

A Bat Survey Report
on behalf of

Mr. Justin McCarthy
for
Ynysgau Chapel
Wyndham Street
Troedyrhiw
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4JY



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Project Overview

Client	Mr. Justin McCarthy
Site / Job	Ynysgau Chapel
Report Type	Preliminary Roost Assessment and Bat Activity Survey
Report Reference	LT093-PRA/BAS
Grid Refence	SO 07175 02252
Survey Date	September 2023
Lead Surveyor(s)	Nic Aldridge

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1	Published	30.09.2023	Nic Aldridge	Phil Morgan
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Limitations

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The assessments made assume that the site(s) and facilities will continue to be used for their current purpose without significant change. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Little Wing Ecology (CYF).

Executive Summary

Summary	Little Wing Ecology (CYF) was commissioned to undertake a Bat Activity Survey, of a site known as, 'Ynysgau Chapel, Wyndham Street, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4JY.' The survey was undertaken to inform the client of any constraints, and associated planning requirements with regards to protected species, and to inform a planning application.
About the Site	Building A is a derelict and roofless former chapel. It occupies an urban plot of approximately 20m x 10m and is a traditionally built in stone and brick, with a cement render. The structure is situated off a main service road (Wyndham Street), adjacent to the Merthyr-Cardiff railway line, and in close proximity to the A4054 (Cardiff Road). Building A sits centrally within Troedyrhiw ≈4.3km south of Merthyr Tydfil town centre.
Proposed Development	Planning permission is sought for the demolition of Building A, and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings.
Results	Following guidelines set out on Bat Conservation Trusts Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023), Building A was categorised as being of moderate risk, requiring a dusk survey for bats on two occasions. Following two dusk emergence surveys, no evidence of Building A supporting a bat roost was recorded and bats roosts are likely absent from the structure.
Other Ecological Considerations	During the first visit a common pipistrelle maternity roost was identified in an adjacent building and the main entrance to the roost was at the apex of the southern gable, ≈1m from the boundary with Building A.
Recommendations	<u>Recommendation 1 (Additional Survey Work)</u> No further survey is recommended at this time. In the event that works do not start within two years (i.e., September 2024) further survey may be necessary to qualify the roost status and recommended adaptations (if required) to the mitigation measure detailed below. <u>Recommendation 2 (Mitigation of Impacts on Adjacent Maternity Roost.)</u> - Proposed plan must not obstruct the entrance to the adjacent common pipistrelle maternity roost. - The roost entrance must not be subject to artificial lighting as this would result in disturbance. - Plans to include details of a usable flight path for the animals, from the roost to the adjacent foraging (rear gardens and railway line). - A planting scheme will be used to facilitate this flight path. This could take the form of a standard, native broadleaved tree and a dark corridor between Building A and Number 35 Wyndham Street (space is very limited on this plot). - It is essential; that the roost is not disturbed or obstructed during the demolition or construction process, artificial lighting to be avoided and no scaffolding erected near the roost entrance. - Works to be undertaken October-April, outside of the period when the roost is occupied. <u>Recommendation 3 (Lighting During Development)</u> If any development is to be conducted between March and September (inclusive), efforts must be made to avoid any adverse impacts on the commuting and foraging of bats near the site. External lighting must be restricted during the development period to that which is necessary for safety and security. This must be kept to a minimum. <u>Recommendation 4 (Post Development Lighting Scheme)</u> To prevent any adverse impact upon the potential roosting, commuting and foraging habitats for bats adjacent to Building A (post development), specifically on the adjacent mature trees, the lighting plan for the site must be functional and directional only and kept to a minimum servicing the public areas of the proposed development (as required for safety and security). <u>Recommendation 5 (Hibernation and Pipistrelles)</u> As pipistrelle species are known to hibernate in buildings a precautionary approach will be followed. Any works with regards to the stripping of roofing materials or exposing the wall plate during the winter months (October-April: inclusive) to be supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced bat ecologist under the direction of a method statement. <u>Recommendation 6 (Nesting Birds)</u> If any features associated with nesting birds are required to be altered during the bird breeding season, then a further inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist is required no more than 24 hours before this process commences. <u>Recommendation 7 (Post Development Enhancements)</u> Bats: The incorporation of two Integrated Eco Bat Box (or similar - to be built into the southern gable of the proposed new unit. (https://www.nestbox.co.uk/search?type=product&q=bat+box - Appendix). Birds: Two Schwegler 1SP Nest Boxes (or similar) to be fitted at a height of >3m on the eastern elevation of the proposed new unit (https://www.nhbs.com/1sp-schwegler-sparrow-terrace).
This Executive Summary is intended to provide an overview of the assessment of the proposed development site based on information received by Little Wing Ecology (CYF) at the time of production. This Executive Summary should be read in conjunction with the full report.	



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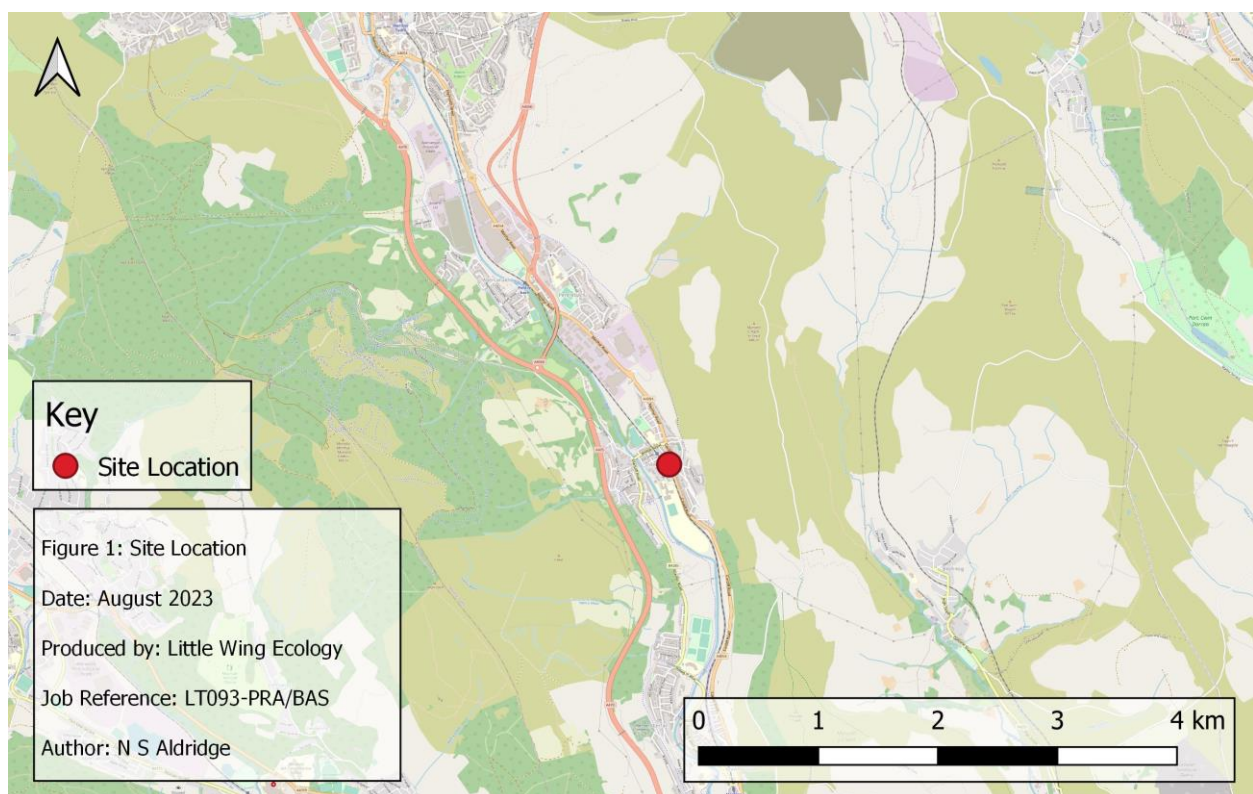
SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Little Wing Ecology (CYF) was commissioned to undertake a Bat Activity Survey, of a site known as, 'Ynysgau Chapel, Wyndham Street, Troedryhiw, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4JY.' The survey was undertaken to inform the client of any constraints, and associated planning requirements with regards to protected species, and to inform a planning application. For the purposes of this report, the structure will be referred to as, 'Building A.' The property is located at: SO 07175 02252.
- 1.1.2 This report contains the results from two dusk activity surveys, conducted during the summer months. Surveys were carried out with the purpose of identifying the presence/likely absence of bat roosts at Building A. Following survey, an assessment of the likely impact that the proposed works will have on bat interest at the site was carried out. This report has been prepared with recommendations for enhancement features to improve opportunities for local species post-development.

1.2 Proposed Works

- 1.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of Building A, and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings.



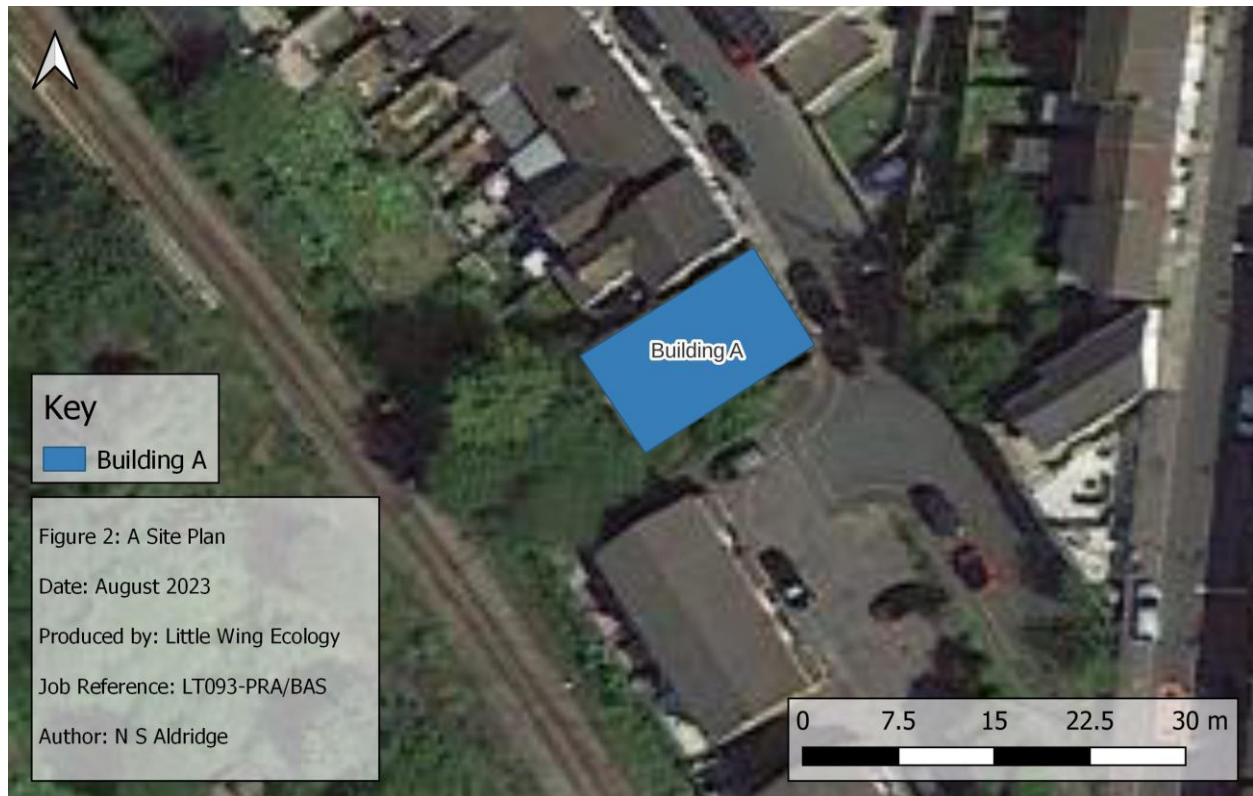
QGIS Development Team, <2022>. QGIS Geographic Information System. Open-Source Geospatial Foundation Project.

1.3 Site Description

- 1.3.1 Building A is a derelict and roofless former chapel. It occupies an urban plot of approximately 20m x 10m and is traditionally built in stone and brick, with a cement render. The structure is situated off a main service road (Wyndham Street), adjacent to the Merthyr-Cardiff railway line, and in close proximity to the

A4054 (Cardiff Road). Building A sits centrally within Troedyrhiw ≈4.3km south of Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

- 1.3.2 Habitats in the immediate vicinity of the structures are mixed, comprising other buildings and made surfaces, such as roads and pavements. Mature trees and shrubs line the adjacent railway line (≈20m), a large broadleaved woodland is present ≈180m to the east and the Afon Tâf is located ≈190m to the west.



QGIS Development Team, <2022>. QGIS Geographic Information System. Open-Source Geospatial Foundation Project.

1.4 Policy and Legislation

- 1.4.1 In Wales, all bat species and their roosts are legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation. This means you may be committing a criminal offence if you:
- Deliberately take, injure, or kill a wild bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats.
 - Damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time).
 - Possess, advertise, sell, exchange a bat of a species found in the wild in the EU (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- 1.4.2 The framework for this protection is provided within three pieces of legislation from the Government of Wales and the UK Government.
- 1.4.3 These are:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
 - The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) – as amended.

- 1.4.4 Additional information on the legal scope of these acts can be found in the Appendix and a link to the full documentation can be found in, 'References and Bibliography.'

1.5 Survey Aims & Objectives

- 1.5.1 Considering this legal framework and local planning requirements, the objectives of this survey were to:
- Determine the presence/likely absence of bat roost(s) at Building A.
 - Determine the species of bat present.
 - Determine the type of roost present (maternity, day roost etc).
 - Identify any bat foraging or commuting behaviour in relation to the location.
 - Consider if there will be impacts on bats from the proposed works.
 - Consider if nesting birds are present which might be affected by the development proposals.
 - Gather sufficient information to be able to make appropriate recommendations, inform mitigation and licencing.

SECTION TWO: THE SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Desktop Survey (Bats)

- 2.1.1 Available records for bats (within 2km) were provided by SEWBReC (LERC 0234-439).

2.2 Desktop Survey (Habitat)

- 2.1.1 A review of aerial photography was undertaken to assess the provision of suitable foraging and commuting habitat within proximity to Building A. This information was used in combination with a review of statutory designated sites, via the MAGIC website, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to help in confirming the presence of bat species locally.
- 2.1.2 Bats are considered cryptic species and therefore it can be difficult to confirm whether they are present or not. Although the provision of local biological records would provide a range of information, such records can only be relied upon as relative where they are reasonably recent and when supplied by an experienced bat surveyor. It was therefore considered necessary to undertake a detailed survey regardless of the data search results, as this is most likely to be beyond the acceptability of current data as defined in BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development and will not be as effective as spending time examining and or monitoring the buildings for the presence of bats.

2.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 2.3.1 A potential nest and roost assessment survey was carried out on the interior and exterior of Building A by a suitably experienced ecologist and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) licenced bat worker. The external fabric of the structure was methodically inspected using close-focusing binoculars and a high-powered torch for potential access points such as gaps in the fabric of the building, beneath lifted roof materials or other gaps in the roof. Loose flashing, smudge marks and droppings on walls directly below eaves and gables etc were also searched for. A description of the building, including construction material and current condition was recorded. Internally, the building was searched using a high-powered torch to identify possible links to exterior roost entrances and clear signs of presence via urine staining, feeding remains, odour, piles of droppings, live bats, and bat carcasses. The space was also examined in the dark to identify areas where the presence of light would identify potential entry points for birds and bats. The aim of this survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and/or mitigation. During the field survey, an assessment of the habitats on-site and beyond the site boundary was undertaken. The aim of this was to identify potential commuting and foraging corridors, and suitable foraging sites. This enabled the suitability of the location for bats to be determined.

- 2.3.2 Nesting birds were also considered at the time of the survey, with the surveyor looking for signs of bird activity, nests, nest building, feeding at nest sites, and evidence of collections of bird droppings, feathers, or any other indications of use by birds.

2.5 Additional Ecological Considerations

- 2.5.1 Whilst a full ecological appraisal was not undertaken at the site, a note was made of any additional ecological considerations identified during the survey. For ease of reference these have been included within this report (Section 3).

2.6 Limitations of the Survey Method

- 2.6.1 A record was made of any constraints that limited the results of this survey report and is presented in Section 3.

2.7 Activity Surveys

- 2.7.1 Following guidelines set out in, 'Bat Conservation Trusts Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023)), Building A will be categorised for the level of risk of supporting bats and recommendations made as to the requirement (if any) for dusk activity surveys to determine the presence/likely absence of roosting bats, species identification, population size, roost type, and the requirement for any associated mitigation. If required, dusk survey(s) for bats will be conducted no less than 14 days apart. During any subsequent activity surveys, sufficient surveyors will be required to adequately cover all features identified during the PRA. Nocturnal bat surveys can be undertaken May–mid September, inclusive. Taking a precautionary approach, and dependent on the outcome of these surveys, additional survey work may be required, but only if higher than expected activity is recorded. Details of our surveyors and their experience is recorded in the Appendix.

2.8 Equipment (Activity Surveys)

- 2.8.1 The equipment used for dusk activity surveys provides high quality recordings of bat calls which are analysed using BatSound and AnalookW software. Recordings are annotated by the surveyors to provide contextual information on bat behaviour and flight patterns. At Little Wing Ecology (CYF) we use Pettersson D240x time expansion bat detector and Tascam DR-05X Portable Digital Recorder, Peersonic RPA3B full spectrum recorders and Anabat SD2 Frequency Division detectors. As a night vision aid (NVA) we use a MELCAM Video Camera Camcorder 1080P IR Night Vision Digital Camera. Audio for this is provided by an Anabat SD1. In addition, we use Audiomoth – a full-spectrum acoustic logger, based on the Gecko processor range from Silicon Labs.

SECTION THREE: RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Survey Results

- 3.1.1 The survey location was examined by consulting Magic Map. No part of the site contains, or is within, any statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). There are no Sites of Species Scientific Interest (SSSIs) on or adjacent to Building A.
- 3.1.2 The nearest SSSI are 'Cwm Glo a Glyndyrys,' which is located ≈3.1km northwest of Building A, and 'Caeau Nant y Groes,' which is located >4.1km west of Building A. At ≈9.2km south east is, 'Aberbargord Grasslands / Glaswelltiroedd Aberbargord,' (SAC/NNR) and at ≈12.7km north is, 'Cwm Cadlan,' (NNR).

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

PRA	Evidence
Building A: A traditionally built stone and brick, single storey chapel, now derelict. >95% of the roof has collapsed and sits inside the building. Joists have been cut at the gables. A small number of trusses remain in place near the western gable, but most of this is without a roof. A small number of slates remains intact at the northwest corner and the eaves are intact at this point for ≈2.5m. A small, single-story extension is present along the front (eastern gable). The corrugated steel roof on this structure is largely intact but interior ceilings have been removed and the structure is open at eaves (bargeboards are missing) making this a well-lit, and drafty space. This extension houses a small storeroom and toilet. No live bats were recorded and limited opportunities were present. The southern most of these small rooms was the darkest space. Nearly all of the wall palette is exposed. Dense ivy covered the southern elevation and mature trees/dense foliage face the western elevation. The southern and western elevations are fenced off with limited visibility. Several window frames remain in-situ and gaps were recorded around the top and sides of some of these frames. The interior of the structure contains the derelict remain of the roof and, what formerly would have been two interior rooms, now open to the elements with a few dark spaces and potentially dry roosting locations. The rubble to the interior provides potential in terms of cavities but on the whole is exposed to the elements with few dry, sheltered areas. A railway line runs close to the western elevation. This is lined with mature trees and shrubs and provided an excellent connectivity to the wider landscape.	No live bats or droppings recorded. No nests recorded.

Table 3.1: PRA

3.3 Results of Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.3.1 Following guidelines set out on Bat Conservation Trusts Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed.) (2016), Building A has been categorised as being of moderate risk, requiring a dusk survey for bats on two occasions. This survey represented the minimum recommended number of visits to give confidence in a negative result for structures.

3.4 Local Records for Bats

- 3.4.1 Local biodiversity records provided by SEWBRc returned 87 species records including 77 within 2km. There were 72 records for bat species and 15 records for bird species locally. Some of these were too old to be considered viable. There are four records for bats within 500m of Building A. None of these are species specific and are all recorded as Chiroptera (Bats). Between 0.5km-1km, there are an additional 12 records for bats including six for common pipistrelle, three for soprano pipistrelle, one for a myotis, and two unidentified.

3.5 Habitat and Satellite Imagery - Suitability for Commuting and Foraging Bats

- 3.5.1 There are several small areas of scattered woodland within the settlement of Troedyrhiw the most significant being adjacent to the railway line, and along the Afon Tâf. A larger broadleaved woodland is

present along the eastern boundary with the settlement. The Tâf, and adjacent railway run side by side at ≈900m to the south providing a degree of inter-connectivity. The Afon Tâf is a significant feature in the landscape, providing a high-quality foraging habitat and excellent connectivity.

- 3.5.2 The impact of artificial lighting on the site is mixed. The west of the plot represents a dark site, bordered by mature trees and the adjacent railway, with little impact from artificial street lighting. The east elevation is wholly urban and exposed to artificial lighting.

3.6 Suitability for Hibernating Bats

- 3.6.1 The features identified within the PRA are considered to offer a negligible risk at providing the hibernating conditions that bats prefer. No cellars/underground spaces were recorded during the surveys. As pipistrelle species are known to hibernate in buildings, this will need to be taken into consideration.

3.7 Activity Survey Recordings

- 3.7.1 On 08.08.23, a maternity roost for common pipistrelle was identified at the adjacent building (35 Wyndham Street). The main entrance to the roost was at the apex of the southern gable, ≈1m from the boundary with Building A. On exiting the roost, bats were flying directly into the interior (or over) Building A. As a consequence, while no evidence was recorded of bats using Building A as a roost, there were a number of foraging bats over and within Building A, which could not conclusively be linked back to this roost. As result of this, a second survey was arranged with the aim of confirming and clarifying the results. On this second visit (07.09.23), one surveyor was to be placed inside Building A, with direct observation of the internal structure, a second would be placed overlooking the structure, on the exterior, with a clear view of the adjacent roost entrance, and a third was to be placed facing the northern elevation, with a tally counter and walkie talkie to count/monitor the bat emerging from the maternity roost (and feedback to the other surveyors). In addition to a roost entrance at the southern gable of this structure, additional entrances were identified on the western elevation of the main roof and from the rear extension (west). During the first visit, 54 recordings made, including 41 of common pipistrelle, nine of noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), three of soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and one was an unidentified bat). In addition, 12 recordings were made of animals emerging from the adjacent building. 11 of which were confirm as common pipistrelle and one unidentified but likely the same species. Bat interest at Building A was predominantly foraging over and within the structure and along the mature trees to the west including along the adjacent railway line.
- 3.7.2 On 07.09.23, no evidence was recorded of bats using Buildings A as a roost, confirming the results of the previous survey. Of the 43 recordings made, 20 were for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) which were predominantly observed foraging over and within Building A and at mature trees to the west, above rear gardens (between Wyndham Street and the adjacent railway line). Twelve recordings were made of noctule bats which, while not seen, were recorded to the west and likely along the railway line. Seven recordings were made of soprano pipistrelle and seven recordings for a pipistrelle species. No animals emerged from the gable of 35 Wyndham Street and it is likely that these animals may have moved on to transitional roosts.

3.8 Infrared Video Survey

- 3.8.1 In addition to active monitoring using bat detectors, an infrared camera was deployed on the dusk activity surveys as a night vision aid (NVA).



Plate 1: Infrared Monitoring (Image quality)

3.9 Field Survey Details & Weather Conditions

Date	Timings (BST)		Notes, Sunset Times	Weather Conditions		
	Start	End		Variable	Start	End
11.07.2023	10.00	10.51	PRA	Temp (°C)	26.0	27.02
				Cloud Cover (Oktas)	0	0
				Precipitation	Drizzle	Nil
				Beaufort Scale	F1	F1
08.08.2023	20.30	22.05	Dusk Activity Survey Sunset: 20.51	Temp (°C)	18.3	19.2
				Cloud Cover (Oktas)	8	7
				Precipitation	Nil	Nil
				Beaufort Scale	F2	F1
07.09.2023	19.35	21.05	Dusk Activity Survey Sunset: 19.48	Temp (°C)	23.7	22.9
				Cloud Cover (Oktas)	6	6
				Precipitation	Nil	Nil
				Beaufort Scale	F0	F0

Table 3.2: Field Survey Details and Weather Conditions

3.10 Additional Ecological Constraints (Results)

- 3.10.1 Visibility along the western elevation was minimal due to dense vegetation and restricted access. However, all features of interest were visible by observers.
- 3.10.2 A maternity roost for common pipistrelle was identified at the adjacent building (35 Wyndam Street). The main entrance to the roost was at the apex of the southern gable, ≈1m from the boundary with Building A. On exiting the roost bats were flying directly into the interior (or over) Building A. Provision will be needed to protect this roost, from any direct or indirect impacts by the proposed development.

3.11 A Summary of Evidence

Survey Location	Species (Recorded)	Notes
Building A	Common pipistrelle	Droppings: No droppings were recorded at Building A. Live sightings: During two dusk observations, no bats were recorded emerging from Building A. All the observations and recordings made were of bats emerging for the adjacent building, commuting and foraging over or within building A and along adjacent woodland and gardens to the west of Wyndham Street. Roost Type: No roost has been identified at Building A. Bats are considered likely absent.
	Noctule	
	Soprano pipistrelle	

Table 3.3: Summary of Evidence

3.12 Impact Assessment

- 3.12.1 When the nature conservation significance of the site is considered against recognised criteria (Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004 and Good Practice Guide: NRW Approach to Bats and Planning October 2015 and IUCR Red List of Threatened Species), the nature conservation status of the site is assessed to be moderate, due to the presence of a maternity roost in the adjacent building. Bat roosts are considered likely absent from Building A. If unmitigated, the scale of this development is considered to affect the local bat population, with a moderate risk of detrimental impacts to the conservation status at a local level. Three species were recorded commuting/foraging near Building A; common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule (Least Concern – IUCN Red List). A cautionary approach will be recommended to mitigate impacts on commuting and foraging bats.

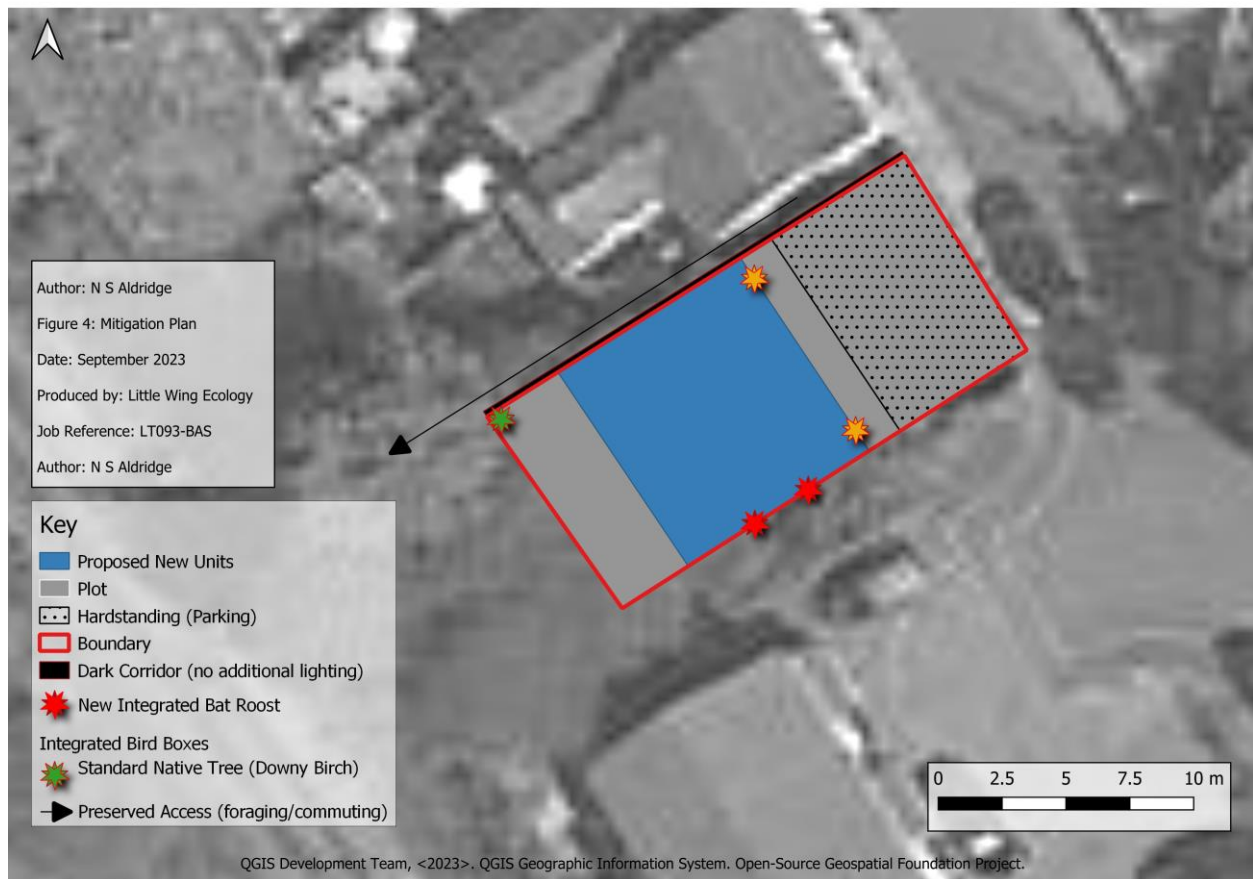


SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Following guidelines set out on Bat Conservation Trusts Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023), Building A was categorised as being of moderate risk, requiring a dusk survey for bats on two occasions. During the first visit a common pipistrelle maternity roost was identified in an adjacent building and the main entrance to the roost was at the apex of the southern gable, ≈1m from the boundary with Building A. On exiting the roost, bats were flying directly into the interior (or over) Building A. While no evidence was recorded of bats using Building A as a roost, there were a number of foraging bats over and within Building A that could not conclusively be linked back to this roost. As result of this, a second survey was planned with the aim of confirming and clarifying these results.
- 4.2 Following the second dusk emergence surveys, no evidence of Building A supporting a bat roost was

recorded and bats roosts are likely absent from the structure. Bat interest on site consisted of foraging and commuting (predominantly to the west) over and alongside the building and foraging associated with a mature treeline directly west of Wyndam Street and over neighbouring gardens. The interior of Building A was used for foraging. In total three species were confirmed as using the site for commuting and foraging: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule.

- 4.3 Special consideration will need to be taken of the maternity roost for common pipistrelle that was identified at the adjacent building (35 Wyndam Street). Provision will be needed to protect this roost from any direct or indirect impacts by the proposed development. Proposed plans must not obstruct this roost entrance and the roost entrance must not be subject to artificial lighting as this would result in disturbance. The flight path for the animals to the adjacent foraging site (rear gardens and railway line) must be planned for (e.g. a planting scheme). In addition, it is essential; that the roost is not disturbed or obstructed during the demolition or construction process, artificial lighting to be avoided and no scaffolding erected near the roost entrance. Works to be undertaken outside of the period when the roost is occupied (September-April).



- 4.4 All bat species and their places of rest are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The legal protection for bats concerns impacts from disturbance, loss of roost locations, modifications to roosts and loss of access or obstruction to roost locations. If impacts of this nature will arise, then a European Protected Species (EPS) licence will be required from NRW before any work is done which affects the roosts and the bat exit/entry points. As bat roosts are considered likely absent from Building A, a licence is not required at this time. In the event that works do not start within two years (i.e., September 2025) further survey and assessment will be necessary to qualify the results of this report and its recommendations. If at any point during works a protected species is encountered on-site, it is

essential that all work is to cease and that a suitably experienced ecologist is contacted for advice.

- 4.5 As pipistrelle species are known to hibernate in buildings a precautionary approach will be followed with particular reference to lintels, window frames and wall cavities.
- 4.6 Building A supports limited features that could be exploited by nesting birds, e.g., house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). A cautionary approach is recommended with particular reference to the small section of intact roof at the north-west corner.

SECTION FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS & ENHANCEMENTS

Based on the results of this report, it is recommended that the following conditions be included in the plans. These recommendations include enhancement features. These enhancement features are designed to support 'net gain' for biodiversity onsite, or off-site (if the proposed development cannot accommodate such requirements *in-situ*).

Recommendation 1 (Additional Survey Work)

No further survey is recommended at this time. In the event that works do not start within two years (i.e., September 2025) further survey may be necessary to qualify the roost status and recommended adaptations (if required) to the mitigation measure detailed below. If at any point during works a protected species is encountered on-site, it is essential that all work is to cease and that a suitably experienced ecologist is contacted for advice.

Recommendation 2 (Mitigation of Impacts on Adjacent Maternity Roost.)

- Proposed plan must not obstruct the entrance to the adjacent common pipistrelle maternity roost.
- The roost entrance must not be subject to artificial lighting as this would result in disturbance.
- Plans to include details of a usable flight path for the animals, from the roost to the adjacent foraging (rear gardens and railway line).
- A planting scheme will be used to facilitate this flight path. This could take the form of a standard, native broadleaved tree and a dark corridor between Building A and Number 35 Wyndham Street (space is very limited on this plot).
- It is essential; that the roost is not disturbed or obstructed during the demolition or construction process, artificial lighting to be avoided and no scaffolding erected near the roost entrance.
- Works to be undertaken September-April, outside of the period when the roost is occupied.

Recommendation 3 (Lighting During Development)

As a European Protected Species, disturbance of bats during foraging/commuting, even if accidental, is to be avoided. It is therefore recommended that the use of artificial lighting during the development of the site is avoided. External lighting must be restricted during the development period to that which is necessary for safety and security. This must be kept to a minimum.

If any development is to be conducted between March and September (inclusive), efforts must be made to avoid any adverse impacts on the commuting and foraging of bats near the site. External lighting must be restricted during the development period to that which is necessary for safety and security. This must be kept to a minimum.

Recommendation 4 (Post Development Lighting Scheme)

To prevent any adverse impact upon the potential roosting, commuting and foraging habitats for bats adjacent to Building A (post development), specifically on the adjacent mature trees, the lighting plan for the site must be functional and directional only and kept to a minimum servicing the public areas of the proposed development (as required for safety and security). It must be achieved using baffles and screens, if necessary, to ensure no light spill on any retained or planted vegetated (including off-site vegetation - e.g., there is a potential to impact animals using the nearby habitat features).

- A sensitive lighting scheme is recommended and must be created. The sensitive lighting scheme must follow advice details in 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK: Technical Guidance Note 08/23' (2023) and comprise of:

- Light fixtures, filaments, light spill and artificial light must be directed away from bat roost entrances, both existing and those to be created as part of the mitigation.
- Luminaries are to be LED only, due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability. Luminaires must have a warm white spectrum (ideally <2700 Kelvins), reducing the blue light component and increasing the red-light component.
- Luminaries must feature peak wavelengths high the 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats.
- Heights of fixtures must be carefully considered to minimise light spill. Only luminaries with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control must be used.
- Luminaries must always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e., no upward tilt.
- Any external security lighting must be set on motion sensors and short (15 second) timers.
- As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres must also be used, and directed away from any natural features and must not encroach outside the Site boundaries, particularly the surrounding trees, hedgerows, and other vegetation in the landscape.

Recommendation 5 (Hibernation and Pipistrelles)

As pipistrelle species are known to hibernate in buildings a precautionary approach will be followed. Any works with regards to the stripping of roofing materials or exposing the wall plate during the winter months (October-April – inclusive) to be supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced bat ecologist under the direction of a method statement. Stripping of roofing materials or exposing the wall plate during the winter months must be undertaken by a suitably experienced and licensed bat ecologist and only when temperatures are 10°C or above.

Recommendation 6 (Nesting Birds)

All nesting birds, their chicks' eggs and active nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). If a nest is discovered during works and is active, it must be left undisturbed until all the chicks have fledged. If any features associated with nesting birds are required to be altered during the bird breeding season, then a further inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist is required no more than 24 hours before this process commences. If an active nest is found by a site inspection, an exclusion zone around the nest will be necessary to preserve this feature until the chicks have fledged the nest.

These measures will allow the development to conform to current protective legislation as laid out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (plus amendments).

Recommendation 7 (Post Development Enhancements)

Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities (including local councils and the National Parks), 'must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.' This replaces the section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales, which states that; 'All public authorities have a statutory duty to conserve biodiversity in all of their functions.'

Local authorities are legally required to make efforts to protect and enhance wildlife and its habitat and this is executed, in part, through the requirement of an ecological assessment for planned development sites and therefore, we recommend the following principles of design must be followed:

Bats: To support the local bat population and increase roosting opportunities locally; post-development, the inclusion of features suitable for roosting bats to be included in the plans. In order to encourage bat roosting activity and increase roosting opportunities on-site post-development, it is recommended that an addition of two new roosting opportunities is provided as part of the development.

The incorporation of two Integrated Eco Bat Box (or similar - to be built into the southern gable of the proposed new unit. (<https://www.nestbox.co.uk/search?type=product&q=bat+box> - Appendix).

Birds: Two Schweidler 1SP Nest Boxes (or similar) to be fitted at a height of >3m on the eastern elevation of the

proposed new unit (<https://www.nhbs.com/1sp-schwegler-sparrow-terrace>).

SECTION SIX: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 ENCOUNTERING A PROTECTED SPECIES DURING WORKS

- 6.1.1 If at any point during works a protected species is encountered on-site, it is essential that all work is to cease and that a suitably experienced ecologist is contacted for advice.

6.2 EXPIRATION OF THIS REPORT

- 6.2.1 This report is valid for two years. In the event that works do not start within two years (i.e., September 2025) further survey and assessment will be necessary to qualify the results of this report and its recommendations.

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A. Site Photographs

Building A





B. Bats and The Law: Legislation in Wales

Policy	Description
The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019	Bats are specifically protected by (The Habitat Regulations). The Habitat Regulations are the way in which EU legislation is transposed into UK law. All species protected via this legislation are defined as 'European Protected Species.' The Habitat Regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in European Protected Species (i.e., those listed on Schedule 2), of which all UK bats are included. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of a license by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes but only after the LPA and NRW is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and that such actions will have no detrimental effect on the wild populations of bats.
The Environment (Wales) Act 2016	Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires all statutory authorities including Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to have due regard for living organisms and types of habitats that are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales. Furthermore, the LPA have a duty under the Act to take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitats included on any list published under Section 7 and to encourage others to take such steps.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (The WCA 1981) is the principal legislation by which most species are protected in Wales. Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981, which makes it an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost; intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or a roost, or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost. The interpretation of a bat roost is "any structure or place which any wild [bat]...uses for shelter or protection". Because bats tend to reuse the same roosts, the legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. In relation to birds, the WCA 1981 makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Schedule 1 of the WCA Act 1981 includes bird species for which addition the additional offence of disturbing these species at their nests or their dependent young.

c. Meet our Survey Team

Nic Aldridge (NA) is an ecologist with Little Wing Ecology and the author of this report. He is a licensed bat worker with over 20 years' experience in education and conservation and over five years' experience surveying built-structures, open habitats, and woodlands for bats. Following a degree in Botany and Zoology, Nic completed an MSc in Wildlife Management, Conservation and Control, at the University of Reading. He has practical experience in field-based research with a focus on invertebrate and vegetation diversity and producing phase 1 habitat surveys and habitat management plans. He has carried out the ringing of Daubenton's bats as part of a multi-year project on the species and has undertaken monitoring work on several important lesser horseshoe bat roosts. He has attended courses with the Bat Conservation Trust to improve his knowledge and skills and has led voluntary projects to develop habitats and collect species data. Nic founded Little Wing Ecology in 2021 as a social enterprise, to use the skills and expertise of an ecological consultancy to work with the local community, support local conservation projects and provide training and education for the next generation of ecologists.
Elizabeth Winstanley (LW) is a Nature Recovery Officer with the large Conservation Organisation and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. She has over seven years' experience working in practical conservation. Following a degree in Outdoor Education, Liz volunteered with a Wildlife Trust before taking on her current responsibilities. She has held her current position since 2015. During this time, Liz has undertaken numerous surveys and monitoring projects, including work on butterfly transects, phase 1 habitat surveys, reptile and amphibian surveys, upland monitoring, BTO bird box round, dormouse training and recording, bumblebee conservation – bee walks and many more. Currently Liz is responsible for the management of seven Nature Reserves including four SSSI 's. Liz has also attended several training sessions to develop her knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology.
Tracey Cotterell (TC) is a Learning Coach with Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone (Coleg Gwent) and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. Tracey has a lifelong love of nature and enjoys spending her spare time volunteering with organisations such as The Welsh Wildlife Trusts, Blaenavon Heritage and Coleg Gwent Equine department. She enjoys being outdoors, whether in a working capacity or for personal interest such as running, riding, or surfing. She has volunteered throughout her life in roles as varied as an NHS First Responder, to working for the Wildlife Trust. During this time, she has gained skills in volunteering with environmental conservation matters, and through being a signaller in a search and rescue team. Tracey enjoys the responsibility of conserving the surrounding environment, learning, and helping to regulate human activities to minimise direct and indirect negative impacts on both flora and fauna. Tracey has also attended several training sessions to develop her knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology.
Yvette Amos (YA) is a civil servant with Companies House and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. She has a lifelong love of nature and enjoys spending her spare time and vacations centred around nature and wildlife focused destinations. Yvette enjoys being outdoors, where she expresses her love of photography along with her interest in the natural world. She is experienced in data collection at a high level, having formerly worked for Cardiff University, School of Social Sciences and Computer Science. Yvette has attended several training sessions to develop her knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology and is dedicated to gaining experience in nature conservation, wildlife management and ecology.
Richard Farr (RF) is a Grounds Maintenance Operative with the Monmouthshire County Council and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. He has previously worked as a trainee for the Gwent wildlife Trust and currently in his second year of a bachelor's degree in ecology. Richard has a life-long love of nature during his time with the Gwent Wildlife Trust, he has gained a wide set of practical skills and experiences which have developed his knowledge and understanding of ecology and conservation at a range of the Trust's Local Nature Reserves. Richard is studying ecology and conservation science at UWE (University of West England) and is learning a wide range of skills including; field skills, habitat identification, species identification/classification, various ways in which data is collected/interpreted and the use of R Studio regarding wildlife.
Libby Cotterell (LC) is a full-time student and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. She has a lifelong love of nature and the outdoors and enjoys learning new skills and engaging in practical work, in order to have a positive impact on local conservation issues. Libby has attended several training sessions with Little Wing Ecology to develop her knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology.
Elise Winstanley (ELW) is a full-time student and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. She runs a college newspaper and is committed to community engagement. Elise is currently studying law, psychology and criminology at A Levels, and has a keen interest in nature and habitat preservation. Libby has attended several training sessions with Little Wing Ecology to develop her knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology.
George Harley (GH) is a full-time student and a wildlife surveyor with Little Wing Ecology. He has a love of the outdoors and enjoys learning new skills and engaging in practical work. George has attended several training sessions with Little Wing Ecology to develop his knowledge, understanding and practical skills in bat monitoring and bat ecology.

Reviewer

Phil Morgan (PM) has over 40 years' experience of undertaking building, tree and cave surveys for all bat species (S091084/1; expiry April 2024). In addition, he has undertaken foraging and flight line surveys using heterodyne and other echo-location equipment, and in 1991 made a significant contribution to a Bristol University run project, which established the methodology used in the National Bat Monitoring Programme. Phil has also undertaken numerous radio tracking exercises on both lesser horseshoe and Daubenton's bats. He holds Natural Resources Wales licence for other protected species including dormice, otter, and great crested newt. Phil was the previously the Conservation Officer with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, with an all-Wales remit, before leaving to start the Just Mammals Consultancy, where he was Principal Ecologist for 21 years. Phil is a Chartered Environmentalist, with the Society for the Environment (CEnv), and a full Member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).
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D. Biodiversity Enhancement Features

Enhancement / Supporting Features	Information
	<u>Integrated Eco Bat Box</u> The Nestbox Company Accessed 20/11/2022. Available at: www.nestbox.co.uk N.B. this is given as an example only. Many other suitable products are available.
	<u>Schwegler 1SP Nest Box – Sparrow Terrace = Grey</u> Ark Wildlife Accessed 29/09/2022. Available at: https://www.arkwildlife.co.uk/product/schwegler-1sp-sparrow-terrace-grey/ N.B. this is given as an example only. Many other suitable products are available.

E. Activity Survey – Recordings (Raw data)

DATE	Time (start)	Time (end)	SPECIES (COMMON)	No	Surveyor's Position	OBSERVER'S NAME	COMMENT	CLASS OF SITE
08.08.23	21.58	21.58	Bat	1	South	Tracey Cotterell	Emergence (from neighbour)	Maternity roost (35 Wyndham St)
08.08.20	20.50	21.12	Common pipistrelle	8	North	Nic Aldridge	Emergence from neighbour	Maternity roost (35 Wyndham St)
08.08.21	21.08	21.26	Common pipistrelle	2	North	Nic Aldridge	Foraging	Foraging
08.08.22	21.23	21.25	Common pipistrelle	2	North	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
08.08.23	21.11	21.11	Common pipistrelle	1	East	Elizabeth Winstanley	Emergence (from neighbour)	Maternity roost (35 Wyndham St)
08.08.23	21.12	22.00	Common pipistrelle	13	East	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
08.08.23	21.43	21.43	Common pipistrelle	1	East	Elizabeth Winstanley	Heard-not-seen	
08.08.23	21.11	21.12	Common pipistrelle	2	South	Tracey Cotterell	Emergence (from neighbour)	Maternity roost (35 Wyndham St)
08.08.23	21.13	22.01	Common pipistrelle	12	South	Tracey Cotterell	Foraging	Foraging
08.08.23	20.55	21.19	Noctule	4	North	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
08.08.23	21.10	21.35	Noctule	4	East	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
08.08.23	21.28	21.28	Noctule	1	South	Tracey Cotterell	Heard-not-seen	
08.08.23	21.25	21.25	Soprano pipistrelle	1	North	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
08.08.23	21.41	21.41	Soprano pipistrelle	1	East	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
08.08.23	21.41	21.41	Soprano pipistrelle	1	South	Tracey Cotterell	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.08	20.16	Common pipistrelle	4	South	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.10	20.45	Common pipistrelle	12	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.07	20.10	Common pipistrelle	3	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Commuting	Commuting
07.09.23	20.06	20.06	Common pipistrelle	1	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
07.09.23	20.15	20.52	Noctule	4	South	Elizabeth Winstanley	Heard-not-seen	
07.09.23	20.24	20.45	Noctule	8	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
07.09.23	21.12	20.22	Pipistrelle spp.	2	South	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.12	20.12	Pipistrelle spp.	2	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	
07.09.23	20.23	20.52	Soprano pipistrelle	5	South	Elizabeth Winstanley	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.52	20.52	Soprano pipistrelle	1	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Foraging	Foraging
07.09.23	20.10	20.10	Soprano pipistrelle	1	Interior	Nic Aldridge	Heard-not-seen	



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About Us

Little Wing Ecology is a not-for-profit ecological consultancy based in the South Wales Valleys. Specializing in bat surveys for housing developments, but providing a wide range of ecological services, it provides appropriate expertise on behalf of a range of clients.

We are a small ecological consultancy dedicated to providing an easy-to-use and jargon-free service. We produce the following products:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Preliminary Roost Assessment
- Bat Surveys
- Mitigation Planning
- European Protected Species License Applications
- On-site Services to Support Planning Applications and Development

As a Consultancy, we use our experience, expertise, and love of wildlife to provide an easy to access and pragmatic service that upholds the highest standards of conservation.

As a Not-for-Profit Social Enterprise, we reinvest our profits. We work with valleys communities, conservation groups, local authorities, and other groups to support these three key areas:

A. Helping Nature

Developing and supporting habitat gain in the valleys through:

- Habitat improvement.
- Developing the built environment for the benefit of wildlife.
- Long-term monitoring projects for wildlife populations in the valleys.

B. Working with People

- Providing employment, training and voluntary opportunities for the local community and young people to help them build their skills, develop a stronger relationship with nature and build confidence in themselves.

C. Supporting Communities

- Reinvesting in nature and people, locally.
- Supporting education within communities to promote a positive relationship between people and wildlife.
- Providing pro-bono surveys for worthwhile causes.

Adroddiad Arolwg gan



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