



Bat Scoping Survey: 48 Park Avenue, Glynneath, Neath, SA11 5DR.



Instructed by: Jan Hutchings

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

Author	Date	Version
Rich Watkins	April 2021	V1.0

T: 01873 268017/07866461726

E: rich@ecologicalservices.wales

W: www.ecologicalservices.wales

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1.0 The Brief: its background and purpose

1.1 48 Park Avenue is a bungalow that is falling into disrepair in the rural village of Glynneath. This building is currently being used as a family home. The owners propose to demolish the building and build a replacement dwelling on the site. The new building will have modern building standards and regulations. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist the planning process.

1.2. As we are outside the maternity season this report will concentrate on identifying potential for bat roosts and any evidence of previous occupation.

1.3 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an ecologist with 13 years experience and Aislinn Harris a Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist, license number S085699-1.

1.4 A data search has been applied for and the results will be added to the full bat survey report which will follow.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The building is a timber framed property with external rendered walls. The property is detached. The roof is clay tile with a traditional apex pitched roof with a dry verge on each gable. There is unlikely to be a cavity wall in the building. There is an internal attic space. There is no cellar.

2.2 This building dates back to in excess of 60 years and is located in a rural location.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourse is the river Neath 211m to the south.

2.4 There is considerable countryside and woodland within close proximity of the building. There is excellent connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 Grid Reference of the site is SN87720636

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 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 year after year 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 rain. Therefore this survey will evaluate potential for bat use, in addition to searching for evidence of bats.

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 Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. The survey methods employed can provide evidence for the potential presence of bat 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.

3.4 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 and will be valid for two years from date of issue. 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. Natural Resources Wales will only consider reports up to two years old.

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 or 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 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 board, soffit, gable end, porch, lead flashing hanging tiles, ridge tiles, broken tiles, eaves, sash window frame, wood cladding, fascia board, window sill, 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 (Horse Shoe) bats differ in their roosting requirement 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 scoping survey was undertaken on the 27th March 2021 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. Binoculars and endoscope were used when required.

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

- Staining around entry or roosting point caused by oils secreted by the bat into its fur
- Scratching on surfaces caused by the bat in the act of take off and landing
- Bat droppings on walls, floors, roof voids, window cills 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 There is potential for bats to access and use the building.

6.4 There was areas of lead flashing on the roof suitable for bat access. There was slipped and missing roofing tiles . There was also damaged soffit and a



6.5 The building was deemed too offer moderate potential for bats use.

6.6 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any external features although this would not be definitive of bats not using the building at other times of the year.

6.7 Unfortunately due to the location and amount of access points into the building it was not possible to exclude use by bats.

7.0 Internal Inspection

7.1 Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, no internal inspection was undertaken

8.0 Emergence and Dawn Surveys

8.1 The survey was undertaken outside the core maternity season for bats therefore activity surveys have not been undertaken.

9.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

9.1 No direct evidence of bat use was identified.

9.2 There is roosting potential for bats in the building. There are numerous of entry points into the building that bats could utilise. The building was deemed to offer moderate potential for bat use. If further exit surveys are undertaken then these must be undertaken in the core maternity season for bat of May to August inclusive. The surveys must be undertaken in weather conditions conducive to bat activity. The surveys will be spread a minimum of 2 weeks apart. Each survey will have 3 suitably qualified bat surveyors present. Suitable bat monitoring equipment will be used to acoustically analyse any bat calls that are present to allow accurate species identification. The surveys will conform to the “*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines 2016.*”

9.3 The building is located in an area with excellent connectivity for bat to the wider environment. The surrounding environment offers excellent potential for bat use.

9.4 If the schedule of works proposed involves demolition, roofing works, including the roofline or significant works to any internal attic space then it is recommended that further exit/return surveys are undertaken during the core maternity season for bats of May to August inclusive. These results must be submitted with any planning application for the building.

9.5 If the schedule of works do not involve roofing works, works to the external roof line, any areas detailed in section 6 of this report or significant works to any internal attic space then it may be possible for works to proceed under a detailed ecological method statement which must be drafted by a suitably qualified ecologist and submitted for approval by the LPA Ecologist. In this instance a retained ecologist will be appointed for the project to oversee the works and offer direct supervision where required. The retained ecologist will ensure that no potential bat roosting areas will be impacted upon and will act accordingly if bats or evidence of bats are discovered ongoing.

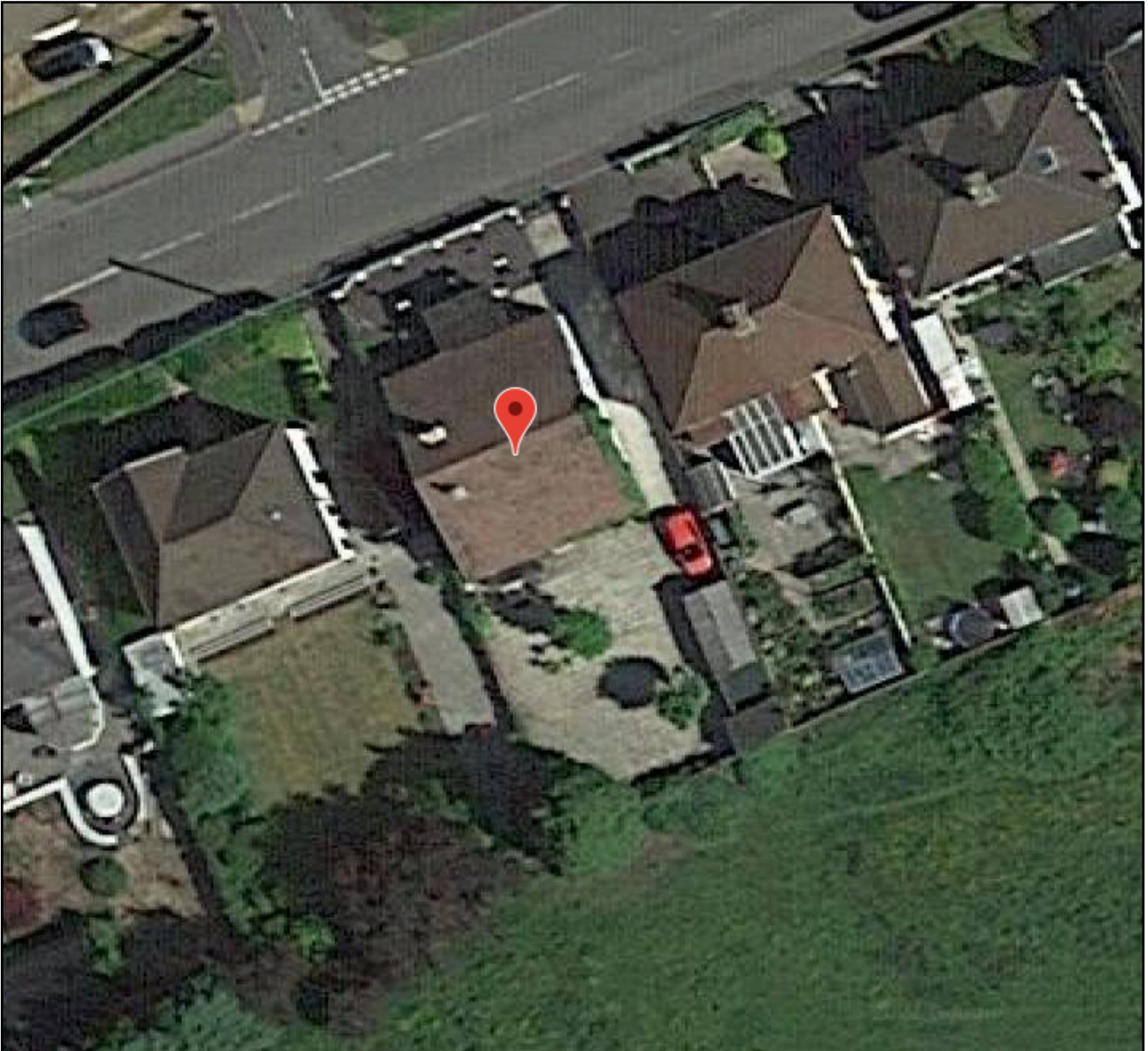
Signed: **R Watkins** Date: April 2021

10.0 Appendix

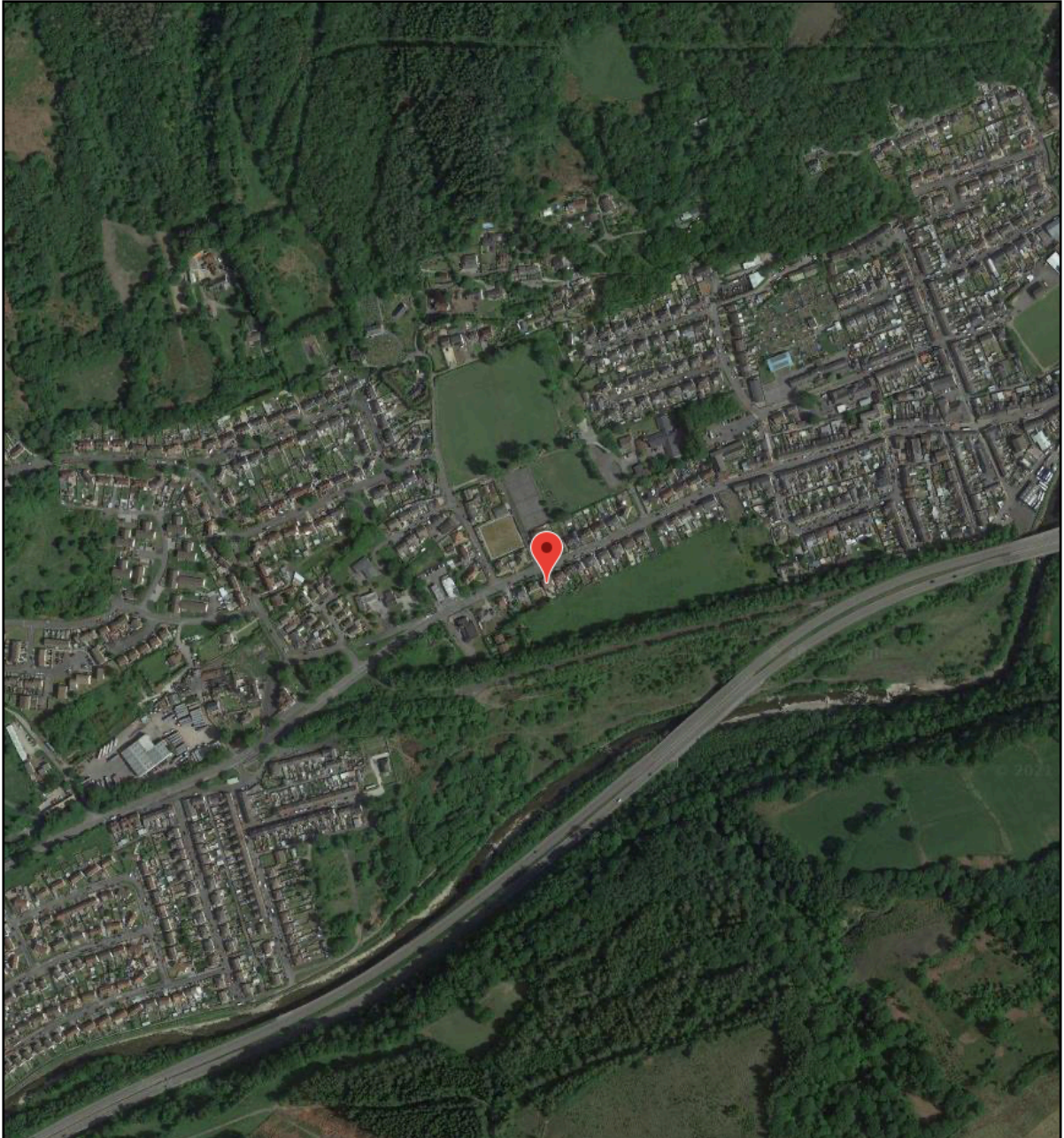
Aerial site photo

OS Map

Aerial Photos



The building in its local environment.



The building in its wider environment offering excellent ecological connectivity

