



YGG Tregelles

Bat Survey Report

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by

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DECLARATION

The information, advice and opinions which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB Price'.

Ecologist (Planning & Consultancy)

The following report is considered a reasonable and true representation of the ecological situation on the site assessed. The report is however just a snapshot assessment therefore the authors are unable to guarantee that all biodiversity interest has been identified. In addition, if works are not undertaken, a programmed re-assessment will be required. The survey information is considered applicable for two years from the date of the survey.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

YGG Tregelles in Neath Abbey is demolishing an old block to make space for car parking and constructing a new block on the existing playing fields adjacent to the school.

Presence/Absence bat surveys were carried out in 2025 to assess if there was a bat roost present in the buildings.

Moderate levels of activity were recorded on site during the initial emergence survey. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

Moderate levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the second emergence survey. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

No bats were observed roosting within the building complex. A derogation license from Natural Resources Wales will not be required for demolition.

As a form of enhancement, it is recommended that bird and bat boxes are included on the new school block. The exact location of these will be confirmed with the ecologist on site during installation.

As the design of the new building has not yet been undertaken, design of the new building should be carried out in collaboration with the Council ecologist to ensure the Statutory biodiversity duty is met during the design process and that appropriate mitigation and enhancement is included

This report is valid until July 2027.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SITE LOCATION

At the time of writing, YGG Tregelles in Neath Abbey is proposed for a partial demolition and rebuild. Location is shown on the aerial photograph below. Grid reference for centre of old block for demolition is SS73213 97485.



Figure 1 - Site location, block to be demolished highlighted in red

The building is surrounded by a school building complex in the middle of a relatively urban setting. A church and graveyard are set to the east of the site (there is a known bat roost in the church). A railway line bordered by woodland runs behind the site.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

At the time of writing, the old block highlighted is to be demolished and a new block is to be built on the field adjacent to the graveyard. At the moment, there are no proposed plans to indicate what the new block footprint or design will be.

1.3 SCOPE OF SURVEY

The objectives of the survey were to obtain sufficient data to:-

1. Identify potential bat activity levels and use of buildings on site e.g. roosting within the buildings identified and/or foraging in and around the surrounding area;
2. Identify any other potential constraints to redevelopment on the site from other species present;
3. Assess whether the proposed redevelopment of the buildings on site would be likely to have an impact upon those species, if present;
4. Make recommendations for further survey work (if necessary) to establish the seasonal use of the site and to help determine the species status, if present; and
5. Recommend a mitigation strategy (where possible) for those habitats/species present that pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

2 BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.1.1 SURVEY METHOD

An external building assessment was undertaken which assessed the suitability of the building to support roosting bats.

Externally the building was surveyed, with the aid of binoculars where necessary, for evidence of access points and droppings, grease marks and urine staining. The buildings were examined in order to identify features that are favoured by bats as roosting sites, including pitched roofs with a void/loft, behind fascia boards and soffits, in and through gaps around windows and hanging tiles or weatherboarding. Any potential access points are recorded, along with any external physical evidence of use by roosting bats, such as urine staining and/or droppings around access points, on windows and on window ledges.

An assessment of the potential of the building to support nesting birds was also carried out at the same time.

2.1.2 SURVEY RESULTS

Due to the state of the internal building (weather damage) and suspended ceilings, it was not considered appropriate to go above the ceiling to inspect roof spaces.

Table 1 below contains photos providing an overview of the overall structure of the roof.

Table 1. Photos showing YGG Tregelles



South elevation of the school showing slate roof



End of building facing east

The building is an old teaching block with slate roof and rendered walls. It is one storey with tall internal ceilings with suspended ceilings.

Potential access points for roosting bats were observed during the preliminary roosting assessment: gaps were observed between the ridgetiles and roof, the soffits and fascias also had several gaps all the way around the building. Overall, the building was considered to be of Moderate/high potential to support roosting bats, given the features present.

3.2 EMERGENCE SURVEY

3.2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The surveys were conducted in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins J. 2016). The building was assessed as having Moderate potential to support roosting bats. Two emergence surveys were carried out.

The first dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 14th May 2025 (by Megan Price and Lewis Badham) in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset. Surveyors were positioned so they could see all elevations at the same time.

The second dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 1st July 2025 (by Megan Price and Richard Pulman) in weather conditions conducive to bat activity i.e. little or no rain and temperatures in excess of 10° C. The emergence survey began approximately 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours after sunset. Surveyors were located at opposite sides of the school.

Each surveyor was equipped with a Anabat Scout detector.

Thermal imaging cameras (Guide TK612) were used to cover all aspects of the building and the footage was watched back the next day to confirm that no bats were missed by surveyors during the emergence surveys.

8 thermal cameras were deployed to cover the building elevations appropriately (including areas that were unable to be viewed by the surveyors), 4 scout bat detectors were used to record bat activity throughout the site.

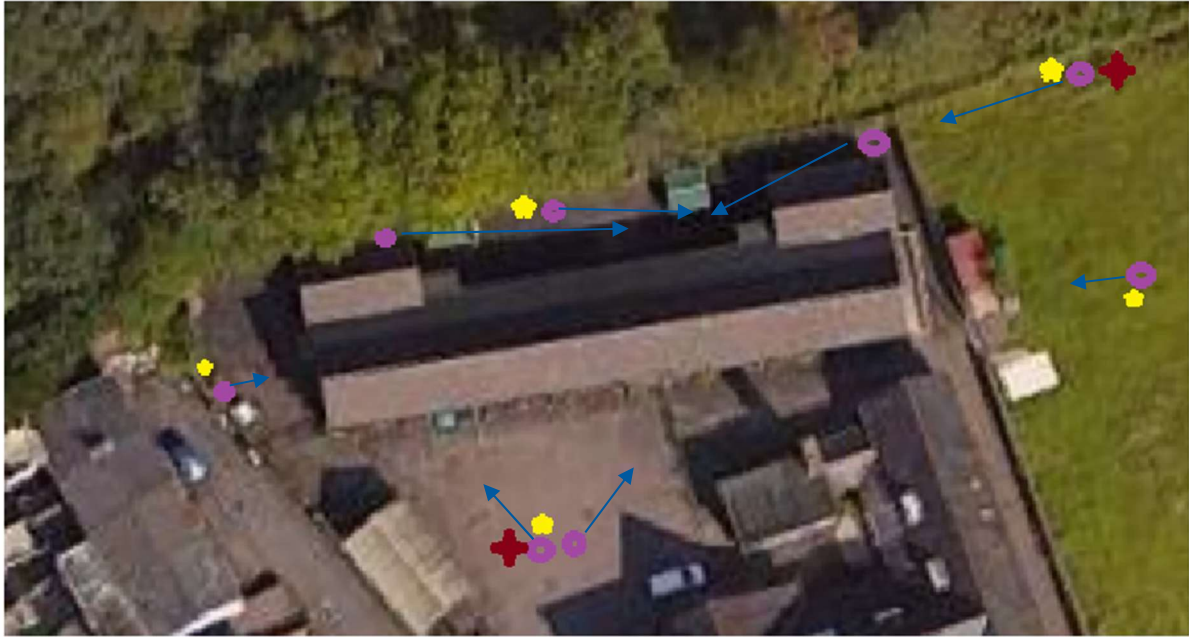


Figure 2 - Location of Thermal cameras and scout detectors



- Thermal camera position



- Scout detector position



- Surveyor position



- Camera direction

3.2.2 LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations to the survey as it was carried out at the correct time of year in conducive weather conditions.

3.2.3 RESULTS

14th May 2025

Moderate levels of activity were recorded on site during the initial emergence survey. Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bats were observed commuting across the site and using the railway line adjacent to the site. Bats were observed foraging and flying close to and above the school building. No bats were observed leaving the building over the course of the survey.

1st July 2025

Moderate levels of bat activity were recorded on site during the emergence survey. Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats were observed foraging across the site.

Conclusion

There were moderate levels of bat activity across the site on both surveys, most of the foraging activity was along the north boundary of the site which has a wooded corridor with railway line behind it. There was a lot of foraging on the adjacent playing field concentrated on the wooded boundary. However, activity with bats interacting with the building was low and it is deemed that bats are not roosting in the building for demolition.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATION

4.1 SITE WORKS METHOD

It is unknown as to when works will commence upon the building and the proposed plans for the demolition and new block have not reached design stage. It is assumed that the old block will be demolished, and the new block will be built on the adjacent playing field however the exact location and size of footprint is unknown at this point in time. A derogation license from Natural Resources Wales will not be required for roofing works.

If the building is not demolished in the next 2 years a repeat bat survey will be required to ensure there have been no changes in bat use of the building.

It is recommended that the designers liaise with the council ecologist at all stages of the design process to minimise loss of grassland on the playing field and that appropriate mitigation can be built into the scheme. A green roof, living walls, rainwater planters and areas of the field being changed to a cut and collect regime could be included in the design process.

4.2 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

In line with the general principles set out in SPG: Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018) and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the application is required to demonstrate how biodiversity enhancement is to be achieved.

As a form of enhancement, it is recommended that bird and bat boxes be deployed upon the new building, in line with manufacturing guidance. The exact location of these will be confirmed with the ecologist on site during installation.

Design of the new building should be carried out in collaboration with the Council ecologist to ensure the Statutory biodiversity duty is met during this scheme and that appropriate mitigation and enhancement is included.

5 REFERENCES

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