48 STATION ROAD, PORT TALBOT
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Prepared for: **Life Property Group**

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Date: **September 2025**

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48 STATION ROAD, PORT TALBOT

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a brief summary of findings and recommendations of the Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats undertaken on behalf of Life Property Group (hereafter referred to as the client) at 48 Station Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1LJ. The report should be read in its entirety for full details of the survey.

- ExCAL Limited has been commissioned by Life Property Group (hereafter referred to as the client) to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at 48 Station Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1LJ. The survey comprised of an internal and external inspection of the building to assess its potential to support roosting bats and identify whether any evidence of bats within the property was present;

- The client intends to apply for a Change of Use application, whereby the property will be converted from commercial premises into a residential space. The application will likely require significant interior renovation works, which could potentially amount to a high level of disturbance and destruction of bat roosts (if present) within the survey building;

- Local Record Searches were undertaken using Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 'MAGIC' geographic mapping software and the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales 'DataMapWales' in order to determine the importance of the site from a biodiversity perspective in the context of its surroundings, and to determine the site's proximity to statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the survey area (if present);

- The data search returned no records of statutory designated sites within 1km of the survey building. One record of a non-statutory designated site within 1km of the survey building was however returned during the desktop study, the details of which are outlined below: -

    - Margam Special Landscape Area (SLA) (EN2/4) – 0.62km NE of site.

- The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on Friday 29th September 2023;

- A number of potential suitable roosting features for bats were noted within the loft spaces, including timber rafters and ridge beams used to support the roof (suitable for free hanging bats), and connections between ceiling joists, rafters and the ridge beam (suitable for crevice-dwelling bats);

- A single potential access/egress point was recorded to the main building loft during the survey, namely via an arrow slip style window located on the northern wall of the building. This window has been blocked from the interior with wire mesh, however, gaps within the mesh are considered potentially large enough to enable access/egress for bats to the loft interior in this location;

- It should be stressed however that no historical or active evidence of bats in the form of feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining or other indications of bat use were observed across any of the floors or in any of the associated loft spaces throughout the building after an extensive search during the survey;

- Furthermore, the loft space does not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats;

- The building interior is well lit during the day, reducing its likelihood to be utilised as a day roost. In addition, the building interior was warm owing to its well-insulated nature and as a result was also assessed as being unsuitable for hibernating bats;

- Having taken the above into consideration, and due a complete absence of evidence of bat use being recorded throughout the entirety of the building and associated loft spaces after a thorough assessment, 48 Station Road is assessed to possess **negligible/low** potential to support roosting bats;

- Due to the building being classified as possessing low/negligible potential/suitability for bats, **no further survey effort is recommended with respect to bats**;

- No development has occurred at the property since the original PRA was undertaken in 2023. The developer is however now in a position whereby they wish to commence with works at the site. Given the original PRA was undertaken almost 2 years ago, the recommendation was made that the building should be subjected to an updated PRA to ensure that the characterisation of the building and its potential to support roosting bats has not changed since 2023;

- An updated PRA was subsequently undertaken on 29th August 2025;

- The results of the updated PRA indicate that the characterisation of the survey building has not changed since the original PRA undertaken in 2023, and subsequently, no further survey effort is recommended with respect to bats. The mitigation recommendations made during the original PRA should therefore be adopted;

- Full recommendations and best practice techniques are outlined in Section 5.2 of this report.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Brief

ExCAL Limited has been commissioned by Life Property Group (hereafter referred to as the client) to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats within the former Barclays Bank building at 48 Station Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1LJ.

The survey building is scheduled for significant renovation in order to convert the building from a former commercial space into residential usage under a change of use application.

2.2 Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to assess the building's potential to support roosting bats, and to identify any Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) on or within the building which may be utilised by bats.

Furthermore, the building was also subjected to a thorough internal and external inspection to determine whether the building has historically been / is actively being used by bats.

2.3 Site Context

The survey building is located within Port Talbot town centre (Grid Reference: SS 76683 89911) and is approximately 30m in length and 11.5m in width.

The building is constructed from stone and covers three-storeys. Ty-Draw Place and Station Road are located to the immediate north and west of the building respectively, and these roads connect to other residential streets including an unnamed street located to the rear (east) of the property. The southern side of the meanwhile is adjoined to an adjacent building, namely Pig Iron Tavern which serves as a public house.

The vast majority of the immediate surroundings of the building therefore consist of hardstanding and a mixture of residential and commercial buildings which make up the town centre.

The A48 trunk road / Heilbronn Way is located approximately 85m west of the survey building. This road is subjected to a high volume of traffic, much of which is associated with Port Talbot Parkway train station which is located ~300m south-west of the survey area. Furthermore, a raised section of the M4 motorway is located ~485m north-east of the survey building, which is an extremely busy road with high levels of traffic, particularly through Port Talbot.

Some vegetated areas which offer potential suitable foraging habitat for bats are located in relatively close proximity to the survey building. The most easily accessible of these habitats is located beyond the A48 approximately 150m to the west of the site, whereby sporadic areas of scattered scrub and semi-improved grassland are located around industrial buildings and associated infrastructure.

It should be noted however that habitat linkages between vegetated areas to the west and the survey building are poor however, with no hedgerows or woodland (which may provide good commuting opportunity for bats to better foraging and roosting habitat further afield) being recorded in the immediate vicinity of the survey building.

Phoenix Wharf, a large expanse of water used for pleasure boating and various commercial purposes, is located beyond the areas of scattered scrub and grassland, approximately 605m south-west of the site.

The wider surroundings meanwhile consist of a mixture of industries, residential and agricultural areas. Afan River estuary is located ~1.7km south-west of the survey area, whilst the town of Aberavon is located approximately ~2km to the west. The main blast furnaces of Tata Steel Port Talbot steelworks are located ~1.8km to the south-east of the proposed development site.

2.4 Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of demolition of the change of use and associated renovation of the property, to change its use from that of a former commercial bank to residential accommodation.

These works could potentially lead to high levels of noise, disturbance or even destruction of the existing roof spaces and lofts, which could subsequently lead to the potential disturbance and destruction of bat roosts if these are also present within the building.

2.5 Legislation

All UK bat species and their roosts are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations), which defines "European protected species of animals".

The combined legislation makes it illegal to: -

- Intentionally kill, injure or capture bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts;
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally; and
- Sell, barter or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement of Bats in Europe) the UK is also required to protect their habitats, requiring the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas.

2.6 Limitations

This report has been prepared for the benefit of the client and its contents should not be relied upon by others without the written authority of ExCAL Ltd. Unauthorised third party use of this report is done so at the parties' own risk and ExCAL Ltd owe these parties no duty of care or skill.

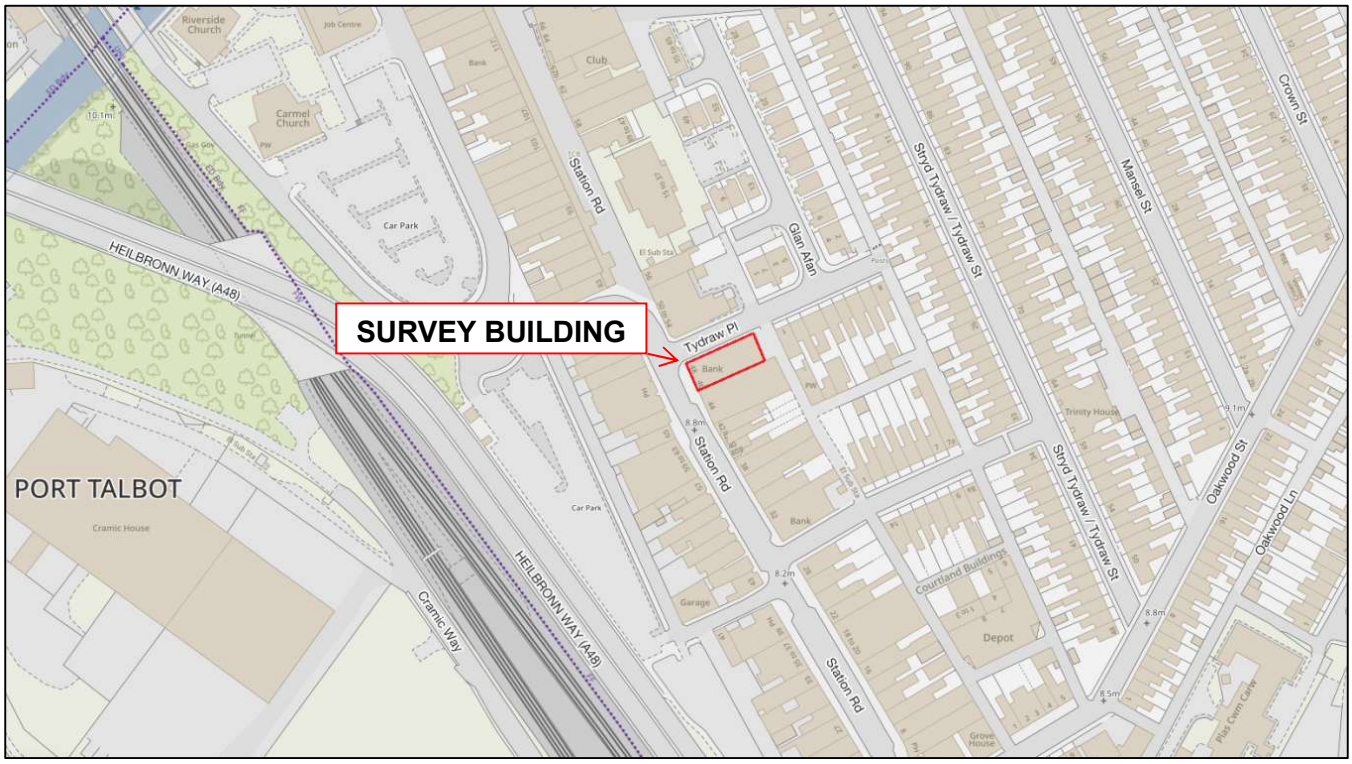
3.0 SITE LOCATION

3.1 Site Details

The approximate centre of the site is located at Grid Reference SS 76683 89911 and the survey building address is listed below: -

Former Barclays Bank Building
48 Station Road
Port Talbot
SA13 1LJ.

Figure 1 – Survey Area



4.0 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

This report has been designed to comply with the British Standard Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development – BS 42020:2013 (BSI, 2013); the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins, J. 2016).

The property was subjected to an internal and external inspection to assess its potential to support roosting bats.

4.1 Desk Study

Local Record Searches were undertaken using Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 'MAGIC' geographic mapping software and the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales 'DataMapWales' resource in order to determine the importance of the site from a biodiversity perspective in the context of its surroundings, and to determine the site's proximity to statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the survey area (if present).

4.2 Field Survey

The building was surveyed both externally and internally for evidence of (and potential for) bats. The survey was undertaken by Steve Owen a licenced surveyor (NRW Licence no: **S090423/1**) on 29th September 2023.

The external inspections were undertaken during daylight hours from ground level. All areas of the property were accessible during the survey, including the roof and associated loft spaces, which were accessed from the building interior via dedicated loft hatches. The interior of the building was also surveyed extensively for evidence of bats and for potential access/egress points for bats.

4.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment for Bats

During the preliminary roost assessment, the following evidence was sought: -

- The presence of potential access and egress routes for bats into and out of likely roosting sites and evidence of the use of such potential access points by bats such as scattered droppings, urine staining or scratching around entrances;
- Corpses or skeletons;
- Feeding remains;
- Bat droppings;
- Likely commuting routes and nearby habitat assessment for potential use by bats;
- Any other signs of use by bats including the presence of bats themselves.

In addition the overall site and its wider surroundings were evaluated for their potential to support commuting and/or foraging bat species.

The internal inspections were also undertaken during daylight hours and were aided by the use of a high-powered torch. All areas accessible to bats were searched for evidence of bat droppings and feeding remains.

Internal signs of roost access and egress points were also identified, for example light shining into internal building spaces from the exterior of the building or damage to any internal roof linings.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within buildings which were searched as a priority for any bat fields signs. Examples of these are outlined below: -

- Dividing walls;
- Underneath ridge beams;
- Beneath hip joints and junctions;
- Timber/wall joints;
- Voids between block work;
- Staining above/around gaps;
- Droppings around gaps.

Roosting bats and signs of their presence are not always visible, so any potential bat roosting locations and features were also noted during the survey.

4.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey Limitations

External and internal inspections for bats can be undertaken at any time of year. The survey was conducted using the recommended equipment and was led by a licenced bat worker.

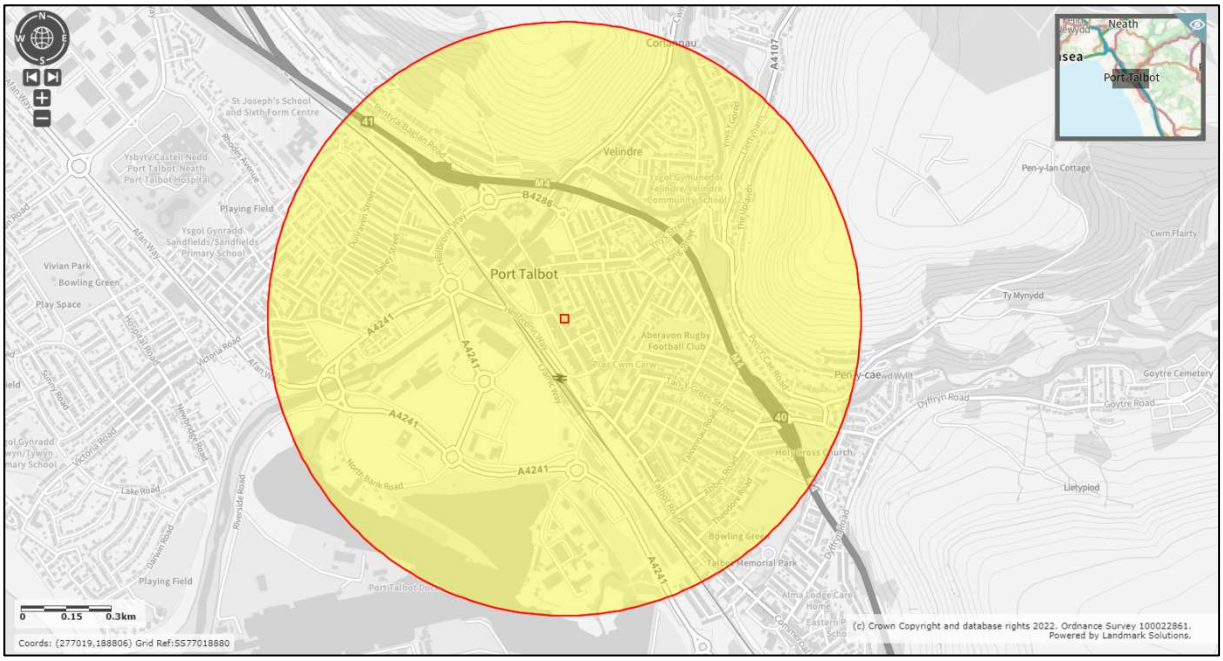
No significant survey limitations were noted during the survey and as such, no limitations were recorded which may have impacted the robustness of the results of the Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats.

4.4 Desktop Study

4.4.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The desk study returned no records of statutory designated sites within 1km of the survey area. The 1km buffer area along with the site location is visible in Figure 2 below: -

Figure 2 – 1km Buffer Area Search Record



The nearest statutory designated sites to the survey area are outlined below: -

- Margam Moors (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) – 4.9km SE;
- Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir (SSSI) – 4.9km SE;
- Crymlyn Burrows (SSSI) – 5.4km NW.

4.4.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

A single record of a non-statutory designated site was recorded within 1km of the survey area, namely Margam Special Landscape Area (SLA) (EN2/4) which is located approximately 0.62km north-east of the site.

In order to protect areas of high landscape quality, development within designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated.

The proposed development is thought to be sufficiently well-spaced from Margam SLA (>1km from site) such, that the development proposals are unlikely to have a detrimental impact on this SLA.

The desk study returned no further records of non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the survey area.

4.4.3 Ancient Woodland

No records of ancient woodland were recorded within 1km of the survey building.

4.5 Preliminary Roost Assessment for Bats

4.5.1 Building Exterior

The exterior of the survey building can be viewed in Figures 3 – 7 below: -

Figure 3 - Front (SW) Aspect of Building with Main Building Entrance Visible to the Left

Figure 4 – (N) Aspect of Survey Building, Looking (SE)

Figure 5 – (N) Aspect of Survey Building, Looking (SW)

Figure 6 - Rear (NE) Aspect of Building with Flat Roof of the Building Rear Visible. The Main Building is Visible Behind

Figure 7 – (NE) Aspect of Main Building as Visible from Flat Roof at Rear of the Building. Looking (W)

The survey building is approximately 30m in length and 11.5m in width, and is comprised of two distinct sections, namely; the front (west) of the building, which covers two-storeys and possessed a pitched roof, and the building rear, which is single-storeyed in nature and possesses a flat roof, located to the east.

The front of the main building (located to the south-west) is constructed from mortared stone, rises over three-storeys and possesses a converted loft. This section of the building possesses a pitched roof with 3 dormers on the western side, whilst the rear (eastern) section of this roof possesses a gable at each end.

The roof has been finished with double Roman tiles which appear to be in excellent condition, with no cracked, damaged, slipped or lifted tiles being recorded which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats. Similarly, areas of lead flashing present on the roof of the building were identified to be intact and unpeeling, and in generally excellent condition.

The rear gables of the main building roof building possess wooden fascia boards, which were found to be in excellent condition and flush with the masonry of the walls, with no areas of damage or gaps behind the fascia suitable for crevice-dwelling bats being recorded.

Similarly, the soffits in these areas were also constructed from timber, and although these were observed to be in generally excellent condition, a small area of damage was recorded to the soffit beneath the southern gable at the rear (eastern) side of the building.

Although the gables are constructed from the same stone as the rest of the building, a vertical / hanging tile finish is located toward the top of the gables at each end of the building. The hanging slates were found to be in excellent condition, (with no significant areas of damage which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats) being recorded. Furthermore, no gaps were recorded behind the wooden fascia boards and the vertical / hanging tiles which make up the finish of the gable ends in this location.

Images of the damaged soffit and hanging tiles on the eastern side of the building are visible in Figures 8, 9 and 10 below: -

Figure 8 – Damage to Wooden Soffit Recorded at Rear (E) Side of Building, in Corner of Southernmost Gable

Figure 9 – Closer View of Damage to Wooden Soffit Recorded at Rear (E) Side of Building

Figure 10 – Hanging Tiles in Good Condition at Apex of Northern Gable at Rear (E) Side of Building

As discussed, a hole of approximate 30cm x 10cm size was present within the underside of the soffit toward the eastern side of the building (as Visible in Figures 8 & 9)

This hole was surveyed thoroughly, and upon inspection it could be seen that the hole is superficial in nature, providing no access to further areas of the property interior. A small void is present in this location, however upon thorough inspection; no evidence of bat usage was recorded around or within the damaged soffit.

No further cracks, holes or crevices were recorded within the exterior of the property, reducing the property's suitability for crevice-dwelling bats.

A large wooden double-door with four top lights is located on the front (western) side of the building which formerly served as the main access point to the building interior. The doors were found to be in excellent condition and well-sealed, with no gaps being recorded which may afford access to the building interior for bats.

Numerous windows are located across the two floors and within the dormers in the converted loft of the building, and the building possesses a combination of cross windows / triple mullion-and-transom windows constructed from stone, into which timber glazing has been set.

The ground floor possesses 8 sets of windows in total, with 2 sets located on the western (front) side of the building, and the remaining 6 sets of ground floor windows being located along the northern side.

The first floor meanwhile possesses a total of 3 sets of windows, with 2 of these located on the western (front) side and 1 set located on the northern side of the building respectively

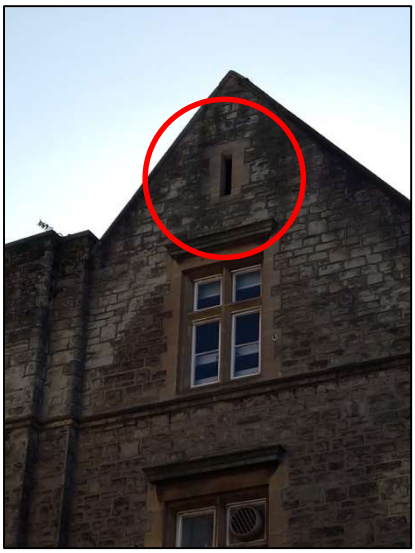
Finally, 4 sets of windows are located within the converted loft / 2nd floor of the building. The central stone dormer within the loft possesses a cross-window, whilst the two timber dormers which flank the central dormer possess timber windows. A single cross window is also located at the 2nd floor along the northern side of the building.

All windows and doorframes were observed to be in excellent condition, with no gaps or significant damage being recorded which may afford access to the building interior for bats.

It should be noted however that a small arrow loop style slit window was also observed at the apex of the northern wall of the building. From the building exterior, it appears as though this gap may permit potential access to an interior loft-space, which may be present above the 2nd floor of the building.

An image of the slit window is visible in Figure 11 below: -

Figure 11 – Slit Window on (N) Wall, which may Permit Access to an Interior Loft Space



Further observations of this slit window were made from the building interior during the survey, as outlined in Section *4.5.2 – Building Interior*.

The rear of the building meanwhile is single-storeyed in nature, and possesses a flat roof. The roof has been finished with roofing felt which was observed to be in excellent condition, with no areas of damage, peeling or lifting being identified during the survey.

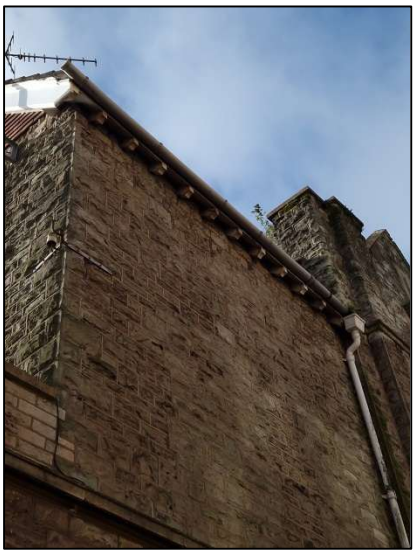
The rear of the building has also been constructed from stone with extended mortar joints. The stone and associated mortar across the whole of the building was found to be in excellent condition, with no damaged stone or crumbling mortar (and associated gaps) being recorded during the survey, reducing the building's potential to support crevice-dwelling bats.

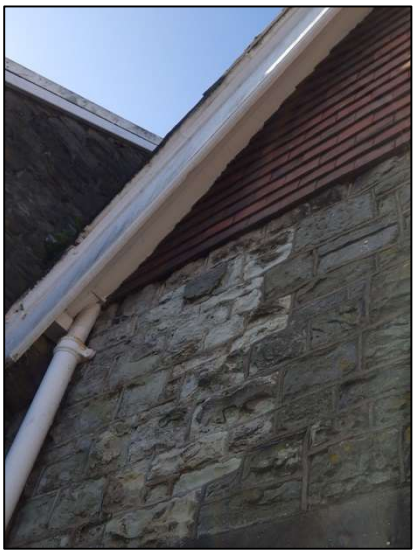
A further single wooden door is located at ground floor level on the eastern side of the property which formerly served as a pedestrian access / fire escape to the building interior. The door is well-sealed, preventing bats from entering the building via any gaps around this doorway.

Furthermore, an additional fire exit door and 3 associated UPVC awning windows are also present at 1st floor level on the eastern side of the building which is accessible via a stairway / gangway located on the flat roof of the building in this location (these features are visible in Figure 8). The fire door and UPVC windows in this location were observed to be in excellent condition and well-sealed, with no areas of damage being recorded which may permit entry for bats to the building interior.

Figures 12 - 14 below provide further photographs and details of the primary survey building: -

Figure 12 - 14 (from left to right) – Figure 12: Underside of Northern Gable, Showing Extent of Rafters which make up the Roof in this Location; Figure 13: Wooden Fascia Boards in Excellent Condition, with no Suitable Gaps for Crevice-dwelling Bats being Observed; Figure 11: Ventilation Grilles and Stone Lintel on Northern Gable of Building





Overall, the exterior of the building was in excellent condition, with no significant areas of damage to masonry, timber or other building constituents being recorded which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, and similarly, no areas of damage were recorded which may permit access/egress for bats to the building interior.

4.5.2 Building Interior

Images of the building interior are visible in Figures 15 - 27 below and overleaf: -

Figure 15 – Ground Floor General Interior, Looking (E)

Figure 16 – Fire Escape and Awning Windows from 2nd Floor, Looking (E)

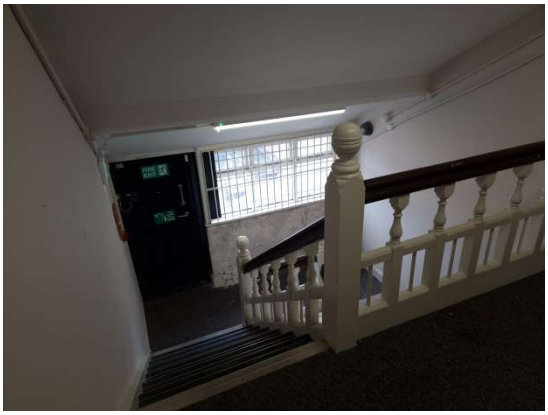


Figure 17 – Ground Floor General Interior, Looking (W)

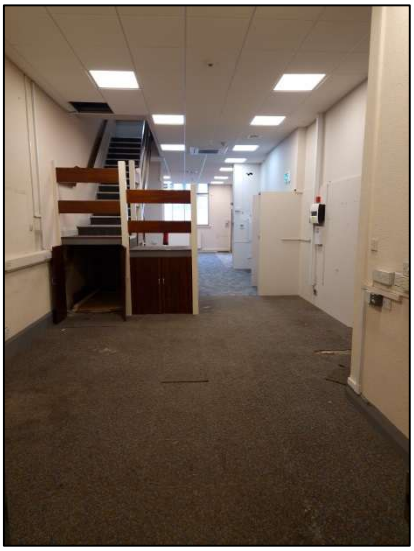


Figure 18 – 2nd Floor Room, Located within Gable, Looking (E)

Figure 19 – 2nd Floor Room and Visible Dormer, Looking (W)

Figure 20 – 2nd Floor Room with Hatch Permitting Access to Northern Gable, Looking (E)

Figure 21 – 1st Floor General Interior, Looking (W)

Figure 22 – 2nd Floor Room with Hatch Permitting Access to Southern Gable, Looking (E)

Figure 23 – Damage to Plasterboard Making up Ceiling of 2nd Floor Room, Exposing Timber Framework Beneath

Figure 24 – Closer View of Damage to Plasterboard Making up Ceiling of 2nd Floor Room, beneath which Timber Framework Making up the Underside of the Roof is exposed

Figure 25 – Access to Void via Hatch in Ground Floor Ceiling

Figure 26 – Access to Main Loft via Hatch in 2nd Floor Kitchen Area

Figure 27 – Access to 2nd Loft via Hatch in Northern Gable

Ground Floor

The ground-floor interior of the building is well lit by natural light, owing to the large number of windows which are present along the western and northern walls of the building, significantly reducing the likelihood of the interior of the building being utilised as a day roost. The ground floor is open-plan, due to the building's former use as a commercial bank, and a suspended ceiling is present on this floor.

Windows and doors were observed to be well-sealed, with no areas of damage or gaps being recorded which may allow access to the building interior.

A small hatch is present within the ceiling toward the eastern extremity of the ground floor (as visible in Figure 25).The hatch was accessed via ladder, and upon entry a small void was observed. This void is well insulated, and appears to house a number of electrical cables and water pipes, which likely serve the ground floor toilets located below.

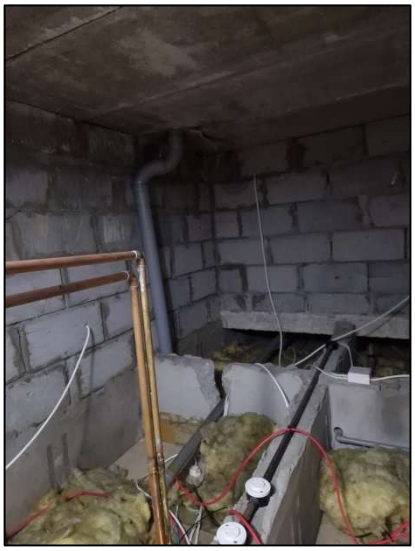
The floor and ceiling of the void are constructed from concrete, whilst tightly-fitted concrete blocks make up the walls. No light egress into this void was observed, suggesting that there are no access or egress points into this void apart from via the access hatch present within the ground floor ceiling.

Furthermore, no evidence of bats was identified within this void during the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Images of the void within the ground floor ceiling are visible in Figures 28 and 29 below: -

Figure 28 – Interior Details of Void on Ground Floor

Figure 29 – Interior Details of Void on Ground Floor



All areas of the ground floor were inspected thoroughly for evidence of bats or any potential access/egress points which may be suitable for bats to gain entry into the building interior. No evidence of bats or suitable access/egress points for bats were recorded on the ground floor of the building.

First Floor

The first floor interior was similarly observed to be well lit, due to a number of windows being present across all but the eastern side of the building.

The first floor appears to have been formerly used as office space. Toilets are present at the top of the ground floor stairwell, whilst an additional room appears to house industrial and extractor system equipment.

An emergency exit and windows (as observed from the north of the building exterior) are present along the stairwell which leads to the 2nd floor of the building. All windows and doors were observed to be well-sealed, with no potential access/egress points for bats being recorded to the 1st floor of the building.

No evidence of bats or suitable access/egress points for bats were recorded on the 1st floor of the building.

Second Floor

The second floor of the building was also generally well lit, apart from the southern and northern gables which do not possess any windows.

This floor is divided into 4 main rooms, with these consisting of a kitchen area, office and rooms associated with both the northern and southern gables of the building.

All windows (including dormer windows) were observed to be well-sealed, with no access/egress points for bats being recorded around the entirety of the 2nd floor, and no evidence of bats was recorded on the 2nd floor of the building.

Two loft hatches were visible within the ceilings of the 2nd floor. Access to the main building loft is granted via a small hatch within the kitchen area, whilst a second loft access is present within a small room in the northern gable, which serves a second standalone loft of the building.

Main Building Loft

The main section of the building possesses a pitched gable roof, with the interior timber framework being of closed-couple type, with timber joists connected to the base of rafters and secured by a ridge beam at the top.

Photographs of the main building loft are visible in Figures 30 – 33 below: -

Figure 30 – Light Ingress from Arrow Loop Window at (N) End of Main Building Loft

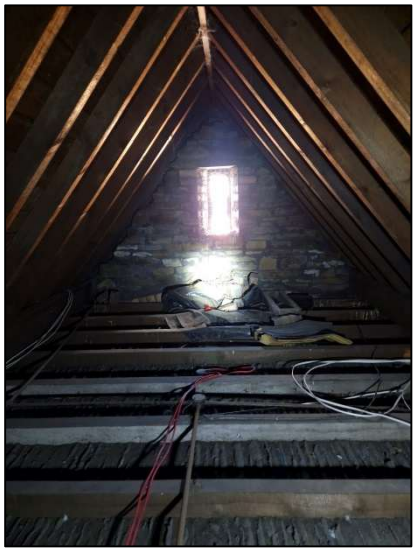
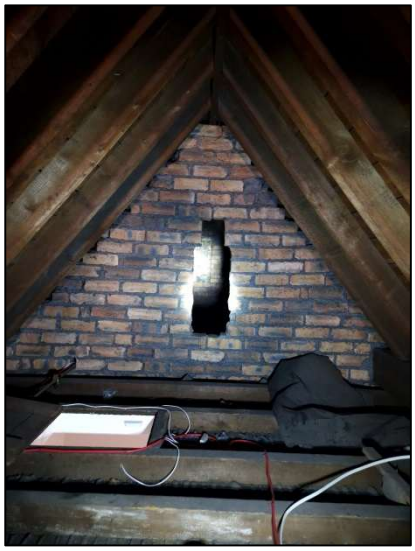


Figure 31 – Arrow Loop Window Detail, with Mesh Covering. Historical Bird Nest can be seen

Figure 32 – Brick Wall Present Halfway along Loft, Dividing the Loft into Distinct Northern / Southern Sections



A number of timber purlins and rafters present within the loft were identified to be potentially suitable for free-hanging bats, whilst there is also adequate space within the loft which would be suitable for void-dwelling bats.

Tightly sealed and adjoined timber boards were visible to be present underneath the double Roman roof tiles of the exterior leaving none of the tiles exposed or visible from the interior of the building. Given that these boards are located beneath the exterior double Roman tiles which make up the roof, there is the potential for a small void to be located between the wooden panelling and the roof tiles making up the roof itself.

It should be noted however that no gaps were identified within or between these timber boards from the loft interior. Furthermore, no damage was recorded to the structure of the roof from the building exterior, whereby the double Roman tiles were found to be in excellent condition, with no damage (such as from lifting, slipping or cracking of the tiles) being recorded. As such, no potential access/egress points for bats to the building interior

were recorded across the entirety of the roof of the building, restricting access for bats to the potential void located between the interior timber panelling and exterior roof tiles.

These two factors in conjunction mean that the property and main building loft are extremely well sealed from the interior and exterior via these avenues.

The main loft is divided into two areas, whereby a brick wall (present approximately halfway along the loft) splits the loft into distinct southern and northern sections. An approximate 60cm x 20cm gap is present in the centre of this brick wall, which permits access between the two areas.

A smaller brick wall of approximate 50cm height is also present within the northern section of the loft, and covers the width of the loft in this location.

The northern section of the loft was significantly lighter than that of the southern section. This is due to light ingress being observed from the northern end of the loft, whereby the arrow loop style window observed from the building exterior allowed a substantial amount of light to enter the northern side.

The window was inspected in detail, and upon closer inspection, it appears as though a mesh frame has been placed across the window, likely in order to deter nesting birds (evidence of nesting birds was found throughout the loft, with broken eggshells and disused nests being identified in close proximity to the window and along the small wall in the northern section of the loft) from entering the loft.

It should however be noted that, although the gaps within the mesh were considered to be potentially adequately sized to enable access/egress for bats to the main building loft interior, no evidence of historical or active use of the loft by bats was identified after an extensive inspection of the loft which was undertaken during the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Further images of the main building loft are visible in Figure 33 – 35 below: -

Figure 33 – Small Brick Wall Present within Northern Section of Main Building Loft

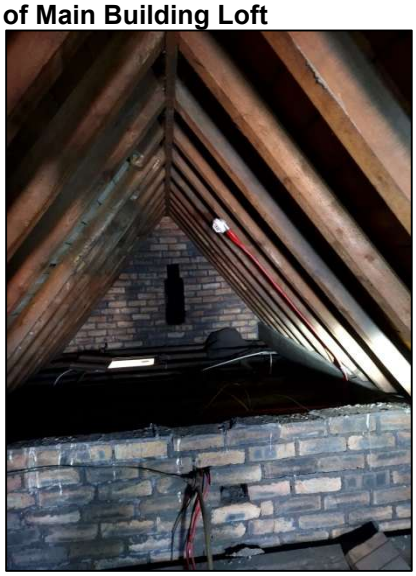


Figure 34 – Tightly-Sealed Timber Boards Located Under Double Roman Roof Tiles

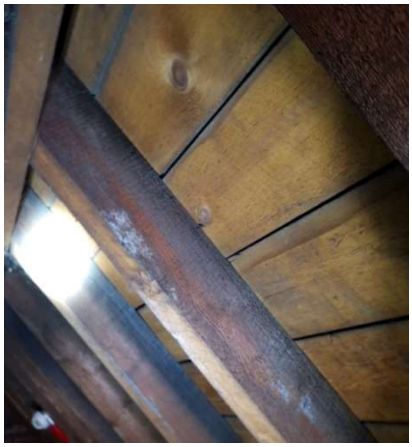
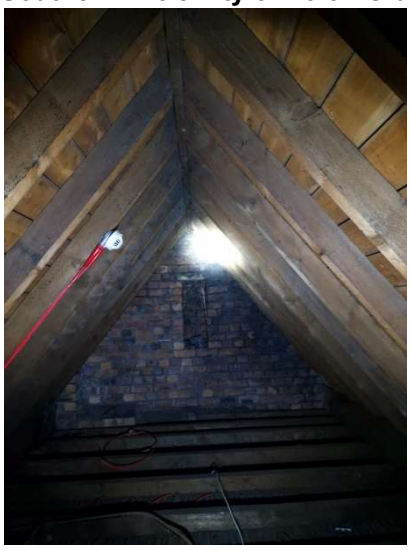


Figure 35 – Southern Section of Loft, Accessed via Gap, with Brick Wall at Southern Extremity of Loft Visible



The southern section of the loft meanwhile was much darker than the northern side, owing to the dividing brick wall present halfway along the loft and due to a lack of windows within the southern section of the loft.

This section of the loft is similar in construction to the northern side, and the timber boards underlying the roof tiles were once again observed to be tightly-sealed, with no areas of damage permitting or suitable gaps for crevice-dwelling bats being recorded. The southern extremity of the loft in this location possesses a brick wall, in excellent condition.

Similarly, all brickwork within the main building loft wall was found to be in excellent condition, with no cracks or crevices suitable for crevice-dwelling bats being identified during the survey. Gaps above the extent of the dividing brick wall were surveyed for crevice-dwelling bats, with no evidence of usage being found.

All areas of the main building loft were surveyed extensively for evidence of bats in the form of feeding remains, smudging, droppings, live bats etc., with no current or historical evidence of bats being identified.

Similarly, the joins between all ceiling joists, rafters and the ridge beam were inspected extensively for signs of bat use and for any gaps which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats. No evidence of bats of current or historical bat use was identified during the survey.

Furthermore, due to the building being located in a busy town centre, the interior of the building is subjected to high levels of noise, light and disturbance from human activity on a day-to-day basis (noted during the PRA), which further discourages bats from utilising the building interior for roosting purposes.

Northern Gable Loft

A second loft is present within the building which is accessible via a hatch in a small room within the northern gable on the 2nd floor of the building.

Photographs of northern gable loft are visible in Figures 36 – 38 below: -

Figure 36 – Access to 2nd Loft via Hatch in Northern Gable

Figure 37 – Interior Details of 2nd Loft within Northern Gable

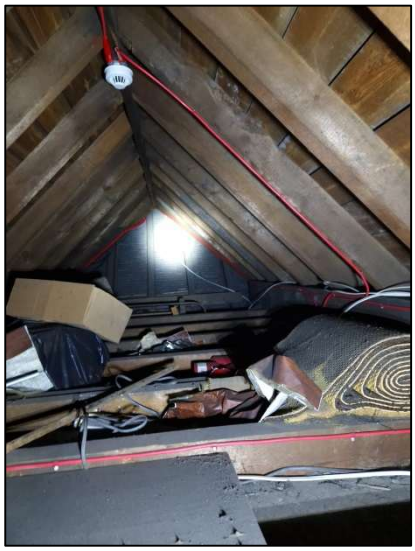


Figure 38 – Tightly Sealed Timber Boards in 2nd Loft

The interior of the northern gable loft is similar to that of the main building loft, with the exterior double Roman tiles being shielded from view by tightly fitted timber boards which have been set on the rafters of the loft in this location.

Each end of the loft possesses brick walls in excellent condition, with no areas of damage suitable for crevice-dwelling bats being recorded.

Although potential roosting features for bats in the form of timber rafters (suitable for free-hanging bats) were identified within the northern gable loft, no areas of damage or light ingress were recorded during the survey, and similarly no suitable potential access/egress points for bats were recorded throughout the loft, significantly reducing its potential to support roosting bats.

No evidence of bats was identifies within the northern gable loft during the PRA.

4.5.3 Signs of Bats

No signs of bats in the form of feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining or other evidence of bat use were observed across any of the floors or in any of the associated loft spaces throughout the building after an extensive search during the survey.

4.5.4 Potential Access for Bats

No potential access or egress points to the main building interior were recorded across any of the floors of the survey building during the PRA.

A single potential access point to one of the lofts was recorded however, whereby small gaps in a mesh screen which covers the interior of the arrow slip style window in the northern wall of the main loft may be of sufficient size to enable void-dwelling bats to enter the main building loft via this avenue.

Although the underside of the structure of the roof was not visible from the building interior due to having been covered with tightly fitted and sealed wooden panelling, the roof of the building was observed to be in excellent condition from the building exterior, with no areas of damage (in the form of slipped or broken tiles, or areas of lifting) being recorded which may afford access to the potential void likely located between the wooden panelling and the double Roman roof tiles which make up the roof of the building. .

As such, bats are unable to enter this void (if present) from the exterior of the building, and are subsequently unable to utilise this void for potential roosting or to gain subsequent access to the main building interior.

Furthermore, the external masonry and associated mortar were also found to be in excellent condition, with no areas of damage being recorded which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, or which may permit access/egress to the building interior for roosting bats.

A small area of damage to a timber soffit of approximate 30cm x 10cm size was recorded on the underside of the soffit toward the eastern side of the building beneath the southern gable. This hole was surveyed thoroughly, and upon inspection it could be seen that the hole is superficial in nature, providing no access to further areas of the property interior.

4.5.5 Potential Features for Bats

The interior of the building was inspected thoroughly for suitable features for bats and any evidence of bat use. Potential roosting features within the building are primarily found within the loft spaces present within the building.

A number of potential suitable roosting features for bats were noted within the loft spaces, including timber rafters and ridge beams used to support the roof (suitable for free hanging bats), and connections between ceiling joists, rafters and the ridge beam (suitable for crevice-dwelling bats).

The wooden fascia boards, windows and doorframes were all found to be in generally excellent condition, although one small area of damage was recorded to the underside of one of the timber soffits toward the eastern side of the building.

This hole was surveyed thoroughly, and upon inspection it could be seen that the hole is superficial in nature, providing no access to further areas of the property interior. A small void is present in this location, however upon thorough inspection; no evidence of bat usage was recorded around or within the damaged soffit.

Although potential suitable roosting features may be present between the interior wooden panelling and exterior roof tiles of the building, the roof and ridge tiles of the property were found to be in excellent condition, with no areas of damage, cracks, slipping or lifting to the tiles being recorded across the entirety of the roof of the building, significantly reducing the potential to support crevice-dwelling bats.

Similarly, the masonry of the building was also found to be in excellent condition, with no cracks or damage being recorded to the mortar or pebbledash render during the preliminary roost assessment.

4.5.6 Surrounding Habitat

The building is located within Port Talbot town centre. Ty-Draw Place and Station Road are located to the immediate north and west of the building respectively, and these roads connect to other residential streets including an unnamed street located to the rear (east) of the property. The southern side of the meanwhile is adjoined to an adjacent building, namely Pig Iron Tavern which serves as a public house.

The vast majority of the immediate surroundings of the building therefore consist of hardstanding and a mixture of residential and commercial buildings which make up the town centre.

Some vegetated areas which offer potential suitable foraging habitat for bats are located in relatively close proximity to the survey building. The most easily accessible of these habitats is located beyond the A48 approximately 150m to the west of the site, whereby sporadic areas of scattered scrub and semi-improved grassland are located around industrial buildings and associated infrastructure.

It should be noted however that habitat linkages between vegetated areas to the west and the survey building are poor however, with no hedgerows or woodland (which may provide good commuting opportunity for bats to better foraging and roosting habitat further afield) being recorded in the immediate vicinity of the survey building.

The immediate surrounding habitat is assessed as being of low suitability for commuting and foraging bats due to a lack of suitable vegetation which provides foraging opportunity for bats, and also due to the absence of potential connectivity pathways between the site to areas of higher forging potential such as woodland and open field habitats elsewhere.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment Summary

The property at 48 Station Road was surveyed in detail on 29th September 2023 to assess its potential to support roosting bats.

No evidence of bats in the form of droppings, markings, feeding remains or other indications was identified within the building interior or associated loft spaces during the survey. The building interior was warm owing to its well-insulated nature and as a result was also assessed as being unsuitable for hibernating bats.

The interior of the building is generally very light across all 3 floors, owing to the presence of windows which are set into the southern and western walls of the building, significantly reducing the building's potential to be utilised as a day roost across these floors.

The building is bound by Ty-Draw Place to the north and Station Road to the west, whilst the M4 motorway is located in close proximity to the survey building, being located approximately 485m to the north-east. Very little suitable foraging habitat for bats is present in the immediate vicinity of the buildin, the closest of which being located approximately 150m west, beyond the A48 trunk road. Similarly, commuting pathways are poor, with no significant areas of woodland, or hedgerows being present in the nearby vicinity of the survey building.

Although some potential roosting features for bats were identified within the lofts of the building, no evidence of bats (such as from droppings, feeding remains, smudging, staining etc.) was recorded throughout the entirety of the building during the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Potential access/egress points for bats to the building interior were limited, with windows and doors being well-sealed, whilst the masonry and double Roman tiles of the building were also found to be in excellent condition, significantly reducing the building's potential to support crevice-dwelling bats.

A single potential access/egress points for bats to the building interior was recorded during the survey, whereby a small arrow loop style window, present at the apex of the northern wall of the building, may permit access/egress to the main building loft via this avenue.

However, it should be noted that a thick wire mesh has been installed to cover the window from the loft interior, reducing the ease of access to the loft via the window. Furthermore, the loft and all associated potential roosting features was surveyed extensively for evidence of historical or current use by bats, with none being found.

The loft is difficult to access and has subsequently not been cleaned recently, evident from a thick layer of black dust which covered all surfaces within the loft. As such, the likelihood of any evidence of bat use having been removed by cleaning activities within this loft is extremely unlikely.

As such, it can be concluded with a high degree of confidence that the main building loft is not presently and has not historically been utilised by bats for roosting purposes.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that a number of features were identified which significantly reduce the likelihood of bats utilising the buildings; particularly with respect to the interior of the building.

High levels of natural and artificial light throughout the building reduce the building's potential to be utilised as a day roost, whilst the buildings are also subjected to high levels of disturbance in the form of noise and human activity on a day-to-day basis, owing to its location within a busy town centre.

5.1.2 BCT Good Practice Guidelines

Table 4.1 within the BCT Good Practice Guidelines state the following guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement: -

- **Negligible**: - Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats;

- **Low**: - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats; (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation);

- **Moderate**: - A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed);

- **High**: - A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

Furthermore, BCT Good Practice Guidelines state that further surveys (particularly presence/absence surveys) are required if: -

- The preliminary roost assessment has not ruled out the reasonable likelihood of a roost being present (because there are locations with potential for bats to roost undetected in concealed cracks, crevices or voids), but no definitive evidence of the presence of bat roosts has been recorded;

- Potential roost features inspection survey has identified moderate and high suitability potential roost features, but no definitive evidence of the presence of bats has been established;

- A comprehensive inspection survey is not possible due to restricted access, but features are present with a reasonable likelihood of supporting bats;

- There is a risk that evidence of bat use may have been removed by weather or human activities.

The aims of these surveys would be to determine the presence or absence of bats at the time of the survey and the need for further surveys and/or mitigation.

If sufficient areas of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found, then further surveys may not be appropriate.

However, if there is a reasonable likelihood that bat roosts could be present and particularly if there are areas inaccessible for survey, then further surveys may be required proportionate to the circumstances encountered.

5.1.3 Evaluation of Bat Roost Potential within 48 Station Road, Port Talbot

The Preliminary Roost Assessment survey concluded that 48 Station Road, Port Talbot possesses **negligible/low potential to support roosting bats** due to: -

- No evidence of bats (current or historical) identified throughout all areas of the building during an extensive internal survey of the property, or within any of the gaps identified during the survey;

- Well-sealed joins are present between masonry and ceiling / roof areas preventing access into interior roof spaces;

- Limited access/egress points to the building interior, with only one potential access/egress point being recorded during the survey (namely the arrow slip style window toward the apex of the northern wall of the building, permitting access to the main building loft). No evidence of current or historical bat use was identified within this loft after an extensive search which signifies that the loft is not suitable for use by bats;

- Masonry and roof tiles were in excellent condition, with no suitable cracks and crevices being recorded which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats;

- A high level of natural interior light is present within the building, owing to a large number of windows around the property. The property is also subjected to high levels of disturbance from noise due to human activity around the building wing to its location in a busy town centre;

- The building does not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats, leading to the building being classified as possessing **low** potential to support roosting bats as per Table 4.1 of the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Recommendations made within Section 5.2.9 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition* (2016) state that if a structure has been classified as having **low** suitability for bats, an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all the evidence available.

The recommendations further go on to state that if sufficient areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden) then further surveys may not be appropriate.

All areas within the building were thoroughly searched for evidence of bats, including feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining amongst other field signs, with none found.

5.2 Recommendations

The property at 48 Station Road, Port Talbot was classified as possessing **negligible/low** potential/suitability for bats and as such, **no further survey effort is recommended**.

It is concluded therefore that the proposed change of use and associated renovation works will not have a significant detrimental effect on bats or potential roosts within the surveyed building.

In order to ensure that general disturbance is kept to a minimum and contractors are aware of the procedure to follow in the event a bat is unexpectedly found during the works, the following measures are recommended: -

- If any renovation works are scheduled to be undertaken between March and August inclusive, they must be preceded by a nesting bird survey to rule out the presence of nesting birds which may be utilising the building. If no nesting birds are present works can commence. If nesting birds are identified however, works will be delayed to allow the birds to complete their nesting cycle undisturbed or a license obtained from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to allow the works to continue;

- A toolbox talk must be provided to contractors prior to the works to explain that, although it is not anticipated that any bats will be encountered during the works due to the absence of evidence of roosting bats, if bats are encountered during the renovation, then works will cease, a suitably qualified ecologist / Natural Resources Wales representative contacted for further advice and a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) obtained (where required) to enable the works to continue;

- Biodiversity Net Gain - The installation of a minimum of two bat boxes on new buildings will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. The following bat boxes could be used: -

    - Beaumaris Bat Box (buildings);
    - Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box (buildings);
    - Similar alternative brands.

- Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light;

- Alternatively, bat boxes could be incorporated into new buildings / renovations undertaken on the site – for example, Habibat Bat Box or Schwegler 1FR Bat Tubes. Bat tubes should be inserted into the fabric of the building during construction, positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance and facing landscapes areas, away from artificial light;

- Due to the highly mobile nature of bats, it is recommended that if the proposed works are not undertaken within 1 year of this assessment, the building is assessed again to ensure that the character, potential and suitability of the building for bats has not changed within this time.

5.3 Updated Preliminary Roost Assessment – 29th August 2025

As discussed, 48 Station Road, Port Talbot was previously subjected to a PRA on 29th September 2023.

No development works have been undertaken at the site since this date. The developer is now in a position to revisit the application, and subsequently, given that almost 2 years has passed since the original survey was undertaken, the recommendation was made that the survey building should be subject to an updated PRA to ensure both that the original findings are still relevant, and that the context of the survey building has not changed since 2023.

An updated PRA was subsequently undertaken on 29th August 2025.

All interior and exterior areas of the survey building were thoroughly inspected during the updated PRA, to identify whether the building's potential to support roosting bats had changed since 2023.

The results of the updated PRA indicate that **the characterisation of the building has not changed since the original PRA undertaken in 2023, and subsequently the recommendations made during this survey are still valid**.

Subsequently, **no further survey recommendations are made with respect to bats, and the mitigation strategy outlined in Section 5.2 of this report should still be adopted**.

Due to the highly mobile nature of bats, it is recommended that if the proposed works are not undertaken within 1 year of this updated assessment, the building is to be assessed again to ensure that the character, potential and suitability of the building for bats has not changed within this time.

6.0 REFERENCES

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