

**BEECHES BUNGALOW
PRIMROSE BANK
BRYNCOCH**

BAT & PROTECTED Spp: PRELIMINARY SURVEY/ASSESSMENT

January 2022

1 survey at the request of-

Natasha Worth, owner.

2 proposed works

Removal & replacement of the front/east-west roof at an existing bungalow. (A contiguous north-south, lower, roof is retained as-is but is within “disturbance distance”.)

3 site: name/grid ref

Beeches Bungalow, Primrose Bank, Bryncoch, Neath SA10 7BX.
SN740001

4 nature & date of survey

12th January 2022- assessment of bat-use *via* external/internal search.

The survey visit was made in January, when bats can be expected to be torpid/inactive in/at winter/hibernation roost sites, and when direct activity-survey is unhelpful/inappropriate.

The survey sought to assess the “likelihood” of bat use during other (spring-summer-autumn) times of the year.

5 objectives-

- to assess the likelihood of any bat (or other protected species) use of the building
- to identify any constraints, including any requirement for further “in season” direct activity-survey, consequent upon the discovery of bats (or other protected species) in the building.

6 surveyors

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Rob Colley: scientific/conservation bat licence 1999-, SO89480/1.

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 Habitat 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. **Section 6 (EWA)** requires LAs to ensure that development i) causes no significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and ii) provides a net benefit for biodiversity. There is a particular requirement to address those species and habitats listed 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 (NERC)/ **section 7 (EWA)**: Species of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biological Diversity. Implementation of these responsibilities 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, 2007/2012/14) & ***Bat Workers’ Manual 3rd ed.*** (JNCC 2004).

building assessment:

A daytime external and internal survey of the building was made, searching for possible bat (or other protected species) entry/exit points, incidental evidence (principally faeces) of bat use of the building and direct evidence of roosting bats. All of the bungalow- ie. the to-be-replaced roof and the contiguous within-disturbance-distance roof was examined.

emergence watch: n/a

DNA genotyping: n/a (When surveyors are unsure of the origin of any bat faeces found, these 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 detector-recorder equipment is left *in-situ* to indicate species identification and patterns-of-use at the site.)

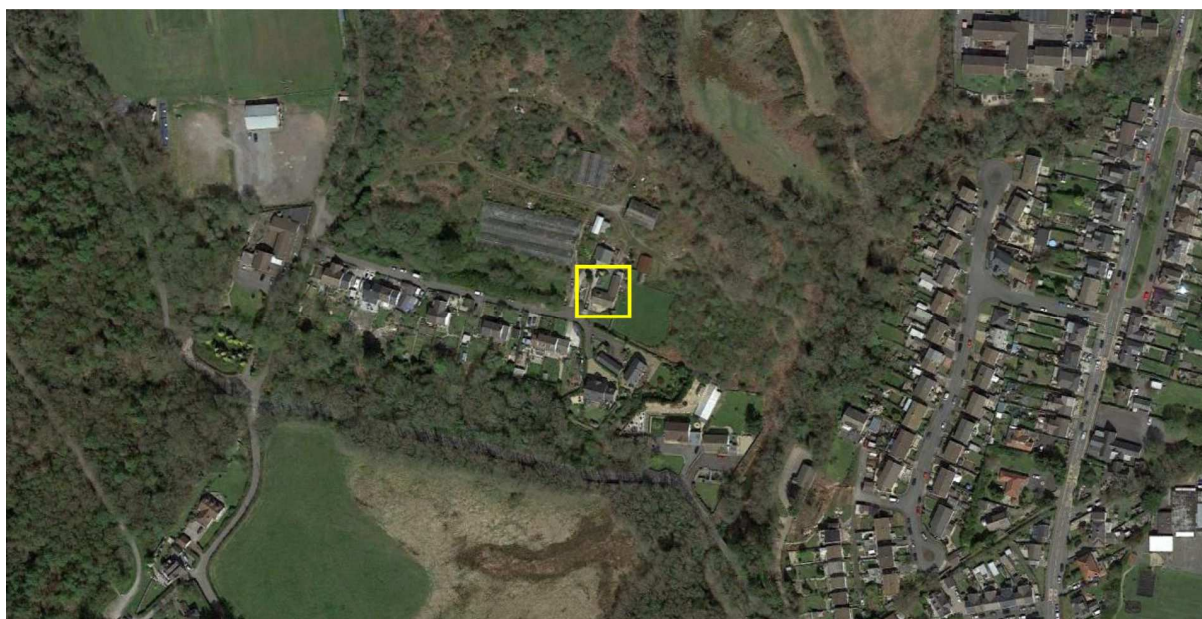
methodology/mitigation: Methodology/mitigation measures, where appropriate, are based on the surveyor’s experience of similar situations, with reference to ***Bat Mitigation Guidelines*** (English Nature, 2004) & ***Bat Workers’ Manual 3rd ed.*** (JNCC 2004).

9 results

9.1 site location, adjacent habitat:

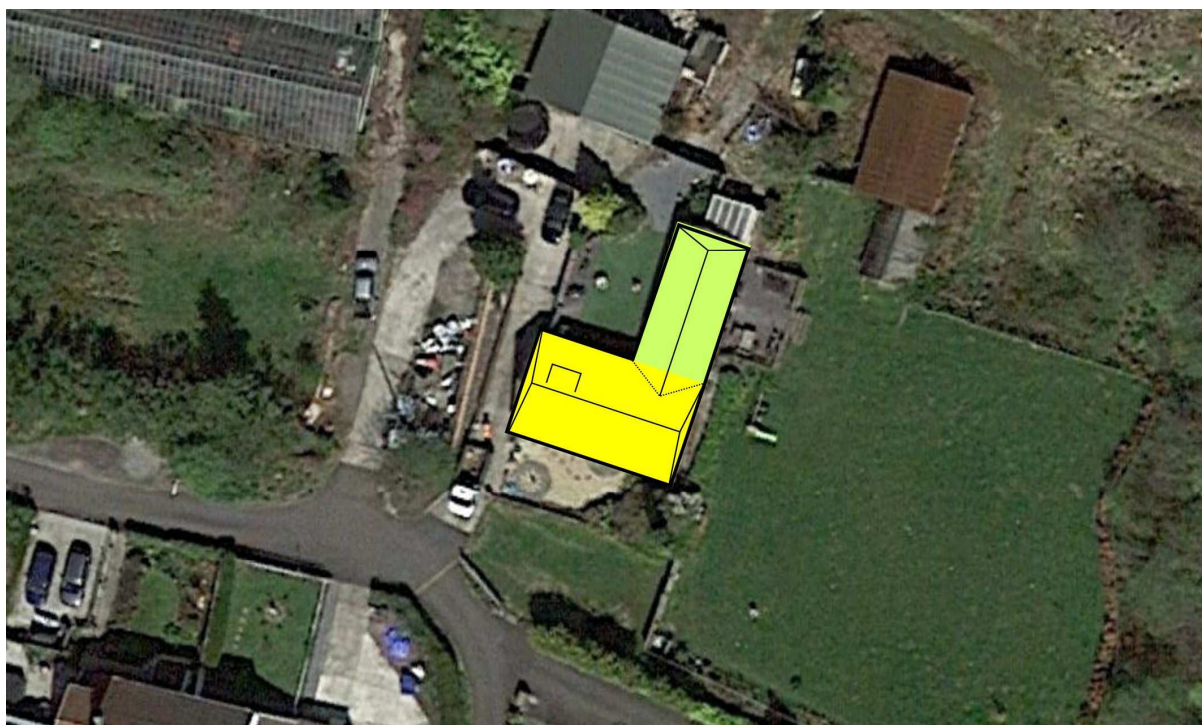
The survey building is at the (east) end of a residential *cul de sac*, immediately north of, and above, a minor road from Bryncoch to Ty llwyd: this minor road has flanking scrub-woodland which stretches to the Dyffryn woodlands, to west, and to the River Cydach woodland corridor <200m to east/north. Extensive (Bryncoch) village housing is over-river to-east.

This wider-area habitat mix gives good foraging opportunity for bats, and any “Welsh” species might be expected at/around the survey site.. Targeted surveys at the nearby scout hut (ahead of repair works), roadside woodland (ahead of road-bank repairs) and at the Clydach woodlands (to south), at nine dates 2007-2021, report Common pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and Natterer’s bat *Myotis nattereri* activity. Summer day roosts of both pipistrelle spp are known at village housing <500m.



The survey building is a detached, occupied, bungalow, in family use. The to-be-replaced east-west aligned section (A) fronts the access lane; a north-west aligned lower roofed section (B) is contiguous to the east end of A.

There are gravelled/flagged yards to north, west and south; a large lawn extends to-east, to the edge of Clydach corridor woodland; there is linear housing, widely spaced and of various designs, over-lane, to south.



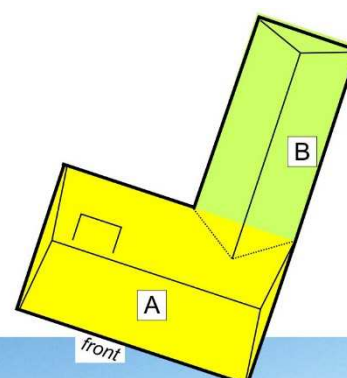
9.2 general description; bat access points; potential bat-roost opportunity; evidence of bat presence:

annotation refers to sketch plan/photo's, below

With the exception of half of the east gable, which is brickwork, and ground level/dwarf brickwork, all external walls are rendered/dashed: all are in good repair, with no possibility of bat-access intra-masonry; all (uPVC) windows/doors are securely tight-fitted. There is no potential fly-in bat-access opportunity.

All walltops- three gables, four longwalls- have wall render tight-sealed to (wide) uPVC soffits: there are no potential bat crawl-in access opportunities off-walls. Projecting purlin ends are mastic-sealed to wall render.

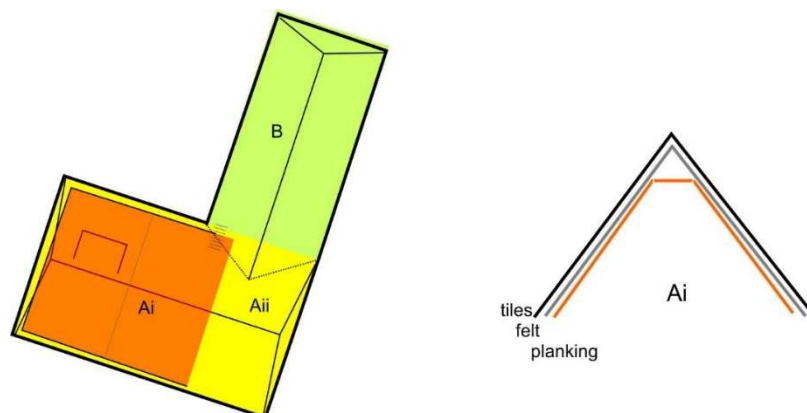
Both roofs have flat-tile cladding, with no inter-tile bat-accessible gaps visible. A very slightly uplifted east end ridge tile at the roof of A suggests a possibility of a gap under but any such (hypothetical) gap is moss choked (as are tile laps at most of the rear pitch of A and all of B); otherwise, both ridges are tight-sealed on mortar bedding and have no visible bat-access opportunity. A dormer window at the west end of the north pitch of A has tightly-fitted (and heavily mossed) lead flashings to the roof tiles, and intact/good repair uPVC planked walls below a flat roof; a flue pipe at the front pitch of A also has sealed lead flashings.



Internally, there is no bat interest at the occupied rooms. At section A, an open staircase accesses the roof void, the western two-thirds (Ai) of which has boarded floors and timber-planked vaulted linings to give an occasional-use room, illuminated by the dormer window and electric lighting; 45cm wide horizontal boarding at the attic room "apex" has narrow gaps at each side, to the wallplanking, with bituminised felt sarking visible above- faeces fall might be expected here in the event of bat presence above the timber linings.

The eastern "third" of the roof void (Aii) is open to the under-tile bit. felt sarking; felt irregularities/joints/slight damage had no bat evidence at/below; f-g/rockwool

insulation is below floor boarding; roof timbers are small, simple, modern rafters and ridgeboard. The inner gable is blockwork, with uneven finish at the apex. The over-block gaps at the apex are heavily cobwebbed, and the wall below is lightly cobwebbed: bat faeces-fall would be visible here, in the event of any bat use of the gable walltop (and none was found).



The roof void of section B has (internal) open-connection to the east end of A. The attic is low, f-g/r'wool insulated and bit. felt sarked; roof timbers are small, simple, modern rafters, plus ridgeboard.

No external or internal evidence of bat use was found at/in the bungalow; no potential bat-access points were identified; no evidence of, or opportunity for, other protected species use (eg. bird nesting) was identified.

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

9.4 DNA genotyping: n/a

9.5 other-season bat use- assessment: no other-season "likely" roost opportunity was identified.

10 other protected spp/ecology

No other protected species interest was noted at the site, and the proposed renovation works do not impact beyond the current building footprint.

11 summary/assessment

11.1 No external or internal evidence of bat use was found, and no potential bat-access points were identified. The surveyor has no expectation of any-season bat use of the building, and identifies no protected-species constraint to the proposed works; ***potential*** for bat-use is assessed as nil/***negligible***.

11.2 No other ecology/protected species interest is identified at the proposed works.

11.3 To answer the LA's responsibility for enhancing biodiversity (7.2, above) the o/o intends to place a (Schwegler 1SP) three chamber nestbox at >2m ht on the west gable wall of the bungalow.

Rob Colley
January 2022