



**CARDONNEL COURT NURSING HOME, CARDONNEL ROAD,
NEATH**

BAT SURVEY

ISSUE 1, VERSION A

JUNE 2023

Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to demolish a former nursing home and replace it with a new 16 bed care facility.

An initial bat inspection survey of the site was undertaken on 17th March 2023. No bats or evidence of bats was seen on the exterior of the building, however, the building has a number of features suitable for roosting bats. As a result, the building was determined as being of at least moderate potential for roosting bats with a minimum of two activity surveys required.

Subsequent activity surveys revealed that the property is not a bat roost. Due to the difficult viewing angle of the building, it is considered necessary that the works are undertaken in line with a non-licensed method statement to safeguard the slight possibility of roosting bats. If at any point bats are observed, all works will cease, BE Ecological Ltd engaged and NRW consulted. Further surveys and/or a licence may be required prior to works re-commencing.

No evidence of breeding birds were found throughout the buildings at the time of survey. However, a single blue tit and a number of sparrows were seen throughout the survey.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey and subsequent activity surveys of a former care home for the potential presence of birds and bats in order to support a planning application to demolish the property and replace it with a 16 bed care home.

The surveys were undertaken in line with the current guidance on standards for bat surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.2 Site description

The building is a brick and block built, pebble dash rendered structure beneath a clay tile roof. The building is located immediately to the west of Cardonnel Road, Skewen, Neath (figure 1). The building is large and complex with multiple rooves, valleys and pitches. Generally the ridges run from south west to north east and north west to south east. The building is the subject of antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

The site is located on the edge of an urban area but is surrounded by trees and broad-leaved woodland and a railway line to the east. The site is adjacent to the (NPTSINC099 Pentrefynnon).



Figure 1- detailed view of site (arrowed red) (Google Maps, 2023)

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to demolish the existing building and replace it with a 16 bed care home.



2 LEGISLATION & POLICIES

BATS

2.1 Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) provides safeguards for European Protected Species (those listed under Annex IV Habitats Directive). With regards to bats, this makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) capture, injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) disturb a bat in a way that would (significantly in Scotland) affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy a roost (this is an 'absolute' offence)
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

2.2 Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the legislation for England and Wales for nature conservation, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost

2.3 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires that all public authorities, when carrying out their functions in Wales, seek to "maintain and enhance biodiversity" where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to "promote the resilience of ecosystems". This ensures that biodiversity is an integral part of the decisions that public authorities take in relation to Wales. It also links biodiversity with the long term health and functioning of our ecosystems, therefore helping to align the biodiversity duty with the framework for sustainable natural resource management provided in the Act. In Wales, this legislation replaces and enhances the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) which sought to raise the profile of biodiversity and to make sure that it is considered in all local authority decisions by ensuring that "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.". Other elements of NERC 2006 may still apply.

BIRDS

In Britain, all naturally occurring species (including hawfinches) are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The legislation protects all birds, their nests and eggs, and it is an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird;
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built; and
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

In addition, birds listed on Schedule 1 of the above legislation, such as the red kite (*Milvus milvus*), are afforded further protection, and it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb the bird whilst nest building or while at (or near) a nest with eggs or young; and
- Disturb the dependant young of such a bird.

Some birds however are exempt from this protection for certain purposes.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Survey Objectives

- To carry out an initial bat inspection survey the building
- To present the above details and if necessary further surveys, recommendations for mitigation, future research and compensation within this report.
- To carry out a scoping survey for breeding birds

3.2 Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of a five parts:

- Initial bat inspection survey of building (including birds)
- Data search
- Activity survey 1
- Activity survey 2
- Activity survey 3

3.3 Data Search

The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) were formerly requested to supply a Bat and Roof-nesting Birds (BARB) survey for the site. The survey to provide; bat records within a 2km buffer, roof nesting birds within 150m buffer plus a list of all Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and sites of Special of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated for bat species within a 10km site buffer in June 2022.

3.4 Surveyor Information

The inspection survey was undertaken by Beth Evans. Beth is the owner of BE ECOLOGICAL LTD and has a postgraduate degree in Environmental Biology: Conservation & Resource Management, specialising in British bats. Beth has 11 years' experience of ecological surveys, both in a small scale and large multi-disciplinary context. Beth also holds Natural Resources Wales and Natural England bat licences to disturb and handle bats. Beth was accompanied on the survey by Gavin Vella.

Beth Evans was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rogers, Stephen Shutt, Gavin Vella, Dion Rowles and Sylvia Sanyalou. Stephen is an experienced licensed bat ecologist. Michael Hogan held a bat licence in Wales for many years. Gavin vella is an experienced ornithological surveyor and bat surveyor, with Mike, Dion and Sylvia having undertaken numerous bat surveys with BE Ecological Ltd over the last two seasons.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

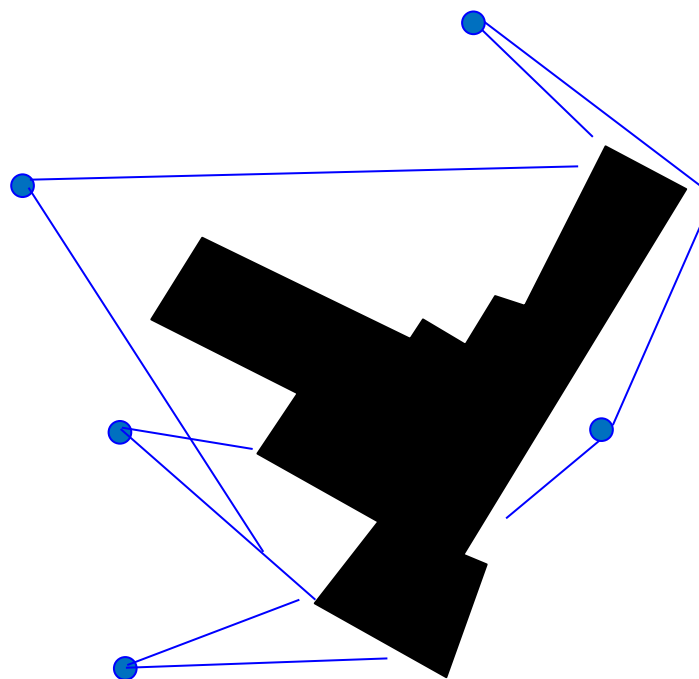
An initial inspection survey was carried out on 17th March 2023 by Beth Evans to search the building, both internally and externally to identify potential bat roosting areas and signs of bat use including; live bats, dead bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks and discarded prey items. The buildings and all areas/items of interest were recorded and photographed. Extension ladders/steps were used to safely access areas where no safe access was available the survey was conducted using, close focus binoculars and/or a high powered lamp.

3.6 Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)

Building 'emergence' and 're-entry' surveys were carried out on the following dates, times and weather conditions. Climatic conditions including rain, wind, temperature and cloud cover were recorded for each survey using a hand held Kestrel 4500 weather station.

3.6.1 Survey 1- 3rd May 2023

A dusk survey was carried out on 3rd May 2023 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors and cameras were equipped with Batlogger M detectors.



Approximate surveyor location

3.6.2 Survey 2- 18th May 2023

A dusk survey was carried out on 18th May 2023 as above.

3.5.1 Survey 3- 21st June 2023

A dusk survey was carried out on 21st June 2023 as above.

3.7 Survey limitations

Any survey for bat species can only be a series of snapshots in time. Bats are highly mobile, long lived creatures (capable of living up to 30 years, sometimes longer) with complex social structures and utilising multiple roost sites within a year. The implications of this are that surveys and surveyors have to make informed assumptions based on observations, recorded data, local information and a detailed knowledge of the species.

Access around some areas of the building is dangerous and not accessible to surveyors for health and safety reasons. In addition to this, there are numerous trees surrounding the building that obscure view. Surveys were undertaken as best as practically possible.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Designated Sites

The site is adjacent to the Pentrefynnon SINC (NPTSINC099 Pentrefynnon) (noted from pre-application comments). Please note the data search did not identify this site as a SINC.

The closest records of roosting bats refer to roosts of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats approximately 180m from the site.

Other records further afield refer to noctule, myotis sp., and soprano pipistrelle.

4.2 Inspection survey

4.2.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the building. However, a number of potential access points for bats were noted. These include but are not limited to:

- Gaps beneath ridge tiles
- Gaps beneath slipped/missing tiles
- Gaps via smashed windows and doors
- Gaps beneath fascias/soffits
- Gaps beneath lead flashing

As a result of the above, the building is of at least moderate potential and therefore will require at least two activity surveys to be undertaken in the appropriate season (May to September) prior to any planning determination.

4.2.2 Internal survey results

The building is the subject of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. As a result it was deemed unsafe for surveyors to enter the building due to human presence at the time of survey. This is unlikely to be a constraint as further emergence surveys have been recommended and commissioned. Any bats in the building will be observed during these surveys.

1.1 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

1.2 Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions

Table 1: Schedule and weather conditions

Visit	Date (sunrise) (sunset)	Start End	Time	Temp C	Wind	Cloud Cover	Notes
Survey 1 03/05/23	20:42	Start End	20:30 22:15	14 13	Low Low	30% 15%	Dry evening, insects flying
Survey 2 18/05/23	21:05	Start End	20:50 22:35	18 18	Low Low/moderate	100% 100%	Dry evening insects flying
Survey 3 21/06/23	21:37	Start End	21:25 23:10	10 18	Low Moderate	60% 40%	Dry evening insects flying

1.3 Activity Survey Results

1.3.1 Survey 1- 3rd May 2023

Activity was moderate throughout the course of the survey.

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle, the bat was seen foraging along the vegetation to the north of the site approximately 15 minutes post sunrise. Following this, common pipistrelle bats were also seen foraging along the street to the south of the development site.

Throughout the course of the survey, a small number of common and soprano pipistrelles were seen foraging along the vegetated boundaries of the site. Approximately 40 minutes post sunrise a lesser horseshoe bat was recorded by the surveyor to the west of the building, foraging along the railway line to the rear.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the building on this date.

4.2.1 Survey 2- 18th May 2023

The results of this survey were similar to that of the previous survey with common and soprano pipistrelle activity present at the site for the majority of the night with bats favouring the tree lines surrounding the building.

A small number of noctule calls were heard throughout the course of the survey but the bats were not seen.

A small number of myotis sp. calls (natterers) were heard along the railway line to the west later into the evening. A number of common pipistrelles were observed flying high over the building at sunset.

No other bats emerged from or interacted with the building on this date.

4.2.2 Survey 3- 21st June 2023

Bat activity was relatively low compared with that of the previous two surveys.

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle approximately 30 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen foraging along the vegetation to the north of the site.

Small numbers of soprano and common pipistrelle calls were heard throughout the course of the survey with a single noctule and myotis sp. pass towards the end of the survey at the north of the site.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the building on this date.

4.3 Identified Roosts

The building was not identified as a bat roost on this date.

4.4 Conclusion & Recommendations

Bat activity at the site is moderate across the full set of surveys. Species heard include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, myotis sp and lesser horseshoe bats.

No bat roosts were identified within the building on the site. Due to the complex access around the building, it is considered necessary that the works are undertaken in line with a method statement (appended to this report).

If at any point bats or evidence of bats are found, all works will cease, BE Ecological Ltd will be informed, NRW consulted. Further surveys and/or a licence may be required prior to works recommencing on the building.

4.5 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the buildings at the time of survey. Should a birds nest be identified within the building during works, it will be left until such a time the young have fledged the nest of their own accord.

5 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Active Season Usage

At the time of survey it appears that the building is not a bat roost.

5.2 Hibernation Season Usage

It is considered that due to the level of disturbance presence at the building. Hibernation is unlikely.

5.3 Ecological Impacts of development

It is considered that the property is not a bat roost and therefore impacts on roosting bats are unlikely.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

Three bat tubes <https://www.nhbs.com/ib-vl-05-vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-batbox> or similar will be installed in the south eastern elevation of the new build. The bat boxes will be positioned beneath the eaves and protected from any lighting.

6.2 Birds

Three Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terraces or the following <https://www.nhbs.com/sparrow-terrace-nest-box> will be attached to the northern and eastern elevations of the new build.

Native species planting will be incorporated into the final design and any landscaping.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 Timing

It is considered that the building is not a bat roost and therefore restrictions on timings are not necessary.

7.1.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A- the building is not a bat roost

7.1.3 Lighting

Bat boxes and any bat mitigation/compensation will not be directly illuminated. All external lighting will face downwards and be set on timers to ensure that bats can use the area should they wish. – In addition to this, any onsite lighting will conform to the following guidelines:

<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

The eastern boundary of the site (railway line) should be protected from any onsite lighting due to the presence of lesser horseshoe bats.

7.1.4 Bat Licensing

A bat licence will not be required in this instance.

7.1.5 Supervision

N/A.

7.1.6 Compliance

Following completion of the project, the ecologist will visit the site to verify the correct installation of

the enhancement measures. E-mail confirmation will be issued to the LPA.

8 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust. (2016) *Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004) *The bat workers' manual (3rd Edition)*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (HMSO).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (as amended) (HMSO).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO).

APPENDIX A- PHOTOGRAPHS







9 METHOD STATEMENT

1. A suitably licenced and experienced ecologist will be on call for the duration of the works.
2. Before any work begins on site, a briefing for contractors and other site-staff 'toolbox talk' will be given by an ecologist. The briefing will cover the issues in respect of protected species they may encounter on site, where they might find them, methods of working, and what they need to know to avoid committing an offence. Every briefing attendee will be provided with a copy of a Method Statement and the contact details of an ecologist and Natural Resources Wales.
3. If at any point bats or evidence of bats is found, all works will cease, BE Ecological Ltd informed and NRW consulted.
4. If bats or their signs are found, a EPS licence may be required before works can legally resume.