



**SITE NAME:FORMER
BARCLAYS BANK, 47 HIGH
STREET, MERTHYR TYDFIL**

BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY

DATE: APRIL 2025

ISSUE 1VA

Former Barclays Bank, Merthyr Tydfil

Bat Survey Report

Document control

Issue	Author	Checked	Approved	Date
1	BE	BE		21/04/26

Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Approved by	Date
1	A	Minor amendments	BE	21/04/26

DISCLAIMER

The report, content and all information contained herein may not be reproduced without the prior written permissions of BE ECOLOGICAL LTD. No part of this report or the information contained herein may be copied or reproduced without prior written consent from BE ECOLOGICAL LTD. This report has been prepared for the sole use of the commissioning party (s) contained herein and under no circumstance is any other party to make use of this report and information unless agreed in writing by BE ECOLOGICAL LTD. The report and information may not be used for any reason, including use for planning purposes, until such times as all outstanding fees relating to it have been paid to BE ECOLOGICAL LTD. No liability is accepted by BE ECOLOGICAL LTD for any use of the report or its contents, other than for those purposes stated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1	Background.....	5
1.2	Site description.....	5
1.3	Proposed development.....	6
2	LEGISLATION & POLICIES.....	7
2.1	Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).....	7
2.2	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.....	7
3	METHODOLOGY.....	13
3.2	Survey Objectives.....	13
3.3	Survey Summary.....	13
3.4	Surveyor Information.....	13
3.5	Internal & External Inspection.....	14
3.6	Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys).....	14
3.6.1	Survey 1- 2nd May 2025.....	14
3.6.2	Survey 2- 29th May 2025.....	17
3.7	Survey limitations.....	19
4	RESULTS.....	20
4.1	Data Search.....	20
4.2	Inspection survey.....	20
4.2.1	External survey results.....	20
4.2.2	Internal survey results.....	20
5.0	Activity surveys.....	21
5.1	Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions.....	21
5.2	Activity Survey Results.....	22
5.2.1	Survey 1- 2nd May 2025.....	22
5.2.2	Survey 2- 29th May 2025.....	22
5.2.4	Identified flight paths (arrowed red).....	23
5.3	Identified Roosts.....	24
5.3.1	Survey 1.....	24
5.3.2	Survey 2.....	24
6.0	Conclusion.....	24
7.0	Breeding Birds.....	24
8.0	INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....	25
8.1	Active season usage.....	25
8.2	Hibernation season usage.....	25
8.3	Breeding birds.....	25
8.4	Ecological Impacts of development.....	25
9.0	MITIGATION/COMPENSATION/ENHANCEMENT.....	26
9.1	Bats.....	26

9.2	Birds.....	26
10.0	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
10.1	Timing.....	27
10.2	Timber/roofing materials.....	27
10.3	Lighting.....	27
10.4	Bat Licensing.....	27
10.5	Supervision.....	27
12.0	REFERENCES.....	30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to redevelop the Former Barclays Bank, 47 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken by BE Ecological Ltd in 2025 in order to inform a planning application to redevelop the property. The results indicated that the building is of low to moderate potential for roosting bats and as such further surveys were recommended.

Subsequent emergence surveys revealed that the building is not a bat roost. A European Protected Species Licence will not be required.

No evidence of breeding birds was found on the exterior or interior of the building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey and subsequent activity survey at the Former Barclays Bank, 47 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil.

This report includes the findings of the aforementioned bat activity surveys undertaken in the appropriate season.

The surveys were undertaken in line with the current guidance on standards for bat surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023[1]).

1.2 Site description

The site is a three storey brick and block built structure beneath a pitched slate roof. The main ridge runs from south to north with an extension ridge running in the same direction. The extension is situated to the east of the property. There is a basement present within the building.

The site is situated within the town centre of Merthyr Tydfil. There is no vegetation surrounding the property.

2 LEGISLATION & POLICIES

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

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) 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 PLANNING POLICY WALES (EDITION 12, FEBRUARY 2024)

The following sections are relevant

6.2.8 The role of development as part of a spatial approach will be two fold. Planning authorities firstly must ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and secondly that it provides opportunities for enhancement within areas identified as important for the ability of species to adapt and/or to move to more suitable habitats.

6.2.9 Planning authorities must encourage the appropriate management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna and other statutory and non-statutory designated sites. The features concerned are those which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as 'stepping stones' or 'wildlife corridors', are essential for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange. The protection and creation of networks of statutory and non-statutory sites and of the landscape features which provide links from one habitat to another can make an important contribution to developing resilient ecological networks and securing a net benefit for biodiversity and in doing so improve the quality of the local place and its ability to adapt to climate change.

6.2.12 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

6.4.3 Recognising that development needs to take place and some biodiversity may be impacted, the planning system should ensure that overall there is a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, resulting in enhanced well-being. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.

6.4.4 It is important that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. Where adverse effects on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated/restored, and as a last resort compensated for, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission.

6.4.5 Planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species (not including non native invasive species), locally or nationally and must work alongside nature and it must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improve, or enable the improvement, of the resilience of ecosystems.....

6.4.11 Planning authorities must follow a step- wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.....

6.4.12 Having worked iteratively, in line with Figure 12, through the stages of the step-wise approach below, and providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity. Where biodiversity enhancement proportionate to the scale and nature of the development is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be

given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise, it will be necessary to refuse permission.....

6.4.15 (2). When all locational, siting and design options for avoiding damage to biodiversity have been exhausted, applicants, in discussion with planning authorities, must seek to minimise the initial impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.....

6.4.15 (5). Each stage of the step-wise approach must be accompanied by a long term management plan of agreed and appropriate avoidance, minimisation, mitigation/restoration and compensation measures alongside the agreed enhancement measures. The management plan should set out the immediate and on-going management of the site, future monitoring arrangements for all secured measures and it should clearly identify the funding mechanisms in place to meet the management plan objectives. The management plan must set out how a net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved within as short a time as possible and be locally responsive and relevant to local circumstances.

6.4.15 (6) Finally, where the adverse effect on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience clearly outweighs other material considerations, the development should be refused.

6.4.16 Potential applicants should not conduct any pre-emptive site clearance works before submitting a planning application as this can make it more difficult for a development proposal to secure a net benefit for biodiversity. Where a site has been cleared prior to development its biodiversity value should be deemed to have been as it was before any site investigations or clearance took place. A net benefit for biodiversity must be achieved from that point.

6.4.31 Although non-statutory designations do not have a statutory process for their protection, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Regionally Importance Geodiversity Sites make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given protection in development plans and the development management process. Non-statutory sites can form the core of a vital network of threatened habitats, play an essential role in protecting, maintaining, connecting and restoring biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery and a net benefit for biodiversity. Before authorising development likely to damage a local wildlife designation, planning authorities should give notice of the proposed operation to the local authority Ecologist and third sector environmental organisations. In all cases a written opinion must be secured from the local authority Ecologist.....

6.4.35 The presence of a species protected under European or UK legislation, or under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal which, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat and to ensure that the range and population of the species is sustained.

6.4.42 Permanent removal of trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where individual or groups of trees

and hedgerows are removed as part of a proposed scheme, planning authorities must first follow the step-wise approach as set out in paragraph 6.4.15. Where loss is unavoidable developers will be required to provide compensatory planting (which is proportionate to the proposed loss as identified through an assessment of green infrastructure value including biodiversity, landscape value and carbon capture). Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost.....

6.4.43 Ancient woodland, semi-natural woodlands, individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees, woodlands and hedgerows are to be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deterioration unless very exceptionally there are significant and clearly defined public benefits; this protection must prevent potentially damaging operations and their unnecessary loss.....

6.8.1 There is a need to balance the provision of lighting to enhance safety and security to help in the prevention of crime and to allow activities like sport and recreation to take place with the need to:

- protect the natural and historic environment including wildlife and features of the natural environment such as tranquillity;

2.4 BUILDING WITH NATURE

Applicants should consider standards for development design “Building with Nature” which can be found at www.Buildingwithnature.org.uk

2.5 PLANNING POLICY WALES SEPTEMBER 2009 (TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 5: NATURE CONSERVATION AND PLANNING)

Section 6.2.1 – the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal, that, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

Section 6.2.2 – It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

2.6 ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016 - THE BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY

The Environment (Wales) Act became law on 21st March 2016 and replaces the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It puts in place legislation to enable Wales' resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up manner and to form part of the legislative framework necessary to tackle climate change. The Act supports the Welsh Governments wider remit under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 so that Wales may benefit from a prosperous economy, a healthy and resilient environment and vibrant, cohesive communities. Caerphilly County Borough Council as a public body has obligations under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to demonstrate how the Local Authority will "seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems".

The intention is to ensure that in carrying out their functions, public authorities will:

- Place biodiversity as a natural and integral part of policy and decision making within public bodies, embedding it in its plans, policies and projects and day-to-day activities
- Address biodiversity decline through positive actions that will result in maintenance or enhancement of our biodiversity
- Develop ecosystem resilience through maintaining and enhancing biodiversity

The reporting associated with the Section 6 duty will report against the 6 NRAP objectives (see section on Nature Recovery Plan, below)

A resilient ecosystem is one that is healthy and functions in a way that is able to address the pressures and demands that are placed on it, and is able to meet current social, economic and environmental needs whilst being able to also provide the same benefits for future generation. A resilient ecosystem is the cornerstone of the "Resilient Wales" goal in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

2.7 STATE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT (SONARR)

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 [EWA] requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to publish a State of Natural Resources Report¹ (SoNaRR); to provide information on the current state of our natural resources to enable Welsh Ministers to set priorities for action at the national level. The Authority is required to have regard to the findings of this report in exercising its functions.

The SoNaRR report, finalised in September 2016 recommends a proactive approach to building resilience and for the first time links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales. This Report will underpin Natural Resources Policy.

The economic and social benefits that a fully functioning environment can provide to human society include agricultural production, forestry, building materials, tourism and leisure, energy generation, flood prevention, pollination services for crops, clean water, clean air and healthy soils. The SoNaRR report spells out the major threats to the proper functioning of ecosystems in Wales, which include:

- Climate change
- Land use change
- Over exploitation of natural resources; and
- Nutrient enrichment and pollution

2.8 NATURE RECOVERY PLAN

The Welsh Government launched the Nature Recovery Plan² (NRP) which sets out its commitment to biodiversity in Wales and how Wales will address the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi biodiversity targets in Wales. The Nature Recovery Action Plan links to and complements The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment Act (Wales) 2016.

The NRP highlights the issues that we need to address and the objectives for action to show how, in Wales we can address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. Specifically through:

- Putting nature at the heart of decision making
- Increasing the resilience of our natural environment
- Taking specific action for habitats and species

The Nature Recovery Plan consists of three parts:

Part 1: Sets out the position with regard to biodiversity in Wales

Part 2: actions identified to support biodiversity, (The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP))

Part 3: Under development: The Nature Recovery Framework

1.<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en>

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Search

A data search was not undertaken in this instance due to the low impact of the works.

3.2 Survey Objectives

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

3.3 Survey Summary

- The bat survey comprised of three parts:
- Part 1- Initial bat inspection survey
- Part 2- A single activity survey
- Part 3- A second activity survey

3.4 Surveyor Information

The survey was run 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 Evans was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rogers and Dion Rowles.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

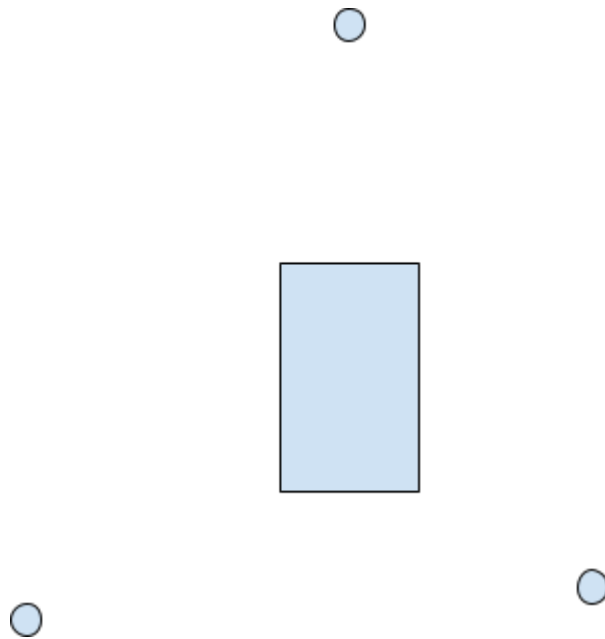
An initial inspection survey was carried out in August 2025 to search all buildings, both externally to identify potential bat roosting areas and signs of bat use including; live bats, dead bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks and discarded prey items. The buildings and all areas/items of interest were recorded and photographed. Extension ladders/steps were used to safely access roof areas and fascia boards etc; 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- 11th August 2025

A dusk survey was carried out on 11th August 2025 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors. IR cameras and thermal imaging devices.



Approximate surveyor locations

3.6.2 Survey 2- 5th September 2025

A dusk survey was carried out on 5th September 2025 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible to surveyors as possible (as above) . Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors .

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.

Thermal imaging devices were not used in this instance. As surveyors were setting up for the first survey, a glass bottle was thrown at a surveyor due to the cameras attracting attention. The decision was made to not use cameras so that surveyors could leave the site quickly should they need to. This is not seen as a limitation due to the fact the area is well lit. In addition to this, the impacts of the proposals are minor.

Some areas of the roof just cannot be seen from the ground, however, surveyors were positioned in such a way that it was possible to deduce whether bats had emerged from the building.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Inspection survey

4.1.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the building. A number of access points were noted:

- Gaps beneath a small number of slipped/lifted tiles

Generally the building appears to be in relatively good order. The soffits do not have gaps beneath them and the ridge tiles appear to be well sealed.

The building was assessed as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

4.1.2 Internal survey results

Internally, it was not possible to enter the roof void. The building has suffered a lot of vandalism and leaks over the years and the structural integrity of the roof and ceilings is unknown. In addition to this a lot of the ceilings are suspended.

Internally (first and second floors) the rooms are empty and have been vandalised. No bats or evidence of bats was found in this location.

Beneath the building is a basement. The basement was previously used to hold the safes for the bank. There is no exterior access to the basement and the door is kept shut. There is an old opening that would have previously lead to the road, however this has been securely blocked up with no way in or out. No light ingress' were found within the basement and no bats or evidence of bats was identified.

5.0 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

5.1 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 11/08/25	20:39	Start End	20:15 22:10	15 15	Low Low	10% 15%	Dry evening, insects flying
Survey 2 05/09/25	20:19	Start End	20:00 21:50	16 15	Low Low/moderate	100% 100%	Dry evening, insects flying

5.2 Activity Survey Results

5.2.1 Survey 1- 11th August 2025

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle, approximately 20 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen commuting high in the sky from south to north.

A further two common pipistrelles were observed commuting south to north approximately 20 minutes after the first bat was observed.

Other than three common pipistrelles, these were the only bats seen and heard throughout the survey.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the building in any way.

5.2.2 Survey 2- 29th May 2025

Despite ideal bat surveying conditions, no bats were heard or observed throughout the course of the survey.

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

5.2.4 Identified flight paths (arrowed red)

No flight paths were identified throughout the survey.

5.3 Identified Roosts

5.3.1 Survey 1

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

5.3.2 Survey 2

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

6.0 Conclusion

The property has not been identified as a bat roost. Activity at the site was extremely low.

The works to the property are minimal with all of the roof being retained as is. There is no exterior access for bats to the basement.

No bats or evidence of bats was found throughout the interior of the building.

A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are found.

7.0 Breeding Birds

No evidence of birds was noted throughout the survey.

8.0 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Active season usage

The property was not identified as a bat roost.

8.2 Hibernation season usage

It is considered unlikely that bats will use the property over winter however hibernation cannot be ruled out and therefore works must avoid the winter months.

8.3 Breeding birds

No evidence of breeding birds was noted.

8.4 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 therefore impacts on roosting bats are unlikely.

9.0 MITIGATION/COMPENSATION/ENHANCEMENT

9.1 Bats

The following bat box will be attached to the eastern elevation of the property <https://www.nhbs.com/elisa-bat-box?srsId=AfmBOor-4tN-Jk31A-gzKxllxyjMc3ZRGqHm5oi2bufn9jbjlVoeOnll>

9.2 Birds

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

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Timing

It is considered that the building is not a bat roost and therefore the works can be undertaken at any time of year. The winter period should be avoided if possible due to the unlikely presence of hibernating bats.

10.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A the property has not been identified as a bat roost.

10.3 Lighting

Newly created access points and 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/>

Flight paths to the bat boxes and the newly created bat mitigation will be kept dark at all times.

10.4 Bat Licensing

A European Protected Species Licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales will not be required before any works commence.

10.5 Supervision

N/A

12.0 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust. (2023) *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 (as amended) (HMSO).

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

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

APPENDIX A- SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1- Photograph of basement



Plate 2- suspended ceilings



Plate 3- photograph of building rear



Plate 4- tight fitting slates



Plate 5- photograph of tight fitting soffits

