

Ecologyia Ltd.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey Report – Danilo Cinema, Hinckley

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

1.1.1. This report describes the results of the preliminary bat roost assessment undertaken by Ecologyia Limited. (EL) on behalf of Wigston Estates Ltd (WEL) on 19 November 2023 on the Former Danilo Cinema, Hinckley, Leicester, LE10 0BH. EL were commissioned by WEL on 14 November 2023 to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of the former cinema complex at Grid Reference SP 42517 94211 to establish the ecological baseline conditions regarding bats. No specific Land entry requirements was provided by WEL. The following terms are used:

- **Project** – Danilo Cinema; and
- **Survey feature** – Feature of potential impact.

1.1.2. This report is intended to be read with reference to the location map Figure 1 (see results section).

1.2. OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Surveys were commissioned in order to:

- determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and / or mitigation for any survey feature highlighted during survey; and,
- provide a classification of any survey features suitability for roosting bats.

1.2.2. This report provides the results of the survey undertaken on the 19 November 2023, drawing conclusions from the findings of the surveys. The report additionally makes recommendations to further surveys required as a result of bats being identified utilising features, or features with the potential to support roosting bats, where required. It represents a snapshot of conditions at the time of survey, and it should be noted that the findings may be subject to change.

1.3. SCHEME OVERVIEW

1.3.1. No detailed information regarding the Project has been provided by WEL other than the following:

The former Danilo Cinema is to be converted into a number of residential apartments.

2 LEGISLATION

Many species of animal and plant receive some degree of legal protection. For the purpose of this survey, legal protection primarily refers (but may not be limited) to:

- Species included on Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see Section 9[5] and 13[2]);

- Species included on Schedules 2 and 5 of The *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations* 2017 (the ‘Habitats Regulations’); and
- *Conservation of Habitats and Species* (Amendment) (EU Exit) *Regulations* 2019.

2.1. LEGISLATION RELATING TO BATS

2.1.1. All British bat species are listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act* 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations* 2017. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 41 of the Habitats Regulations. These make it an offence, *inter alia*, to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- Deliberately disturb any such animal, including in particular any disturbance which is likely:
 - to impair its ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young;
 - to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any of these animals uses for shelter or protection.

2.1.2. In addition, five British bat species are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. These are:

- Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*);
- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*);
- Bechstein’s bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*);
- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*); and
- Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*).

2.1.3. In certain circumstances where these species are found the Directive requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to ensure that their populations are maintained at a favourable conservation status. Outside SACs, the level of legal protection that these species receive is the same as for other bat species.

3 METHODOLOGY

Bat surveys were undertaken by a suitably experienced and licensed ecologist, utilising a torch and binoculars and endoscope (where required), in accordance with practices detailed in both the Bat Conservation Trusts (BCT) Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines (4th Ed.) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee Bat Workers Manual (3rd Ed.), as from the time of appointment on 14 November 2023 by WEL.

3.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1. No desk-based assessment was requested by WEL to interrogate records from the Local Records Office.

3.1.2. A desk study has been carried out to identify nature conservation designations, designations for bats, and to obtain existing records of bat species potentially relevant to the scheme. Data was obtained from online publicly available sources detailed below:

- Defra MAGIC Interactive map (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>); and
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org>).

3.1.3. The desk study included a search for:

- International nature conservation designations (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)) within 10km of the proposed Project to identify sites where bats are a primary reason for designation.
- National statutory nature conservation designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) within 2km of the proposed Project where bats are a primary reason for designation.
- Bat species and European protected Species derogation licences within 2km of the proposed Project.
- Reference was also made to Ordnance Survey maps of the wider area and online aerial images (www.google.co.uk/maps) in order to determine any habitat features of potential interest for bats in the area.

3.2. PERSONNEL

3.2.1. Surveys have been undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist;

- Dr. S. A. Graham BSc (Hons), MSc, CEcol, CEnv, MCIEEM, FLS (licensed bat worker: Natural England Registration No. CL 15: 2015-11477-CLS-CLS & CL18: 2015-13792-CLS-CLS, NatureScot No. 197766 and Natural Resources Wales No. S090298/1).

Dr. S. A. Graham has been a practicing ecologist for over ten years, holding a BSc (hons), MSc in environmental science and PhD as well as being a full member of the chartered institute of ecology and environmental management (MCIEEM) and both a chartered ecologist (CEcol) and chartered environmentalist (CEnv). Dr. S. A. Graham has been a

licensed bat roost (including hibernation in England) surveyor since 2009, working throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

3.3. RELEVANT GUIDANCE

3.3.1. The survey methodology and subsequent interpretation of results made reference to the following guidance documents:

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th ed). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers Manual*. 3rd Edition. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

3.4. BUILDING INSPECTION

3.4.1. Bat roosts can be found in many places such as trees, buildings, bridges, underground etc. Within the Project area there is a complex structure with the potential to receive a high level of intensive modification during works / the Project, which was subject to external and internal inspection. The most common recorded roost sites around buildings include gable ends, below ridge tiles, under roof slates / tiles, behind soffits or barge boards etc. access to the above spaces need only be through a hole not exceeding 10 – 20 mm in diameter.

3.4.2. Signs of roosting bats in built structures may be indicated by one or more of the following:

- Staining, beneath or around a resting area, caused by the natural oils in bat fur;
- Bat droppings beneath a resting area;
- Bat droppings and / or insect remains beneath a feeding area;
- Audible squeaking, from within the hole, especially on hot days or at dusk;
- Insects, especially flies, around a hole;
- A characteristic odour of bats and / or their droppings; and
- Dead bats – usually young bats from a nursery roost site.

3.4.3. The licensed bat ecologist, experienced in conducting bat surveys, attended the Project to undertake external visual assessment of the building, to identify potential access and egress points into the structure and assess the suitability of any features that may provide suitable roosting habitat. All appropriate horizontal and vertical surfaces were checked for signs of bats. An internal inspection of the building was subsequently undertaken, to search for bats and evidence indicating use by bats. The surveyor was equipped with a ladder, torch, close focusing binoculars, an endoscope and bat detector.

3.5. ASSUMPTIONS OF BAT ACTIVITY

3.5.1. Highlighted features within the Survey feature were visually assessed from the ground by an appropriately qualified and experienced, licenced ecologist and were allocated to one of the following categories:

- **None:** No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground / underground levels).

No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade / protection for flight-lines, or generate / shelter insect populations available for foraging bats).

- **Negligible:** No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use these small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.

- **Low:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (i.e. in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground, light levels or levels of disturbance) and / or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by large numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool / stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).

Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.

Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.

- **Moderate:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (i.e. in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground, light levels or levels of disturbance) and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this Section is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).

Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.

Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.

- **High:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (i.e. in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground, light levels or levels of disturbance) and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool / stable hibernation site.

Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.

High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.

Site is close and connected to known roosts.

4 RESULTS

4.1. DESK STUDY

- 4.1.1. A review of freely available online information identified an absence of International nature conservation designations (SACs) within 10km of the proposed scheme where bats are a primary reason for designation. In addition, it also identified an absence of National statutory nature conservation designations or SSSIs within 2km of the proposed scheme where bats are a primary reason for designation.
- 4.1.2. No identifiable European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licences have been granted by Natural England within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme in relation to bats.
- 4.1.3. Fifty-one records of bats have been recorded within a 2 km search radius of the proposed Project. Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* (20), Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* (13), Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri* (5), Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (5), Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (4), Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* (1), Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii* (1), Whiskered *Myotis mystacinus* (1) and Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* (1).
- 4.1.4. No further records pertaining to bat species have been identified.

4.2. PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 4.2.1. The Danilo Cinema was located at Grid Reference SP 42517 94211. The location within Hinckley is indicated in Figure 1.

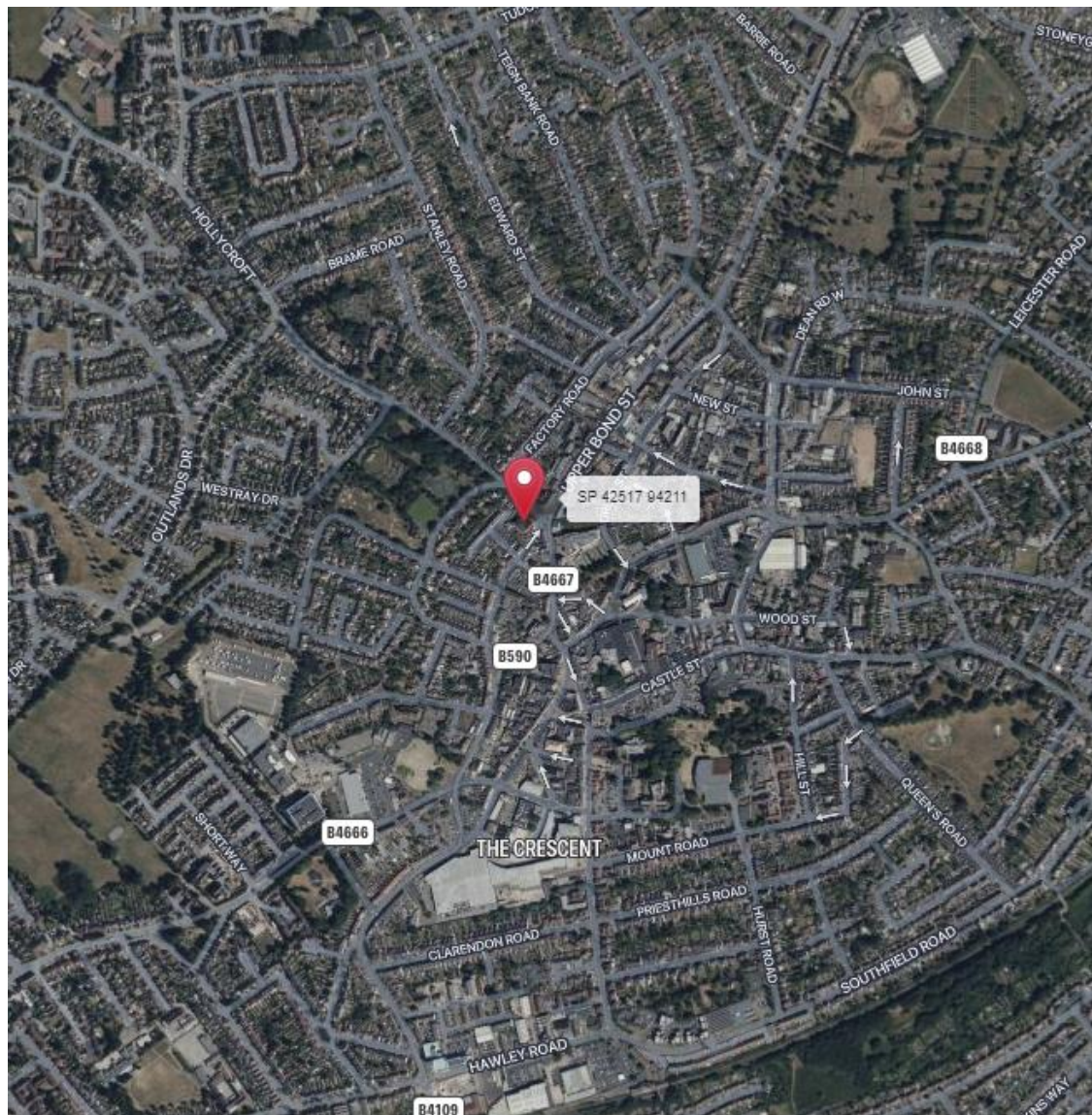


Figure 1: Danilo cinema located in Hinckley Town centre, Leicestershire.

4.2.2. Surveys were conducted when weather conditions were generally conducive to undertake preliminary roost assessments, i.e., relatively warm, and dry. Full weather details are provided within Table 1.

Table 1: Environmental variable encountered during the preliminary roost assessment at the Danilo cinema located in Hinckley Town centre, Leicestershire.

Environmental Variable	Conditions experienced during survey
Temperature (°C)	11
Cloud cover (in eighths)	8
Wind speed (mph)	5
Wind direction (8-point compass)	SW
Precipitation	None

External Survey

- 4.2.3. The Project represents a large former cinema from the 1930's. The building is of predominantly solid brick walls, although a small cavity may be present between the skins of brick (see Appendix 1, Images 1 – 6). The building has a concrete slab flat roof to all elements of the building, with the exception of the domed entrance to the cinema. The building has a mixture of wooden and metal doors and frames, where retained, along with metal window frames. The majority of glass has been broken in the windows, although these have been boarded over.
- 4.2.4. There are numerous possible entry / egress points into the building through vents on the northern and eastern aspects (see Appendix 1, Image 7 for example) as well as gaps in the window boards on the eastern and southern aspects. The missing central section of the solid slab main roof provides the largest entry / egress possibilities for bats (see Appendix 1, Images 8 & 9).
- 4.2.5. It is noted that the majority of these are in close proximity to streetlamps and would be anticipated to heavily lit during bat activity periods.

Internal Survey

- 4.2.6. The building has been historically extensively stripped, with little present other than the fabric of the building as seen in Appendix 1, Images 10 – 17. Internally, the building comprises an entrance lobby, stairwell, Projector rooms and small side rooms, were still retained. All ceiling are of concrete slab construction.
- 4.2.7. All small side rooms are well sealed with the doors shut, with the exception of a small downstairs room where a single bat dropping was found on top of an old safe. The surface was oily meaning that the dropping could not be aged. The bat dropping was indicative of that from *Pipistrellus* sp. bats. Being the only dropping found within any room of the Project, it is anticipated that this was the result of an opportunistic foraging even by a single bat.
- 4.2.8. There are a number of holes within the internal walls of the building. A close inspection of these identified no bats and / or signs of bats, with the majority open to the elements within the central section of the building where the main roof has collapsed.
- 4.2.9. No further signs of bats and / or bats were identified at the time of survey.
- 4.2.10. The building is considered to provide a Low suitability in respect to roosting habitats as defined in Table 4.1 of Collins (2023).

Habitats

- 4.2.11. The Project is situated in the centre of Hinckley Town. Surrounded by residential and commercial properties, there is little immediate connectivity to the wider landscape other than small residential gardens, predominantly to the North-east. Hollycroft Park sites further to the north-east.
- 4.2.12. Thick patches of ivy were observed on the walls and roofs of adjacent outbuildings associated with residential properties.

- 4.2.13. The building would be heavily lit on the northern and eastern aspects along Hollycroft Road and Trinity Lane (respectively), see Appendix 1, Images 1, 2 & 5.
- 4.2.14. The building represents a Low suitability in respect to potential flight-paths to suitable habitats in the wider environment as defined in Table 4.1 of Collins (2023). It is also considered to provide Negligible foraging habitats in respect to foraging habitats as defined in Table 4.1 of Collins (2023).

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1.1. Several species of bat have been recorded within the wider environment of the Project over the decades. There are however, no records from the Project site or immediately surrounding environment from recent record. No International and / or Nationally designated sites were identified within the appropriate survey extents.
- 5.1.2. A number of features were identified across the Project that would facilitate access into the building; predominantly the collapsed roof in across the main section of the building. It was noted that the majority of these, however, are in close proximity to streetlamps and would be anticipated to heavily lit during bat activity periods.
- 5.1.3. The building has been historically extensively stripped, with little present other than the fabric of the building. All small side rooms are well sealed with the doors shut, with the exception of a small downstairs room where a single bat dropping was found. Being the only dropping found within any room of the Project, it is anticipated that this was the result of an opportunistic foraging even by a single bat.
- 5.1.4. There are a number of holes within the internal walls of the building. A close inspection of these identified no bats and / or signs of bats, with the majority open to the elements within the central section of the building where the main roof has collapsed.
- 5.1.5. The building represents a Low suitability in respect to potential flight-paths to suitable habitats in the wider environment. It is also considered to provide Negligible foraging habitats in respect to foraging habitats.
- 5.1.6. In line with BCT 'Best Practice Guidelines', this Project would be classified as having **LOW to Negligible** bat roosting suitability. This would indicate that no further survey is required to establish presence / likely absence of roosting bats within the Survey feature ahead of any proposed works.
- 5.1.7. In line with BCT Guidance (Collins, 2023) and the UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason, P.F. and Wray, S, 2023), it is recommended that works should be undertaken under a Precautionary Works Method Statement (PWMS) approach. The PWMS should detail legal responsibilities to all contractors, bat and bat features identification, appropriate working methodologies and procedures in the eventuality a bat is identified during works (including emergency care). ecologists contact details. This should be disseminated to all contractors through a "Tool Box Talk" (TBT) ahead of an individual's commencement on site.

6 LIMITATIONS

- 6.1.1. The lack of evidence of a protected species does not preclude their possible presence at a later date. This is particularly true for bats; their use of a particular feature can significantly vary,

not only on a seasonal basis, but also from day to day. Any survey represents only a ‘snapshot’ of possible bat activity. Importantly, lack of evidence of a bat roost does not guarantee their absence and therefore consideration should be given to the need to update the data in the future in the event of substantial delay to the implementation of Scheme.

- 6.1.2. This report is valid for a period of 12 to 18 months from the time of survey, not report production. Reliance on the findings of this report, post this period, should seek clarity from the report author, as per the CIEEM (2019) Guidance.

7 REFERENCES

CIEEM. (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th ed). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers Manual. 3rd Edition*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

APPENDIX 1

Image 1: Image looking at northern aspect of the building.



Image 2: Image looking at central section of the northern aspect of the building.



Image 3: Image looking at right most section of the northern aspect of the building.



Image 4: Image looking at eastern aspect of the building.



Image 5: Image looking at southern aspect of the building.



Image 6: Image showing small opening in brickwork on eastern aspect of the building.



Image 7: Image showing indicative open vent on northern aspect of the building.



Image 8: Image showing missing roof within main flat roofed section of the building.



Image 9: Image showing missing roof within main flat roofed section of the building.



Image 10: Image showing condition of typical flat roofed section of the building.



Image 11: Image showing typical small room within the building.



Image 12: Image showing condition of typical flat roofed section of the building.



Image 13: Image showing roofed section of the entrance to the building.



Image 14: Image showing internal condition of main section of the building.



Image 15: Image showing internal condition of main section of the building.



Image 16: Image showing internal condition of small room within the building.



Image 17: Image showing internal condition of small room within the building.



Image 18: Image showing a single bat dropping found on an old safe within a small ground floor room. Bat dropping was sat on an oily surface meaning age was impossible to establish. Dropping indicative of a *Pipistrellus* sp. bat.

