

Land off Neath Abbey Road, Neath

12740_R01_Bat Survey & Assessment

1.0 Introduction and Site Background

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Ltd on behalf of Aldi Stores Ltd. It describes the findings of a bat survey of a small building to be demolished in the footprint of the proposed new Aldi store on land off Neath Abbey Road, Neath, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SS 74489 97529 and is illustrated below (the building to be demolished is labelled 'Celtic Stone').

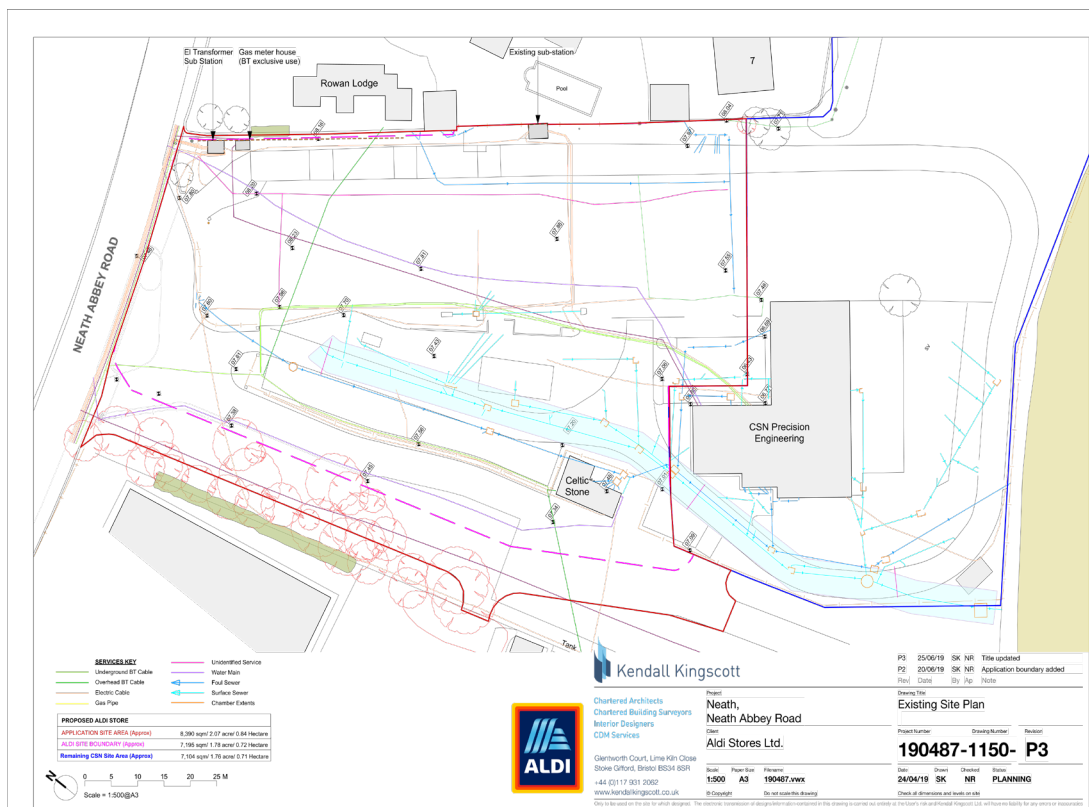


Figure 1: Red Line Site Boundary (building to be demolished is labelled 'Celtic Stone').

- 1.2. This report:
- Describes the actual or potential ecological issues that might arise as a result of the demolition of the building; and
 - Where appropriate, makes recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancement, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation.
- 1.3. This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018).

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2.0 Methodology

- 2.1. A ground level external and internal inspection of the site was undertaken on 7th October 2019 by Trevor Boreham, an experienced ecological surveyor. Methods used for the external and internal inspection were adapted from best practice guidance (Collins, 2016). The site was carefully examined, from ground level, aided using a Clulite torch and endoscope, where required. A systematic visual inspection was undertaken of the building with a focus on areas that could have potential roost features (PRF), as well as the ground below these features. The weather conditions for the survey were dry, overcast and 13°C.

3.0 Results

Context

- 3.1. The site supports predominantly hardstanding and close-mown grassland (refer to figure 2, below). Celtic Stone is a small building on the western boundary. Outside of the site, there are industrial buildings to the south, some mature trees to the west, with residential housing to the east.

Figure 2: aerial photograph



Building Assessment

- 3.2. The building is a single storey disused office with a flat roof. The building is in good condition with no visible damage to the soffits or facias (Photograph 1). There is a gap of approximately 3cm between the roof felt and roof deck on the southern and western aspect of the building (Photograph 2). This gap was investigated using an endoscope and no signs of bats were observed, although access was not available along the entire length of feature.
- 3.3. The interior of the building was evidently recently in the process of renovation. Bare plasterboard with holes for light fittings were exposed. The interior of the building and holes in

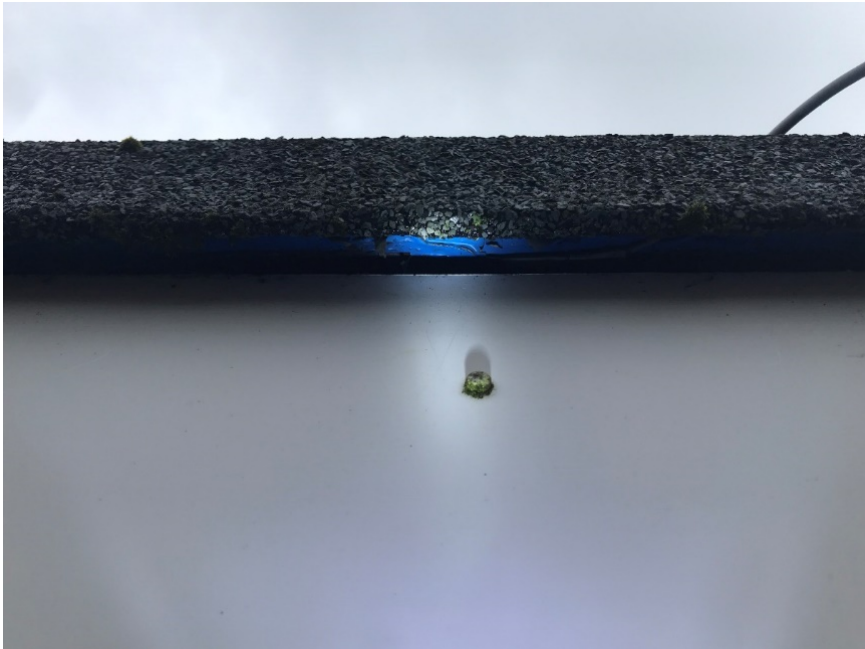
the plasterboard were inspected for evidence of bats though none was recorded. The internal conditions within the rooms are too light to be used by bats.

- 3.4. A lightweight garage structure is open-fronted and too light and airy to be used by bats (Photograph 3).

Photograph 1: Single storey building



Photograph 2: Gap between roof felt and roof deck.



Photograph 3: lightweight garage has negligible potential for bats



- 3.5. In terms of the surrounding habitats, the building is surrounded by hardstanding and is not linked to habitats that would be likely to be well used by bats for commuting or foraging. There are some street lights to the north-east (see Photograph 4) that are likely to render the night-time light levels too light for some bat species. The roads to the north and south of the site are also well-lit at night.

Photograph 4: Street lights north-east of the site.



- 3.6. In summary, based on the nature of the building's construction and the habitats that surround it, it has negligible potential for roosting bats.

4.0 Potential Effects and Requirement for Mitigation

- 4.1. Bats and their roosts are a European Protected Species (EPS), with the animals themselves and their roosts being protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 4.2. The Celtic Stone building will be lost as part of this development. However, it has negligible potential for roosting bats and hence no impacts to bats are expected.
- 4.3. Consequently, no specific mitigation measures prior to or during demolition are needed. Given the sub-optimal nature of the habitats and surroundings for bats, and the ambient light levels at night, no enhancements (e.g. bat boxes) are recommended as they are highly unlikely to be used.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1. No evidence or potential for bats was identified within the building to be demolished. It is therefore concluded that demolition would not affect bats and so would not trigger the legislation protecting bats and their roosts.

6.0 References

CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

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

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