Preliminary Roost Assessment

Government Buildings

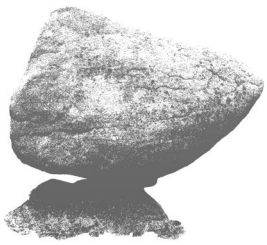
St Georges Road

Millom

LA18 5BA

For

Northedge Architecture



Gritstone Ecology

www.gritstone.org | info@gritstone.org | 07958314 857

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Northedge Architecture. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of Government Buildings, Str Georges Road, Millom, on 31st July 2025. The survey was completed to inform a planning application at the site.

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 15 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the demolition of the existing building, and the construction of new residential units, with associated landscaping works.

1.5. Site context

The site is located on the south side of Sy Georges Road, Millom, LA18 5BA, GR SD 17043 80219, close to the centre of Millom. The site is on the southern edge of the town, and is surrounded by suburban houses and gardens to the north, with sports pitches to the south.

The site includes a pre-1970's single-storey former surgery building, with areas of hard landscaping to the sides and rear.

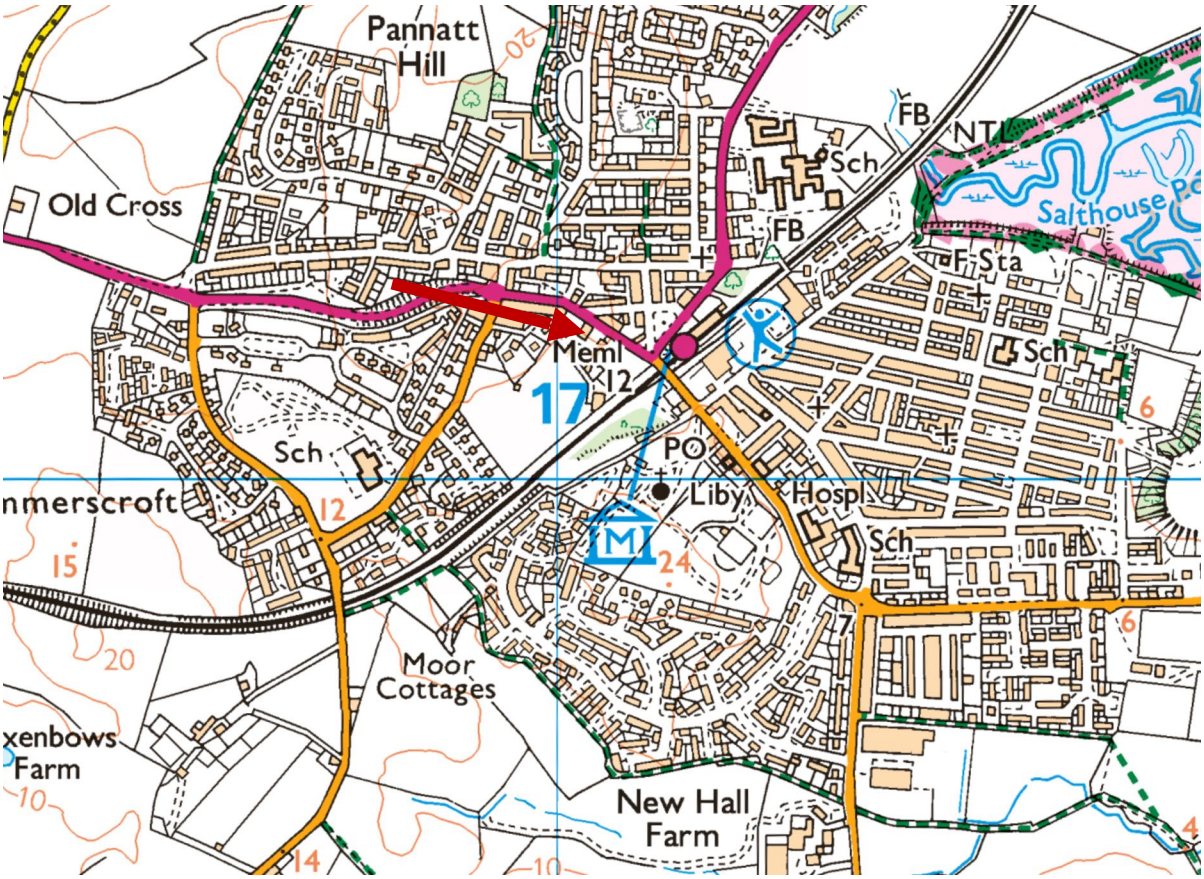
Habitat within 50m of the building includes; houses, commercial buildings, compacted stone hard-standing, and busy well-lit roads.

Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, sports pitches and other areas of open green-space, hedgerows, mature trees, and railway lines.

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

The site and immediate surrounding area provide moderate quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats; with higher quality and less disturbed habitat around farmland on the outskirts of Millom, and marshes on the coast.

1.6. Site location



1.6a – Government Buildings - Millom - site location.

1.6b – Government Buildings - Millom - aerial photograph.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 31st July 2025. Weather conditions during the survey were overcast, warm, and dry, with a temperature of 18°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 Ordnance 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 areas of the building were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in July, when bats are fully active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are more likely to be evident, if present.

3. Results

3.1. External inspection

3.1a – The front of the building.

Government Buildings, Millom, is a pre-19750's former surgery, which is currently unused, and has been unoccupied for a number of years. It has a flat roof, covered with bitumen felt, with hidden gutters. Lead flashing is fitted at the base of chimneys & flues. UPVC fascia boards are fitted at the eaves.

Walls are concrete blockwork with an insulating cavity, discreet lintels are fitted, sills are UPVC; window and door frames are UPVC, glass is largely intact. A single broken window to the rear of the building has been secured with timber boarding. Walls are clad with shiplap vertical timber boarding.

The building is well maintained, and in reasonable condition. Roofing felt, hidden gutters, and flues appear to be in good condition with no obvious gaps or holes in materials. Fascia boards are fitted tightly against the walls with no viable gaps. Walls and timber cladding are in good condition, with no missing or warped boards, which could give access to the crevice between external boards and internal blockwork.

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

3.2. Internal inspection

3.2a – Inside the building.

The building has no roof voids. However some areas have suspended ceilings, as pictured above. Where suspended ceilings were present, tiles were lifted and the small void above was checked.

The building is divided into a number of rooms, the majority of which are well lit by natural light. Internal walls are sealed with plaster, and there are no crevices which are suitable for use by crevice dwelling species of bats.

At the time of the building inspection the building had not been disturbed for a number of years.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the building inspection, 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 well maintained, 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 moderate quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, and bats are likely to be present locally.

Trees, areas of open green-space, and linked back gardens locally provide foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is fragmented by 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 well-sealed, and has no features which are likely to be used by roosting bats.

The area to the north in general is fragmented by 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; there are no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

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

Roofing materials are in generally good condition. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

Walls are brick with an insulating cavity, covered with painted wooden vertical shiplap cladding. Walls are in good condition, with no warped or missing boards which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the walls, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

UPVC fascia boards at the eaves are fixed tightly against cladding boards and hidden gutters, with no suitable gaps between materials.

The small void between suspended ceilings and the underside of roofing materials were inspected in detail using a torch and 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 were roosting in the building, the proposed works would likely impact bats or bat roosts.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the demolition of the existing building, and the construction of new residential units, with associated landscaping works.

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.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th 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 of the building.

2 – The rear of the building.

3 – The roof is in generally good condition with no obvious gaps between materials.

4 – Lead flashing is fitted tightly around chimneys and flues with no suitable gaps.

5 – Fascia boards are fitted tightly against cladding with no suitable gaps.

6 – Timber cladding is in good condition with warped or missing boards.

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

8 – Internally the building is well lit by natural light.

9 – The small void above suspended ceilings was inspected.

10 – In some areas no suspended ceilings are present.