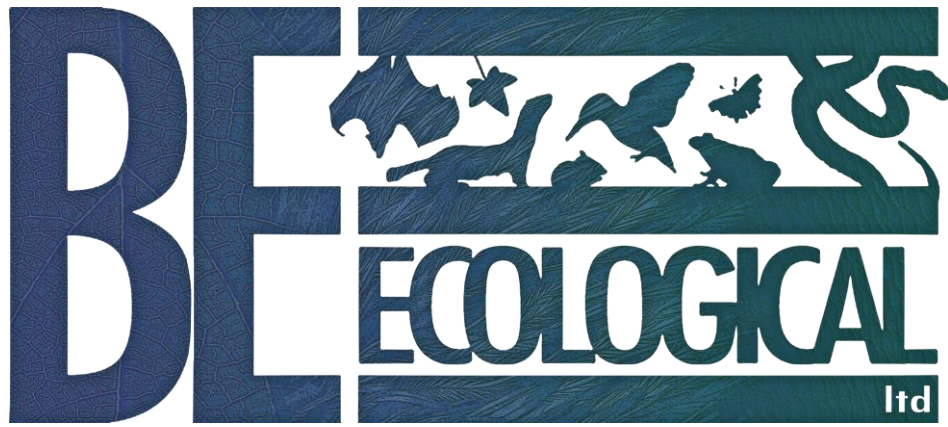




27 VICTORIA STREET, MERTHYR TYDFIL

INITIAL BAT INSPECTION SURVEY

ISSUE 1, VERSION B

NOVEMBER 2021

Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to re-roof a property at 27 Victoria Street, Merthyr Tydfil

An initial bat inspection survey of the site was undertaken on 11th October 2021. No bats or evidence of bats was seen on the exterior or in the interior of the building. These findings were confirmed by a further external survey conducted on 12 May 2022.

The property is currently used as a hairdressers, a café, a bakery and a tanning salon.

Due to a number of factors justified within this report, while no evidence of bats was found it is considered that the building is of low potential for roosting bats. A single activity survey revealed that the property was not a bat roost.

The client has informed BE Ecological Ltd that the roof of the property is leaking, in recent years the aging roof of the property has required emergency repair work on a number of occasions and, after the storms earlier in the year, the client felt it necessary to allay tenant concerns by offering a permanent solution in the form of a fully new roof..

In the unlikely event that any bats or evidence of bats are found, all works will cease, Natural Resources Wales consulted. Works will not recommence until such a time that Natural Resources Wales have provided written confirmation to do so. This may involve further survey effort and/or a European Protected Species Licence being issued.

No evidence of breeding birds were found throughout the buildings at the time of survey. However, a pigeon was noted on the pavement outside.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey along with subsequent activity surveys of a commercial building for the potential presence of birds and bats in order to support a planning application to re-roof the property.

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

1.2 Site description

The property is a rectangular shaped building that comprises of two pitches, the ridges of which run from north to east and east to west. The property is a brick built structure beneath a cement tile roof. Barge boards and fascias where present are of uPVC.

The property is situated on the corner of a line of commercial buildings with the front of the property facing Victoria Street. There are two dead trees to the south west. The property is set within a wholly urban environment with very little connectivity to the wider landscape. The wider landscape comprises of more commercial properties, housing and associate infrastructure. The River Taff is to the west which leads to patches of broadleaved woodland.

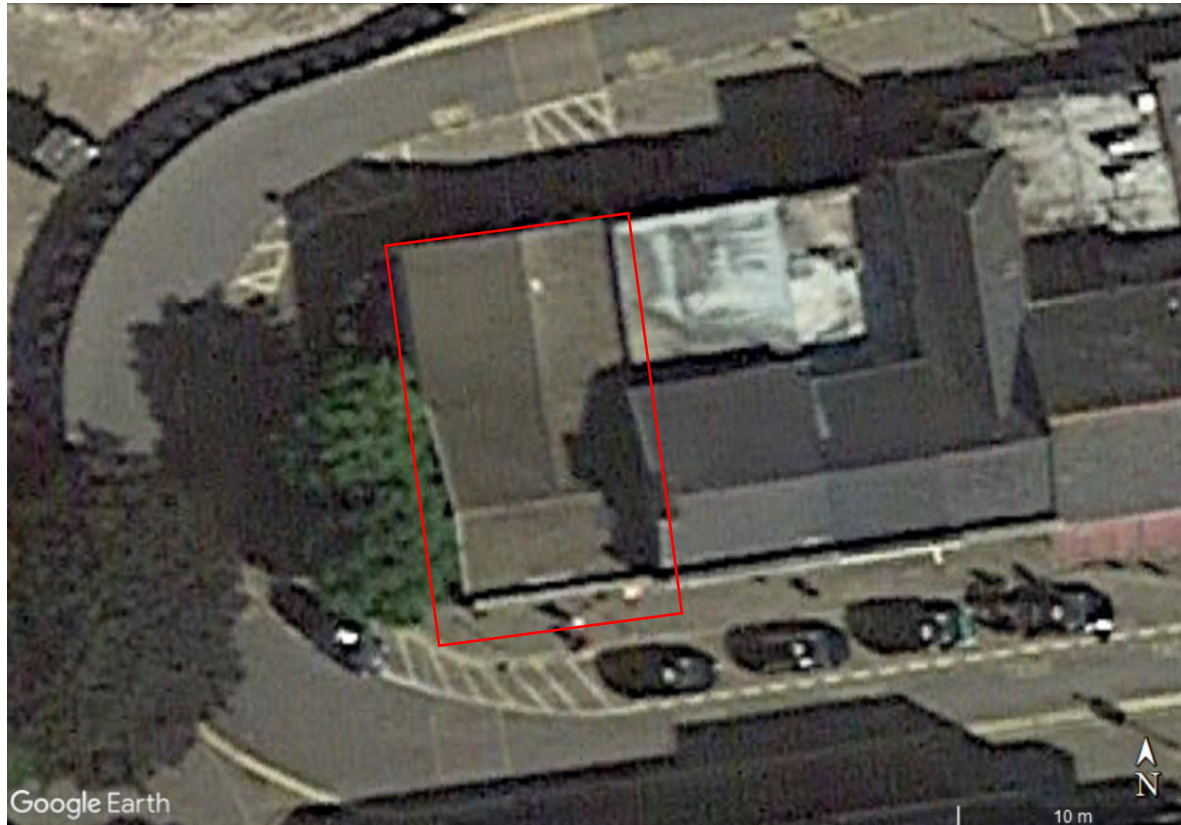


Figure 1- detailed view of site (boxed red) (Google Earth, 2021) Copyright Google Inc. 2021

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to re-roof the property.

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 two parts:

- Initial bat inspection survey of building (including birds)
- Data Search (SEWBrEC)

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 May 2020. The data search reference number is 0212-635

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 Hugh Dixon. Hugh has multiple years' experience of bat surveys and also holds Natural Resources Wales and Natural England bat licences to disturb and handle bats. Beth was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rogers and Petra Mitchard.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out on 11th October 2021 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 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.

3.7 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.

3.7.1 Survey 1- 12th May 2022

A dusk survey was carried out on 12th May using two surveyors ,positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors were equipped with cameras and Batlogger M detectors.

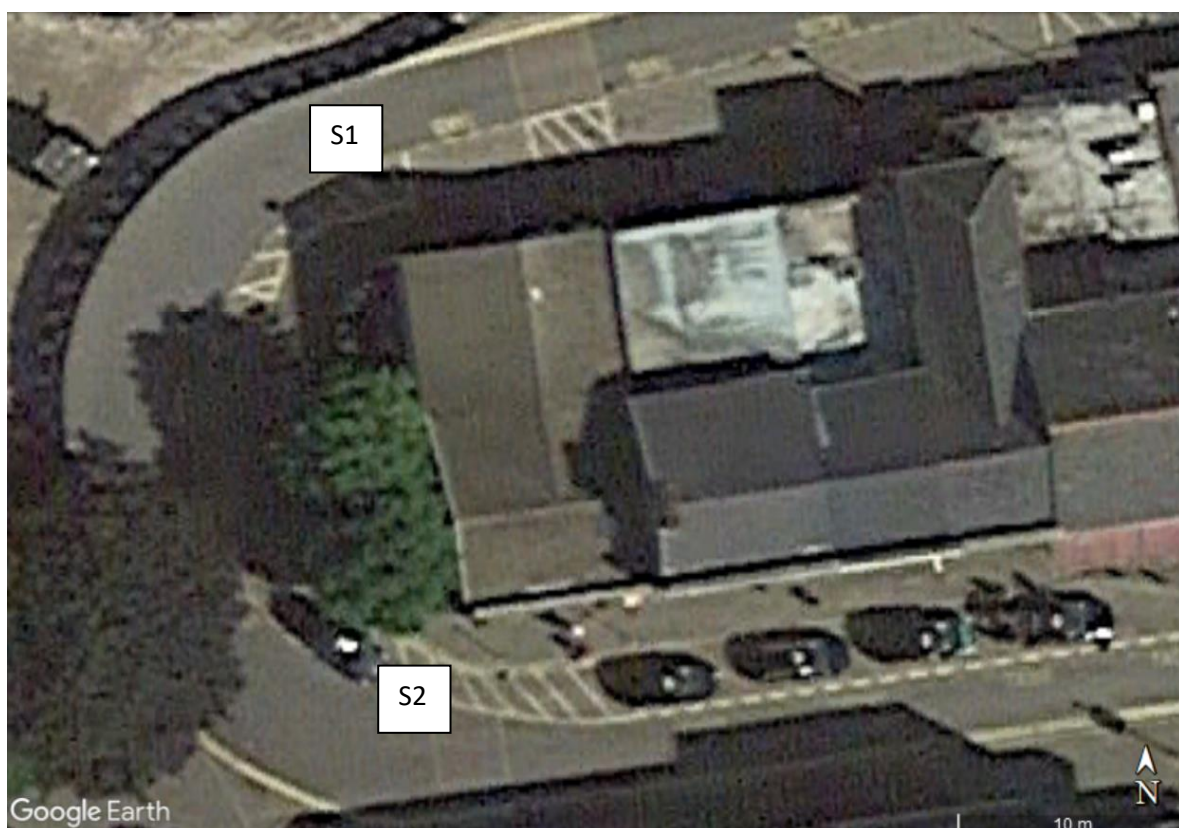


Figure 3: Approximate surveyor locations

4 RESULTS

4.1 Designated Sites

Information regarding statutory and locally designated sites for bats within a 10 km buffer study received from SEWBReC revealed;

The search area **DOES NOT** fall within 10km of an SAC or SSSI that has been designated because of its bats.

4.2 Bat and Bird Records within the Local Area

The SEWBReC search returned 103 records of bats within 2km of the development site. Species include, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, myotis sp. and noctule. The majority of records refer to bats in flight. The closest known roost is a day roost for a soprano pipistrelle, approximately 250m from the site.

There are 28 bird records from the data search, The three closest record are of swift, house sparrow and blue tit, all of which are within 500m of the site

4.3 Inspection survey

4.3.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the buildings.

The potential for access into the building was observed in the form of:

- Small gaps beneath barge boards
- A gap within the soffit box

There is a small area of hanging tiles present on the northern gable, however, these appear to be tight with no obvious gaps. The roof appears to be relatively tight despite the fact it leaks, however, it is difficult to see a lot of the roof from the ground.

Given the above and the location of the site, it is considered that the building is of low potential only.

4.3.2 Internal survey results

There is a large roof void present above the property. The roof void is approximately 2.5m -3m from joist to ridge and is insulated at joist level. The roof is a complex arrangement of rafters and purlins and is quite cluttered. The roof is lined with bitumen felt that is torn in places. There are two large skylights present on the elevation facing Victoria Street that leaves the southern part of the loft light. The roof void is airy and feels relatively exposed. There are old rat droppings present within the roof void, none of which are fresh but no bats or evidence of bats was located.

4.4 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

4.5 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 12.05.22	20:55	Start	20:40	14	Low	30%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	22:50	12	Low	15%	

4.6 Activity Survey Results

4.6.1 Survey 1- 12th May 2020

A total of 20 bat calls were heard throughout the course of the survey. The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle, heard at approximately 15 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen circling the trees opposite the property. A number of common pipistrelles were seen flying back and forth the main road in front of the property throughout the course of the survey (approximately 4) before foraging around the street lights and trees surrounding the building.

No bats were seen interacting with or emerging from the building on this date. Bat activity had ceased by 22:313 and no further bats were seen or heard throughout the course of the survey.

4.7 Identified Roosts

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

4.8 Conclusion & Recommendations

It is considered that due to the skylights, the number of leaks within the roof, the fluctuating temperatures and the lack of connectivity to the wider landscape, the building is of low potential only. Surveys failed to identify the property as a bat roost.

In the unlikely event that any bats or evidence of bats are found, all works will cease, BE Ecological Ltd and Natural Resources Wales consulted. Works will not recommence until such a time that Natural Resources Wales have provided written confirmation to do so. This may involve further survey effort and/or a European Protected Species Licence being issued.

4.9 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the buildings at the time of survey. If a birds nest is identified within the building or the ivy, it will be left until such a time that the birds have left the nest of their own accord.

5 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Active Season Usage

The property has not been identified as a bat roost.

5.2 Hibernation Season Usage

It is less likely that bats will use the building for hibernation due to the lightness and fluctuating temperatures within the void.

5.3 Ecological Impacts of development

The impacts of the development have been assessed using the current information of the proposed works. Should any changes be made to the proposed works, the assessment will need to be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The building has not been identified as a bat roost and as such impacts on roosting bats are unlikely to be present. However, the demolition will be undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision to safeguard the unlikely presence of bats and birds.

No mitigation is required.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

A Schwegler 1FF bat box will be attached to the western elevation of the property. Should the 1FF prove difficult to source, an eco bat box (crevice box) <https://www.nhbs.com/title?slug=eco-bat-box> will be installed in its place.

6.2 Birds

A Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace or the following <https://www.nhbs.com/sparrow-terrace-nest-box> will be attached to the northern gable.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 Timing

It is considered that the building is not a bat roost, as such, the work can be undertaken at any time of year.

7.1.2 Timber/roofing materials

The property was not identified as a bat roost, therefore there is no restrictions on the type of materials used.

7.1.3 Lighting

Bat boxes 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/>

7.1.4 Bat Licensing

A European Protected Species Licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales will not be required before any works commence. If at any point bats or evidence of bat is found, all works must cease and NRW consulted. Further surveys and/or a licence may be required prior to works recommencing

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 (see below). 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







