

BAT SURVEY REPORT
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Prepared for:

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This bat survey report details the findings of 2 dusk emergence and 1 dawn return bat surveys undertaken at, 24 Ormes Rd, Skewen, Neath during September 2019.

The rear site boundary is being used by Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats for commuting and foraging . During all the surveys undertaken there was continuous foraging activity along the woodland edge at the rear of the site. there is no evidence to suggest that the building for proposed development is being used by roosting bats.

The emergence surveys were undertaken on the 05/09/19 & 17/09/19 the dawn return survey 26/09/19.

During the emergence survey, no bats were observed emerging from the building although there was bat activity along the woodland edge at the rear of the site. During the emergence surveys there were regular passes observed and recorded from Common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. These bats were present when the surveys ended which would suggest that they would forage along the woodland edge for most of the night

During the dawn return survey, a similar level of activity and species of bats Were observed and recorded, this reflects the activity during the emergence surveys and all bat observed did not return to the buildings on site

There are no constraints to the redevelopment of the site from the presence of bats.

Artificial Lighting

All bat species are affected by artificial light to a greater or lesser extent. Their emergence time may be delayed if exit points are lit or they may no longer enter the Site.

This can have an impact upon their foraging success. Consideration will therefore be given to the level of external lighting around the Site. If lighting is considered necessary, installation of security or other external lighting will be:

Located with consideration for bats and other nocturnal species, any lights will be pointed towards the ground and not to the surrounding areas and should be no higher than 3 metres from the ground, and will be confined only to areas where there is access or particular security considerations and where health and safety issues need to be considered. Light spill into the adjacent areas should be prevented.

It is proposed to provide 2No Schwegler RF1 bat tubes or similar built into the new extension on side and rear elevation . These will be incorporated into detailed drawings when available.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the findings of bat survey work carried out at No 24 Ormes Rd, Skewen, Neath, SA106SP . Grid Ref SS722976. These surveys were carried out at the request of Mrs Jill Howells by N. Price of EWS. The site surveyed comprises of a detached Bungalow.

This report has been commissioned in response to a request from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in relation to proposed redevelopment of the site.

Survey site marked below



3.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the survey were to obtain sufficient data to:-

1. Identify potential bat activity levels and use of building(s) on site e.g. roosting within the building(s) identified and/or foraging in and around the surrounding area.
2. Identify any other potential constraints to redevelopment on the site from other species/habitats present.
3. Assess whether the proposed redevelopment of the building(s) on site would be likely to have an impact upon those species, if present.
4. Make recommendations for further survey work (if necessary) to establish the seasonal use of the site and to help determine the species status, if present; and
5. Recommend a mitigation strategy (where possible) for those habitats/species present that pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

4.0 SPECIAL LEGAL STATUS

Bats Chiroptera

All bats are European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy a bat roost, or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb a bat. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) issues EPS licenses in Wales.

All British bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (further amended 2017) known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

Under the Habitats Directive, it is an offence if you:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS,
 - Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species,
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.
- Disturbance is defined as that which is likely:
1. To impair their ability –
 - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 2. To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Defra and the Welsh Government publish a joint guidance document on the interpretation of the offences relating to disturbance, and to damage and destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

There are other offences relating to possession, transport and sale.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended 2017) makes it illegal:

- To be in possession of, or to control
- To transport
- To sell or exchange, or
- To offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead EPS which has been taken from the wild, or any derivative

Another international agreement is the Implementation in the Community of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES aims to regulate international trade in species which are endangered, or which may become endangered if over exploited. It lists species in three Appendices, according to the level of protection they need.

Licensing

NRW issues licenses under Regulation 53 of the Habitats Regulations. NRW will issue a license for specific purposes stated in the Regulations, if the following three tests are met:

- the purpose of the work meets one of those listed in the Habitats Regulations (see below).
- that there is no satisfactory alternative.
- that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range.

Licensing purposes

The Habitats Regulations permits licenses to be issued for a specific set of purposes including:

- include preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.
- scientific and educational purposes,
- ringing or marking
- conserving wild animals

The introduction of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 has removed the defence of killing or injuring a protected species during a lawful operation, thus even in an instance where planning permission is granted, the presence of bats must be considered and mitigated for prior to commencement of works. Under the above regulations, an NRW licence can only be given if three tests are satisfied:

- 1.** The action proposed is in the interest of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment.
- 2.** That there is not a satisfactory alternative.
- 3.** That the action proposed will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Failure to satisfy the regulations and obtain an EPSL where required is likely to result in prosecution and can lead to severe fines of up to £5000 per bat and possible imprisonment. Eight species of bat are listed under section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2106). Section 7 of the Act provides a list of living organisms of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This is a list of species considered at threat within Wales and in need of conservation management to maintain and enhance population numbers. A duty is placed on the Local Authority by the Welsh Assembly Government to maintain and enhance populations of species listed in Section 7.

TAN 5

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5, Nature Conservation and Planning, provides advice on how the planning system should contribute to biodiversity protection and enhancement. TAN 5 recognises the importance of biodiversity and the enjoyment of it. TAN 5 requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) to protect and enhance biodiversity during the planning process and to encourage sustainable developments. It also requires LPA's to ensure that protected Sites are properly accounted for within the planning system.

Nesting Birds

All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected in law. It is an offence to deliberately take, kill or injure any wild bird or to take, damage, or destroy any nest or egg of any wild bird under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981) (as amended) (this applies to birds whilst building a nest and/or near a nest containing eggs and/or young).

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Field Survey

Internal and external building assessment surveys were carried out on the building. These internal and external surveys assessed the structure of the building with regards to suitability for roosting bats.

Table 1 - Survey personnel used

Surveyor	Surveys	Experience
Neil Price	Internal/External, Emergence, Dawn	Licensed bat worker
Carol Price	External, Emergence	Assistant

Externally the building was surveyed, with the aid of binoculars where necessary, for evidence of access points and droppings, grease marks and urine staining. The buildings were examined in order to identify features that are favoured by bats as roosting sites, including pitched roofs with a void/loft, behind fascia boards and soffits, in and through gaps around windows and hanging tiles or weatherboarding. Any potential access points are recorded, along with any external physical evidence of use by roosting bats, such as urine staining and/or droppings around access points, on windows and on window ledges. This involved recording the location of any suitable roost locations, and associated access points.

Internal evidence of roosting bats such as droppings, staining, scratch marks and live or dead bats were also recorded, as well as the physical structure of the roof, any suitable access points and other features of note.

5.2 Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry Surveys

In accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins, J. 2016), the building was assessed as high potential to support bat roosts.

The dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the 5 September 2019 and 17 September 2019, a dawn return survey was undertaken on the 26 September 2019 in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset, when it was considered

that all bat species would have emerged. The dawn survey began 2.5 hrs before sunrise (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004)).

Two surveyors were used, positioned at opposite ends so that they had a clear view of the building. Each surveyor was equipped with an SSF Bat 2 detector, a Pettersson D240X heterodyne detector and/or an Echometer Touch pro detector and iPad. Notes were made of bat activity to assist with further analysis back in the office using AnalookW computer software to confirm field identification, (Russ 2012) was used as a reference when analysing the sonograms. Although the surveys were undertaken late in the season the levels of activity and species recorded represents similar levels that have been recorded by the surveys at adjacent sites

5.3 Survey Constraints

There were no constraints to the survey as: -

- Suitable bat survey weather conditions are considered to be when the ambient air temperature exceeds 10°C and when there is little/no wind or rain.
- The survey was carried out within the summer breeding season in optimal weather conditions.

6.0 RESULTS

6.2 Internal and External Survey

Internal and external surveys were carried out on the building on the 2nd of April 2020. The survey look for evidence of bat presence such as live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, clean cobweb free timbers, crevices and holes and characteristic urine staining and/or grease marks.

The features of the building are also recorded such as wall construction, roof structure and features as these could provide possible bat roosting sites.

It was not possible to access the roof void due to the condition of the structure . However large areas of ceiling were missing and it was possible to view large areas of the roof void.

The results for these surveys are shown in table 2.

6.3 Dusk Emergence Survey

Two dusk emergence surveys were carried out on the 05/09/2019 and 17/09/2019. There were no weather or seasonal constraints and the summarised

During the dusk emergence surveys, no bats were observed emerging from the building being surveyed. bats were recorded foraging and commuting along boundaries the site.

6.4 Dawn Re-entry Survey

A dawn return survey was undertaken on the 26/09/2019, The survey started at 05.00 and ended at 07.30 One species of bats were observed and recorded foraging and commuting along site boundaries. No bats were observed returning to the building being surveyed.

Bat flight lines are show in fig 1

Table2. Results of internal and external survey/s of building.

Figure 1 Building Code	Building construction details	Structural features present						Other structural features of note	Potential bat access points	Internal features
		Gables	Barge boards	Soffit Boards	Fascia Boards	Flashing	Roof void			
Detached Bungalow	Single storey building block with cavity , concrete tile roof with underfelt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	.gaps in roof tiles and ridge tiles structural cracks in walls	Multiple gaps in the structure due to structural failure of the building	

Bat flight lines Fig 1

Fig 1



—— Bat flight lines Common/ Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctul

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Bats

The rear site boundary is being used by Common Pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Noctule bats for commuting and foraging . During all the surveys undertaken there was continuous foraging activity along the woodland edge at the rear of the site. there is no evidence to suggest that the building

7.2 Nesting Birds

Should any works to the building be planned within the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) a further assessment for the presence of nesting birds should be carried out prior to works. This would involve a suitably experienced ecologist carrying out visual observation of the buildings to identify any bird nesting behaviour. Without it, development works may result in an offence being committed under the relevant legislation.

If an occupied nest and/or a nest under construction is found, the nest site must be left undisturbed until the chicks have fledged, and/or the nest is abandoned. This again will need to be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist.

7.3 Barn Owl

No evidence of owls was found at the property being surveyed.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the survey results, there appears to be no constraints on the proposed extension . There should be no adverse effect on the bats by the proposed works on this site.

Due to the nomadic nature of bats, care should be taken during the proposed demolition works as there is a possibility that bats could be encountered during the work. If this happens work should stop, and advice be sought from Natural Resources Wales or a suitably qualified bat ecologist.

References

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN – 13 978-1-872745-96-1
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P., (2004). *The Bat Worker's Manual*, 3rd Edition, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
- Jon Russ (2012) British bat Calls. A Guide to Species Identification. Pelagic Publishing.

Appendix A

Photographs

Front elevation





Rear & Side Elevations



Rear Elevation



Internal views
&
Roof void



