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**BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY
ISSUE 1, VERSION B**

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FORMER OFFICES

Bat Survey Report

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background.....	3
1.2	Site description	3
1.3	Proposed development	5
2	LEGISLATION & POLICIES	6
2.1	Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	6
2.2	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981	6
2.3	The Environment (Wales) Act 2016	6
3	METHODOLOGY.....	7
3.1	Survey Objectives	7
3.2	Survey Summary.....	7
3.3	Surveyor Information	7
3.4	Internal & External Inspection.....	7
3.5	Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)	7
4	RESULTS.....	9
4.1	Inspection survey.....	9
4.2	Activity surveys.....	10
4.3	Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions	10
4.4	Activity Survey Results.....	10
	Conclusion	11
5	INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT	12
5.1	Active Season Usage	12
5.2	Hibernation Season Usage.....	12
5.3	Ecological Impacts of development.....	12
6	ENHANCEMENT	13
6.1	Bats.....	13
6.2	Birds.....	13
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	14
8	REFERENCES	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development proposals involve the conversion of the commercial building to four self-contained flats with some external alterations

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake subsequent activity survey of the former offices following a report produced by Acer Ecology in 2023 who stated the building as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

Subsequent emergence surveys revealed that the building is not a bat roost.

A European Protected Species Licence will not be required.

To safeguard the unlikely event that bats are present, all works will be undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake subsequent activity survey of the former offices following a report produced by Acer Ecology in 2023 who stated the building as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

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, 2023¹).

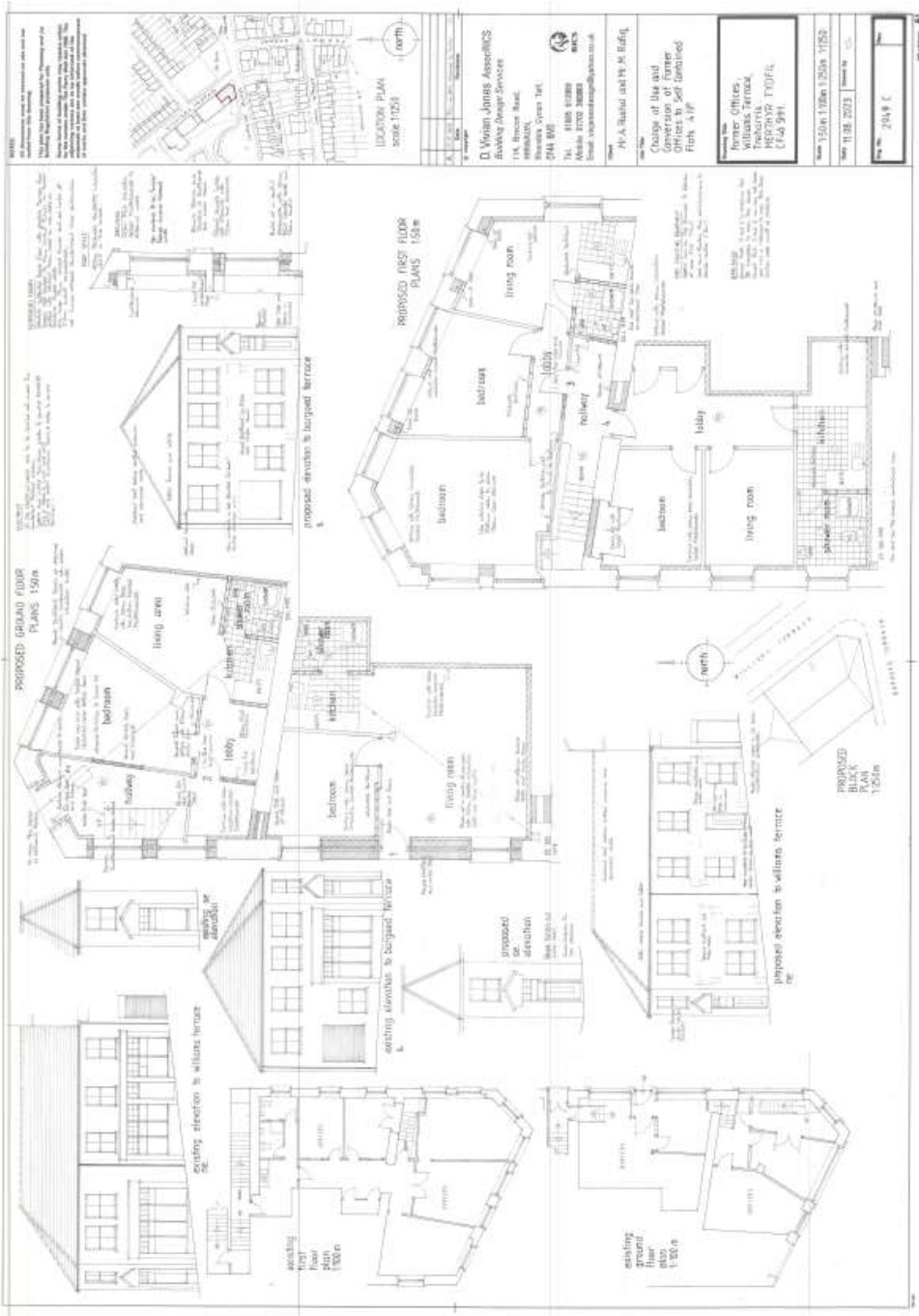
1.2 Site description

Please see Preliminary Assessment (Acer Ecology, 2023)

¹ Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed). BCT, 2023)

1.3 Proposed development

The development proposals involve the conversion of the commercial building to four self-contained flats with some external alterations.



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 Survey Objectives

- To carry out recommended activity surveys
- To present the above details and if necessary recommendations for mitigation, future research and compensation within this report.

3.2 Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of two parts:

- Part 1- single activity survey
- Part 2- Single activity survey

3.3 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 nearly 12 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 Stephen Shutt. Michael Rogers has been undertaking bat surveys with BE Ecological Ltd for the last three seasons and is working towards his bat licence. Stephen Shutt is an experienced bat licensed ecologist with many years of experience.

3.4 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out in November 2023 by Acer Ecology (Acer Ecology, 2023) Please see the report for further detail.

In summary, the building was identified as being of moderate potential for roosting bats and two emergence surveys were recommended.

3.5 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.

3.5.1 Survey 1- 5th June 2024

A dusk survey was carried out on 5th June 2024 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 and thermal imaging cameras.

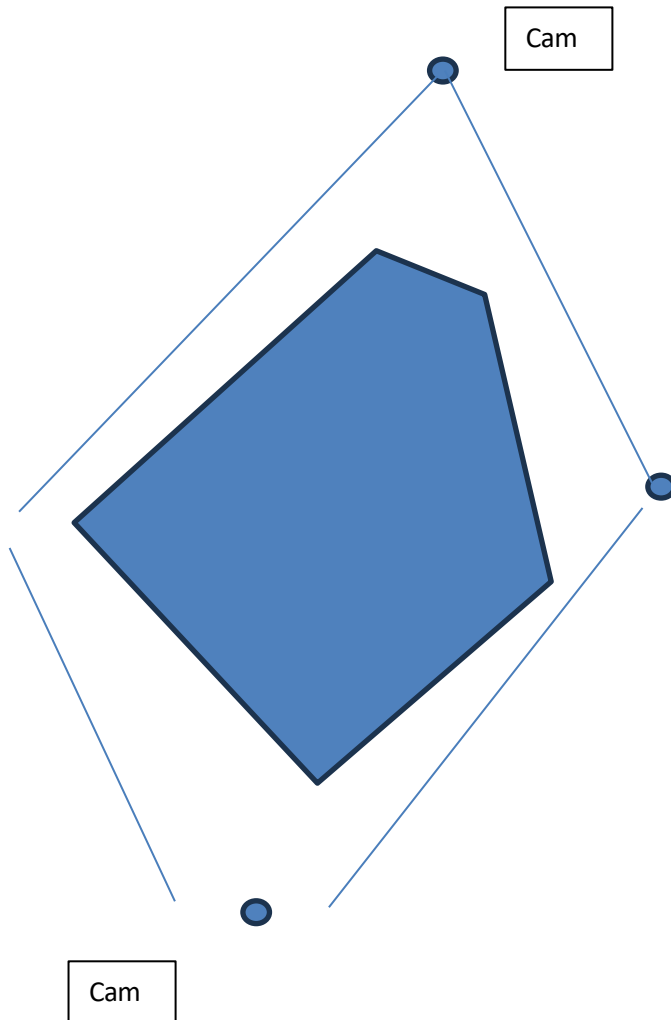


Figure 1: Approximate surveyor locations

Figure 1: Thermal Guide camera view 05/06/24



Figure 3 : Thermal Guide camera view 05/06/24



3.5.2 Survey 2- 9th July 2024

A survey was undertaken on 9th July 2024 as above.

Figure 4- Thermal Guide camera view



Figure 5- Sionyx Colour night vision view 9th July 2024



Figure 6- Sionyx Colour Night Vision view 2 9th July 2024



4 RESULTS

4.1 Inspection survey

4.1.1 External survey results

Please see The Acer Ecology report for the results of the initial inspection survey (Acer Ecology, 2023)

4.1.2 Internal survey results

Please see The Acer Ecology report for the results of the initial inspection survey (Acer Ecology, 2023)

4.2 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

4.3 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 05/06/24	21:27	Start	21:10	14	Low	30%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	23:00	14	Low	15%	
Survey 2 09/07/24	21:31	Start	21:10	16	Low	40%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	23:05	16	Low	50%	

4.4 Activity Survey Results

4.4.1 Survey 1- 5th June 2024

Species heard on site include common pipistrelle only. The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle bat, heard at approximately 15 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen flying high over head from south to north. A number of pipistrelles (approximately 5) were observed commuting high over head and infrequently throughout the survey.

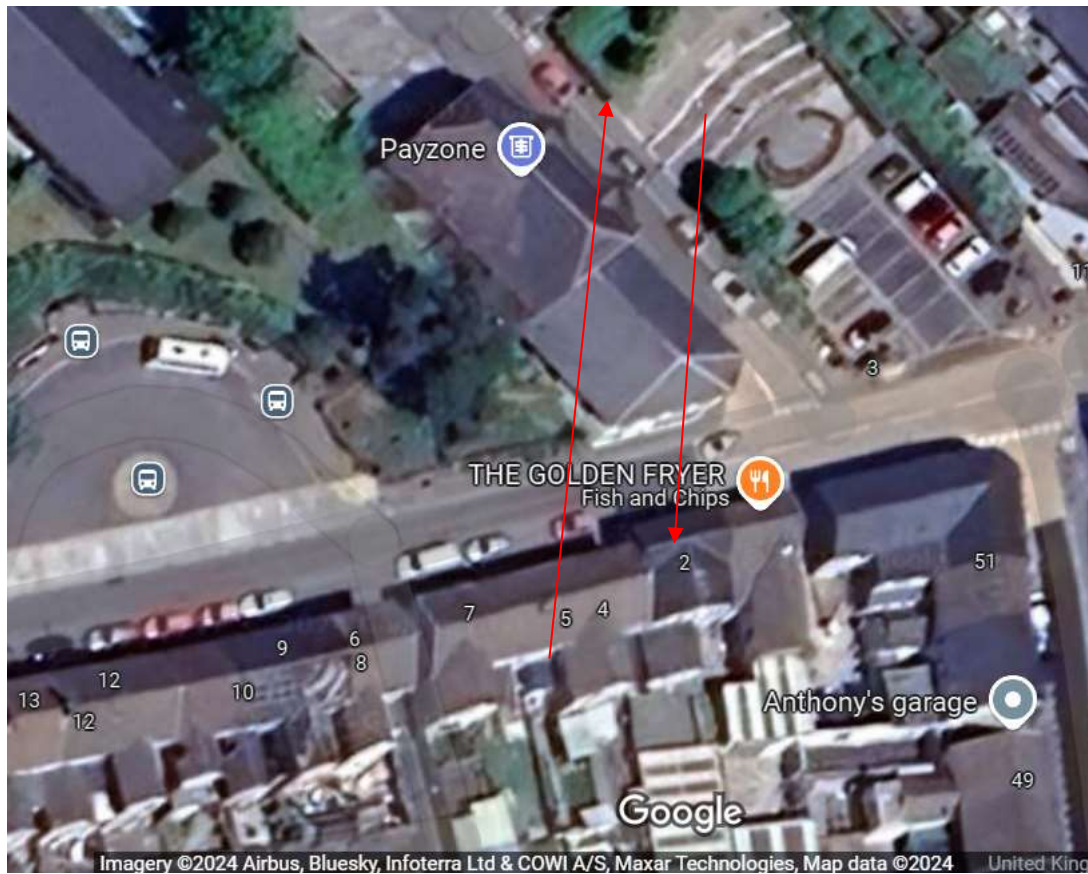
None of the bats interacted with the building in any way and no bats emerged from the building on this date.

4.4.2 Survey 2- 7th July 2024

Species heard on site again include common pipistrelle only. The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle bat, heard at approximately 20 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen flying high over head from north to south. A small number of bat calls (less than 10 were heard throughout the night, infrequently). The calls were short with bats not detected by cameras nor surveyors.

None of the bats interacted with the building in any way and no bats emerged from the building on this date.

Figure 7: Locations of flight lines (arrowed red)



(Google Maps 2024)

4.4.3 Survey 1

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

4.4.4 Survey 2

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

Conclusion

Generally bat activity at the site is low with only one species heard throughout the surveys, common pipistrelle.

The property was not identified as a bat roost.

A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required prior to any works being undertaken on the building.

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 possible that bats will use the property over winter, however this is considered unlikely due to the structure of the building and due to the fact the property has not been identified as a roost.

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 property has not been identified as a bat roost and it is considered unlikely that there will be any impacts on roosting bats. To safeguard the unlikely presence of roosting bats, all works will be undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

A <https://www.nhbs.com/1wi-schwegler-summer-and-winter-bat-box> (or equivalent) will be installed on the northern elevation of the property. The box will be installed at least 3m from the ground and away from windows. No external lighting will be placed on this elevation.

6.2 Birds

A Schwegler 2GR, 1B Schwegler Nest Box or a suitable equivalent will be installed on the north western elevation of the property. The box will be installed at least 3m from ground level.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 Timing

As there is some hibernation potential within the building, the works will not be undertaken in the winter months.

7.1.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A the property is not a bat roost.

7.1.3 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.

7.1.4 Bat Licensing

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

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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 (as amended) (HMSO).

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

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

9 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 and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist.
4. The features 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.

APPENDIX B- ASSESSMENT AGAINST POLICY -PLANNING POLICY WALES: STEPWISE APPROACH AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

On the 11th October 2023, ahead of PPW12 being published, the new Chapter 6 came into force with immediate effect.

Net benefit must be secured via planning applications using the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management. Green Infrastructure Statements will be used to demonstrate the step wise approach. The following information will be used in order to show compliance with policy.

Proposed Development: Former Offices Williams Terrace

Site description: A two storey building beneath a hipped/pitched slate roof.

Surrounding Area description: The site is located within Treharris town centre. The building is within a wholly urban area with a tree corridor to the west. There is not much connectivity to the wider landscape.

Development Impacts: Potential loss of bat roosts should they be present. Increased site lighting should lighting be implemented.

Step wise approach

Step 1- Avoidance- Impacts cannot be avoided on existing habitats due to the requirement to upgrade the building.

Step 2- Minimise- Impacts cannot be avoided on existing habitats due to the requirement to upgrade the building.

Step 3- Mitigate/Restore- Mitigation will be via appropriate safeguarding method statements and ecological supervision to ensure no harm to protected species and the retention of vegetation to the west. Lighting (if required) will be in accordance with that specified for bats

Step 4- Compensation on site- N/A no bat roosts were identified.

Biodiversity Enhancements Proposed

The proposed scheme acknowledges the requirement to achieve a Net Benefit for Biodiversity and from the beginning this has been built into the planning of the project. It is recognized that the footprint of the scheme removes a no vegetation and is within a highly urbanized area. The applicant aims to deliver biodiversity enhancements at the local scale by offering the enhancements stated above on the site.

As result of the ecological measures within this report, it is expected that there will be a demonstrable net benefit for biodiversity.