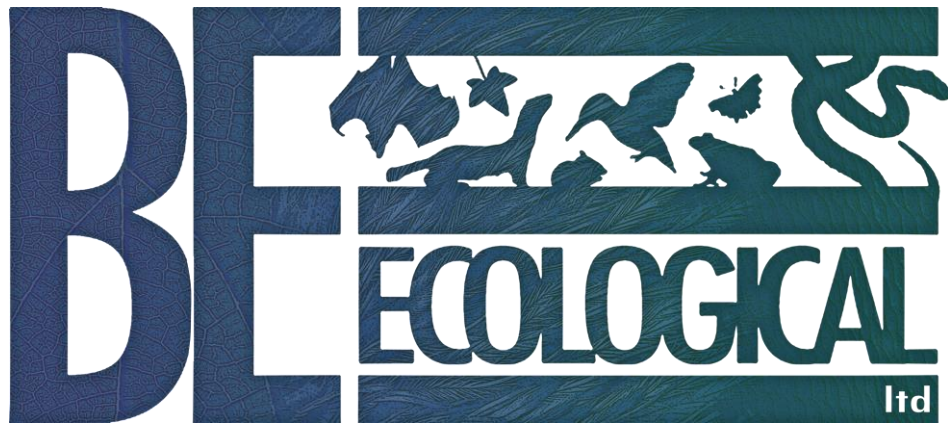




WOODSTOCK, SOMERSET LANE, MERTHYR TYDFIL

BAT SURVEY

ISSUE 1, VERSION B

JUNE 2022

WOODSTOCK, SOMERSET LANE

Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to erect a dormer extension at Woodstock, Somerset Lane, Merthyr Tydfil.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken on the 10th January 2022. The results indicated that the building is of low potential for roosting bats and as such a single emergence survey was undertaken.

The surveys failed to identify any bats roosting within the property.

A European Protected Species Licence will not be required in this instance unless bats or evidence of bats are discovered during the works. To safeguard this unlikely eventuality, works to the roof will be carried out in accordance with a method statement and supervision by an experienced licensed bat ecologist.

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 of a property named Woodstock, Somerset Lane, Merthyr Tydfil in support of a planning application for a dormer extension.

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, 2016¹).

1.2 Site description

The property subject of this survey is Woodstock, Somerset Lane, Merthyr Tydfil (Figure 1).

The building is a brick built bungalow beneath a hipped tile roof. The western aspect of the building has two adjoined pitched rooves (storage/garage areas). The ridge of the property generally runs from north east to south west. There are large soffit boxes on the property, all of which appear to be in relatively good order and are made from timber. There are numerous lights hanging around the soffits for the entire length of the building.

The property is set within its own grounds with hedgerows to the north and south. The hedgerows are well lit with decorative lights. There is relatively good connectivity to the wider landscape that comprises of gardens, fields and patches of broad leaved woodland.

¹ *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, J (Ed). BCT, 2016)

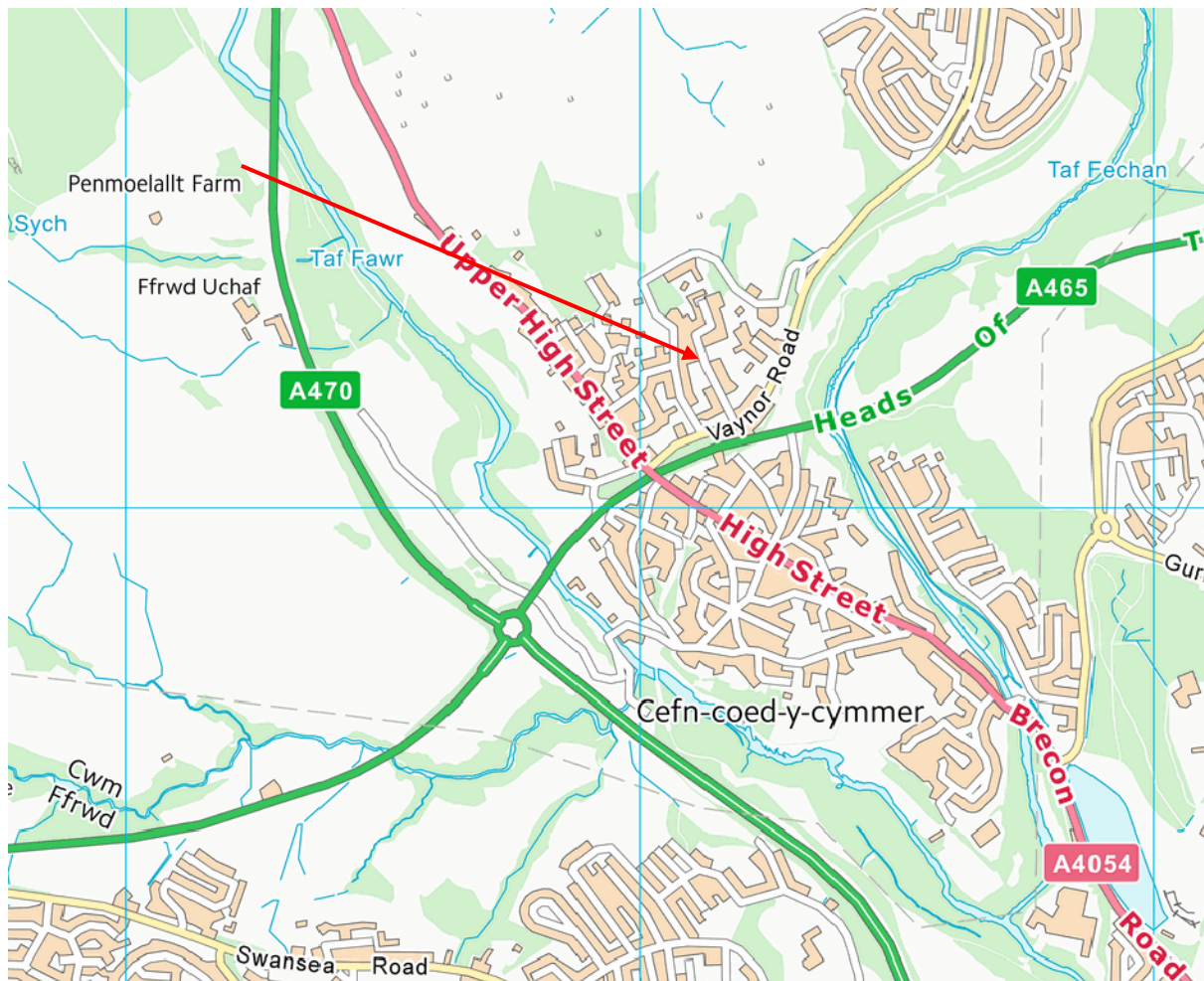
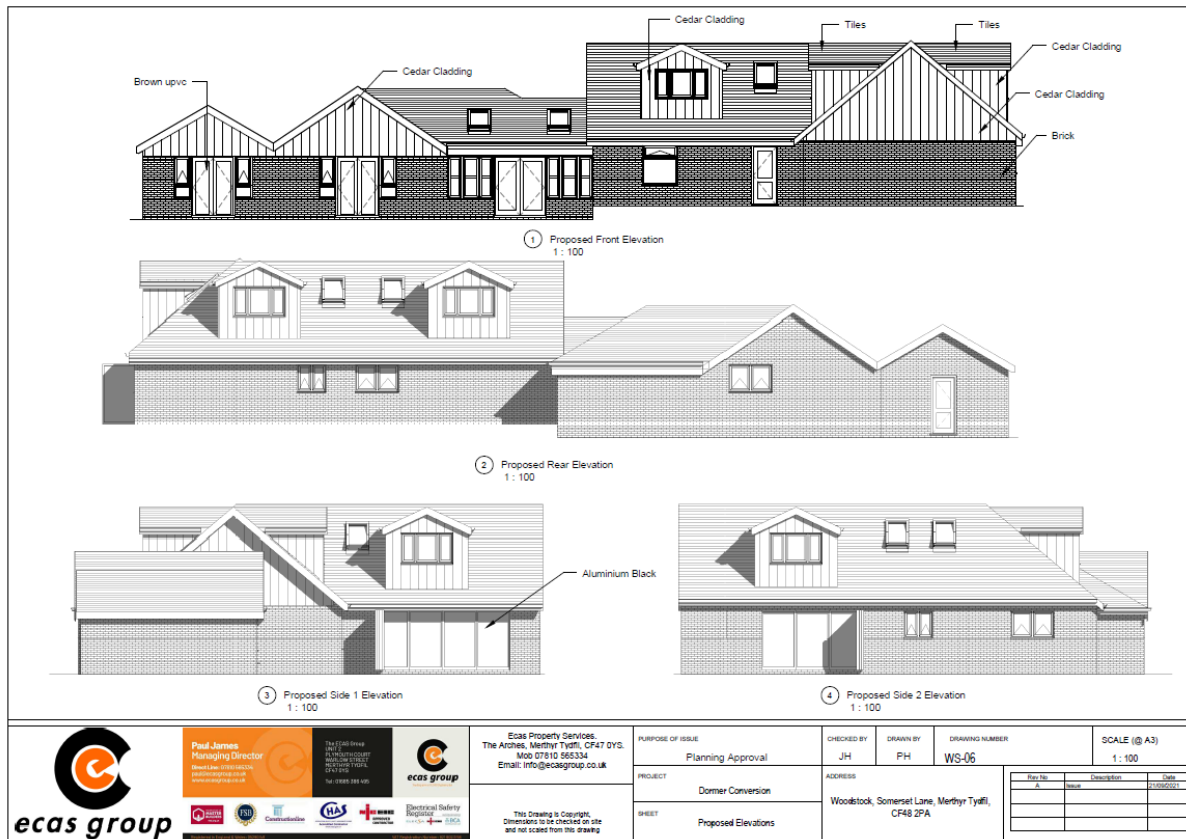


Figure 1: Approximate location of site

1.3 Proposed development

A dormer conversion is proposed for 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 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.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 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 0223-185. 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.

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 data search
- Part 3- A single 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 six 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 Gavin Vella and Michael Rogers.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out on 10th January 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- 10th May 2022

A dusk survey was carried out on 10th May 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.



Figure 3: Approximate surveyor locations

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.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Data Search

There site is not within 10km of either a SSSI or SAC that has been designated for bat species within Wales.

A total of 306 records were returned within the data search. The closest bat record appears to be of a large pipistrelle sp. roost approximately 185m from the site. The record is of a suspected maternity roost due to the presence of young. Other records in the wider vicinity include species such as pipistrelle, myotis sp., noctule, lesser horseshoe and daubentons bats.

14 bird records were returned within the data search. The closest three records refer to blue tit, starling and great tit.

4.2 Inspection survey

4.2.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the building, however, access and roosting potential for bats was identified in the form of:

- Small number of potentially lifted ridge/hip tiles

Please see appended plates for photographs of the property exterior. Other than these areas, the building appears to be relatively well sealed with no obvious gaps and no apparent slipped tiles on the pitches of the roof. There are a small number of gaps beneath fascias, however, these are extremely small and few and far between.

As such, the property was categorised as being of low potential for roosting bats and further emergence/re-entry surveys were recommended.

4.2.2 Internal survey results

Internally, there were two roof spaces to inspect. The first is above the western section of the building. The roof space is extremely clean and currently used for storage. The void is of a typical rafter and purlin construction and is lined with bitumen felt. No bats nor evidence of bats was found in this location.

The larger of the two roof voids is found above the eastern section of the house. Again the void is of a typical rafter and perlin construction and is lined with bitumen felt. Again the loft is used for storage purposes. No bats or evidence of bats was found in this location.

4.3 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

4.4 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 10/05/22	20:51	Start	20:35	14	Low	60%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	22:40	14	Low	40%	

4.5 Activity Survey Results

4.5.1 Survey 1- 10th May 2020

The first bat call heard was a common pipistrelle. The bat was seen commuting high from south to north at 21:00. This was shortly followed by a second common pipistrelle. The bat was seen foraging over the trees to the north of the property intermittently throughout the survey.

A small number of common and soprano pipistrelle bats were seen and heard commuting back and forth the road at the front of the property. A single common pipistrelle bat was seen/heard commuting along the fence line to the rear. Activity had ceased at approximately one hour after sunset.

No bats took any interest in or emerged from the building throughout the course of the survey.

4.6 Identified Roosts

4.6.1 Survey 1

No bats emerged from the building on this date.

4.7 Conclusion

Overall levels of bat activity at the site were low at the site with the only species heard being common and soprano pipistrelle. The sight is well lit with numerous decorative lights on both the building and the hedgerows and the low activity at the site is likely to be a result of this.

The building in general is relatively sealed.

Based on the current evidence, it is considered that mitigation and an NRW development licence will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are encountered during the works.

As such it is considered that the works can proceed providing they are undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

4.8 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the property.

5 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Active Season Usage

It is considered that the property is not a bat roost.

5.2 Hibernation Season Usage

It is unlikely that bats will use the property for hibernation purposes

5.3 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the property.

5.4 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.

It is considered unlikely that the property is a bat roost and no evidence of nesting birds was found throughout the property. As such bats and birds are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

Mitigation will not be required.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

A Schwegler 1FF bat box will be attached to a gable on the southern 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 eastern elevation of the property.

The boxes will be installed as per the final proposed elevation drawing (WS-06).

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 Timing

It is possible that bats will use the building for hibernation purposes therefore work in the winter period should be avoided.

7.1.2 Timber/roofing materials

It is considered that the building is not a bat roost, as such, restrictions on roofing materials are not required.

7.1.3 Lighting

Potential 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/>

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

Supervision for the removal of the tiles to raise the height of the property will be required.

8 METHOD STATEMENT

1. A suitably licenced and experienced ecologist will be on site/call for the duration of the works.
2. Before any work begins on site, a briefing for contractors and other site-staff 'toolbox talk' will be given by an ecologist. The briefing will cover the issues in respect of protected species they may encounter on site, where they might find them, methods of working, and what they need to know to avoid committing an offence. Every briefing attendee will be provided with a copy of a Method Statement and the contact details of an ecologist and Natural Resources Wales.
3. All suitable bat roosting features will need to be removed by hand (slates) and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist.
4. The tiles will also need to be removed manually, one at a time, with the bed and underside inspected for bats/sign of bats by the onsite ecologist before moving onto the next.
5. Only when the onsite bat ecologist is happy that there is no further potential for bats, may he/she leave and the works continue with no supervision. A licensed bat ecologist will be on call for the remainder of the works. In the unlikely event that bats are found during a period that the licensed bat ecologist is not present on site, all works must cease and the licenced bat ecologist engaged.
6. If bats or their signs are found, a EPS licence may be required before works can legally resume.

9 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 (as amended) (HMSO).

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

APPENDIX A- SITE PHOTOGRAPHS













