

**HAWKESWOOD ECOLOGY**  
**Specialists in Ecological Survey and Assessment**

17 Heol Henrhyd, Coelbren, Nr. Ystradgynlais, POWYS. SA10 9PG. Tel/Fax: 01639 701304  
Mobile: 07957 154794 E-mail: hawkeswoodecology@btinternet.com  
VAT Reg No 926 9271 93  
(Proprietors: Niki and Eric Hawkeswood)



**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL AND  
PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT AT  
NEWSQUEST/DX FREIGHT SITE,  
CARDIFF ROAD, NEWPORT**

**ON BEHALF OF**

**LIDL GmbH UK**

**June 2018**

Ref: HE/15/2018

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We confirm that in preparing this Report we have exercised reasonable skill and care, taking into account the project objectives, the agreed scope of the work, prevailing site conditions and the degree of manpower and resources allocated to the project.

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## **SUMMARY**

Hawkeswood Ecology carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the grounds and buildings at Newsquest/DX Freight, Cardiff Road, Newport.

The Site is dominated by hard standing, buildings and poorly managed amenity grassland and shrubberies. The Site is adjacent to a railway in a very well developed area approximately 1.5 kilometres from the city centre.

The Site does not support any important habitats and has very little potential to support protected species, although one building showed limited potential to support roosting bats and requires further survey. Japanese knotweed was found on Site.

It is concluded that there are no apparent ecological reasons that would prevent a proposed development of the Site going ahead, however further survey is necessary to fully assess the impact of the development, if any, upon bats.

**The conclusions of this report are considered valid for two years from the survey date noted in Section 1 of the report.**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Hawkeswood Ecology was instructed to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) of grounds and buildings on land adjacent to the Cardiff Road, Newport; approximate central Grid Reference ST 29925 86347, on behalf of Lidl GmbH UK. The Site is currently occupied by two organisations, Newsquest and DX Nighfreight, with a chain link fence separating the properties. It is proposed to redevelop the Site for retail purposes.
- 1.2 The Site is dominated by hard standing, buildings and poorly managed amenity areas. The Site is bounded by a railway to the north which potentially provides a ‘green corridor’ for urban wildlife. Other than this, the Site sits in a well developed urban area.
- 1.3 The buildings on Site are two contemporary brick built, flat roofed structures and a large metal clad warehouse. They are largely surrounded by tarmac hard standing and areas of poorly managed grassland and shrubbery; Japanese knotweed is present on Site.
- 1.4 The objectives of the survey are:
  - To ascertain the habitats and species present within the Site;
  - To assess the ecological and nature conservation value of the Site;
  - To assess the potential value of buildings on Site for the presence of roosting bats;
  - To assess the potential ecological impacts of the proposed works;
  - To provide recommendations to mitigate the proposed works.
- 1.5 The PEA and PRA were carried out on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

## **2 SURVEY TEAM EXPERIENCE**

- 2.1 The lead surveyor and report author is Eric Hawkeswood. Eric has many years experience of broad habitat and detailed botanical and species surveying. Eric has been an active member of the Brecknock Bat Group since 1999 and been involved in a number of long running surveys within the county. He is a Natural Resources Wales (NRW) licensed bat worker (no. 74244a:OTH:CSAB:2016) and has extensive experience of roost inspections and emergence work. He has been a professional in the nature conservation field for twenty nine years formerly working as Reserves Manager and Conservation Officer at Gwent Wildlife Trust and Woodland Manager for the Ruperra Conservation Trust. Eric has worked as an Ecological Consultant as joint proprietor of Hawkeswood Ecology since 2001.

## **3 METHODOLOGY AND CONSTRAINTS**

### *Desktop Study*

- 3.1 The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) were asked to carry out a search for protected species and species of local interest. The search buffers were 2 kilometres for bats and 500 metres for all other species. Given the urban location of the Site, this was considered to be a commensurate level of search.

*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

- 3.2 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was carried out in line with the guidance issued by The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (2013) and consisted of a walk-over survey of the proposed Site taking into account features within and adjacent to it. Habitats were categorised according to the Phase 1 Habitat Survey guidelines (JNCC, 2010) and annotated onto a map (Figure 1). Plant assemblages were described using the DAFOR scale of cover abundance (Appendix 1) and each habitat was recorded using Target notes (Appendix 2); a species list of plants identified during survey is given in Appendix 3 and photographs are given in Appendix 4.

*Bats - Buildings*

- 3.3 The principal aim of the daytime inspection was to survey the main structures of the buildings for the presence of bats and their roost sites. An external examination was made of the design and structure of the buildings to assess the suitability for use by bats and for potential access points followed by a thorough internal search. Evidence such as bat droppings (faeces) or urine staining on windows, doors, walls or other surfaces was looked for.
- 3.4 The daytime inspection was carried out with the aid of close focusing binoculars, endoscope, night vision scopes, ladders and a 1,000,000 candlepower spot lamp.

*Constraints*

- 3.5 No constraints to the surveys were noted.

## **4 DESK TOP STUDY FINDINGS**

- 4.1 At the time of writing, the results of the data search had not been received. These will be commented upon during the report on follow up surveys recommended in section 8.

## **5 FIELD SURVEY FINDINGS**

*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

- 5.1 The Site sits in a built up area of Newport, adjacent to the main Cardiff Road and a railway line. It is a developed Site supporting three buildings and a large surfaced car park and access areas. There are some areas of poorly managed amenity grassland and former shrubberies which have largely been cut down. See Figure 1, Phase 1 map and Appendix 4 for photographs.
- 5.2 The amenity areas consist of mown grassland (Target Note 1) and two areas of shrubbery (Target Notes 2 and 3). There are two planted trees on the frontage and a previously felled mature hornbeam which is showing coppice growth.
- 5.3 The amenity grassland (Target Note 1) is mown and dominated by grasses and typical broad leaved species such as creeping buttercup, daisy, self-heal, creeping cinquefoil and rough hawkbit. Grasses include abundant perennial rye-grass, Yorkshire fog and sweet vernal-grass.

- 5.4 The shrubberies at Target Note 2, in the Newsquest area of the Site, have either been cut to ground level or are unmanaged. Amongst the decorative shrubs are cotoneaster and a species of variegated ivy. The areas are largely given over to colonising ruderal species including bramble, broad-leaved willowherb, scarlet pimpernel and Yorkshire fog.
- 5.5 The shrubberies at Target Note 3, the entrance to DX Freight, have been completely neglected and have become largely overgrown with false oat-grass, ragwort, ivy creeping cinquefoil and bramble. Montbretia, an invasive alien species, is present here.

*Other Habitats*

- 5.6 The remainder of the Site is given over to tarmac surfaces. A fence-line runs between the Newsquest and Freight parts of the Site (Target Note 4) and some young trees have developed along this with locally frequent ash and buddleia. There are some areas of Japanese knotweed along this fence-line and at the eastern boundary.

*Fauna*

- 5.7 No faunal species were noted on site during the survey but common garden birds such as robin, wren and blackbird were heard in the adjacent railway line vegetation. The potential for breeding birds is very limited with limited shrub and tree growth and unsuitable buildings.

*Surrounding Area*

- 5.8 The Site sits in a well developed area of urban Newport immediately to the south of a main railway line. The embankment to the railway line is well vegetated with scrub woodland which offers suitable foraging and commuting habitats for bats, birds and other wildlife.

***Bat Roost Daytime Assessment***

- 5.9 The Site supports three large buildings, two are brick built and are offices used by Newsquest (buildings A and B) and a third is a large partially metal clad warehouse (Building C) with associated offices in the DX Freight area.
- 5.10 The building locations are shown and numbered in Figure 1 and details are given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Description of Buildings**

No	Wall Structure	Roof structure and loft space	Comments	Assessment of Bat Roost Potential
A	Cavity wall brick built structure with large areas of glass and UPVC to the roof level.	Flat roof, inaccessible for inspection. Covering is felt or fibre-glass over a concrete, Bison - type roof. Where internal ceiling tiles were missing, the roof space could be seen to be shallow, around 20 centimetres, with glass fibre insulation.	The roof structure was ‘recessed’ and it is assumed that there were integral gutters. No access for bats could be seen. <b>Direct evidence of bats:</b> none <b>Potential for roosting bats:</b> No access could be seen that would allow bats access to the building.	None
B	Similar structure to Building A.	Roof structure as building A apart from a metal verge on the northern elevation. This was completely sealed.	As with Building A, no suitable access for bats could be seen. <b>Direct evidence of bats:</b> None <b>Potential for roosting bats:</b> As for Building A.	None
C	Larger warehouse/despatch building. Two storey brick built office at front with cavity wall, front wall of warehouse also brick built to roof. Other warehouse walls metal cladding over metal superstructure.	Flat roof on office, no access for inspection externally. The main warehouse has an asbestos roof with polycarbonate lights.	A large building with some opportunities to wall tops on the front wall and under loose metal verges associated with doors. Bats are known from asbestos roofs such as these and have also been found by Hawkeswood Ecology in 2016 hibernating under the insulation on the lower asbestos sheet in a similar structure. <b>Direct evidence of bats:</b> None <b>Potential for roosting bats:</b> Limited potential to access wall tops and to gain access to the insulated asbestos roof.	Low

- 5.8 Of the buildings on Site, only Building C, the Freight Warehouse was considered to hold potential for roosting bats. The location adjacent to the wooded railway embankment gives the Site a higher potential to support bats than would be the case were it elsewhere in the urban development.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

- 6.1 The Site is mainly developed with poorly managed amenity areas supporting little biodiversity interest. The coppiced hornbeam on the Site frontage has a dense cover of ivy which may support breeding birds although nothing was observed during survey.

- 6.2 Japanese knotweed is present particularly in the eastern parts of the Site.

- 6.3 Of the buildings on Site, only Building C was considered to have any potential value to support roosting bats and further survey is necessary to establish if it is used by them. No use of the buildings by breeding birds was observed. Even should Building C be found to support roosting bats, it is likely with appropriate mitigation and works carried out under licence, that loss of the buildings and grounds are considered to be of **no significance** in a local or regional context.

### *Protected Species*

- 6.4 There is very limited potential for birds to use the dense ivy on the coppiced rowan on the Site frontage for breeding purposes, however, there are far more favourable sites very close by on the railway embankment.
- 6.5 Building C offers some potential to support roosting bats and further survey is necessary to properly assess this. A full assessment of impacts on protected species will be made following an observations survey on Building C.
- 6.6 Railways are a favoured habitat for reptiles. In this instance, it is considered that they would be unlikely to colonise the Site due to the dense nature of the scrub woodland on the embankment and the lack of mosaic habitat on the Site itself. The Site supports no suitable habitat for other protected species.

## **7 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

### *Birds*

- 7.1 Part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence (with certain limited exceptions and in the absence of a licence) intentionally to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or intentionally to damage, take or destroy its nest whilst being built or in use, or to take or destroy its eggs. Consequently, even common birds such as blackbirds or robins, and their nests and eggs are protected in this way. Any works involving removal or other management of trees or shrubs must be undertaken outside the breeding bird season (March- August).

- 7.2 Further, section 1(5) of Part 1 of the W&C Act states any person intentionally disturbing any wild bird included in Schedule 1 whilst it is building a nest or is in or near a nest containing eggs or young or disturbs the young of such a bird is committing an offence and liable to a special penalty.
- 7.3 Amendments to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 made in 2012 have effectively strengthened the protection of wild birds and their habitats. The amendment is “To help preserve, maintain and re-establish habitats for wild birds.”
- 7.4 Under the amended Regulations, Local Planning Authorities (as well as national statutory conservation bodies such as Natural Resources Wales) are required to protect and create bird habitat.

*Bats*

- 7.5 British bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Schedule 5 of this act made it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any British bat. It is also an offence to intentionally damage or destroy their place of rest (the roost).
- 7.6 Further all bat species are protected under Annex IV of the European Communities Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitats Directive) as amended which requires the United Kingdom government to provide bats with strict protection. Lesser horseshoe bats are also protected under Annex II of the Habitat Regulations which requires the national government to identify Special Areas of Conservation to protect and enhance core populations of Annex II species.
- 7.7 The Habitats Directive is transcribed into England and Wales Law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, this legislation consolidates amendments made to the earlier 2010 act. This legislation states in Part 3, Protection of Species, paragraph 43(1) that a person who:
- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
  - (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
  - (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
  - (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,
- is committing an offence.
- 7.8 Further, with regard to disturbance of EPS, Paragraph 43(2) that disturbance is an act which is likely to:
- (a) to impair their ability—
    - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
    - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
  - (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- 7.9 In the case of a development involving the loss or modification of a building which may affect bats the above legislation must be considered and it may be necessary to apply to Natural Resources Wales for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL).

- 7.10 The introduction of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), has removed the defence of killing or injuring a protected species during a lawful operation, thus even in an instance where planning permission is granted, the presence of bats must be considered and mitigated for prior to commencement of works. Under the above regulations, a WAG licence can only be given if three tests are satisfied:
- The action proposed is in the interest of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment;
  - That there is not a satisfactory alternative;
  - That the action proposed will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- 7.11 Failure to satisfy the regulations and obtain an EPSL where required is likely to result in prosecution and can lead to severe fines of up to £5000 per bat and possible imprisonment.
- 7.12 Eight species of bat are listed under section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2106). Section 7 of the Act provides a list of living organisms of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This is a list of species considered at threat within Wales and in need of conservation management to maintain and enhance population numbers.
- 7.13 A duty is placed on the Local Authority by the Welsh Assembly Government to maintain and enhance populations of species listed in Section 7.
- Invasive species*
- 7.14 It is an offence under Section 14 (2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ‘plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild’ any plant which is listed in Schedule 9 Part II of the Act. Japanese knotweed is listed in Schedule 9 Part II.
- 7.15 Proper precautions must be taken to prevent the spread of these plants; failure to do so may result in prosecution.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Observation surveys of Building C are needed to properly assess use, if any, by bats. Initially a single observation is recommended after which a decision will be made as to whether further survey is necessary.
- 8.2 Removal of trees and shrubs should be undertaken outside the accepted bird breeding season of March to August. If this is not possible, the affected areas will be searched by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to commencement of works. There is no licence for the destruction of active bird nests and translocations invariably fail. Any nest will be protected by a buffer zone until such time as it is no longer in use.

- 8.3 Any new build should provide permanent nest sites for house nesting bird species such as house sparrow or swift. In this location, swift boxes on a western elevation, if suitable, would be well sited.
- 8.4 Controls will be put into place to ensure that no spread of Japanese knotweed plant material is caused when moved from Site. All waste (including soils) that may contain plant material must be treated as licensed waste and taken to an appropriately licensed landfill Site. Montbretia is also a controlled invasive plant species and must also be carefully controlled to avoid spread.
- 8.5 Any landscaping plan should introduce native species reflecting those present in the local area (all planted species should be of local provenance) or species with known value to British wildlife. Plantings should include species known to be valuable to foraging birds and bats such as those producing berries and attractive to insects, i.e. heather, hawthorn, pyracantha and hazel.
- 8.6 Subject to further bat observations survey, recommendations for demolition of Building C will be made in a later report.

## **9 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The Site is presently dominated by the hard-standing, buildings and poorly managed amenity areas, it is considered to be of very low biodiversity interest.
- 9.2 The buildings were considered to be of low potential for protected species; however further bat observations survey of Building C is required to properly assess its value and the potential impacts of its demolition.
- 9.3 The Site does not offer suitable habitat to support other protected species although birds may use some of the shrubs on Site.

## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Nature Conservancy Council, 1990, (2010 revision), *The Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit*, JNCC

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended), HMG.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016), *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013), *‘Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal’*

**FIGURE 1:  
PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP AND LOCATION OF TREES ASSESSED**

Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Survey map



**APPENDIX 1**  
**DAFOR SCALE OF COVER ABUNDANCE**

The DAFOR scale is used as a simple measure of cover abundance for individual plant species within a habitat. The scale is as follows:

- D Dominant
- A Abundant
- F Frequent
- O Occasional
- R Rare
- (L Locally – sometimes used as a prefix to the above)

**APPENDIX 2**  
**PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY TARGET NOTES**

1. Amenity grass, poorly managed by infrequent mowing. A semi-mature cherry tree and coppiced mature rowan tree are present on Site frontage. The rowan has dense ivy on the stool and coppice growth. Grassland areas at the front of the Site and between the two areas of the Site along the chain link fence; some tree species gaining a foothold along fence with young ash, sycamore and buddleia occasional. Species in the sward were:

<i>Species</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Ash	O
Buddleia	O
Clematis	LF
Cock's-foot	O
Creeping buttercup	LF
Creeping cinquefoil	LF
Cut leaved cranesbill	O
Daisy	F
False oat-grass	F
Ivy	LA
Japanese knotweed	LA
Least yellow trefoil	O
Perennial rye-grass	A
Rough hawkbit	O
Self-heal	F
Sweet vernal grass	F
Sycamore	O
Yarrow	F
Yorkshire fog	A

2. Unmanaged shrubbery, most shrubs cut to ground level. Cotoneaster, and variegated ivy present. Colonising species included frequent broad-leaved willowherb, dandelion, scarlet pimpernel, Yorkshire fog and bramble.
3. Unmanaged shrubberies at DX Freight entrance. Frequent to locally abundant were ribwort plantain, field horsetail, barren brome, false oat-grass, ivy, and creeping cinquefoil. Occasionally occurring species were bramble, perforated St John's wort and Montbretia. Single young hornbeam in central section.

**APPENDIX 3**  
**LIST OF PLANT SPECIES RECORDED IN THE SURVEY**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Barren brome	<i>Bromus sterilis</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg
Broad-leaved willowherb	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>
Buddleia	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>
Clematis	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Creeping cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
Cut leaved cranesbill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg
False oat-grass	<i>Arhenatherum elatius</i>
Field horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Flowering cherry	<i>Prunus</i> sp
Garden ivy (variegated)	<i>Hedera</i> sp
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopian japonica</i>
Lesser trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>
Montbretia	<i>Crocsmia</i> sp
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Perforated St John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Rough hawkbit	<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Scarlet pimpernel	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Sweet vernal grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer psuedoplatanus</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanata</i>

**APPENDIX 4**  
**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Newsquest/DX  
Freight, Newport.  
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2018



Building A front



Buildings A and B, note recessed roof (arrowed)

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Newsquest/DX  
Freight, Newport.  
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2018



Internal and external of Building C, DX Freight

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Newsquest/DX  
Freight, Newport.  
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2018



Fenline separating the two companies and amenity grassland



Amenity grassland, Site frontage

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Newsquest/DX  
Freight, Newport.  
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2018



Shrubbery at TN2



The coppiced rowan

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Newsquest/DX  
Freight, Newport.  
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2018



Shrubbery at DX Freight, TN3

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