Preliminary Roost Assessment

41-43 Wellgate

Clitheroe

Lancashire

BB7 2DP

For

Imran Khan

Gritstone Ecology

www.gritstone.org [redacted]

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Imran Khan. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 41-43 Wellgate, Clitheroe, on 26th January 2024. The survey report will be used to provide supporting information for a planning application, at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 10 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Proposed development

The development proposals are for the conversion of the upper floors of the building into residential apartments, changes to the internal layout, and refurbishment of the commercial units on the ground floor.

1.5. Site context

The building is located on Wellgate, Clitheroe, BB7 2DP, GR SD 74512 41877, in Clitheroe Town Centre. The building is on a busy road in the centre of Clitheroe, surrounded by shops, and commercial properties. .

The site includes a double-fronted former restaurant on the end of a row of shops, and small areas of hard landscaping.

Habitat within 50m of the site includes; shops, commercial buildings, areas of hard landscaping, houses, and busy well-lit roads.

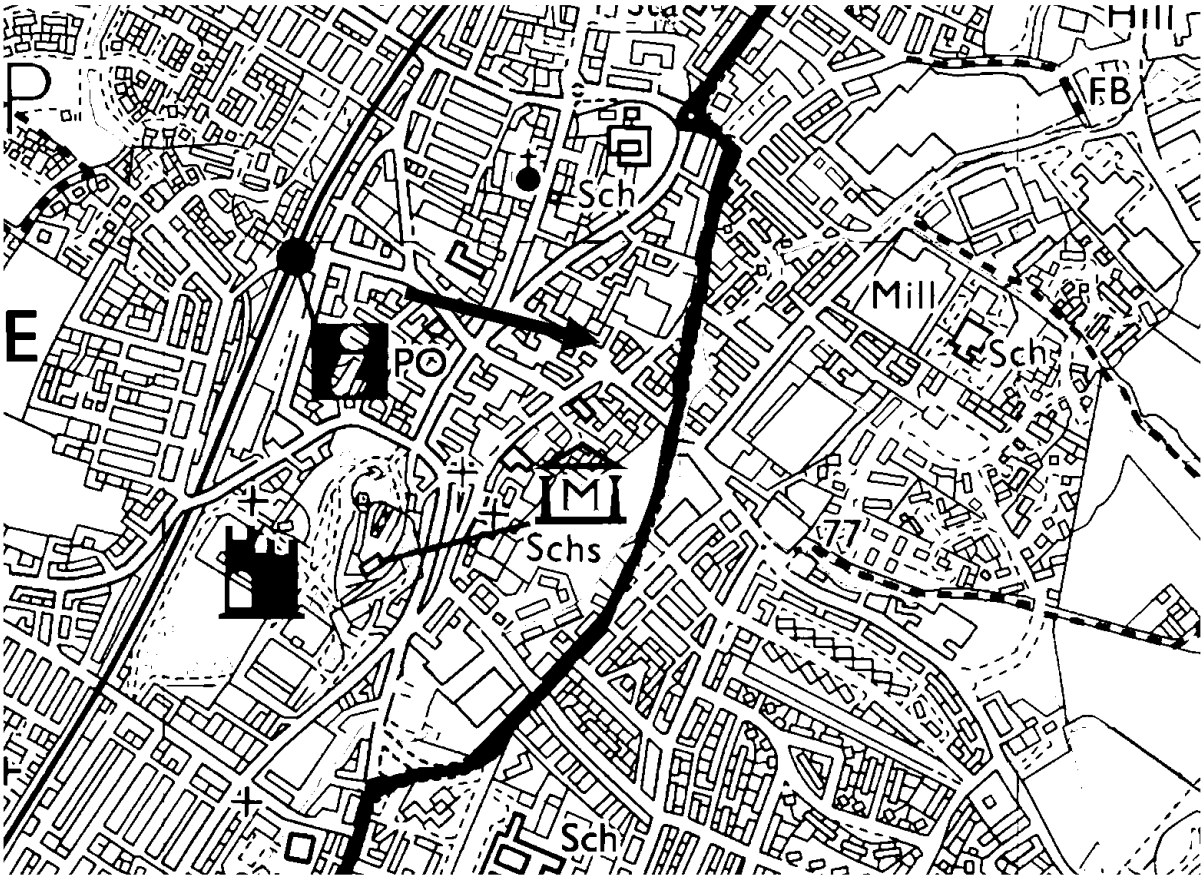
Habitat within 500m includes, commercial & retail buildings, housing & busy roads, linked back gardens, small areas of open green-space, mature trees, and watercourses.

Small areas of open green space, and linked back gardens, potentially provide low quality foraging opportunities for bats. However, the area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

Higher quality habitats are available locally, with open farmland 700m to the east and west, and along The River Ribble 1.5km to the west.

The site and surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats, with higher quality habitat to the west.

1.6. Site location



1.6a – 41-43 Wellgate – site location.

1.6b – 41-43 Wellgate – aerial photograph.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The survey was completed on 26th January 2024. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, cold, and dry, with a temperature of 10°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordinance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.

Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

Additionally a camera drone was used to inspect the roof in detail.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in March, when bats are less active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are less likely to be present.

At the time of the inspection some internal works had already been completed. Internal walls had been stripped back to bare stonework, and ceilings had been removed, exposing the roof voids.

3. Results

3.1. External inspection

3.1a – The front of the building.

No41-43 Wellgate is a double fronted former restaurant, which is empty, and has been unused for less than 12 months. It has an equally pitched roof, covered with slate roof tiles and ceramic ridge tiles on the main roof, and with Marley plain concrete roof and ridge tiles on a roof to the rear.

Roof pitches face north, south, east, and west, gable ends face east & west. End tiles at the verges are sealed with cement. Lead flashing is fitted at the base of chimneys, and where roof tiles abut brickwork. Timber fascia boards are fitted at the eaves to the rear.

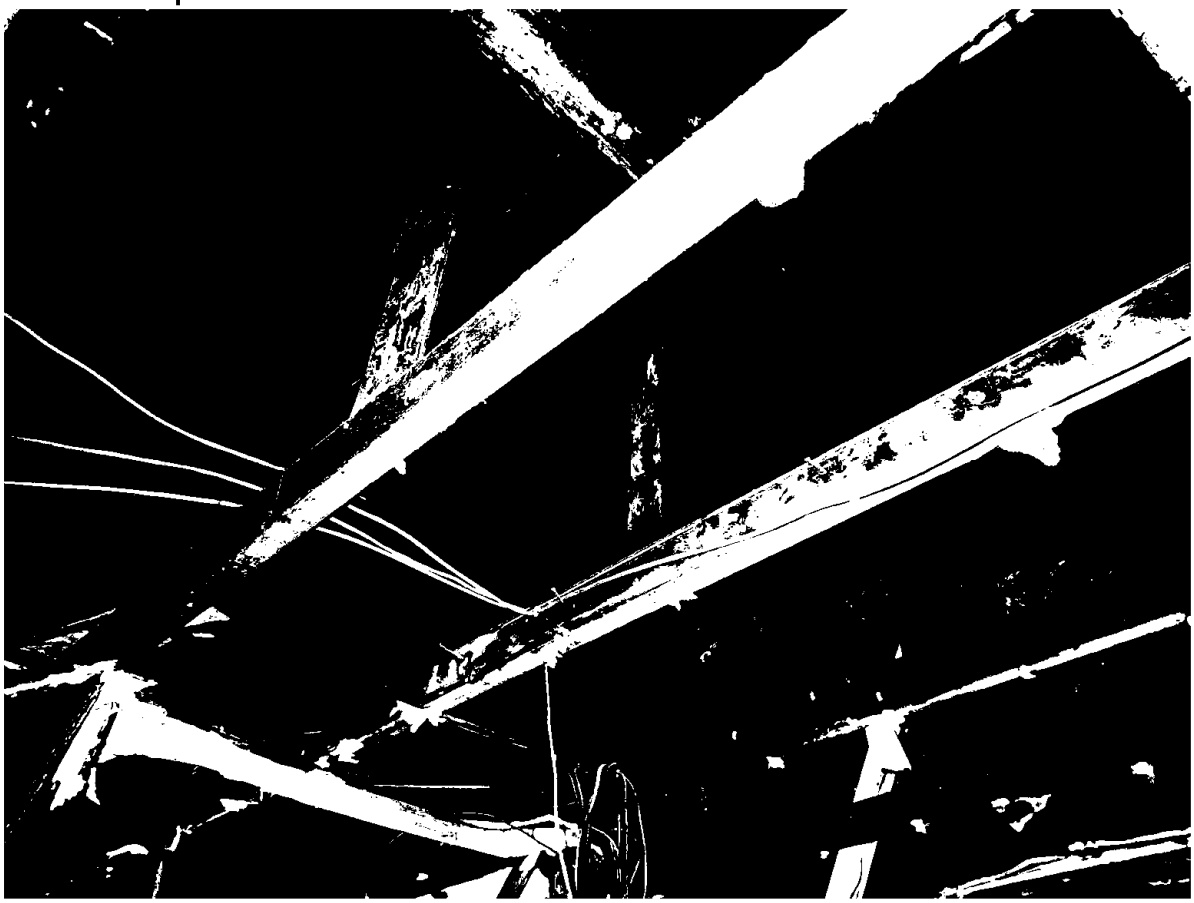
Walls are solid stone, covered with a white painted cement render. Lintels are stone, sills are stone; window and door frames are UPVC, all glass is intact.

The building is well maintained, and in reasonable condition. Ridge tiles are fixed tightly, there are no damaged or missing ridge tiles. There are no damaged, slipped, or missing roof tiles. Roof tiles are tightly fitted, with no gaps between tiles. Cement at the gable end verges is intact with no viable gaps.

Timber fascia boards are fitted tightly against the walls. Walls are in good condition, with no missing mortar, render, or cracks.

There are no features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no indications of use by bats were present during the inspection.

3.2. Internal inspection



3.2a – The roof void.

The building has three separate roof voids, however, the ceilings have been removed, and all voids are exposed. The roof voids were not used for storage, and were only accessed for essential maintenance.

The roof has a timber rafter and purlin roof structure lined with a modern breathable membrane. Roof lining is intact with no tears. Timbers and gable end walls are undisturbed and were covered in dusty cobwebs at the time of the survey.

The building has solid stone walls with no cavity. The top of walls was inspected at the eaves and gables using an endoscope. There are no gaps at the eaves or gables; and there are no gaps which give direct access to the roof void from the outside.

The building has no cellar, and there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable or likely to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is in a busy town centre location, in reasonable condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection.

4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, although bats are likely to be present in the wider area.

Small areas of open green space, trees, and linked back gardens locally provide limited foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is heavily fragmented by traffic, light, and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. However, the building is in the town centre and has no good quality habitat in the immediate area, is well-sealed, and has no features which could be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is well maintained, and in reasonable condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; the roof voids have no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

Although the ceilings have been removed prior to the inspection, roof timbers, gable end walls, and gaps between timbers, stonework, and roofing materials are covered in dusty cobwebs, indicating that they are undisturbed.

The lack of any indications of use inside the roof void, such as droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the roof void, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

Roof and ridge tiles are in reasonable condition, and ridge tiles are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

The walls are solid stone with no insulating cavity. The walls are covered with a white painted cement render, which is in good condition. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities. Timber fascia boards at the eaves to the rear are fixed tightly against walls, with no suitable gaps.

The small gaps between stonework, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using an endoscope. No droppings were found, and no suitable gaps were present which could give access, or shelter to roosting bats.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats or bat roosts are present in the building, the proposed works could result in an offence being committed.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the conversion of the upper floors of the building into residential apartments, changes to the internal layout, and refurbishment of the commercial units on the ground floor.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely, to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.

7. References

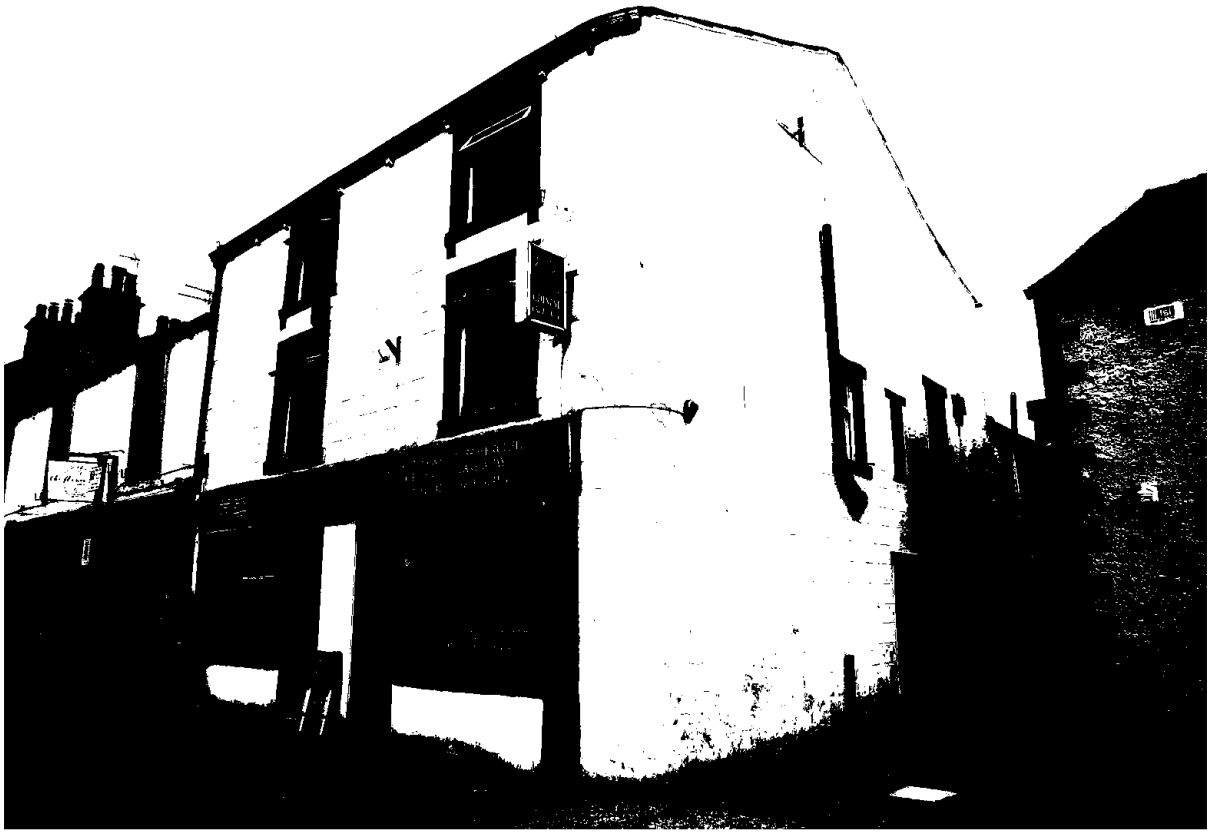
Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

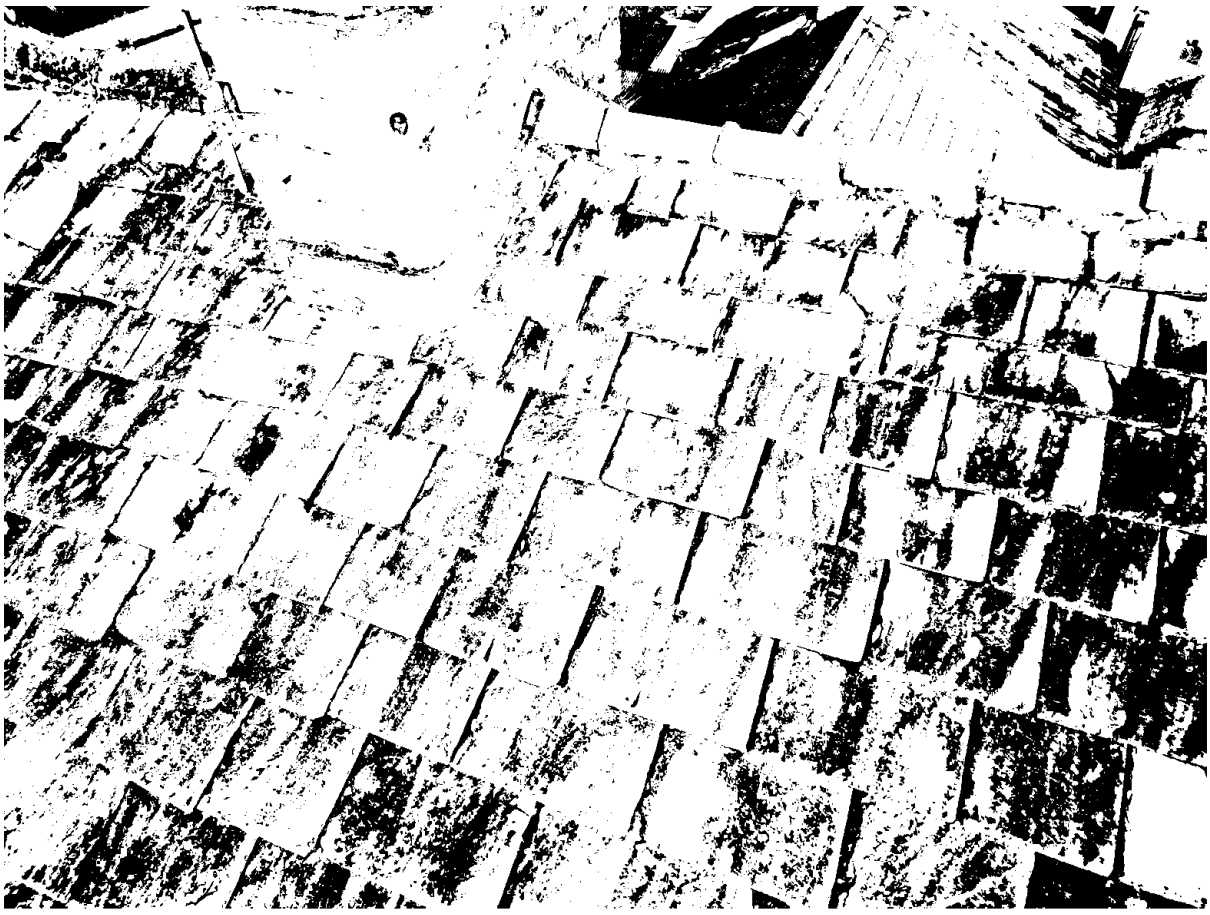
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC

8. Appendix 1 – Photographs

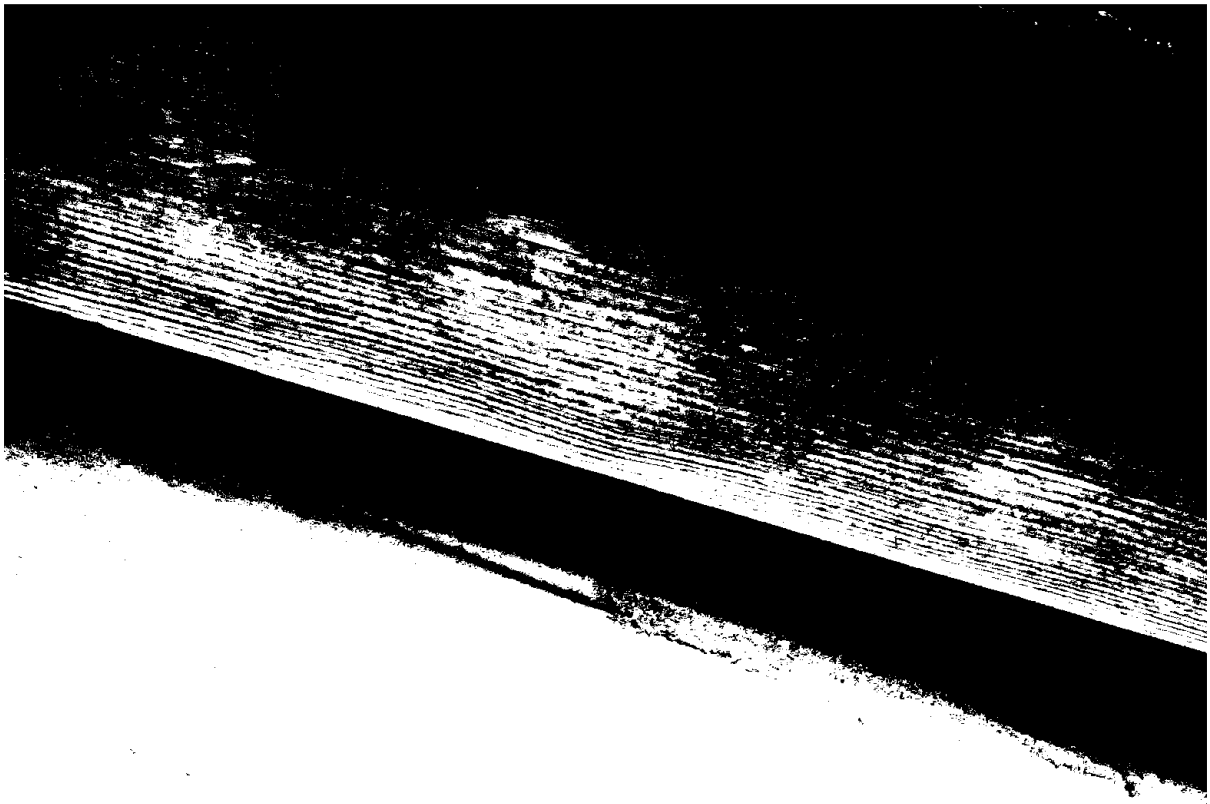


1 – The front and gable end of the building.

2 – The rear of the building, showing both roofs.



3 – Roof and ridge tiles are in reasonable condition with no suitable gaps.

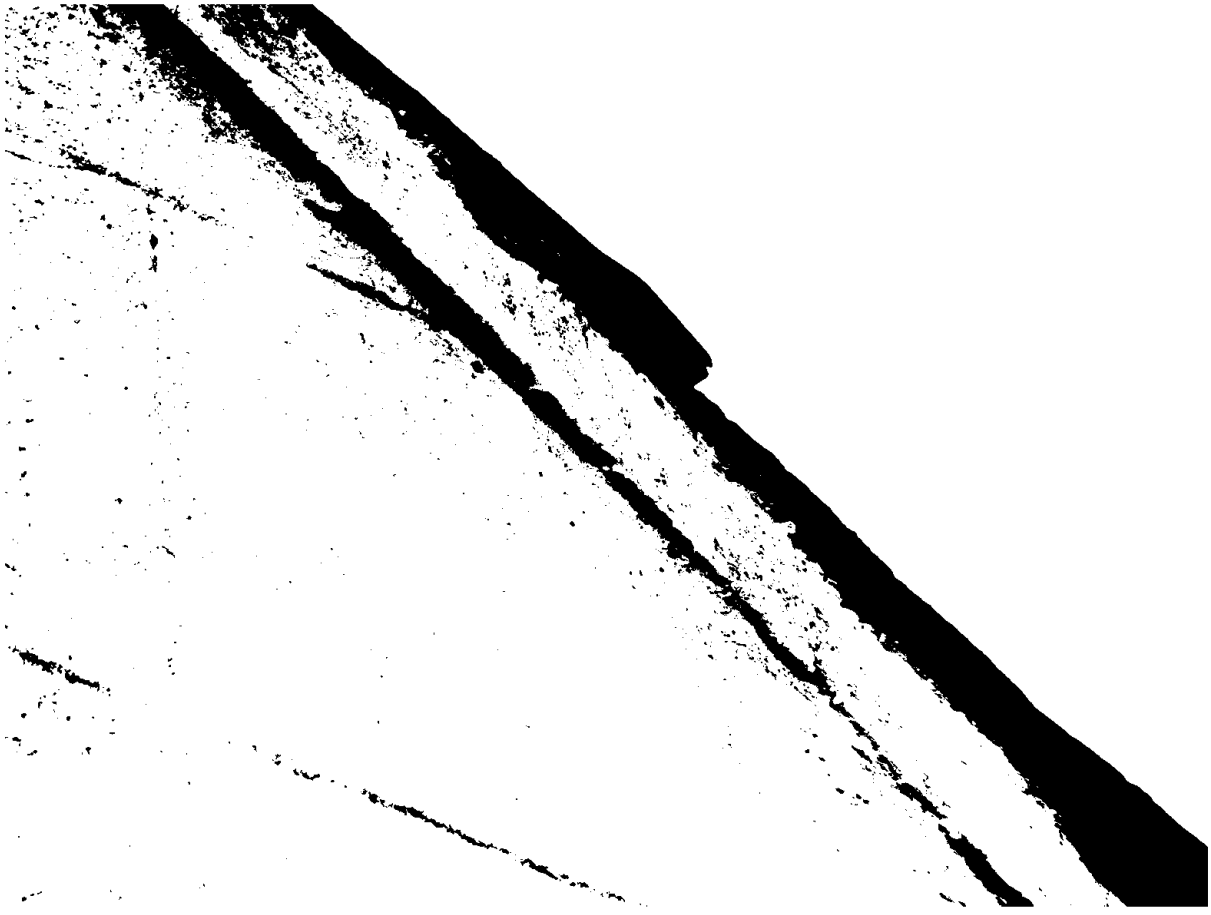


4 – Fascia boards at the eaves to the rear are fixed tightly against brickwork.

5 – Lead flashing is fitted tightly with no suitable gaps.

6 – Stonework and render are in good condition with no suitable gaps.

7 – Window and door frames are tightly sealed into walls with no suitable gaps.



8 – Cement at the gable end verges is in good condition with no suitable gaps.

9 – The building has three separate roof voids lined with modern membranes.

10 – Roof timbers and walls are covered in dusty cobwebs.