

File Note: LEL_CRN_L156TF_PRA_001_REV A

Discipline: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats and Preliminary Roost Assessment

Site: Church Road North, Wavertree L15 6TF (Structure Grid Ref: SJ 3928 8936).

Site Visit Date: Thursday 18th June 2020

INTRODUCTION

Landscape Ecology Limited was instructed by Lidl GB Limited to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats and subsequent Preliminary Roost Assessment on a disused structure sited on a plot of land at Church Road North, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TF (hereafter referred to as “the site”) (see **Figure 1**).

The current survey follows on from a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Landscape Ecology Limited in April 2020 where one of the recommendations is that an internal and external inspection for roosting bats or potential features that bats might use for roosting be undertaken.



Figure 1: shows location of ‘the site’ with indicative red line site boundary. The extensive structure location can be seen to the south-east corner of ‘the site’.

‘The site’ was until recently, occupied by the Cooperative Society supermarket with a closed snooker hall upstairs. Before that it was understood to have been a bingo club, Lennon’s supermarket and originally the Abbey Cinema, constructed circa. 1939.

All bat species in England and Wales are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

METHODOLOGY

The appraisal was undertaken in line with recommendations detailed in Chapter 4 and 5 of the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) publication Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016).

Chapter 4 details the methodology for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats which requires a desk study and habitat assessment and Chapter 5 details the Preliminary Roost Assessment methodology which involves an internal and external inspection of the structure and any trees on site that may have suitable features for roosting bats. The latter was carried out using binoculars and a high-powered torch searching for such features such as gaps and crevices in the brickwork and pointing, under tiles and behind barge boards for example. Evidence of bat occupancy was searched for such as droppings on the floor of the building, on windowsills and beneath suitable features.

The appraisal was undertaken in wet weather conditions by Mr Donald Kernott Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (MCIEEM) who holds a Level 2 Class Licence to survey for bats (Licence Nos. 2015-16995).

Constraints

The structure is now disused, although the ground floor was only recently vacated (March 2020) by the Cooperative Society much of the upper floors have lain empty for some time, therefore as the threat of Covid-19 was considered negligible it was considered safe to enter to undertake an internal inspection. Further, during on-site engagement with the client and security, Covid-19 social distancing was maintained throughout.

Once inside, access to some locations was constrained in some sections of the structure due to the presence of asbestos.

Furthermore, other areas of the structure have suspended ceilings and false walls, particularly the central section of the structure (redundant snooker hall). Suspended ceilings are unsafe to access and false walls can possibly hide voids that cannot be accessed. Nevertheless, internal access was available to the majority of areas and it was possible to view some voids, including the suspended ceiling through roof coverings, holes or damaged walls.

The east side wall of the single-storey warehouse structure could not be accessed as it backs onto private gardens.

RESULTS

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Habitats within 'the site' were overviewed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and described as *'...Approximately 50% of 'the site' is occupied by a four-story brick-built structure. The remainder of 'the site' is predominantly hardstanding with a narrow band of landscaping to the front'*. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also noted that 'the site' is located *'...in a predominantly urban residential/commercial area'*.

Built circa. 1939, the structure is quite imposing in the local area. The north section comprises a four-storey brick-built structure while the adjoining section to the south appears to be a more recently added single-storey, in part, brick-built warehouse type structure.

A review of Google Earth identified the following potential commuting and foraging habitats for bats within the wider area beyond 'the site'.

- Adjoining back gardens to the east of the structure.
- Wavertree Green (maintained grassland) approximately 150m south.
- Approximately 300m west are the maintained grasslands of Liverpool Aquatics Centre/Wavertree Playground. Approximately 900m beyond that is a railway corridor.
- Approximately 300m east there is Thingwall allotment gardens.
- Approximately 900m north, another railway corridor.
- Greenbank Park and Sefton Park are approximately 1.4km to the south west and Calderstones Park is approximately 1.8km south-east.

MAGIC indicates that the nearest known historical granted EPSL applications within 2km of the centre of the 'the site' is approximately 1.6km to the south-west and associated with common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*. The next nearest known historical granted EPSL applications are approximately 2.8km north-east and 3.0km west, both associated with common pipistrelle bats.

Due to the scale of the proposals, location and the habitats to be affected it was considered that detailed historical bat records from the centre of 'the site' obtainable from the Local Record Centre (Merseyside Biobank) and/or Merseyside & West Lancashire Bat Group is unlikely to reveal any additional important information.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas was accessed; however, NBN Atlas records are copyrighted and cannot be used commercially, therefore a detailed disclosure of any records found cannot be utilised.

In conclusion, it is considered that 'the sites' habitats have a limited suitability to be potentially used by commuting and foraging bats. However, 'the site' is linked by back gardens to the wider area including Wavertree Green to the south and Wavertree Playground to the west. Therefore, overall habitats adjacent to 'the site' and in the wider area are considered to have a **moderate** suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

The potential suitability of the structure for roosting bats is discussed in the Preliminary Roost Assessment results below.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Trees

The trees were assessed for their potential for roosting bats during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal referred to in the introduction of this report. No features were noted and considered to be negligible value for roosting bats.

The Structure – External Appraisal

The structure itself as shown in **Figure 1** is a brick structure built circa. 1939. Ground floor doors are currently shuttered up for security with metal sheeting. All aspects of the structure were accessible, including the east side of the main structure, which was gained via internal fire doors. **Figure 2** shows a plan of the structure with potential bat roosting features highlighted.



Figure 2: plan showing general layout of the structure with potential bat roosting features highlighted (red) and labelled. Figures 3a to 3h below provide some discussion in relation to the type of potential roost features observed.

Figures 3a to 3h below provide images and discussion in relation to the potential bat roosting features observed during the external appraisal and as identified in **Figure 2**.



Figure 3a: Feature1 - located on the north-east aspect corner of the structure, small gap in brickwork.



Figure 3b: Feature 2 – located on the north aspect of the structure, gaps in brickwork where pointing has eroded.



Figure 3c: Feature 2a – stonework overhangs on the north and west face of the structure show signs of weathering with potential gaps – see also Figure 3e.



Figure 3d: Feature 3 – lower window above canopy at entrance to structure – broken pane may present opportunity for bat species to gain access to the structure.



Figure 3e: Feature 4 – close up of crack in stonework overhang on the west face of the structure. There are similar overhangs on the north face of the structure which may also have potential roosting opportunities for bats.



Figure 3f: Feature 5 – redundant modification fixing points on the front west face of the structure may also provide potential opportunities for roosting bats.



Figure 3g: Feature 5a – similarly to Figure 3f redundant modifications may provide potential opportunities for roosting bats.



Figure 3h: Feature 5b – gaps in pointing on west face of structure.

During the external inspection no evidence of use by bats such as droppings were encountered.

The Structure – Internal Appraisal

The internal appraisal was undertaken methodically moving from level to level and room to room found no evidence of bats. For ease of reading the internal appraisal will be discussed level by level and include the following;

- Ground level (former co-operative shop floor and warehousing)
- Mid-level (redundant snooker hall)
- Upper levels (old cinema remnants)

Ground Level (former co-operative shop floor and warehousing)

Until recently (March 2020) the ground floor operated as retail and warehousing spaces.

Ground level spaces themselves are mostly unsuitable for bats offering limited crevices or cavities that bats might find suitable and access seemingly not possible. Further, many of the rooms were lit artificially and this lighting was on when the structure was accessed.

See **Figures 4a to 4f images** and captions for further discussion in relation to the internal appraisal.



Figure 4a: Image 1 – shows the extensive shop former floor retail space brightly illuminated with strip lighting which was on when the structure was accessed.



Figure 4b: Image 2 – one of a number of warehouse spaces which make up part of the single-storey brick-built structure to the south of 'the site'. Again, brightly illuminated with strip lighting and seemingly no possible access points for bats.



Figure 4c: Image 3 – another section of the warehousing area. Strip lighting and seemingly no access points for bats.



Figure 4d: Image 4 – another section of the warehouse showing clean floors.



Figure 4e: Image 5 – toilets – windowless, clean, strip lit and with no possible access for bats.



Figure 4f: Image 6 – rest room – similarly clean, strip lit and no possible access for bats.

During the ground level internal appraisal, no evidence of use by bats such as droppings were encountered. In addition, the ground level area appears to be well-sealed and maintained with no potential access features for bats to gain entry.

Mid-Level (redundant snooker hall)

The former Riley's snooker club occupies the mid-level spaces of the structure. It is unclear how long the club has lain empty but judging from the condition of the interior, it appears to be a number of years.

Mid-level spaces themselves are mostly unsuitable for bats offering limited crevices or cavities that bats might find suitable and access seemingly not possible. Further, it appears there are no direct access points, though if bats are using this part of the structure it is assumed that they could potentially access from upper reaches of structure and enter via false walls or suspended ceilings.

See **Figures 5a to 5i** images and captions for further discussion in relation to the internal appraisal.



Figure 5a: Image 1 – access to the former Riley's snooker club from the ground floor level is via some stairs.



Figure 5b: Image 2 – shows a surface checked for evidence of bat droppings – none were found.



Figure 5c: Image 3 – shows another stairwell from the ground floor level to the former Riley's snooker club. Note the rat droppings at the bottom of the landing step.



Figure 5d: Image 4 – shows surfaces in the stairwell in Figure 5 c above being checked for bat droppings – none were found.



Figure 5e: Image 5 – false walls are numerous in nature in the mid-level spaces. Here we can see one has been ‘punched’ through – where possible these spaces were checked for evidence of use by bats – none were found.



Figure 5f: Image 6 – shows another false wall where the only opportunity to view the space behind was with a torch from the snooker club side of the wall.



Figure 5g: Image 7 – shows further surfaces checked for evidence of bat droppings – none were found.

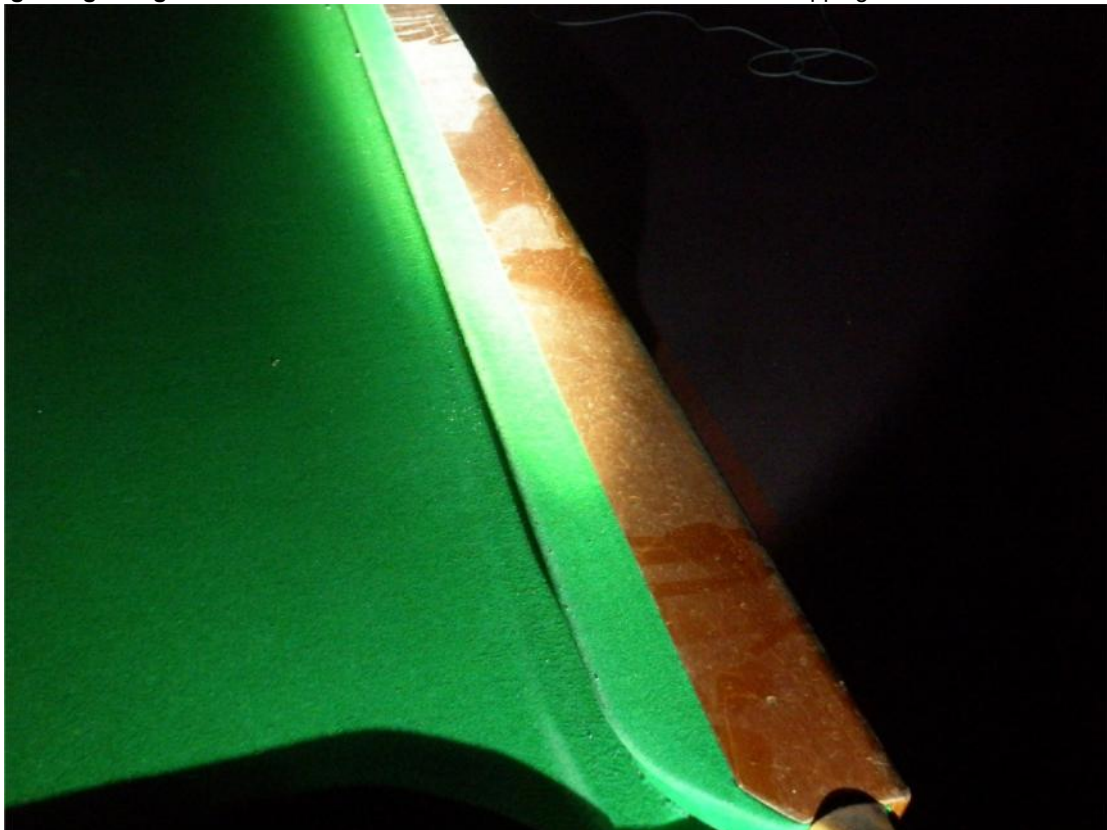


Figure 5h: Image 8 – a number of snooker tables remain – these exhibited no evidence of the space being used by bats.



Figure 5i: Image 9 – shows the interior of the suspended ceiling. This was not accessible for health and safety reasons; however, it was possible to view the interior through a removed ceiling panel & check surrounding panels for evidence of use by bats – none were found. Here we can see the original roof of the cinema auditorium.

During the mid-level internal appraisal, no evidence of use by bats such as droppings were encountered.

Upper-Levels (old cinema remnants)

Much of the spaces in the upper levels are a mixture of corridors, small rooms, stairwells and roof voids. It is thought the corridors and small rooms may have been the projection rooms and associated access of the original cinema.

There are likely more opportunities for roosting bats in this area of the structure than ground and mid-levels. However, access to this section of the structure appears limited to bats via the occasional open or broken window. Daylight also penetrates many areas of the upper levels.

See Figures **6a** to **6i** images and captions for further discussion in relation to the internal appraisal.



Figure 6a: Image 1 – stairwell up from former Riley's snooker club has a lobby area before another flight of stairs up to some corridors. It can be seen that daylight penetrates this area of the structure.



Figure 6b: Image 2 – another lobby area part-way up the stairwell also has daylight penetrating the structure.

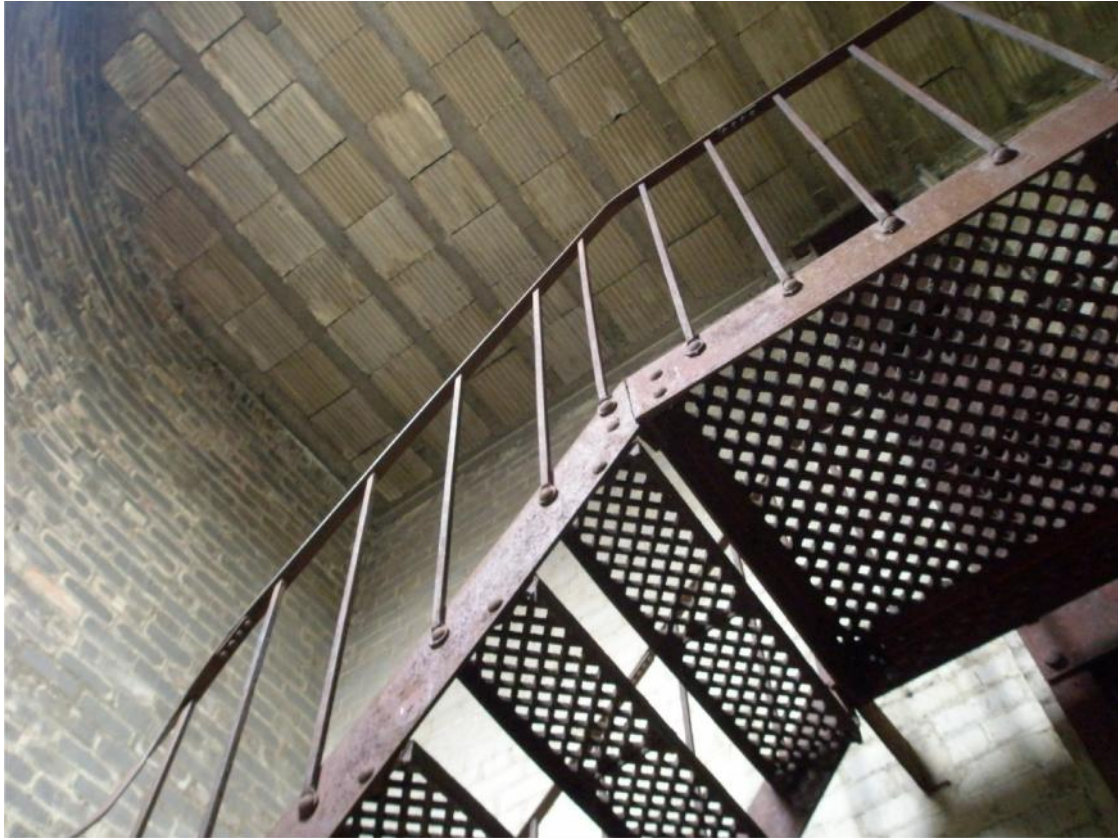


Figure 6c: Image 3 – a view of the roof of the structure from below the stairwell – it's unclear what the material is made from.



Figure 6d: Image 4 – this image shows the upper level of the structure. Here we have corridors exposed to daylight penetration.



Figure 6e: Image 5 – one of the rooms off the corridor, though slightly darker, still has daylight penetrating from the corridor.



Figure 6f: Image 6 – this image shows another narrower stairwell down from the upper structure to ground level. Small windows allow daylight to penetrate



Figure 6g: Image 7 – cobwebs in the small windows of the stairwell discussed in Figure 6f were checked for bat droppings – none were present.



Figure 6h: Image 8 – a small opening from one of the rooms off the corridor leads into a substantial roof void where, access permitting, checks for use by bats were made.



Figure 6i: Image 9 – a view inside the roof void shows ventilation shafts and the outline of the former cinema auditorium roof.



Figure 6j: Image 10 – this image shows the roofing material to the structure which appears to be corrugated asbestos and not metal as suggested in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.



Figure 6k: Image 11 – a further image from the roof void showing the roof curvature of the auditorium where checks were made via torchlight for evidence of use by bats – none were found.



Figure 6i: Image 12 – another floor space in the roof void where checks for evidence of use by bats were made – none were found.

During the upper-levels internal appraisal, no evidence of use by bats such as droppings were encountered.

CONCLUSION

Habitats surrounding the site could be characterised as predominantly urban with garden vegetation that is likely to be utilised by commuting or foraging bats. Similarly, the wider area has suitable habitat that bats may use for commuting and foraging.

MAGIC indicates that the nearest known historical granted EPSL applications within 2km of the centre of the 'the site' is approximately 1.6km to the south-west and associated with common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. The next nearest known historical granted EPSL applications are approximately 2.8km north-east and 3.0km west, both associated with common pipistrelle bats.

The structure is now disused, although the ground floor was only recently vacated (March 2020) by the Cooperative Society much of the upper floors have lain empty for some time.

The internal appraisal found no evidence of roosting or use by bats. Most areas could be accessed, however due to the presence of asbestos and modifications such as false walls and suspended ceilings some areas could not be accessed.

The structure appears to be mostly inaccessible to bats, with the majority of rooms, corridors and other spaces within the structure unsuitable for use by bats. Unsuitability ranges from a well-sealed & maintained structure, artificial lighting, daylight penetration and generally a lack of suitable roosting features.

It is considered overall that a satisfactory internal inspection, despite constraints, has been undertaken. Further, additional survey work as discussed below will confirm the presence/likely absence of bats.

The external appraisal also found no evidence of use of the structure by bats however a number of features have been highlighted that may provide opportunities for roosting bats, in particular crevice dwelling bat species.

In conclusion, the structure has evidenced potential roost features that opportunistic crevice dwelling bats could utilise for roosting and habitats locally and beyond are deemed to have suitability for foraging and/or commuting opportunities for bat species. Therefore, the structure is considered overall to have a **moderate** roosting potential.

It is recommended that to fully establish if bat species are using the structure, dusk emergence or dawn re-entry surveys are required to take place. In accordance with the BCT Guidelines Chapter 7 (Collins 2016), structures of **moderate** roost suitability require two survey visits. This should be carried out between May to September. Dependant on the level of activity encountered, an additional survey may be required to support any application for a European Protected Species mitigation licence, should one be required.


It is advised that no works take place to the structure until the presence/likely absence of bats is established via the surveys discussed above.

Signed



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Reviewer: Adrian Taylor CEnv MCIEEM



References

Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn)*.
The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

MAGIC <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/home.htm> Accessed 06/06/20

NBN <https://nbnatlas.org/> Accessed 06/06/20