

Bat Survey Report

for

Ysgol Cwmgors, Cwmgors, Ammanford



Project data

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1 Summary

1.1 Proposed Development

- 1.1.1 This report has been written to support a planning application to Neath Port Talbot Council for the change of use of a former primary school to a community enterprise, arts, education and energy centre.
- 1.1.2 The potential presence of bats and roof nesting birds is a material consideration and therefore surveys are a requirement of the planning authority prior to a planning decision being made.

1.2 Surveys

- 1.2.1 Surveys for bats were completed in July 2020 and included a Preliminary Roost Assessment together with a dawn re-entry survey. An assessment for breeding birds was made at the same time as the Preliminary Roost Assessment.

1.3 Results and Assessment

- 1.3.1 The surveys identified the presence of a common pipistrelle day roost for low numbers of individuals. This roost will remain unaffected by the development proposals.
- 1.3.2 No evidence of nesting birds was noted within the property.

1.4 Recommendations

- 1.4.1 Recommendations have been given with regards to carrying out a tool-box-talk for site contractors prior to works taking place in relation to the removal of the chimney and the installation of the mezzanine level.
- 1.4.2 Recommendations have been given with regards to potential dry rot works in relation to bats.

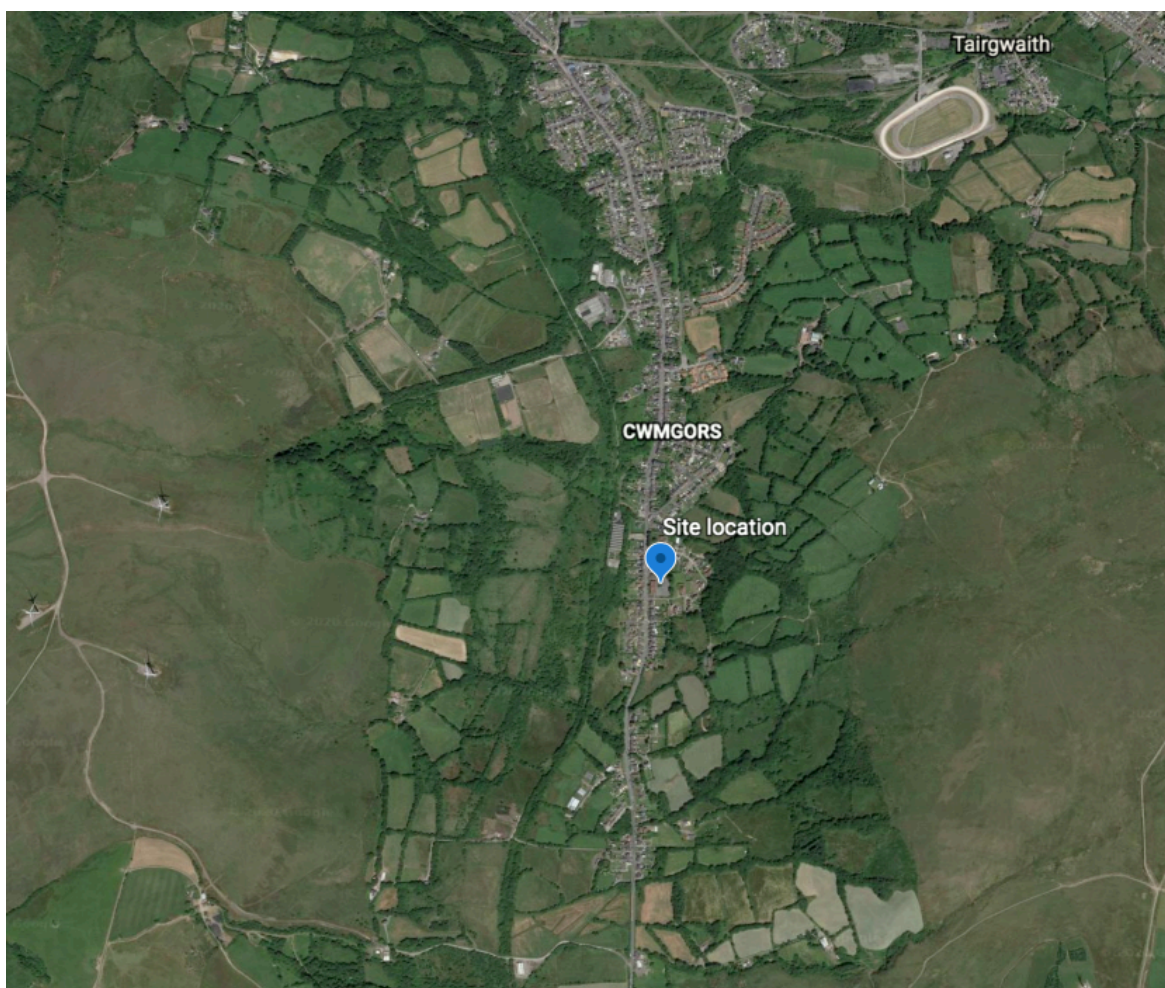
- 1.4.3 Recommendations have been given to provide some net benefit for biodiversity, including the installation of bat and bird boxes.
- 1.4.4 Repeat surveys are recommended if a period of more than two years elapses between the date of these surveys and commencement of the works.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Proposed Development

- 2.1.1** Koru Ecology Associates was commissioned in July 2020 by D McCallum of Awel Aman Tawe (“the Applicant”) to complete a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and follow-up re-entry survey for bats at the former Cwmgors primary school, near Ammanford (“the Site”). The Site is centred on approximate National Grid Reference SN7042110452 and its location is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Site Location.



- 2.1.2** This report has been prepared as part of a planning application to Neath Port Talbot Council for change of use of a former primary school to a community enterprise, arts, education and energy centre, including a single storey rear extension, external works and ground source heating.

2.2 Previous Survey Work

- 2.2.1 To the best of the Applicant's knowledge, no previous survey work in relation to bats and roof nesting birds has been completed on this site.

2.3 Study Aims

- 2.3.1 This report details the methodology (Section 3) and results (Section 4) of the PRA and follow-up re-entry survey work. An assessment of the likely impact of the development proposals on bats and breeding birds is also given (Section 5).
- 2.3.2 Where appropriate, advice is given to help minimise impacts on bats and breeding birds, together with recommendations for some net benefit as part of the development (Section 6). If followed correctly, this advice will ensure that the development complies with current nature conservation policy and legislation.

3 Methodology

3.1 Study Scope

3.1.5 Koru Ecology Associates was commissioned by the Applicant to complete the following works in relation to the Site:

1. Desk-based study, including written consultation with the local biodiversity records centre to identify records of bats within the local area, and nearby protected sites designated for bats.
2. Preliminary roost assessment.
3. One dawn re-entry survey.
4. A check of the building for signs indicating the presence of nesting birds.

3.1.6 All surveys were completed in accordance with current guidance (Collins, 2016), subject to the limitations described in Section 3.3.

3.2 Surveyor Qualifications and Experience

3.2.1 Diana Clark MSc MCIEEM (t/a Koru Ecology Associates) led all survey work for this project, and wrote this report. Diana has worked as a consultant ecologist since 2003 and holds two degrees in related disciplines. She is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds a Natural Resources Wales science, education and conservation licence with respect to bats (licence number S088381/1). Koru Ecology Associates is also a CIEEM Registered Practice.

3.2.2 Diana was assisted by Tawny Clark and Oliver Buxton during the dawn re-entry survey. Tawny holds an environmental degree and has seven years of experience working as a consultant ecologist, during which time she completed numerous bat surveys over multiple seasons, as well as a number of surveys in the last three years with Koru Ecology Associates. Oliver has worked in the environmental sector for more than nine years, is a member of Glamorgan Bat Group and has completed a number of bat surveys with Koru Ecology Associates previously. Both Tawny and Oliver worked under the direct supervision of Diana during their visit to the Site.

- 3.2.3 This report has been subject to technical review by Steve Hancock CEnv MCIEEM. Steve has worked as a consultant ecologist since 2009 and holds a degree in a related discipline. Steve is a Chartered Environmentalist, a full member of CIEEM and holds a Natural Resources Wales science, education and conservation licence with respect to bats (licence number 79821:OTH:CSAB:2018).

3.3 Study Limitations

- 3.3.1 Every effort was made during field visits to complete comprehensive surveys and produce a detailed description of the Site. However, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the environment 100% of the time. Natural and semi-natural habitats change over time, and thus results given in this report may become less reliable in the future. Repeat surveys are usually recommended if a significant period of time elapses between when surveys were completed and when works commence. Further details are given in Section 6 of this report.
- 3.3.2 It should be noted that the wall slots in the open shelter described in Section 4.4. were only inspected from ground level. Because this building is to be retained and these features will not be affected, further inspection was not considered necessary at the time of the PRA.
- 3.3.3 The central part of the main school building roof is complex in nature. Full external and internal visual inspection was possible during the PRA, but for health and safety reasons it was not possible to place surveyors on the roof to observe this area more closely during the dawn re-entry survey. However, a significant proportion of this central roof area was still visible from the ground at either end of the building. Whilst it is possible that re-entry of bats in this area could have been missed, it should be noted that a) as per the rest of the roof structure, this area is extremely well-sealed (see Section 4.3) with only a very few gaps at the edge of tiles by the hip ridges, b) no evidence of bats associated with these gaps was noted during the PRA, c) any significant return of bats (such as a maternity roost) would have been easily observed from the ground, and d) none of the roof covering (including tiles, felt or battens) will be directly affected by the work proposals. Taking all of this into account, this is not considered to be a significant constraint.

3.4 Desk Study

- 3.4.1 South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) was contacted and asked to supply records of bats within 2km of the Site, as well as records of any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) protected with regards to bats within 10km. In addition, records of roof-nesting birds within 150m were also requested.
- 3.4.2 Whilst biological data searches aren't always necessary for smaller projects such as those impacting a single stand-alone building, due to the age and the Site's rural location, a data search was considered appropriate for this project. Desk study data can help provide some additional information with regards to local context.

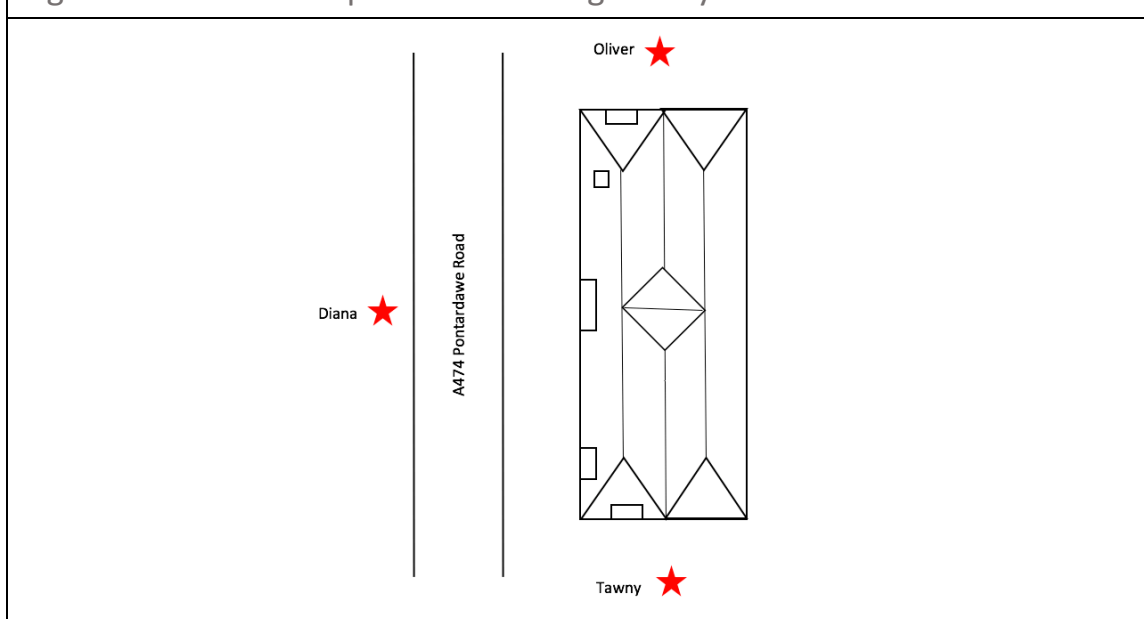
3.5 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.5.1 An initial visual check of the property was completed by Diana Clark on 13th July 2020. Due to the presence of high ceilings within the main school building, a longer ladder was required in order to safely reach the loft void. As a result, a second visit was conducted on 15th July to complete this. During both visits, the Applicant was present onsite to facilitate access.
- 3.5.2 During the Preliminary Roost Assessment visits, all three buildings present on the Site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats, in accordance with current guidance (Collins, 2016), and included both external and internal inspections. Signs indicating the presence of bats were searched for, including locating clear evidence of bat presence (such as live or dead specimens, droppings, fur-oil staining and/or vocalisations) and/or potential roosting locations/access points (such as lifted tiles, gaps between fascias and walls, missing mortar in brickwork, lifted lead flashing, gaps in timber joints, hanging tiles etc.).
- 3.5.3 A high-powered torch was used to inspect attic spaces, the roof structure and walls of each building, both inside and outside, with a ladder being used where necessary to more closely examine any potential roosting features. Additionally, close-focusing binoculars were used to visually check any inaccessible parts of the external roof structure. Photographs and notes were taken of the buildings and any features of interest.

3.6 Re-entry Survey

- 3.6.1 A single dawn re-entry survey was completed on 23rd July 2020, based on the building being of low suitability for bats (see Section 5). The survey was completed by Diana Clark, Tawny Clark and Oliver Buxton. Ultrasonic bat detectors were used to listen to calls in the field, as well as recording for later computer analysis where clarification of species calls was necessary. Bat detectors and recording devices used by each surveyor included iPhone 5/EMT and two Magenta 4s/Anabat Expresses. All surveyors made use of headphones during the surveys. The weather was dry, wind speed 0 – 2, temperature 13 – 14 degrees centigrade and cloud cover around 80%. The survey started at 03:56, one and a half hours before sunrise at 05:26, and finished at 05:41, quarter of an hour after sunrise.
- 3.6.2 During the survey, personnel positioned themselves in such a way that the areas of roof with identified potential roost features/access points could be viewed at the same time, or could be viewed easily by minimal movement. Because this survey was a dawn re-entry survey and because bats often display characteristic pre-entry behaviour immediately prior to returning to a roost, the use of what is essentially a small-scale ‘back-tracking’ technique can reduce the need for high numbers of surveyors where a more complex roof is present – in this case where there are two pitches and a number of dormer windows.
- 3.6.3 The location of personnel during the re-entry survey visit is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Location of personnel during surveys.



3.7 Breeding and Roosting Birds

- 3.7.1 During the Preliminary Roost Assessment visits, the property was also searched for evidence of breeding and/or roosting birds. Evidence indicating their presence would normally include signs of nesting (for example, associated with chimney structures, internal beams, at the top of internal attic walls, externally attached to walls immediately below eave boards etc.). Additionally, the presence of birds themselves, urine splashes, droppings, pellets and broken egg shells were also looked for. Where present, notes were taken with regards to the location of any evidence and (where possible) likely species.

4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 No Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs) designated for bats are present within 10km of the Site.
- 4.1.2 SEWBreC returned nine records of bats within 2km of the Site.
- 4.1.3 Six of these are activity records for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*, the nearest record being approximately 200m from the Site. One of the records is for a maternity roost of *Pipistrellus* sp., located approximately 350m from the Site and recorded in 2009. Another record is for a maternity roost of common pipistrelles, located approximately 1.9km from the Site and recorded in 2014. The final record is for an unidentified bat species roost located 1.5km from the Site and recorded in 2017.
- 4.1.4 Two records of roof nesting birds were also returned by SEWBreC, including blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* (recorded in 2000, approximately 100m from the Site) and barn owl *Tyto alba* (recorded in 2012, approximately 200m from the Site).

4.2 Site Context

- 4.2.1 The Site is located within the village of Cwmgors, approximately halfway between the towns of Ammanford and Ystradgynlais as the crow flies, and within the Garnant River valley. The main school building forms a long rectangle, the length of which falls in a north-south orientation, and it is positioned to the east of the A474 Pontardawe Road. A small area of uncut grass is located between the main school building and the road, and a large tarmac area is located to the east, on which an open shelter is present. A small shed structure is located at the southern end of the Site, adjacent to Llwyn Hen Road.
- 4.2.2 The Site is located in a rural setting, with a narrow band of houses extending to the north and south along the A474, with a few side streets present. Beyond the houses, is a network of fields with associated hedgerows and woodland pockets, beyond which

is the edge of Mynydd Uchaf (to the east) and Mynydd y Betws (to the west). The Garnant River is located approximately 300m to the west of the site.

4.3 Main School Building

4.3.1 The main school building comprises two rectangular structures, each with a pitched roof and hipped gables, joined together down the middle. A number of dormer windows are present and a chimney is located towards the north west of the building. Solar panels are present on the eastern faces of the building.

4.3.2 Figure 3 shows the approximate layout of the building, and Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 are photographs of all four aspects of the building.

Figure 3. Approximate layout of the main school building.

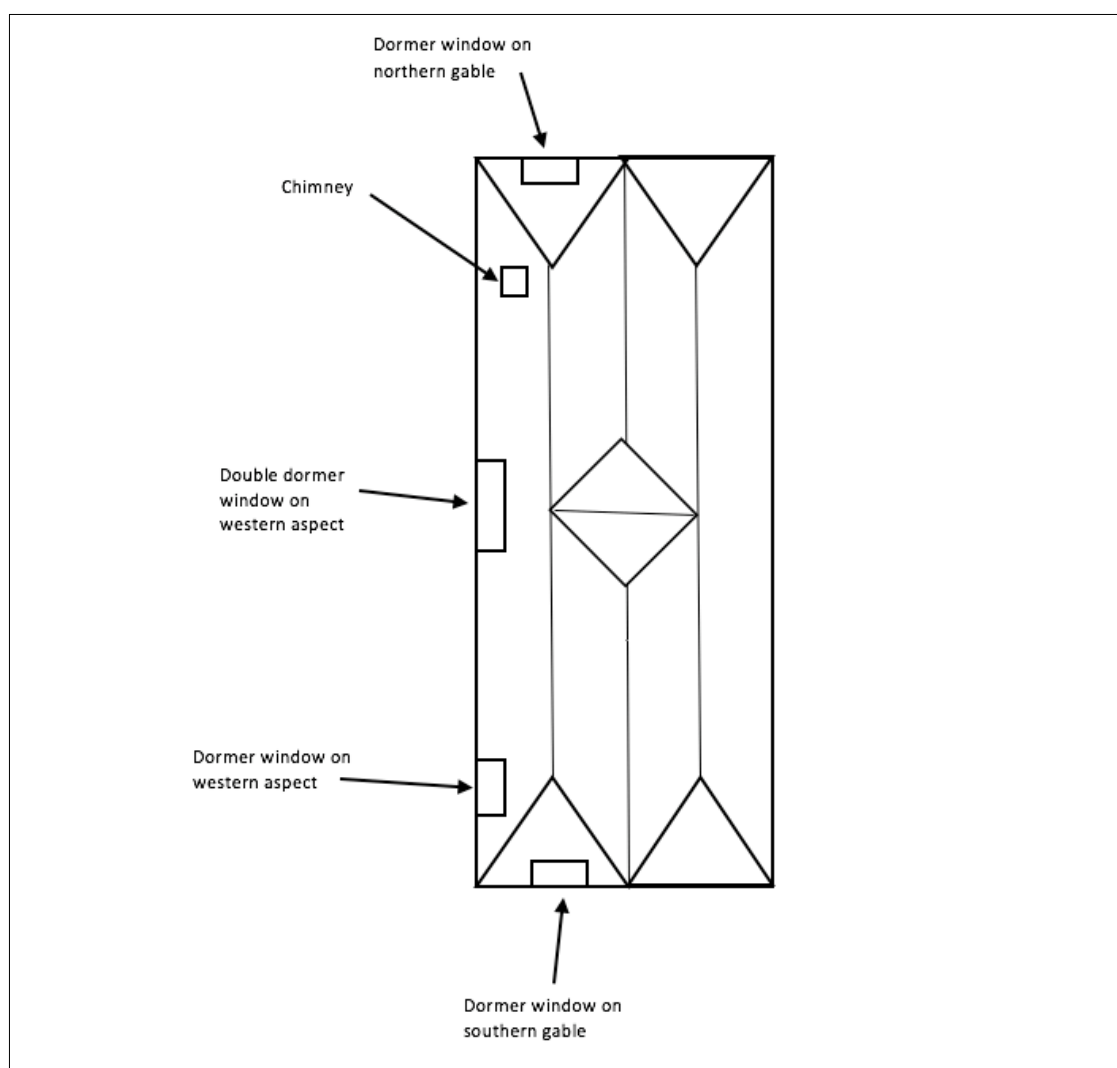


Figure 4. Main school building,
southern aspect.



Figure 5. Main school building,
eastern aspect.



Figure 6. Main school building,
northern aspect.



Figure 7. Main school building,
western aspect.



4.3.3

The building is brick built with painted render on the top two thirds of the external walls. The chimney is also brick built and the roof covering is of modern clay tiles. The gable fronted dormer windows are uPVC with flat, felted roofs, and the soffit boxes are wooden and painted. Joins around dormer windows, valleys and the base of the chimney are made weather-tight with lead flashing. The main windows in the walls are uPVC, all of which have been additionally secured with either clear Perspex or metal sheets.

- 4.3.4 The most significant observation of note with regards to the main school building is that it is extremely well-sealed. There are no lifted or slipped tiles, the lead flashing is almost entirely perfect, the ridges (including the gable hip ridges) are sealed with cement, the windows are sealed and the soffit boxes are in good condition. It is understood that the roof covering was replaced in 2005, i.e. relatively recently, which would explain the current condition of a building known to be constructed in 1912. A small gap is present between the underside of the soffit boxes and the walls of the building all the way around, however it was possible to see to the back of this space in its entirety and no signs of bats were noted here or anywhere else externally.
- 4.3.5 A few small potential entry points/roost opportunities were noted however, in the form of several small areas of lifted lead flashing and several small gaps at the edges of tiles located immediately adjacent to the hip ridges, where the tiles had been cut to fit the diagonal nature of the hip and the lifted lip at the edge of the tile is exposed. These are minimal in number and limited in terms of the size of space they would provide access to, but could not be ruled out for the presence of bats, based on the PRA alone.
- 4.3.6 Internally, the loft void was easily accessible and the roof appeared to be of modified kingpin construction, with the main support being the diagonal beams and the 'kingpins' being slender metal poles (see Figure 8 below). A single purlin is present on each aspect of the roof. The void is divided internally by brick walls and in some areas different levels were noted, which correspond to the different ceiling heights of the rooms below.
- 4.3.7 As mentioned previously, the roof covering was replaced in 2005 and during the survey it was noted that fragments of small clay tiles had been deposited on the floor of the loft void, together with extensive cement rubble, which presumably comprised the original roof covering and was left behind when the old roof was removed. These sit on top of modern fibreglass insulation, which is positioned between the tie beams/joists. The roof is lined with bitumen felt, all of which is in very good condition.
- 4.3.8 No signs of bats were noted anywhere within the loft void.
- 4.3.9 A basement boiler room is also present within the main school building, roughly sited below the area where the chimney is located. This room is well-sealed when the entrance door is closed and is of stone construction, with the walls being covered in several layers of lime wash/ paint (see Figure 9 below).
- 4.3.10 No signs of bats were noted anywhere within the boiler room.

Figure 8. Typical view inside the loft void.

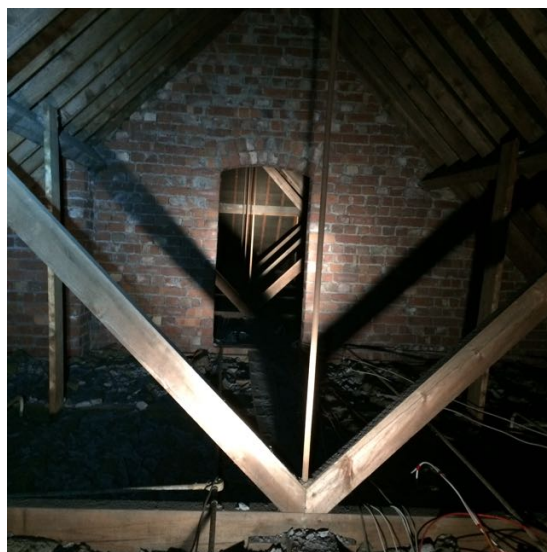


Figure 9. Boiler room in the basement.



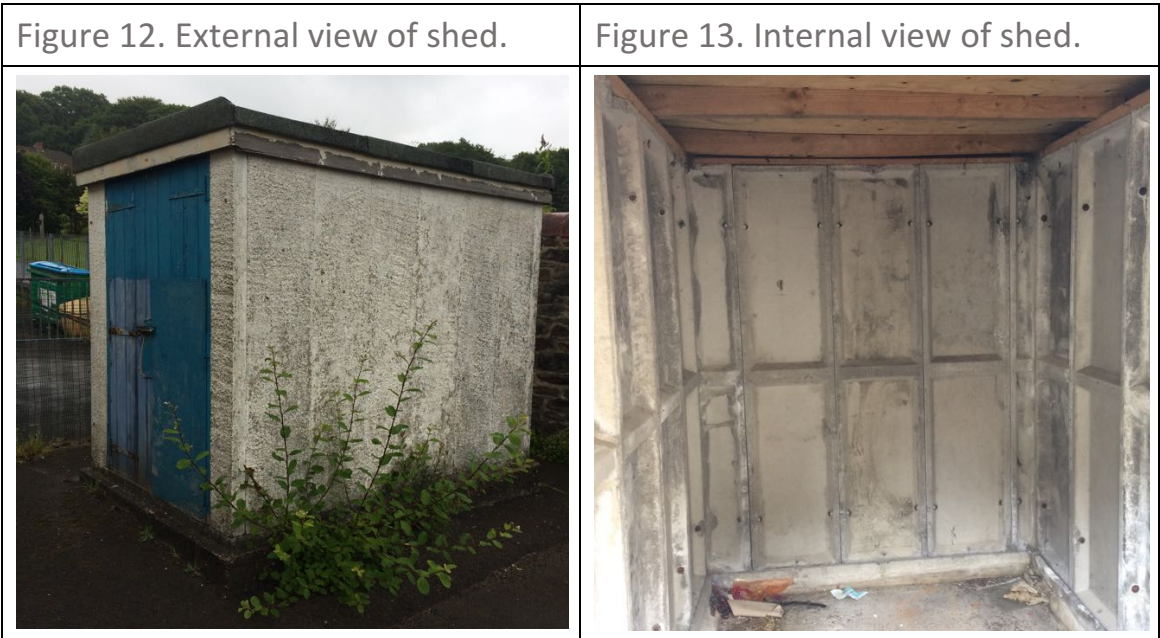
4.4 Open Shelter

- 4.4.1 An open shelter building is located to the east of the main school building, in what was previously the playground. The shelter has no external sides, with just a main central stone and brick wall present, which holds up the middle of the pitched roof (see Figures 10 and 11 below).
- 4.4.2 The roof is of corrugated metal construction is supported by diagonal wooden beams across the span, together with vertical metal poles at the edges. Several slots are present within the wall, creating narrow holes that go right through.
- 4.4.3 No signs of bats were noted anywhere in this building, however it should be noted that gaps at the top of the wall slots could allow access to the inside of the stonework and could not be ruled out for bats based on the PRA alone.

4.5 Shed

- 4.5.1 A small shed is located to the south of the main school building, three of the sides of which are formed of pre-fabricated concrete panels, rendered on the outside (see Figures 12 and 13 below). The fourth side (which faces north) comprises double painted wooden doors. The roof is flat and supported by wooden beams with a felt covering, and the wooden fascia boards are in moderate to poor condition.

4.5.2 No signs of bats were noted anywhere in the shed, and all features in this building were fully visible and could be ruled out for bats during the PRA.



4.6 Re-Entry Survey

- 4.6.1 All surveyors recorded low numbers of very brief common/soprano bat passes during the survey (2/3 per surveyor). No other bat species were heard during the survey.
- 4.6.2 At 05:13, a single common pipistrelle bat was observed displaying classic pre-entry behaviour, circling around the building and several times going up to a small gap at the end of a tile on a sloping hip ridge on the western aspect. It re-entered the building at this point two minutes later at 05:15, eleven minutes prior to sunrise. No other bats were seen re-entering the building during the survey. Figure 14 below shows the location of the re-entry point.

Figure 14. Bat re-entry point on the western side of the main school.



4.7 Breeding Birds

- 4.7.1 No evidence of breeding and/or roosting birds was noted anywhere associated with the main school building, the shed or the open shelter.

5 Assessment

5.1 Legislation

5.1.1 Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Taken together, these make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- b) Deliberately disturb any bat, in particular any disturbance which is likely to (i) impair their ability to survive, breed, reproduce or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (ii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- c) To be in possession or control of any live or dead bat or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat;
- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that bat uses for shelter or protection;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

5.1.2 A bat roost may be any structure a bat uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection. It is important to note that since bats tend to re-use the same roost sites, current legal opinion is that a bat roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

5.1.3 The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 requires public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. In complying with this duty, public authorities must have regard to a list of living organisms and types of habitat which in their opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This list must be prepared and published by the Welsh Ministers under Section 7 (1) of the same Act.

5.1.4 Until this list has been published, the list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance previously published under Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, should be used. Eight species of bat are on this list, including barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, noctule

Nyctalus noctula, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and lesser horseshoe *R. hipposideros*.

5.2 Habitat Assessment for Bats

- 5.2.1 The Bat Survey Guidelines state that habitats of high suitability for commuting and foraging bats include '*continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge*'.
- 5.2.2 The Site is located within a rural setting, surrounded by open countryside, fields, ditches and hedgerows. A number of areas of woodland are also located nearby and a small river is located approximately 300m to the west. Although the A474 Pontardawe Road has a number of street lights placed along it (including one located right next to the main school building), very little artificial light is present within the immediate surrounding countryside. Whilst some species of bats (such as pipistrelles) are largely unperturbed by lighting, other species such as the horseshoe bats are more sensitive. The generally low light levels in the vicinity of the site mean that the more sensitive species are more likely to use the habitat for foraging and commuting purposes.
- 5.2.3 Taking the above into account, the suitability of commuting and foraging habitats for bats nearby is considered to be **high**.

5.3 Building Assessment for Bats: Shed

- 5.3.1 The shed located to the south of the main school building contained no signs indicating the presence of bats, and all features could be fully inspected during the PRA. This building was therefore ruled out for bats at the PRA stage and no further survey work was considered necessary. The removal of this building as part of the development proposals (see the Outline Schedule of Works: External Works, submitted as part of the planning application (Arndell, 2020)) will result in **no impacts on bats**.

5.4 Building Assessment for Bats: Open Shelter

- 5.4.1 The open shelter located to the east of the main school building contained no signs indicating the presence of bats and was considered to be largely unsuitable. However, it should be noted that gaps at the top of the wall slots could allow access to the inside of the stonework and could not be ruled out for bats based on the PRA alone.
- 5.4.2 It is understood that this building will be retained on the Site and sensitively renovated as an original feature of the school, with largely cosmetic changes taking place (see the Outline Schedule of Works: Separate Building to the Rear). No changes will be made to the slots in the stonework, as described in Section 4.4, therefore **no impacts on bats are considered likely**.

5.5 Building Assessment: Main Schoolbuilding

- 5.5.1 As described previously, no evidence of bats using the roof void was noted during the PRA. The building is extremely well-sealed externally, with very limited opportunities for bats to access spaces under lead flashing and between a few tiles next to hip ridges. Such features were considered likely to be used only by individual bats opportunistically, and do not provide enough space, shelter, protection to be used by a large number of bats (such as a maternity roost). The **suitability of the building for bats was therefore considered to be low**, as per Table 4.1 of Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). Based on this assessment, a single dawn re-entry survey was recommended and completed.
- 5.5.2 Following completion of the re-entry survey, the presence of a common pipistrelle roost has been confirmed. A single bat was observed re-entering the building just before dawn, and no other bats were observed accessing the building. Together with a) the lack of any significant bat activity around the Site during the duration of the survey and b) the lack of any other evidence of bats using the Site for roosting purposes, it is considered likely that the building is being used as **an occasional day roost for low numbers of common pipistrelle bats**. Whilst it is possible that bats may access other features within the building, as already described, there is no evidence indicating the presence of a maternity roost.

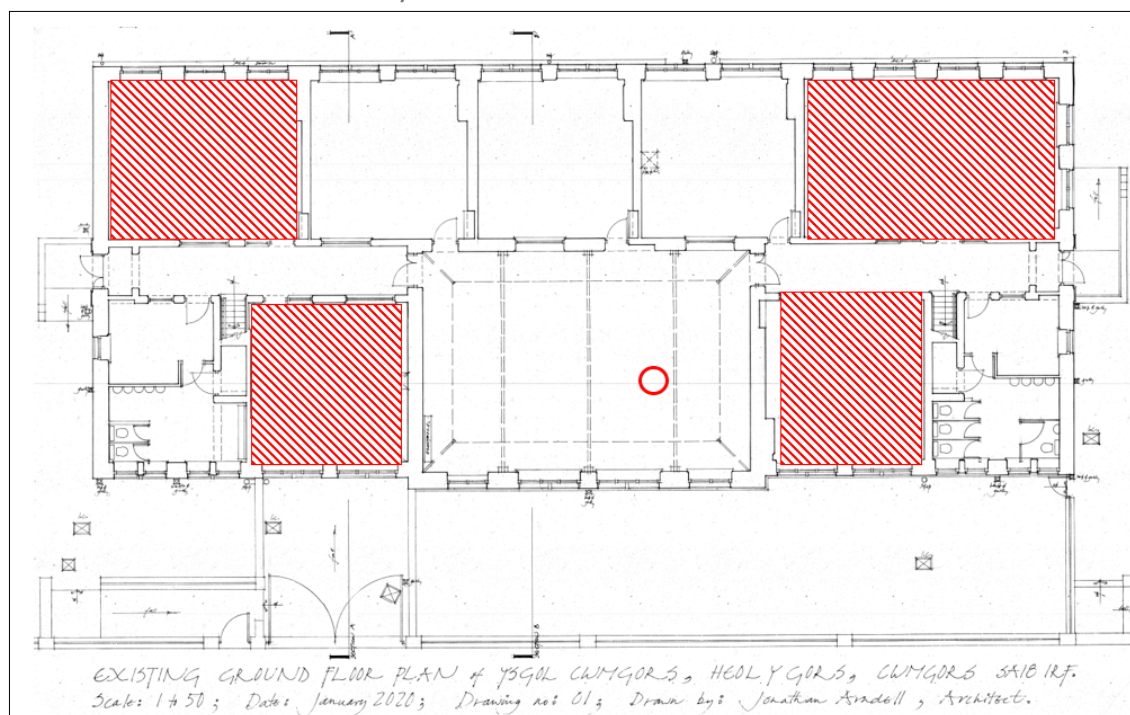
5.6 Summary Impact Assessment for Bats

- 5.6.1 No protected sites designated for the presence of bats were noted within 10km of the Site.
- 5.6.2 No records indicating the presence of a bat roost were noted anywhere within approximately 350m of the Site. Those roosts identified are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development, due to the scale and nature of the development proposals.
- 5.6.3 The proposals relating to demolition of the shed and renovation of the open shelter building are considered unlikely to result in any impacts on bats.
- 5.6.4 The proposals include the following works relevant to bats:
1. Removal of the chimney stack and making good the roof.
 2. Installation of a mezzanine area in several rooms, which will extend up into part of the roof void.
 3. Potential repairs to wall plates and roof timbers where affected by dry/wet rot.
- 5.6.5 The area of roof around the chimney stack is well-sealed and the presence of bats in this area is considered unlikely. The chimney is also well away from the area of the roof where the known common pipistrelle roost is located, thus **the removal of the chimney stack and making good the roof is considered unlikely to impact on bats**. However, bats can turn up unexpectedly and therefore appropriate precautions should be taken to ensure the risk to bats is minimised. These are discussed further in Section 6 of this report.
- 5.6.6 The installation of the mezzanine floor in several rooms (see Figure 15 below) will require the removal of sections of the ceiling to allow extension into the loft void above. None of the areas proposed for the mezzanine area are situated below the area of the roof where the known bat roost is located. In addition, these works will not impact on any felt, tiles or battens that form the roof covering. **Significant impacts of these works on bats are therefore considered to be unlikely.**
- 5.6.7 A number of recommendations were made within the dry rot report by Mike Thomas Preservation (Thomas, 2020) in relation to three areas of internal walls on the ground floor. None of these areas extend beyond 1m from the ceiling, and therefore these works will not affect bats. The Outline Schedule of Works (Arndell, 2020) allows for

potential repairs to wall plates and roof timbers where affected by dry/wet rot. At present, it is not known if these will be required, and if so where, since often water damage of this nature only becomes evident once affected areas are exposed, for example during the construction of the mezzanine areas. However, it should be noted that any such works will not normally require removal or damage to the roof covering or felt, and that props will be used to hold up and maintain the roof structure *in situ* for the duration. If rafters or ridge beams are affected and need replacing anywhere within the vicinity of the known bat roost, appropriate precautions will be taken. These are discussed further in Section 6 of this report.

- 5.6.8 Whilst it is possible that noise and vibration may result in ‘disturbance’, it should be noted that the Habitats Regulations defines ‘disturbance’ in relation to bats as *“any disturbance which is likely 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 to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong”*. (Part 3, 43, 2a and b). Due to the nature of the roost identified, together with the species of bat observed using it and the nature of the proposed works, **‘disturbance’ to bats as defined under the Habitats Regulations is considered unlikely.**

Figure 15. Areas of the building where a mezzanine floor is proposed (red hatching). The approximate location of the bat re-entry point (well away from the mezzanine areas) is shown as a red circle.



5.7 Impacts on Breeding Birds

- 5.7.1 All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.
- 5.7.2 No evidence of nesting birds was noted in the building, impacts of the development proposals on breeding birds are therefore considered unlikely. However, it is possible that breeding/roosting birds may make use of the building in the future. Repeat surveys are therefore advised if a significant period of time elapses between when surveys were completed and when works commence. Further details with regards to repeat surveys are given in Section 6 of this report.

6 Recommendations

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 A number of recommendations in relation to bats and birds have been given to the Applicant and incorporated into the design of the scheme. Additionally, advice has been provided in relation to working methods, whilst the development works are being carried out. The Applicant is fully committed to carrying out these recommendations, which are described in detail below.

6.2 Bats

- 6.2.1 Prior to works commencing, a tool-box-talk in relation to bats will be given by an appropriately competent ecologist to contractors working on a) the removal of the chimney and b) the installation of the mezzanine areas, and all such works will proceed with caution. The tool-box-talk will include an introduction to bats, where they are likely to be found and what to look for, together with what to do if a bat (or signs of bats) is/are found. The phone number of Diana Clark at Koru Ecology Associates will be given to site staff and they will be instructed to immediately stop work and get in touch, should bats or evidence of bats be discovered. A rapid site visit will then be carried out by a suitably competent ecologist who will advise if works can continue, or if a development licence from Natural Resources Wales is required prior to proceeding.
- 6.2.2 Should any rafters or ridge beams in the vicinity of the known bat roost need replacing due to the presence of dry rot, an appropriately competent ecologist will be consulted and advice sought on how to continue the works legally. In such circumstances, a method statement (including appropriate timing of the works) and/or a mitigation licence from Natural Resources Wales may be required. No works in the vicinity of the known bat roost should happen until this is in place.

6.3 Breeding Birds

- 6.3.1 The survey work completed did not identify any evidence of nesting birds, and the main school building in particular was observed to be extremely well-sealed.

However, birds are mobile creatures and may move into areas where they have previously been absent, particularly if a significant period of time elapses between the time of the current survey and the commencement of the works – during which time the condition of the buildings may deteriorate.

- 6.3.2 All works to the property will therefore proceed with caution in relation to breeding birds, particularly between the months of March to August inclusive. If any signs of breeding birds are noted, all works will stop immediately and an appropriately experienced ecologist consulted. In such circumstances, the ecologist may recommend that works be suspended until young birds have fledged the nest, or the nest is no longer viable. Alternatively, works may be suspended within an appropriate exclusion zone.

6.4 Enhancements

- 6.4.1 Due to the size of the Site and nature of development proposals, opportunities for enhancements are limited. However, the Applicant has agreed to install two bird boxes and two bat boxes on the external walls of the main school building, in order to provide new nesting/roosting opportunities for these species groups.
- 6.4.2 The bat boxes will be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats such as pipistrelles (for example, Beaumaris boxes, or similar) and the bird boxes will be general purpose boxes suitable for small passerine species such as blue tit and sparrows, one with a 25mm hole and one with a 32mm hole.
- 6.4.3 All nest/roost boxes will be positioned as close to the eaves as possible, with the bat boxes on the southern face and the bird boxes on the north face (see Figures 16 and 17 below).

Figure 16. Bat box locations on south wall of main building.



Figure 17. Bird box locations on north wall of main building.



6.5 Repeat Surveys

- 6.5.1 In order to provide robust and up-to-date data for impact assessment, it is generally considered good practice to repeat surveys should a period of two years lapse between a survey being completed and the works commencing. This should be addressed even if planning permission has been granted, since bats and breeding birds are protected by legislation entirely outside the planning system.

7 References

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