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27.10.2011

Bat Survey, Industrial Building and Land at Altham Pumping Station, Simonstone

Surveyor- Martin Prescott (lic. No. 2010/4226)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Reason for Survey

In order to obtain planning permission to develop this site a bat survey has been requested.

As a matter of urgency, the owner wishes to repair the damage caused by vandalism and to cover the holes in the roof with sheeting.

1.2 The Site

The site was at Altham Pumping Station, Simonstone. Map ref. SD774331.

The site was amongst industrial units, houses and pasture.

1.3 The Building

The building was a large brick building with four sections. It had been heavily vandalised and much of the roof was missing.

2. Method

2.1 Risk Assessment, Possible Hazards

The required access to the site was easy and posed no hazards other than those normally encountered when surveying basically sound buildings.

2.2 Daylight Survey

The repeat site visit took place on 24th October 2011.

A daylight survey was carried out in order to assess the site and immediate area for bat foraging potential and search the buildings for potential roosting sites and signs of bat occupation.

All possible accessible roosting areas in the building were searched for bats, their droppings and urine stains.

This survey was carried out after a period of mild weather with little rain, therefore any signs to the outside of the building, such as droppings, were likely to be evident.

Areas searched were:

2.2.1 Outside, the ground and other surfaces underneath the eaves around the perimeter of the building.

2.2.2 The inside floor area and surfaces likely to catch droppings and prey remains, particularly around the inside of perimeter walls.

3. Results

3.1 Possible Roost Sites

The buildings were generally easy to search.

The walls were of brick, no cavity.

Of the four sections, two had plank-lined slate roofs, with most of the slates missing.

There would be crevices between the remaining slates suitable for roosting bats.

There was a small loft in section 1.

Section 3 had a well sealed felt roof lined with straw blocks of low bat roosting potential.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 had gables, front and rear, with parapet, obstructing bat access to these aspects.

The fourth section had a roof of unlined corrugated sheeting of negligible bat roosting potential.

See photo and plan.

There were crevices in the masonry of all sections with low bat roosting potential.

The interior floors were relatively clean and free of debris and easy to search.

All of the outside walls were accessible.

No signs of either bats, droppings, urine stains or prey remains were found in or around the buildings.

The buildings were unheated and likely to be penetrated by frost in the winter.

The building was considered to have very low potential for a major bat roost, but there were crevices between roof slates in section 1 and in the masonry, all sections, where transitory bats cannot be discounted.

3.2 Possible Foraging and Roosting Sites

The immediate area consisted of houses, industrial buildings, pasture, occasional trees and scrub. Within 100-200 metres there was a tree-lined river likely to have high bat foraging potential.

There were many buildings in this area considered more suitable for roosting bats, especially the houses which would be warmer and more likely to be used as maternity roosts.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The buildings were not considered to have significant potential for a major bat roost, however there were sub-optimal crevices and the occasional transitory bats cannot be discounted.

4.2 The site was considered to be of low value for foraging bats with high foraging potential over the nearby river.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is unlikely that roosting bats will be disturbed during securing and weather-proofing the buildings. This can proceed with minimal risk to roosting bats.

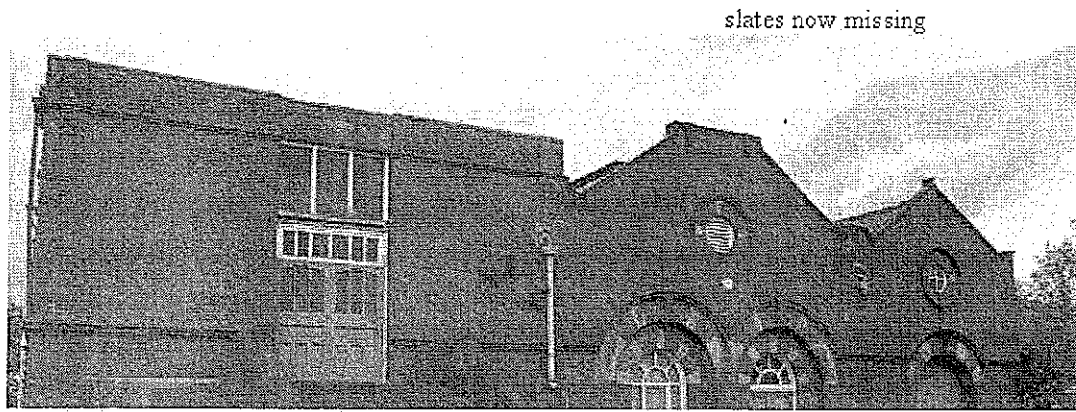
5.2 Demolition should preferably be carried out in winter when bats are likely to be hibernating elsewhere, however as transitory bats cannot be discounted, especially during mild spells, it is recommended that when demolition starts, the removal of the remaining slates is done under the supervision of a suitably qualified bat worker. If signs of a significant bat roost are found, work must stop and further work will be required.

As transitory bats are more likely in spring, if demolition has not started before mid-April 2012, it is recommended that an activity survey is carried out shortly before demolition.

5.3 If there is to be any tree planting on the site as part of the development, it is recommended that the trees used are British native trees as far as is possible. These trees are more likely to attract insects and are therefore beneficial to foraging bats. Suitable species include: Hawthorn, Rowan, Wild Cherry, Guelder Rose and Crab Apple. These have been chosen for their attractive blossom and fruits.

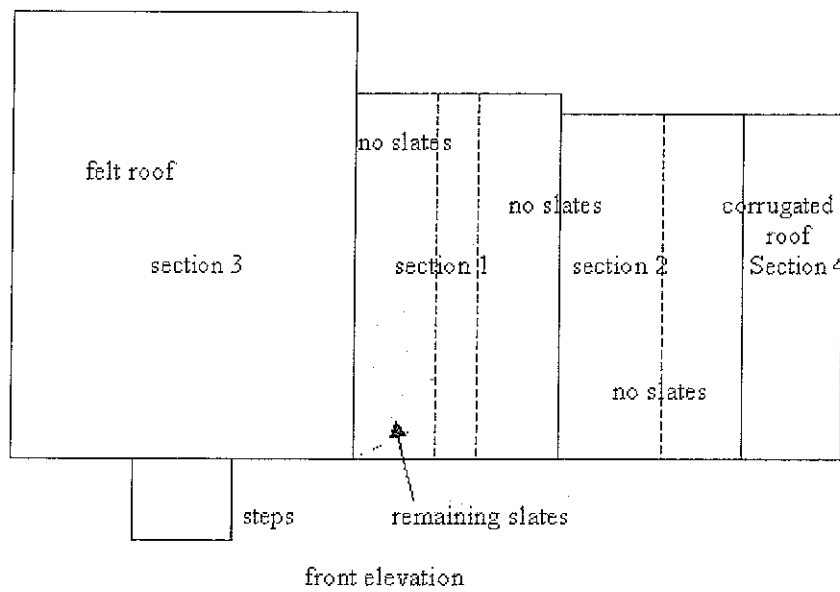
5.4 It should be remembered that bats are occasionally found in the most unexpected places. If any bats are found during the work, Natural England (01942 820364) or myself (0161 796 6211, 07946 488467) should be notified and work stopped immediately.

6. Photos/ Plan



Photo, front elevation showing parapet obstructing bat access to the gables

not to scale



M G Prescott