

**8 WIND STREET
NEATH****BAT & OWL SURVEY****August 2018- May 2019**

No internal or external evidence of bat use was found; no “likely” roost sites were identified; no emergence (or entry) was seen at direct observation watches; the surveyors have no expectation of bat-roost use, at any time of year.

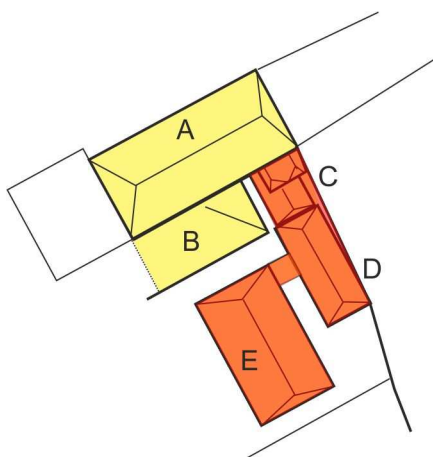
No bat-related constraint to the proposed works is identified.

**8 WIND STREET
NEATH****BAT & OWL SURVEY
August 2018- May 2019****1 survey at the request of-**

Mr Jonathan Morris, Project Director, Architecture/Structures Neath Port Talbot CBC.

2 proposed works

Demolition of extensions (C-D-E) at the rear of a Listed building (A-B) -

**3 site: name/grid ref**

8 Wind Street, Neath
SS753976

4 nature & date of survey

23rd May 2019- assessment of bat-use *via* internal & external search
07th August 2018- external search & roost-emergence/activity watch/survey
28th August 2018- roost-emergence/activity watch/survey

5 objectives

- to assess the extent of any bat or other protected species use of the buildings
- to identify any constraints consequent upon the discovery of bats, or other protected species, in the buildings.

6 surveyors

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Rob Colley: scientific/conservation bat licence 1999-, 75096:OTH:CSAB:2017/ SO86091/1

Rob Taylor: scientific/conservation licence, 1995-

Len Moran: named agent, 75096:OTH:CSAB:2017/ SO86091/1

7 ecology & legal status

7.1 Different bat species have different life-cycle strategies but, in general, each requires the following features:

- hibernation roost sites, where stable winter temperatures allow a period of winter torpor (e.g. underground sites such as caves and mines, or crevices and hollows in mature standing trees)
 - nursery roost sites, where females gather in the spring/early summer to give birth and rear their single offspring (e.g. roof spaces, crevices and hollows in mature standing trees)
 - roost sites for individual, or small congregations of, males during spring-autumn (e.g. roof spaces, or crevices and hollows in mature standing trees)
 - an insect-productive (usually ecologically diverse) feeding environment
- additionally, there is a poorly understood need for social-gathering sites at certain times of the year (e.g. the autumn mating season) for some, or all, species.

Most, if not all, British bat species are believed to be in decline; main threats to bat populations can be summarised as:

- the loss of invertebrate-rich foraging areas (eg. woodland, hedgerows, ponds)
- the loss of nursery and hibernation roosts (eg. caves and mines, roof spaces, large standing trees)
- the effects of toxic chemicals (eg. timber preservatives in roof-space roosts, agricultural insecticides which reduce prey species).

7.2 All British bats, and their roosts (occupied or not) are protected by i)) **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010** (the "Habitats Regs"); this legislation implements the EC Habitats and Species Directive in the UK, and ii) the **Wildlife and Countryside Act** (as amended by the **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**) Schedule 5.

Developments which compromise the protection afforded to a European Protected Species require **Natural Resources Wales licence** (Habitats Regs). The granting of licence will be conditional on i) an agreed "works methodology", designed to minimise impact on the bat(s), ii) agreed "mitigation", to ensure the provision of alternative roost potential at/near the development. Where planning permission is sought, the LPA will need to know, at application stage, what methodology/mitigation is being proposed: this is to i) avoid changes in planning designs, post pp, ii) ensure that LPAs comply with reg 3(4) of the Habs Regs, and iii) allow the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (NRW)) to properly advise the LPA.

These protections can be summarised as prohibiting- taking, killing or injuring a bat; damaging or destroying a roost (occupied or not); obstructing access to a roost; disturbing in-roost bats.

The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006/**Environment (Wales) Act 2016** requires all public authorities/bodies to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity- eg. when considering planning applications. There is a particular requirement to address those species and habitats targetted by the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**, in pursuance of which the Welsh Gov't have listed Common and Soprano pipistrelles, Noctule, Brown long eared, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe, Barbastelle and Bechstein bats at Section 42: Species of Principal Importance (NERC)/**section 7 (EWA)** for Conservation of Biological Diversity. Implementation of this responsibility varies across authorities but, typically, some LPAs ask for "bat accommodation" as a routine req't, and some require survey data to be passed to a Local Records Office.

8 methods

Survey methodologies are implemented as appropriate, based on experienced surveyors' assessment of the features at each site and with reference to the advice in ***Bat Surveys: Good practice guidelines*** (Bat Conservation Trust, 2007/12/14) & ***Bat Workers' Manual 3rd ed.*** (JNCC 2004).

building assessment: Daytime survey of the building exteriors was made before the first evening watch, searching for possible bat entry/exit and roosting points and for evidence (principally faeces) of bat use of the building; internal search was made of all areas at a subsequent daytime visit.

emergence watches: On two summer dates, over the period during which bats can be expected to leave their roosts, direct observation was made of the building exteriors to monitor any bat movement in or out. Heterodyne (Pettersson D200 and frequency-division (Anabat SDI/II+ ZCAIM & CF recorder; Anabat Express) bat detectors were used by observers throughout this period, to assist species detection/identification.

At each date, observers were positioned to allow detection of any bat movement from-, to-, or over- the building. All parts of the building were directly observed on each date.

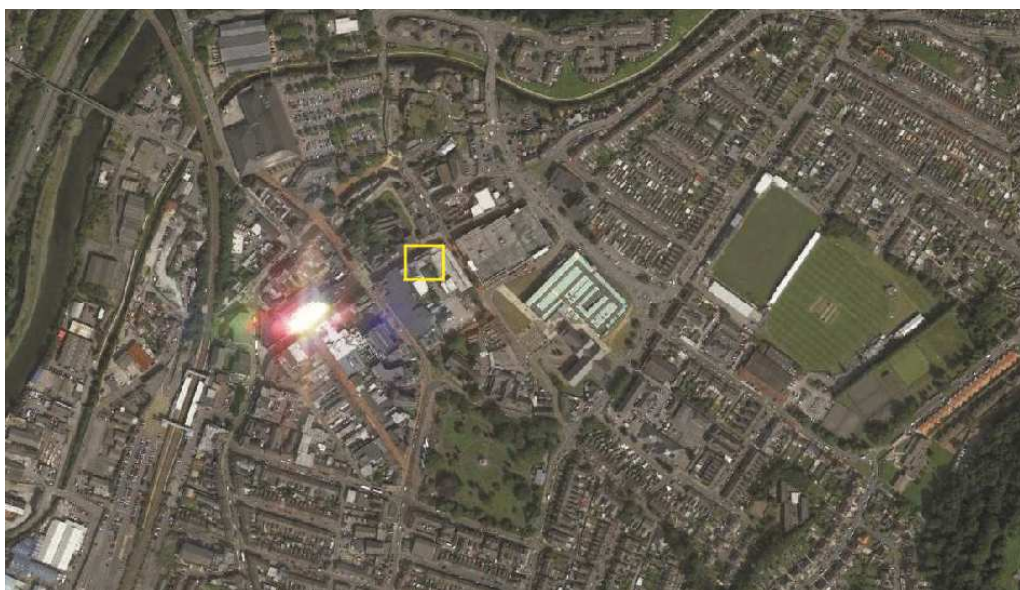
DNA genotyping: **n/a** (Found-at-site bat-guano which surveyors cannot assign to a bat species are submitted to Dr Robin G Allaby, University of Warwick, for species ID via genotyping.

overnight (dusk-dawn) remote data recording: **n/a** (At sites where initial investigation suggests that it is appropriate, Anabat (or Songmeter) detector-recorder equipment is left *in-situ* to indicate species identification and patterns-of-use at the site.)

methodology/mitigation measures, where appropriate, are based on the surveyors' experience of similar situations, with reference to ***Bat Mitigation Guidelines*** (English Nature, 2004) & ***Bat Workers' Manual 3rd ed.*** (JNCC 2004).

9 results

9.1 site location, adjacent habitat:



The site is at Neath town centre, with shops/pedestrian precinct/roads to all sides. There is some scattered buddleia/*Salix* scrub at the edges of parking/service yards at the rear of the survey building and the adjacent (large) stores/shops

The River Neath and the Neath canal, 200-400m to-west, Victoria Gardens and churchyard trees, 100m to-south, give foraging opportunity for generalist opportunist species but the immediate surrounds of the building are entirely urbanised.

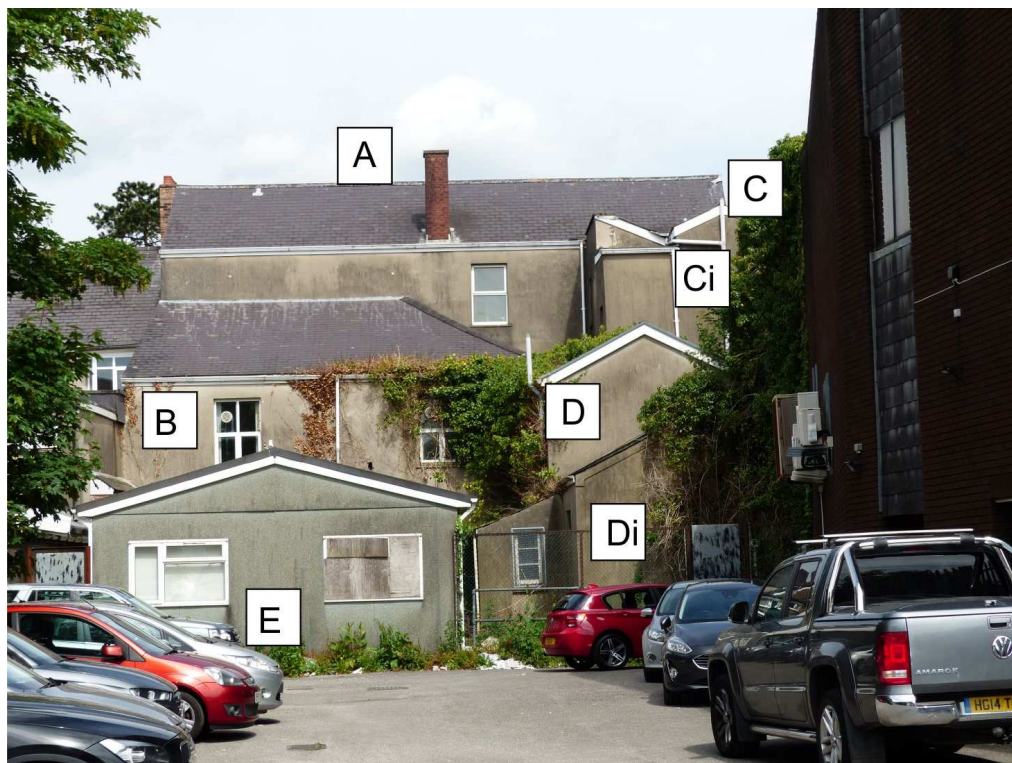
Previous activity surveys at the area (eg. former NPTCBC offices, housing at Gnoll Park Rd, Victoria Gardens, St David's Church: all, Rob Colley *et al*) have all recorded single-animal pipistrelle activity, with frequent Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* over-town flight; the woodland/waterside spp. known to roost/forage at the nearby (<1km) Gnoll Park Grounds are not expected to occur within the town centre.

9.2 Buildings: general description; potential bat access points; evidence of bat presence:

The three storey main part of the building (A) and a rear two storey section (C) are Listed, and are to be retained as-is.

The street-fronting main section (A) is beyond direct impact from the proposed works but removal of the contiguous rear section C has the potential to *disturb* or *obstruct* any bat use of the rear/south east corner of the roof; the rear section (C) is beyond impact from the proposed works. To address the possibility of *disturbance*, the survey included each of these areas.

All masonry is in good repair, with no potential for bat-access intra-masonry; doors and windows are all tight-sealed. Internally, there is no bat interest at any of the (former office) rooms, all of which are internally interconnected.



A: the three-storey building's (north west) frontage is dressed masonry, with a walltop stone cornice above;

At each side's contiguous shop frontages: the west side is tight sealed to (Superdrug) same-height walls; at the east side, a part open, vertical, expansion joint to the (Boots) same-height brickwork gives some possibility of bat-access (no evidence of use). The pitched slate roof appears to be in good repair, with no (visible) bat-access opportunity but from-ground sight of the front pitch is constrained. Rear walltops are largely beyond useful from-ground examination: potential bat-access behind fascias is therefore presumed (but not seen).

A single attic space extends over: roof timbers are large-frame, simple and tight jointed, with a ridgeboard; there is bituminised felt sarking throughout, with a small amount of timber sarking below valleys at a north side small dormer; there is no insulation at the l&p floor; the masonry (wall) at the east gable (to Boots) is too open/exposed for bat use.

In-attic guano evidences historical use by pigeons (and Jackdaw?) but no current use was seen; no evidence of bat use was found.

B: The two storey rear section B has an asymmetrical lean-to slate roof; roof-tie to the main building A is tight sealed; the single space attic (with a remnant brick chimney stack at centre-rear part-dividing) has simple rafters, bit. felt sarking and no floor insulation; no bat evidence was found.

C: A three storey rear extension, to be removed. The northern part of the (small) roof has two shallow monopitches, each angled inward; a smaller to-south, similar height roof (Ci) is very shallowly ridged. A l&p floored walk/crawl in attic space (formerly storage cuddy) under these roofs has (torn/damaged) bit.felt sarking below slate roof cladding and no floor insulation: no evidence of bat use was found.

D: A two storey section; (ivy covered) pitched roof; single space roof void, bit.felt sarked, above a suspended (polystyrene) ceiling with fg floor insulation- direct access not possible and examination restricted to visual search *via* missing ceiling tile- no evidence of bat use seen.

Di: a single storey continuation to D, and a link corridor to E: no potential bat interest identified.

E: a single storey pre-fab; good repair/sealed concrete panel walls, doors/windows intact; cement tile pitched roof directly onto ply panel sarking which completely seals the under roof; metal truss framings, gf insulation at floor; no evidence of bat use, and no potential bat-access points visible at (external) tight-sealed walltops or roof.

No evidence of bat (or owl) use was found, internally or externally; no potential bat roost sites were identified but felt (& ply) sarking at all roofs does give “roofskins” that are beyond direct examination.

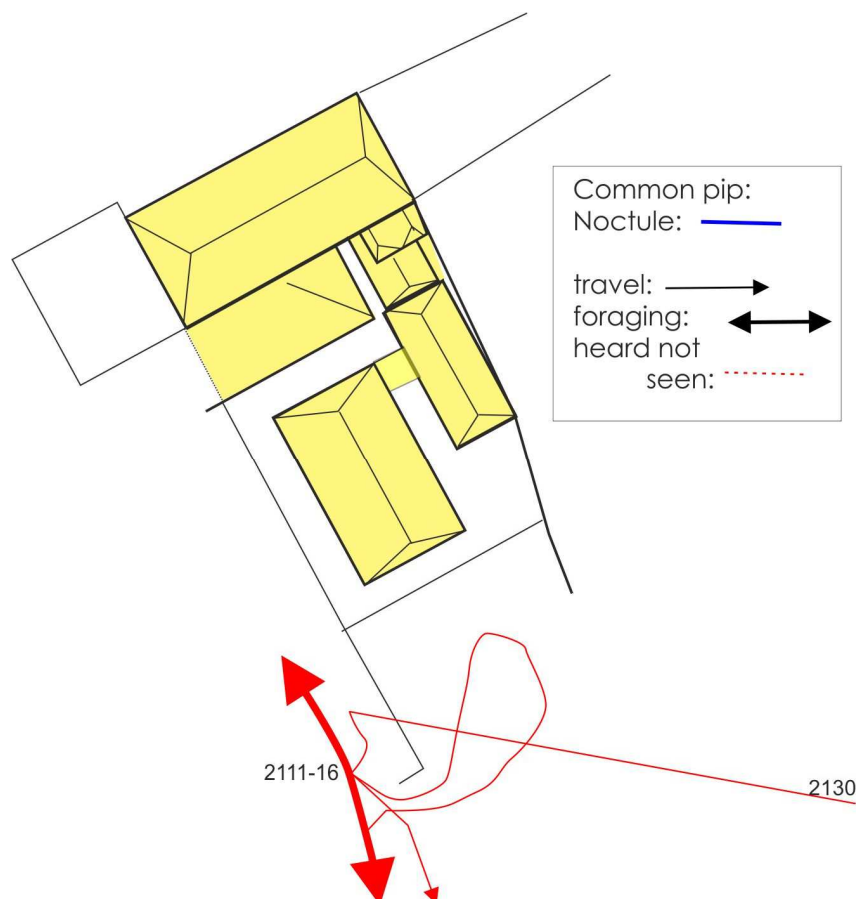
9.3 emergence watches:

At two dates, observers were positioned to allow detection of any bat movement from-, to- or across- the building; all areas were directly observed at each date.

Common pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bats were seen/heard at the site..

7th August 2018
 2035-2150
 start temp. 18°C
 5% cloud; wind fc2 sw

Common pipistrelle: x1 “arrived” at the to-east “Argos yard”, 2111, from the south, & flew/fed here (buddleia scrub at yard edge) c.5mins; x1, from east, crossed rear yard & briefly (<1min) flew at the Argos yard, 2130, before leaving to-south.

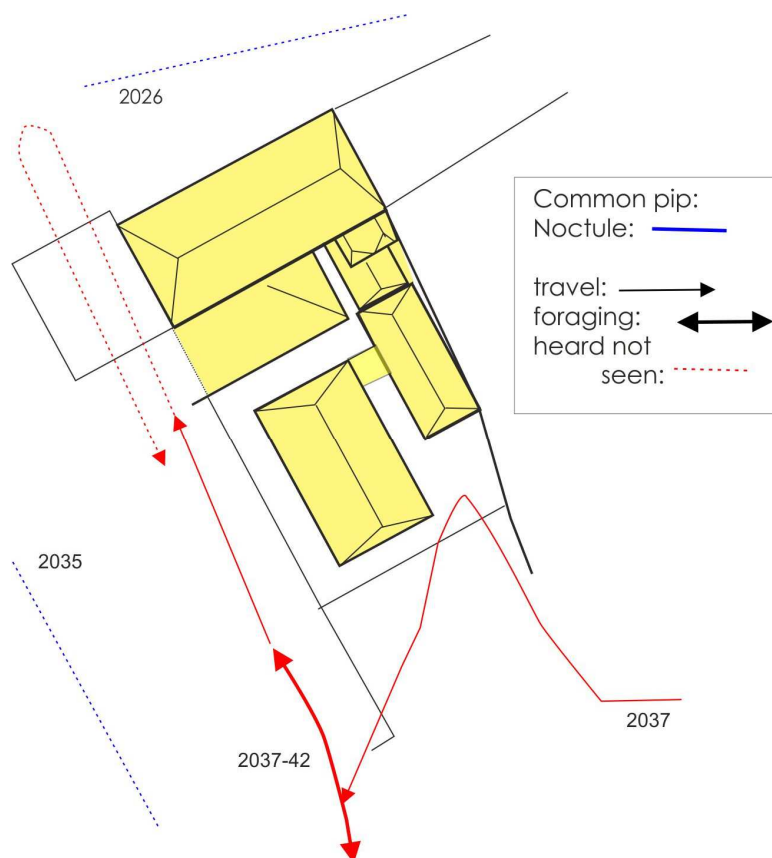


No bats emerged from (or entered) the survey building; no other bats were seen/heard.

28th August 2018
 1940-2110
 start temp. 15°C
 90% cloud; no wind

Common pipistrelle: x1 across rear of site, from east, 2037, flew/fed at Argos yard 2037-42, with i) one foray over scrub at the rear of the survey building, and ii) one off-site foray to-north before returning <1min.

Noctule: x1 heard not seen, to north, 2026; x1 heard not seen, to east, 2035.



No bats emerged from (or entered) the survey building; no other bats were seen/heard.

9.4 overnight (dusk-dawn) remote data recording: n/a

9.5 DNA genotyping: n/a

9.6 other-season use- assessment: no “likely” winter-roost sites were identified.

9.8 evidence of owl use: none

10 **summary:**

No internal or external evidence of bat use was found; no “likely” roost sites were identified; no emergence (or entry) was seen at direct observation watches; the surveyors have no expectation of bat-roost use, at any time of year.

No bat-related constraint to the proposed works is identified.

Rob Colley
May 2019