). The forms a significant feature in the landscape and provides a high quality habitat for commuting and foraging bats.

The proposed planning application is for the installation on solar panels on the main roof structure. It is understood that there are no plans to include the roof of either of the rear extensions in these plans. The area to be impacted on by the proposed development is considered to offer a negligible risk while the extensions are considered to offer a moderate risk. Bats are opportunistic animals and will exploit any opportunity for shelter if it arises and the conditions are favourable.

Taking the results of this survey into consideration, bat roosts are considered likely absent from the main roof structure (i.e. the only area to be impacted by the proposals). Bat interest at Building A is considered to be of negligible conservation significance (Mitchell-Jones 2004) with breeding bats, not a concern. It is therefore considered that there are no specific restrictions or limitations apply. If however, plans change and the rear extension are to be included in the proposal additional limitations will apply (see below).

Legislation

All native UK species of bat are listed on Annex II and IV of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora. This Directive is transposed into UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). All bats are also listed on Schedule 5 of Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded further protection under Section 9 of this Act. In brief, this legislation makes it offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or take a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat or bats in such a way as to be likely to impair their ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young; to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species;
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place that bats use for shelter or protection; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a place which it uses for shelter or protection.

Recommendations

Based on the Preliminary Roost Assessment survey, the main roof structure of Building A is considered to offer a negligible risk at supporting roosting bats; should works be restricted to the main roof space and

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avoid the extensions. In these circumstances, no specific restrictions or limitations apply. No additional survey work is required at this time and works can continue as planned.

However, despite the main structure being considered to have a low potential, the presence of bat roosts within extensions cannot be entirely ruled out. The roof structures of the rear extensions are considered to offer a moderate potential to support roosting bats. Consequently, if the proposed work was in any way impact the roofs of the extensions, this would require two dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey with at least one surveyor to be completed between May and September (at least two weeks apart) during the year in which the works are to commence.

In this instance, if no bat roosts are found during the survey then the works can begin without further delay. However, should bat roosts be found a Natural Resources Wales EPS development licence would be required before works could commence. This approach reduces the chances of unexpected delays to the development as a result of a bat roost being found. However, development works would not be able to begin until the roost detection survey work had been completed. In addition, there is a risk that surveys would become out of date if the proposed work was delayed and would need to be repeated.

As a precaution, and in order to avoid any potential impacts under either of the scenarios outlined above, it is recommended that during works no scaffolding be erected along the eastern gables of the rear extensions.

SECTION FOUR: CLOSURE & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Little Wing Ecology (CYF) has prepared this Report for the sole use of the above-named Client or his Agents in accordance with our terms of business, under which our services were performed. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by us. This Report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of Little Wing Ecology (CYF).

The assessments made assume that the site(s) and facilities will continue to be used for their current purpose without significant change. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Little Wing Ecology (CYF).

Bats are opportunistic animals and will exploit any opportunity for shelter if it arises and the conditions are favourable. If at any point during works a protected species is encountered on-site, it is essential that all work is to cease and that a suitably experienced ecologist is contacted for advice. Should works not start within two years (i.e., March 2025) further survey and assessment will be necessary to qualify the results of this report and its recommendations. This report is valid for two years (i.e., March 2025).

Yours sincerely



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Director / Ecologist
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