



Bat Scoping Survey: Unit 6, Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Tredegar



Instructed by: Ron Skinner and Sons

Reported by: Ecological Services Ltd
10 Mount Pleasant, Llanelly Hill, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 0NT

Author	Date	Version
Richard Watkins	October 2024	V1.0

T: 07866461726 E: rich@ecologicalservices.wales W: www.ecologicalservices.wales

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Guidance Note

1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 The building being surveyed is a detached industrial building situated within a semi-urban environment, to the north west of the town of Tredegar. The building is not currently in use and planning permission is sought to demolish the existing building and redevelop the site to offer car sales storage; car transporter servicing and maintenance and a storage facility. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 13 years experience, license number S0931358-1.

1.3 A data search was undertaken with SEWBRc (0223-978) in 2023 to provide information on local bat and bird species in the area. The data search did not identify any historic records of bats being present within the building. The nearest recorded roost is approximately 910m from the site which is a record for a Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) roost.

1.4 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 280m from the site which is an unspecified record for a Common Pipistrelle; Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*); 290m from the site which is a record for a foraging/commuting Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and 380m from the site which is a record for a Brown Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) care call.

1.5 A number of records for nesting birds were returned as part of the data search within 500m of the proposed development site. Species records include

1.6 The building is not within 1km of a designated SAC or SSSI for bats.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 Unit 6 is a detached, single storey industrial building with a pitched metal roof. There are a number of clear perspex sheets on the roof to allow natural light into the building. The building is brick built to the lower half and metal clad with corrugated sheeting to the upper half. There is a large metal roller door to the southern elevation of the building.

2.2 The building dates back to in excess of 30 years and is situated in a semi-urban environment. There is unlikely to be any ambient lighting within the vicinity of the building.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourse is Sirhowy River, approximately 1.1km to the east of the site at its nearest point. Additionally, Bryn Bach Parc lake lies approximately 200m to the south east of the site and Shon-Sheffrey's Reservoir lies approximately 1.1km to the north east of the site.

2.4 The site is situated within a semi-urban environment to the north west of the town of Tredegar. The site is immediately situated within an industrial area. To the east; north and west there is industrial land generally made up of factories; warehouses and vacant plots. Beyond the industrial estate to the east lies the village of Nantybwch and to the west, the village of Princetown. Immediately south of the A465 lies Parc Bryn Back and the towns of Rhydney lie to the south west and Tredegar to the south east. The wider landscape beyond these towns comprises open countryside

with moorland; fields and pockets of woodland. There is good ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the building is: **SO 1229 1049**

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviours. The survey methods employed can provide evidence for the potential presence of bats at the times when the site was visited. Although the methods follow best practice guidance and were carried out in such a way as to maximise the chances of detection, failure to detect the target species cannot be considered as definitive proof of their absence.

3.2 The report is solely concerned with bats in relation to this building. Trees and other buildings not mentioned directly have not been included in this report.

3.3 Bats use different roosts throughout the year. Bats hibernate in torpor for weeks at a time throughout the cold months, mainly underground in caves and in deep rot holes at the centre of large mature trees. Bats are habitual and can live upwards of twenty years. During the summer months they will normally return annually to the same roost, usually in attics of buildings to form maternity colonies. Outside the maternity season, a scoping survey can be limited as the majority of any bats using the structure as a summer roost may not be present. External evidence such as droppings and staining which can identify bat use may have been removed by the rain. Therefore this survey will evaluate potential for bat use, in addition to searching for evidence of bats.

3.4 Even though bats are habitual creatures they can still move to new roosts if more suitable. Therefore this report cannot predict the status of the structure in regard to bat occupancy in the future. This report should be acted upon as soon as practical. Natural Resources Wales will only accept survey data up to two years old from date of issue for licence applications, although some Local Planning Authorities will only accept survey data up to eighteen months old. If planning or building works are delayed, it is the responsibility of the client to discuss and gain approval from the *author* before work commences.

4.0 Legal Constraints

4.1 Bats, and any place a bat uses for breeding or shelter, either currently occupied or unoccupied are protected by European and British law, predominantly by **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**, which are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed from European directive into law in England and Wales.

4.2 In summary this law states that it is an offence to:

- **Deliberately capture or kill a bat**
- **Deliberately disturb a bat**
- **Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat**
- **Keep; transport; sell; exchange or offer for sale or exchange a living or dead bat or any part of a bat**

4.3 'Deliberately' may also be interpreted, as not intending to injure or kill a bat but having done so due to being insufficiently informed and unaware of the consequences of the action.

4.4 For a more comprehensive description and exact wording of the legislation please refer to:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>

4.5 Where there is a risk that a bat roost may be present, it is incumbent upon the owner to commission a specialist bat survey to identify bat roosts before any work commences. Maximum penalties for offences relating to disturbance to bats or their roosts can amount to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or fines of up to Level 5 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982/1991 (i.e. £5000 in April 2001) per roost or bat disturbed or killed, or to both.

4.6 If a bat roost is discovered, no work that could affect the roost can be undertaken until Natural Resources Wales grants a licence endorsing the work. A thorough method statement and adequate mitigation proposal will need to be submitted to support any licence application.

4.7 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts an onus onto responsible bodies such as Local Planning Authorities to not only preserve, but also to enhance biodiversity meaning that planning applications must offer an element of ecological gain as well as preserving any aspects of ecological importance.

5.0 General Information

5.1 Bats are unable to build roosts themselves but instead rely on both man made and naturally occurring features to provide suitable accommodation. Bats generally prefer older buildings built with traditional materials, as traditional building methods provide more opportunities for gaps and entrances to buildings. Traditional cut roofs are preferred to a roof with trusses. Bats also prefer to roost where the external roost area has access to sunlight during the day such as south facing roof elevations.

5.2 Bats can utilise the following features on a building; end tiles, barge boards, soffit, gable ends, porches, lead flashing, hanging tiles, ridge tiles, broken tiles, eaves, sash window frames, wood cladding, fascia boards, window sills and internal roof spaces and timbers. Although this list demonstrates the most popular roosting sites it is by no means definitive. Bats can use apertures as small as 10mm in diameter to gain access.

5.3 The U.K bat population is divided into two distinct families, Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae. In general, Rhinolophidae (Horseshoe) bats differ in their roosting requirements to Vespertilionidae (the remainder of UK bat species). Horseshoe bats prefer to roost in large areas such as internal attic spaces and hang in the open from the roof of the roost. They tend to roost in visible clusters to maintain the high temperatures that a maternity colony needs. Horseshoe bats also prefer free flight access and egress into the roosting area. Horseshoe bats tend to be more light averting to other UK bat species, and routinely fly around the internal roosting area to warm up before exiting. It is noted that Plecotus (Long Eared) bats share some of these preferences. Vesper bats are, on the whole, crevice dwelling bats who squeeze into small apertures to access the roost. These, like Horseshoe bats, will cluster in maternity colonies, but are normally hidden from view. Vesper bats, with the exception of Long Eared bats, do not require a large internal roost to fly around before exit. Long Eared bats, although part of the vesper family, are very light averting and will, on occasions share the roosting patterns of both Horseshoe and crevice dwelling species.

6.0 External Scoping Survey

6.1 The external scoping survey was undertaken on the **29th October 2024** in conditions of good natural light. All external aspects of the building were comprehensively evaluated for roost potential. Evidence was also sought for any staining or droppings which could suggest bat occupation.

6.2 The building was inspected for overt evidence of bat presence and occupation such as:

- Staining around the entry of roosting point caused by oils secreted by the bat into its fur
- Scratching on surfaces caused by the bat in the acts of take off and landing
- Bat droppings on walls; floors; roof voids; window sills or panes and barge boards
- Urine stains below a possible entrance site, within the entrance to a cavity or on timbers used for roosting
- Bats can produce chatter on warm evenings prior to leaving the roost. A heterodyne bat detector is used to help determine this
- Flies around the entrance or on the floor of possible roosts, which may be attracted to bat guano

6.3 **Due to the age and condition of the building, there were a limited number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and those that were available were deemed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. In general, the building appeared well sealed. Potential gaps were noted around the metal cladding. However, these gaps are considered to have limited suitability as bats could not gain purchase on the metal cladding to climb into the features. Given the metal construction of the roof, it is considered highly unlikely that bats could utilise any possible gaps for roosting purposes as they cannot gain purchase on such material.**

6.4 **No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any external features.**

6.5 **No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the scoping survey.**



7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 The internal scoping survey was undertaken on the **29th October 2024** by Hannah Evans (accredited agent S092780/2), an experienced bat ecologist with 5 years experience.

7.2 There was no internal attic space within the building. The building is open to the roof and comprises an open workshop area and wooden built offices.

7.3 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any internal features.





8.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

8.1 No direct evidence of bat use was identified during the scoping survey. All areas of the building were accessible during the site visit.

8.2 The building is located in an area with good ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

8.3 There is unlikely to be any ambient lighting within the vicinity of the building.

8.4 The building was assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats and offered a limited number of opportunities for bats to access and use the building. Given the metal roof line and cladding along the entire walls of the building, bats would be unable to cling to the metal and utilise any potential roost features within the building. The occasional use of the building by individual common bat species on an opportunistic basis cannot be ruled out. No further survey work is recommended in this instance.

8.5 The building does not offer significant hibernation potential for bats. The external walls were sound with no visible apertures for bats preventing access into the wall structure. When considering the absence of bat access points into the wall structure, the hibernation use of the building is considered to be limited.

8.6 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the scoping survey.

8.7 No bat activity surveys are recommended to establish the presence of bats within the building.

8.8 Following commencement of works and in the unlikely event that the contractor encounters any bats or evidence of bats during any works, then work must immediately stop and the bat worker summoned. If for any reason they cannot be contacted, advice must be sought from Natural Resources Wales, (Telephone Number 0300 065 3000). No works would recommence until a licence is issued by NRW sanctioning works going forward. The guidance note on finding bats found in the appendices must be followed.

8.9 There is potential to offer ecological gain for bats if the project proceeds. This would help satisfy the local planning authorities legal responsibility to preserve and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The creation of a bat roost for crevice dwelling bats can be incorporated into the new build element at very little expense and with no impact to the owners of the building. It is recommended that new roosts be created for crevice dwelling species of bats in the new build scheme and this should be added to the plans prior to submission for planning approval. Further ecological gain can be made by incorporating bird bricks into the new build design. Advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist in regard to the size, type and location of any proposed new roosting enhancements. Any new enhancements must not be directly illuminated and a dark corridor must be established allowing undisturbed access for any bat away from the site. If planning is granted then any ecological compensation/mitigation will be designed to maternity standards to ensure that there is no net biodiversity loss.

8.10 Proposed detailed architectural drawings are not currently available. Once available, further advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist in regard to the size, type and location of any proposed new ecological enhancements.

8.11 Once the new enhancements have been agreed between relevant parties, these must be added to the architectural drawings prior to submission of the Planning Application.

8.12 Any new enhancements must not be directly illuminated and a dark corridor must be established allowing undisturbed access for any bats away from the site.

Signed: *Richard Watkins* Date: October 2024

9.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Guidance Note

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs



The site in its immediate environment.



The site in its wider environment offering good ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference SO 1229 1049



Appendix 3 Guidance Note

Guidance Note (Important information in the unlikely event that bats are discovered)

Where any building or demolition work is to commence, all contractors should remain vigilant at all times during the course of the works, looking for signs that bats are present or that bats have formerly occupied the building. Whilst this survey has been undertaken and no visible evidence of bats found within the building, the possibility of a bat or bats being present cannot be absolutely ruled out. In the extremely unlikely event that bats are discovered during the works, then work must **stop** as soon as it is safe to do so, The bat worker must be contacted immediately and Natural Resources Wales informed in order for a licence to be granted to complete the works. No works will be permitted until such time a license is approved.

If in the unlikely event a roost is accidentally opened up, any loose bats should be returned to the roost and apertures closed to prevent their escape until they can be examined for injury by a bat worker. Dead bats should be retained. Bats are very fragile and should be handled by a professional, and unless absolutely necessary should not to be approached and disturbed. However, where a bat is clearly injured and distressed, the contractor should carefully collect them and place in a light proof box. Gloves must be worn when handling bats*

In the Event of a Bats being discovered the bat worker must be contacted immediately that it is safe to do so on 07866461726

If the bat worker is not available, Natural Resources Wales must be contacted on 0300 065 3000

*Bats can potentially carry European Bat Lyssa Virus (EBLV) which is a strain of rabies virus that is found in some bat species although extremely uncommon, a potential risk occurs; therefore, all bats must be handled with thick gloves.