

5 Varteg Row

Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment

September 2020

www.jbaconsulting.com

**Danielle Redmore
19 George Street
PORT TALBOT
SA13 1ES**

JBA Project Manager

Jonathan Harrison
Kings Chambers
7-8 High Street
NEWPORT
South Wales
UNITED KINGDOM
NP20 1FQ

Revision History

Revision Ref/Date	Amendments	Issued to
September 2021	Final Report	Danielle Redmore

Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Danielle Redmore. Jonathan Harrison of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

Prepared by Jonathan Harrison BSc MSc MCIEEM
Senior Ecologist

Reviewed by Catherine Rodd BSc MRes MCIEEM
Senior Ecologist

Purpose

This document has been prepared as a Final Report for Danielle Redmore. JBA Consulting accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

JBA Consulting has no liability regarding the use of this report except to Danielle Redmore.

Copyright

© Jeremy Benn Associates Limited 2021.

Carbon Footprint

JBA is aiming to reduce its per capita carbon emissions.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Project Background	1
1.2	Location	1
1.3	Work Details	1
2	Legislation	3
3	Methodology	4
3.1	Desk Study	4
3.2	Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment	4
3.3	Limitations	5
3.4	Survey Details	5
4	Survey Results	6
4.1	Desk Study	6
4.2	Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment	6
4.2.1	Site Details	7
4.3	Habitats	7
5	Evaluation and Recommendations	8
5.1	Evaluation	8
5.2	Recommendations	8
A	Photographs	I

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Site Location Map	1
Figure 1-2 Plan view of existing and proposed building plans	2

List of Tables

Table 3-1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of sites for bats	4
Table 4-1 Bat Records within 2km of the site	6

Abbreviations

BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
BRP	Bat Roost Potential
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
EPSL	European Protected Species Licence
ILP	Institute of Lighting Professionals
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature

Definitions

Day Roost	A place where individual bats, or small groups of male bats, rest or shelter in the day but are rarely found by night in the summer.
Hibernation Roost	A roost where bats may be found individually or together during winter months.
Maternity Roost	A roost where female bats give birth and raise their young to independence during the summer months.
Satellite Roost	An alternative roost found in close proximity to a main nursery colony (maternity roost) used by a few individual breeding females to small groups of breeding females throughout the breeding season.
Transitional Roost	A roost used by individual bats or occasionally small groups for short periods of time on waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation (i.e. early spring and autumn).

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

JBA Consulting was commissioned by Danielle Redmore and Robert Thomas in August 2021 undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats in relation in support of a planning application for the change of use from a hall to residential development, within the grounds of 5 Varteg Row.

1.2 Location

The site is located in the grounds of 5 Varteg Row in Bryn, Port Talbot as shown in figure 1-1. The proposed development site is 0.04 hectares in size and is comprised of a disused hall, previously used by St. John Ambulance.

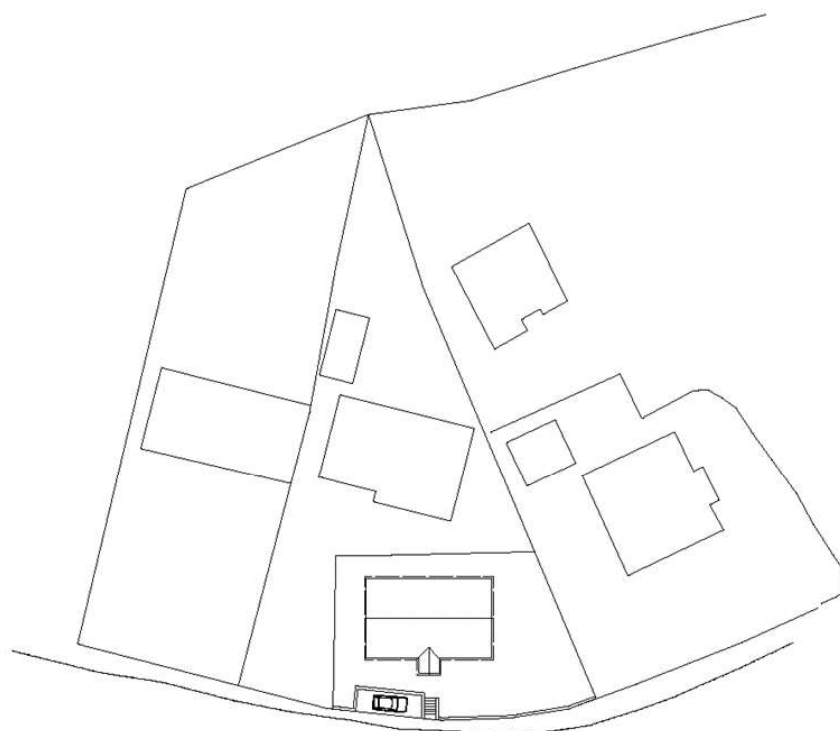
The development site is located within the land ownership boundary of 5 Varteg Row, and therefore the bungalow and associated gardens, boundary wall and driveway of 5 Varteg Row form the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the proposed development site, respectively. The site is bounded to the north by Varteg Row highway. Access to the site is currently available from steps to the east of the building entrance, as shown in Figure 1-1.



Figure 1-1 Site Location Map

1.3 Work Details

The development proposal is to convert the existing building for residential use. The proposals include forming a new parking bay on the south-western edge of the site along with a new set of steps to access the site. An extract of the proposed site plan is contained in Figure 1-2.



Form new steps, parking bay and drop kerb
with retaining designed by engineer

Figure 1-2 Plan view of existing and proposed building plans

2 Legislation

All UK bat species are European Protected Species (EPS), protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

Searches of databases containing ecological records were made. The following sources were included in these searches:

- South East Wales Biological Records Centre (SEWBRc)

Due to the size of the site, it is considered that the zone of influence would be 2km from the residential dwelling and therefore the desk-based assessment was conducted within this search area.

3.2 Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment

Structures likely to be impacted by the proposed works were inspected to determine the potential for bat roosts to be present, using the methods specified in the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, 2016).

Buildings, structures on the site were categorised as having either 'negligible', 'low', 'moderate' or 'high' roosting potential and this was determined by applying the definitions given within the BCT Guidelines (see Table 3-1). Evidence of bat activity associated with potential roost sites includes bat droppings, urine staining, feeding remains, scratch marks and dead/alive bats.

Furthermore, the suitability of habitats across the site to support commuting and foraging bats was assessed in terms of habitat type, abundance, connectivity and distribution. These were categorised as having either 'negligible', 'low', 'moderate' or 'high' suitability for bats which was determined by applying the categories given within the BCT Guidelines (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of sites for bats

Suitability	Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.

	support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat	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. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, treelined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

3.3 Limitations

Data from biological records centres or online databases is historical information, and datasets might be incomplete, inaccurate or missing. It is important to note that even where data is held, a lack of records for a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species is absent; the area may simply be under-recorded. As such, records cannot be relied on and serve only as an indication of what might/ might not be found.

Due to the vaulted nature of the roof in the eastern section of the building there was no access to the small roof void in this area of the building. However, external assessment of this section of the building was completed as part of the survey.

The survey visit was completed outside of the bat activity season. However, while bats were less likely to be active at this time of year, evidence of the presence of bats (e.g. droppings) will remain throughout the year and therefore can still be observed.

Only the house on site was covered by this survey, no trees or other structures within the site were assessed as part of this visit.

3.4 Survey Details

A site survey was undertaken on 30th July 2021 by Jonathan Harrison BSc MSc MCIEEM.

4 Survey Results

4.1 Desk Study

The data presented below (see Table 4-1) includes the most recent record, and record within closest proximity to the site for each bat species. Only data post the year 2000 is included.

Table 4-1 Bat Records within 2km of the site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location and Date
Brown Long-eared Bat/Long-eared Bat Species	<i>Plecotus auritus/Plecotus sp.</i>	The closest and most recent record was from 2019, from 0.25km to the south west of the site. The closest record of a roost was from 2016, 0.9km to the south west of the site.
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	The closest and most recent record was from 2019, 0.25km to the south west of the site.
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	The only record of this species is from 2018, 0.85km to the north west of the site.
Noctule Bat	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	The closest record is from 2016, 0.3km to the north west of the site. The most recent record is from 2018, 0.85km to the north west of the site.
Pipistrelle Bat species	<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>	The only record is from 2011, 1.55km to the north west of the site.
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	The closest record was from 2016, 0.3km west of the site. The most recent record was from 2018, 0.85km north west of the site. The only record of a roost was from 2017, 1.6km southwest of the site.
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	The closest record was from 2013, 0.18km to the west of the site. The most recent record was from 2019, 0.24km to the south west of the site. The only confirmed roost record was from 2017, 1.55km to the south west of the site.
Western Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	The only record for this species was from 2016, 0.3km to the north west of the site.

4.2 Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.2.1 Site Details

Exterior

The building is a single storey with a small attic space at the southern end of the building. It is constructed from brick with a concrete and pebble dashed render which for the most part is in good condition with a couple of areas where the bricks are exposed on the north western exposure. No openings to large voids between the bricks and concrete render had resulted in these exposed areas.

The roof is a pitched timber construction with slate tiles (see photographs 1 and 2 in Appendix A). Due to the elevation of the surrounding land it was possible to clearly see the roof and all tiles appeared to be closely fitting and in good order. The slate tiles appeared to all be close fitting to the timber construction beneath, although, there is the potential for small voids beneath. However, at the time of the survey no access to this area could be identified with all tiles in good order and soffits and barge boards present on all aspects of the pitched roofed sections of the building. These were constructed of timber were generally tight fitting. Two chimneys were present on the building, however both are fitted with cowl that blocks access to the building.

There are numerous windows along each aspect of the building, however, these are currently boarded up with plywood.

Interior

The building is not currently in use and is largely empty. It consists of two rooms with a small loft space above the small room at the northern end of the property.

The roof consists of the timber boards (see photos in Appendix A) supported by a metal frame.

It was possible to inspect all areas of the interior including the fireplaces and no signs of bats within the building were recorded.

4.3 Habitats

The property is adjacent to a large area of unlit upland grassland habitats with continuous woodland present, predominantly conifer plantations. It is separated from this area by a well-lit main road. The habitats in the surrounding landscape provides ample suitable habitat for foraging bat species and it is likely that patches of broadleaved woodland provide foraging opportunities as well as a number of buildings on the edge of this area.

5 Evaluation and Recommendations

5.1 Evaluation

No previous records for bat species were found for the site following the data request for historic biological records from SEWBRc. However, records for a range of bat species, including both field records and records of confirmed bat roosts were returned from within 2km of the site. It is likely that there are a number of bats active in the surrounding landscape and the habitats immediately adjacent to the house and in the wider area present ideal habitat for both roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

The building is considered to have a low to negligible potential for bats in its current state. It is considered that the interior does provide low potential for void roosting species, however, no ingress or egress points were identified and it is considered important that this remains the case up until the case up until the point that the building is refurbished.

No bats were detected utilising the property and there are no restrictions on the timing of the work in relation to bats. Extra care will be taken at wall tops, and when stripping any part of the roof if necessary. All materials are to be lifted and not slid as – despite a negative survey – bats can still be found in these areas.

Features on the outside of the building present limited potential for use for crevice dwelling species (e.g. Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

5.2 Recommendations

If additional lighting is planned for the site, this should be considerate of bats and should be designed following the principles within the guidance issued by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP, 2018).

Appendices

A Photographs



Photograph 1: View of the house from the east.



Photograph 2: Interior roof space



Photograph 3: Areas of exposed brickwork where concrete render has fallen off.



Photograph 4: Chimney on the central roof and windows boarded up.



Photograph 5: Interior showing intact window frames.

References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

ILP (2018) *Guidance Note 08: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK*. Institute of Lighting Professionals, Rugby.

Offices at

Coleshill
Doncaster
Dublin
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
Haywards Heath
Isle of Man
Limerick
Newcastle upon Tyne
Newport
Peterborough
Saltaire
Skipton
Tadcaster
Thirsk
Wallingford
Warrington

Registered Office
1 Broughton Park
Old Lane North
Broughton
SKIPTON
North Yorkshire
BD23 3FD
United Kingdom

+44(0)1756 799919
info@jbaconsulting.com
www.jbaconsulting.com
Follow us:  

Jeremy Benn Associates Limited

Registered in England 3246693

JBA Group Ltd is certified to:
ISO 9001:2015
ISO 14001:2015
ISO 27001:2013
ISO 45001:2018

