

Summary

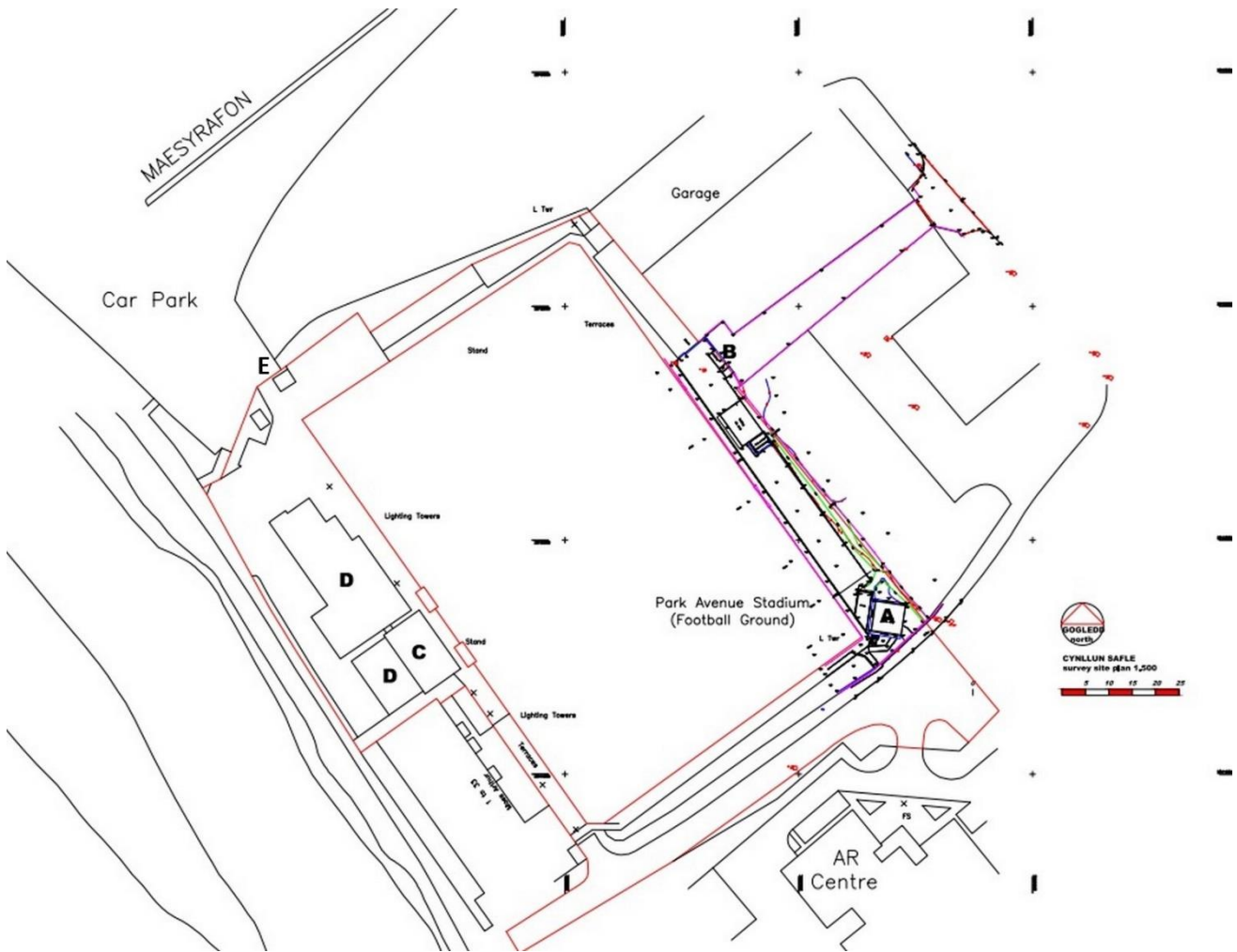
Four buildings at Aberystwyth football club are proposed for demolition, to allow for construction of new changing facilities and function rooms along with two new open stands and a building for residential use. An assessment of the likelihood of these buildings to support protected species was required by the client. Internally, only one of the buildings has a roof void. This building affords no access to bats. One of the other buildings similarly has no potential access points for bats. The other two buildings are potentially accessible, but are fundamentally unsuited to roosting bats. No evidence of bats was found in any of the structures. The proposed work does not pose any significant risk to protected species.

Survey Details

An assessment of the buildings' potential to support protected species was required by the client. Bats are the only such species which could conceivably be present here. The role of this assessment was simply to establish the presence or absence of bats, and not to carry out a detailed survey with associated recommendations. All four structures were carefully examined by Matt Sutton on 23rd November 2023. If bats are present, they may be impossible to see if they are squeezed into cavities. Bats are generally detected in buildings by searching for droppings or prey remains such as moth wings. The inside of the buildings and the base of the external walls were examined for these.



Building Structure



Layout of Football Club with Structures A-E labelled

The buildings proposed for demolition are mostly simple, modern structures of concrete / steel construction. The above map shows the layout of these around the astro-turf pitch. Photographs and descriptions of each building are given below.

Structure A: Enclosed Viewing Building



This enclosed viewing area is of rendered blockwork construction with an artificial slate roof. uPVC soffits and fascias are tightly-fitted to the wall-tops and afford no squeeze gaps. All slates are intact and closely-fitted; ridge tiles are intact and mortared. Internally, there is a small roof void, with mineral wool insulation between floor joists and an intact membrane below the slates.

The building has no potential access points for bats, and no external features which could be used. The roof-space was accessed and found to be clean and completely sealed; no droppings or other signs of bats were found.

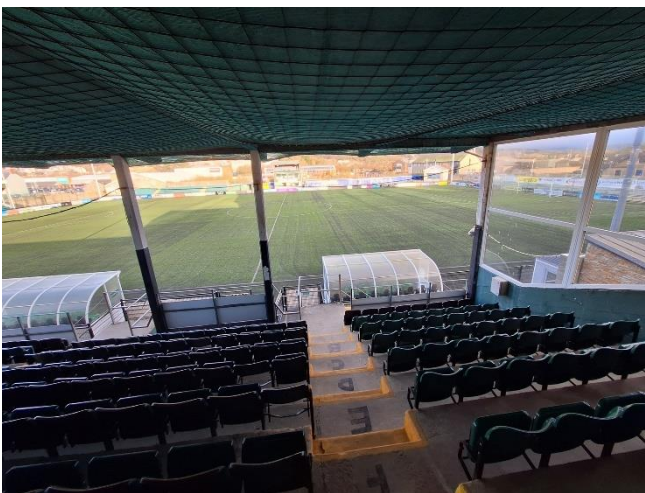
Structure B: Toilet block and turnstile building



This simple building has painted concrete blockwork walls with a shallow mono-pitched metal roof, folded over the wall-tops. There is an open doorway to the toilet section, but no roof-void inside.

No droppings or other evidence of bats was found. There are no internal spaces or external features which could be exploited by roosting bats.

Structure C: Spectator Stand



This open-fronted stand has a metal roof, lined on the inside with netting. There are no features on or inside the stand which could be exploited by roosting bats. There is an area below the stand enclosed by concrete walls; survey access was not possible here, but no potential bat access points were apparent.

Structure D: Clubhouse / Changing Rooms



Two flat-roofed buildings lie to the rear and side of the spectator stand. These are variously concrete block or brick-walled; the clubhouse walls are well-glazed. The clubhouse roof is reportedly lined with solid insulation, whilst the changing room block has a corrugated metal roof. Neither building has a roof void, or any internal or external features which could be exploited by roosting bats.

Structure E: Main Turnstile Building



This small building is brick-walled with a modern slate-roof and wooden close-boarding on the gable ends. Plastic verge-caps seal the slate ends against the barge-boards.

Survey Results

The survey found no bat droppings, either fresh or old. No moth wings or other signs of bats were found. No bats were visible. The various buildings are all unsuited to bats, lacking accessible spaces or features which could be exploited by bats. The intended development is thus of no ecological consequence and no further survey is required.

Legislation

All species of bat and their roosts are protected under United Kingdom law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and in addition are classified as Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and to destroy any place used for rest or shelter by a bat.

Development works that affect a bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Licences in respect of Protected Species for this type of development can be granted for “...the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.”

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 licences can only be issued for a development if NRW is satisfied that:

- There is no satisfactory alternative to the specified works, and;
- The authorised action will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Licencing

No further action is required, and no licence is necessary.

Bat Conservation

An opportunity may exist to provide biodiversity gain into the new residential building by incorporating bat access tiles, which afford bat access to roof spaces.

The author of this report was Matt Sutton. He was an employee of CCW (now NRW) for 15 years, during which time he held a bat licence and was responsible for numerous roost inspection visits, development of mitigation measures for bat roosts, flight-lines and foraging habitats, and assessments of survey programmes by consultant ecologists. As a freelance consultant ecologist for the last 16 years, he has completed numerous scoping reports and activity surveys for building developments and wind-turbine proposals.