



METAL BOX GARAGE

EC2023 016

Bat Emergence Survey Report

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Organisation	Countryside and Wildlife Team, Neath Port Talbot CBC

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Item	Details
Report title	Metal Box Garage, Miland Road – Bat Emergence Survey Report
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Declaration

The information, advice and opinions in this report have been prepared in accordance with the CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct. The report presents a reasonable and true representation of the ecological situation identified through the information and survey evidence available at the time of preparation.

This assessment is a snapshot in time. Ecological conditions can change, and further advice or re-assessment may be required if the proposed works are delayed, if the condition of the building changes, or if new evidence of bats becomes available.

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Contents

Declaration	2
Contents	3
Executive summary	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background and purpose	5
1.2 Survey objectives	5
1.3 Report scope	5
2. Site and building description	5
2.1 Site context	5
2.2 Building description	6
2.3 Proposed works	6
3. Relevant legislation and planning context	6
4. Methodology	6
4.1 Preliminary roost potential	6
4.2 Emergence survey approach	6
4.3 Data interpretation	7
4.4 Limitations	7
5. Results	8
5.1 Survey summary	8
5.2 Other observations	8
6. Evaluation and impact assessment	8
6.1 Roost assessment	8
6.2 Likely effects of demolition	8
6.3 Lighting	8
7. Recommendations and method statement	9
7.1 Demolition	9
7.2 Precautionary working method statement	9
7.3 Nesting birds and feral pigeons	9
7.4 Biodiversity enhancements	9
8. References	10
Appendix A – Survey information schedule	11

Executive summary

Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken at the Metal Box Garage, Miland Road, on 6 August 2026 and 18 September 2026 to determine whether the building supported a bat roost and to inform the proposed demolition.

The building had previously been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. Potential roost features comprised gaps beneath the asbestos-cement roof sheets and louvres within circular openings at each end of the building.

No bats were observed emerging from or re-entering the building during either survey. Five common pipistrelle passes were recorded during the first survey, with bats commuting or foraging across the site from the canal corridor. A single common pipistrelle flew over the site from the canal during the second survey. No other bat activity was recorded.

On the evidence available, no bat roost was identified and bats do not present a constraint to demolition. A precautionary working method statement is nevertheless recommended. If a bat is found at any stage, works must stop in the immediate area and the project ecologist must be contacted for advice before works recommence. Bat and bird boxes should also be installed at suitable locations within the site as biodiversity enhancements.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose

NPT Wildlife was commissioned to undertake bat emergence surveys of the Metal Box Garage, Miland Road, in relation to the proposed demolition of the building. This report provides the survey methods, results, assessment and recommendations required to inform the planning process.

1.2 Survey objectives

- Determine whether bats were emerging from or re-entering the building.
- Record bat species and activity associated with the building and immediate site.
- Assess whether demolition could affect a bat roost.
- Set out proportionate avoidance, precautionary and enhancement measures.

1.3 Report scope

This report relates to the bat emergence surveys only. Nesting feral pigeons were also recorded inside the building and are being dealt with separately.

2. Site and building description

2.1 Site context



Figure 1 Location of the Metal Box Garage, Miland Road. The garage is shown within red-line.

The garage is situated within a developed setting that includes hardstanding and car parking. A canal lies nearby and provides a linear habitat corridor used by bats for commuting and foraging. At night, the building and surrounding area are subject to substantial artificial illumination from several bright street-light columns positioned within the car park and around the garage.

2.2 Building description

The surveyed structure is a metal-clad garage with a corrugated asbestos-cement sheet roof. Circular openings are present at both ends of the building and contain louvres. Gaps occur beneath sections of the roof sheets. These features provide potential access to sheltered areas at the roof and wall junctions and were the principal features considered capable of supporting roosting bats.

The internal space is occupied by a large number of feral pigeons. The combination of the identified access features and sheltered roof-edge locations resulted in the building being assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats, and two emergence surveys were therefore undertaken.

2.3 Proposed works

The proposed works comprise complete demolition of the garage building. No development drawings are required for this assessment because the structure is to be fully demolished.

3. Relevant legislation and planning context

All species of bat and their breeding sites and resting places are protected in Wales under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Bats also receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, among other matters, to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat, deliberately disturb a bat in circumstances specified by the legislation, or damage or destroy a bat breeding site or resting place.

Planning decisions in Wales should take biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into account. Proposals should follow the step-wise approach by seeking to avoid impacts first, then minimise, mitigate and, where necessary, compensate for remaining impacts, while providing enhancement appropriate to the development and site context.

The legal position applies even where surveys have not identified a roost. If a bat is discovered during works, appropriate action must be taken immediately and works must not continue in a way that risks harm or an offence.

4. Methodology

4.1 Preliminary roost potential

The building was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats based on the presence of gaps beneath the roof sheets and louvres associated with the circular openings at either end. Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken to investigate likely absence or confirm presence of a roost.

4.2 Emergence survey approach

The surveys were designed with reference to Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Survey coverage focused on the identified potential access and roost features and on the roof perimeter.

Three thermal imaging cameras were positioned to cover the whole building. The camera-position plan shows the thermal camera locations as blue dots with red arrows indicating the direction of view, and the surveyor position as a green dot. Three cameras were necessary because the site geometry and awkward viewing angles prevented reliable coverage from fewer positions. Two Anabat Scout detectors were used to record bat calls and support species identification and interpretation of activity. The detectors were positioned at either end of the building to provide full acoustic coverage.



Figure 2 Survey coverage plan showing thermal camera positions and viewing directions, surveyor position and acoustic detector coverage.

Due to the site layout and localised safety considerations, the surveyors remained together throughout the surveys. They moved around the building at intervals and changed position during the survey period to check different elevations directly. Thermal footage was reviewed the following day to confirm that no bats had emerged from any elevation during periods when the surveyors were not positioned at that elevation.

Survey	Date	Equipment and coverage
1	6 August 2026	Three thermal imaging cameras; two Anabat Scout detectors; full-building coverage with cameras
2	18 September 2026	Three thermal imaging cameras; two Anabat Scout detectors; full-building coverage with cameras

4.3 Data interpretation

Thermal observations and acoustic records were considered together to distinguish emergence or re-entry behaviour from bats travelling through or foraging within the wider site. Particular attention was given to bats approaching, leaving, entering, circling or otherwise interacting with identified building features.

4.4 Limitations

The garage and surrounding car park were brightly lit during the surveys, which is relevant because some bat species avoid well-lit areas. This may have reduced general bat activity around the building, but the surveys still allowed the potential roost features to be viewed and no bats were seen emerging from or returning to the garage.

For safety reasons, the surveyors remained together rather than being stationed separately around the building. They moved around the garage at intervals during the survey, and the thermal camera footage was reviewed afterwards to check the elevations not being watched directly by the surveyors at each point. This confirmed that no bat emergence was missed.

5. Results

5.1 Survey summary

Date	Bat activity recorded	Building interaction / emergence
6 August 2026	Five common pipistrelle passes. Bats approached from the canal and were observed commuting and/or foraging straight across the site.	No emergence, re-entry or other interaction with the garage was observed.
18 September 2026	One common pipistrelle flew over the site from the canal. No other bat activity was recorded.	No emergence, re-entry or other interaction with the garage was observed.

5.2 Other observations

- A large number of feral pigeons occupied the interior of the building.
- Several bright street-light columns illuminated the car park, the building and its immediate surroundings after dark.
- Activity recorded during both surveys was associated with bats travelling from the direction of the canal corridor and crossing the site.

6. Evaluation and impact assessment

6.1 Roost assessment

No bats were observed emerging from or re-entering the garage during either survey, and no behaviour indicating use of the potential roof-edge or louvre features was recorded. The activity consisted of low numbers of common pipistrelle passes associated with the nearby canal corridor and movement across the site.

Based on the two survey results, no bat roost was identified within the Metal Box Garage. The building is therefore assessed as not presenting a constraint to the proposed demolition on the evidence available at the time of survey.

6.2 Likely effects of demolition

As no roost was identified, demolition is not expected to result in the loss of a confirmed bat roost. A European Protected Species licence for bats is not required. This conclusion must be reviewed if the scheme changes, works are substantially delayed, the building deteriorates or new evidence of bats is found.

6.3 Lighting

Existing night-time illumination around the garage is high. Replacement or additional lighting should avoid unnecessary illumination of the canal corridor and any new bat boxes. Lighting should be directed only where required, use the lowest practicable output and be controlled to prevent spill onto retained or newly created habitat features.

7. Recommendations and method statement

7.1 Demolition

There are no identified constraints to demolition arising from a bat roost, subject to implementation of the precautionary method below and continued legal compliance.

7.2 Precautionary working method statement

1. Prior to demolition, the site manager must brief all operatives on the possibility of encountering bats, the protected status of bats and the actions required if one is found.
2. Demolition should proceed carefully around the asbestos-cement roof sheets, louvres and roof-edge gaps so that concealed areas are exposed progressively rather than through uncontrolled collapse.
3. If a bat is found or suspected at any time, all work must stop immediately in the affected area. The bat must not be disturbed, covered or trapped.
4. The project ecologist, must be contacted immediately for advice. Work in the affected area must not restart until ecological advice has been provided and NRW consulted.

7.3 Nesting birds and feral pigeons

The building contains numerous feral pigeons. This situation is being dealt with independently of the bat surveys.

7.4 Biodiversity enhancements

Biodiversity enhancements should be included as part of the scheme. The exact locations should be agreed with the project ecologist so the boxes are placed somewhere suitable and are not directly lit.

- Install a minimum of two durable woodcrete crevice-dwelling bat boxes.
- Install a minimum of two durable woodcrete bird boxes. Sparrow terraces, or similar, would be suitable where there is an appropriate location.
- Woodcrete boxes are recommended as they are longer lasting and provide better protection from decay and predation than lightweight timber boxes.

8. References

Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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

Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Appendix A – Survey information schedule

The table below identifies information that should be completed from the original field records prior to formal issue.

Field	6 August 2026	18 September 2026
Survey type	Dusk emergence	Dusk emergence
Surveyors	Megan Price and Rose Revera	Megan Price and Marie Fowler
Start / end time	20:40 to 22:25	19:05 to 21:00
Sunset time	20:55	19:22
Temperature	18°C at start; 15°C at finish	15°C at start; 15°C at finish
Cloud cover	10%	75%
Wind	Slight breeze	Slight breeze
Precipitation	None	None
Thermal cameras	3	3
Anabat Scout detectors	2	2
Outcome	No emergence or re-entry	No emergence or re-entry