

Dear JT Planning,

28 March 2025

Re: P2738: Bryntaf Garage, Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4PJ

I am writing to confirm that Kat Oliver, Assistant Ecologist, has conducted an updated inspection of the Bryntaf garage located at Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4PJ, (OS Grid Reference: ST 07026 99820) on 21st of March 2025. The location of the site is detailed within Appendix 1.

Background

A preliminary roost assessment and two dusk emergence surveys were conducted by Sylvan Ecology in 2021. The preliminary roost assessment and dusk emergence surveys found no evidence of bats roosting in the building. Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrelle pygmaeus*) bats were found commuting in the nearby woodland above the quarry face. Noctules (*Nyctalus noctule*) were also recorded commuting on site but not observed. It was advised that the development works would unlikely cause impacts on the bats.

Proposed Development

The proposed works involves the demolition of industrial buildings and construction of 14 dwellings and six apartments. Development plans are in Appendix 2 and 3.

Site Description

The majority of the site and the building remains unchanged since 2021.

The site is surrounded by residential houses to the north, south and east. In the west lies a large quarry with a woodland above it. In the wider landscape, there are sections of woodlands and a relatively intact network of hedgerows.

The site consists of two workshops which are linked to one another, a storeroom with a lean-to office room. The external walls are partially rendered with breezeblocks, roofs are corrugated steel and plastic which are partially lined. The lean-to office has a clay tile roof with no loft void. The roof is in good condition with raised bargeboards which could be used by bats to gain access to the building.

In the eastern elevation, there are few cracks in the rendered walls which could be used by bats as roost. The bargeboards are raised and have gaps. The lead flashing is raised which could provide access

to bats to the building. The edges of the steel roofs have bargeboards which contains small gaps which can be accessed by bats.

There are few gaps in the rendered wall in the northern elevation which can be used by bats as roost.

Much of the interior of the building appears to remain the same. The building has significant light ingress, cold temperatures and no loft void therefore providing negligible suitability for lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) and roof-void dwelling bats to roost inside the building. The few raised bargeboards, raised lead flashing and gaps in the walls provides moderate potential for crevice dwellers.

Photo 1: Raised Corrugated Steel Roof at the Southern Elevation

Photo 2: Shelter Lean-To



Photo 3: Raised Bargeboards in the Eastern Elevation

Photo 4: Cracks in the Rendering



Photo 5: Raised Bargeboard



Photo 6: Raised Bargeboard



Photo 7: Gap in the Bargeboard



Photo 8: Raised Lead Flashing



Photo 9: Cracks in the Rendered Walls



Photo 10: Raised Bargeboards



Photo 11: Raised Bargeboard



Photo 12: Interior View of the Toilet



Photo 13: Northern Elevation



Photo 14: Gaps in the Rendered Wall



Photo 15: Western Elevation



Photo 16: Interior View of the Garage



Further Work

The updated site visit confirmed that the structure remains unchanged. With no alterations to the building, there is nothing to suggest that the likelihood of roosting has increased or that the results of the previous surveys are no longer valid. As a result, no further surveys are considered necessary; however, precautionary measures will be implemented to ensure the protection of any bats that may be present.

As it is not possible to rule out bat use entirely, and there is also a risk of an offence being committed if active birds' nests are present the following recommendations are made to minimise risks to bats and birds. It is recommended that this section of the report is conditioned as part of any future planning consent/demolition notice being granted for the site:

Pre-works Endoscope Check

Before the commencement of any works on the building, a detailed endoscopic inspection will be carried out by a qualified bat consultant to assess the presence of bats in accessible sections of the roof. This inspection will involve the use of an endoscope to visually inspect crevices and spaces that are typically not accessible during routine surveys. The aim is to identify any bats or bat roosts that could be affected by the planned works.

If bats are discovered during this inspection, all work will immediately cease until further bat surveys can take place. This ensures that the protection of bats is maintained and that the legal requirements for working with protected species are met.

By conducting this thorough pre-works endoscopy, the project can proceed in an environmentally responsible manner, with any disturbance to bats being minimised.

Site Induction and Toolbox Talk

A suitably qualified bat ecologist will give a 'tool-box talk' to all contractors involved in the demolition works. This will take place prior to the commencement of works. All site workers will be briefed on the legal status of bats, the likely places to find them, the working practices required to minimise and avoid

harming or disturbing bats (e.g. the procedure required for removing tiles etc.), and the action to be taken if bats are encountered during the works.

If bats are encountered, the bat will be carefully covered over again. Appropriate advice will be obtained from a suitably qualified bat consultant or Natural Resources Wales and, if necessary, a bat development licence obtained before work can resume.

Ecological On-Site Supervision of Works/Soft Strip

A licensed bat worker will supervise the 'soft strip' whereby all features with bat roosting potential will be exposed and removed. This will minimise the chance of bats being killed/injured.

Any removal work will be undertaken using hand tools, (i.e. picks, crowbars, slate rippers, bow saws etc.). These features will be carefully removed by hand and contractors will check for the possible presence of bats on the undersides of these features before they are lifted off, prior to discarding or storing them. During the soft strip process, any cracks or crevices that have the potential to be used by bats will be inspected by a licensed bat worker using a high-powered torch to ensure they are not in use. Cavities will be carefully prised open using a crowbar. Wall tops will be exposed so that any wall cavities can be checked. A decision will be made on site at the time by the site ecologist about the extent of areas that need to be supervised.

The removal of such features will be observed and supervised at close quarters by a licensed bat handler from an appropriate viewing position to be provided by the demolition contractor (e.g. scaffolding or lifting platform).

Bat Discovery Action Plan

If bats or significant evidence of bat activity are discovered during the works, all activities will halt immediately. Any live bats will be left undisturbed and carefully covered to preserve their environment, ensuring that access points remain intact.

Bat Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

As an enhancement measure two externally mounted bat boxes (Appendix 4) will be installed in the nearby trees to provide suitable habitat for crevice-dwelling bats. The box should be positioned at a

height of at least 3m from the ground. The suggested location of the bat boxes is in Appendix 5. The licensed ecologist will oversee the installation of the bat boxes to ensure they are correctly positioned and securely fixed.

Bird Enhancement Measures

Bird enhancement measures will be incorporated through the installation of nest boxes (Appendix 6) in the nearby trees. The suggested location of the bird boxes is in Appendix 5.

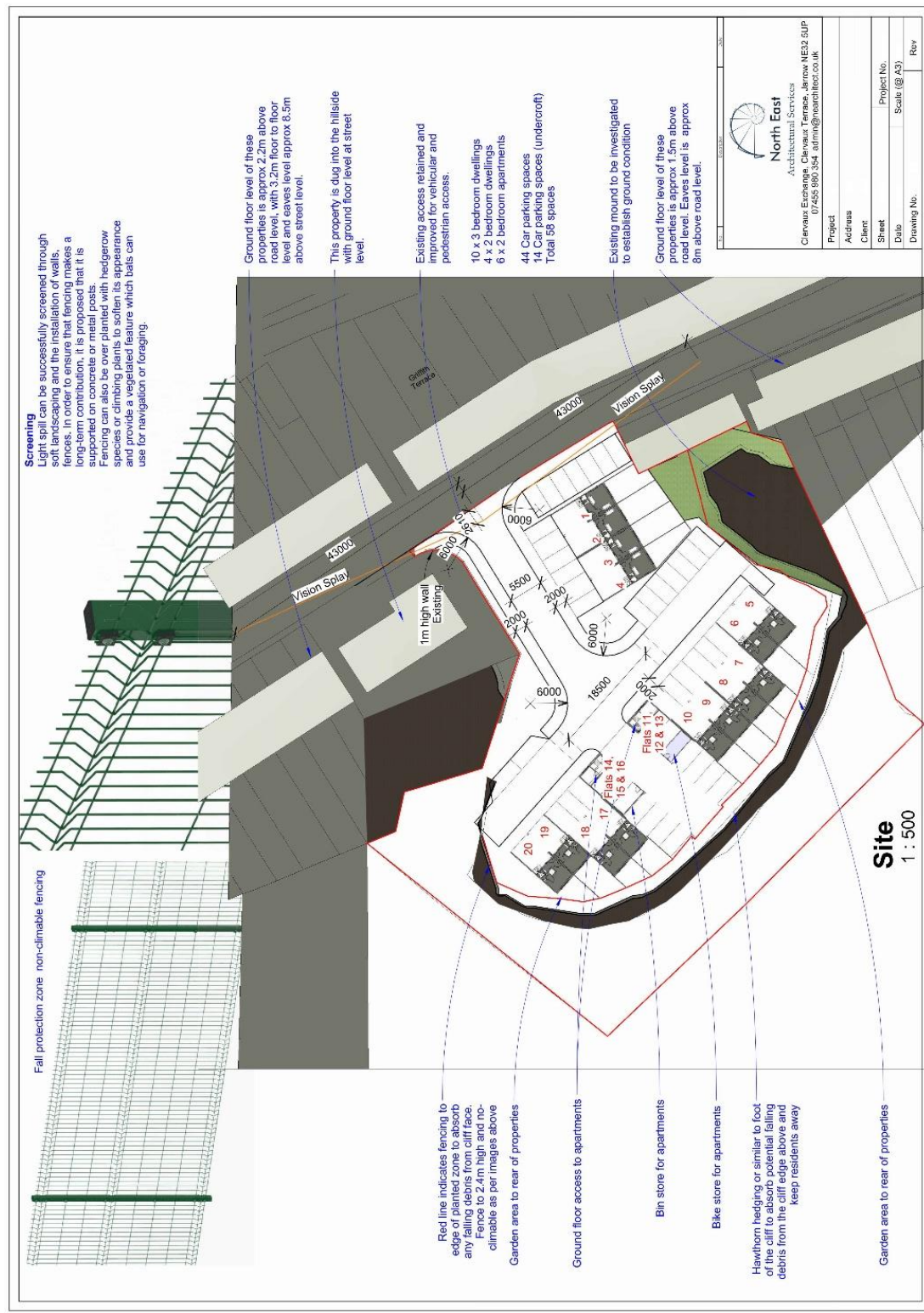
Reference

Collins, J (ed) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

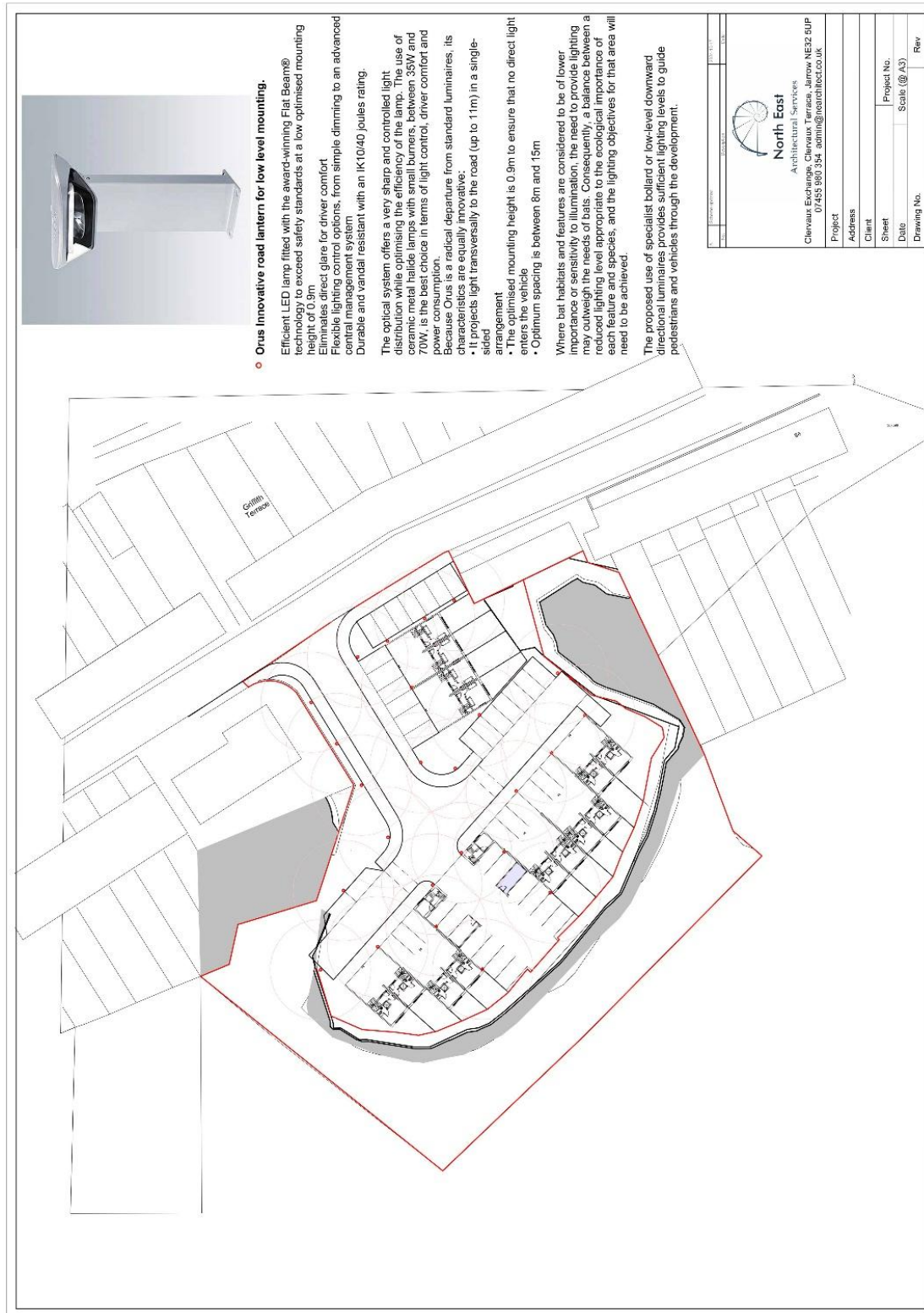
Appendix 1: Location Map



Appendix 2: Development Plans



Appendix 3: Proposed Lighting



Appendix 4: Schwegler 2F Bat Box



The Schwegler 2F General Bat Box is the standard and most popular bat box. Ideal for summer roosts and is constructed of woodcrete, providing a breathable, stable temperature within and is suitable for long-term mitigation projects.

Position: Ideal for trees, should be mounted on tree trunks at a height of 3m – 6m. Can be positioned in clusters of three, with each box facing west through a south-eastern aspect to provide a variety of micro habitats.

Height: 33cm.

Diameter: 16cm.

Weight: 4kg.

Selection of Trees

Selected trees should ideally be a minimum of 500mm diameter at the height of fixing. Trees should not be obviously unstable or badly rotted. The timber and bark at the point of fixing should be sound.

Position of Boxes on Trees

Boxes should be mounted on tree trunks, rather than on boughs or branches. The mounting location should not be heavily shaded. Boxes should be mounted vertically on the tree.

Bat boxes should be mounted a minimum of 3m from the ground, and ideally placed in clusters of three.

The entrance to the box should be clear of obstructions and obstacles in the flight-path towards it. An 'open airspace' of about 3m square should be preserved in front of and below the entrance, and elsewhere any overhanging branches should be at least 1m away.

The mounting location should be readily and safely accessible by ladder, but not accessible by someone climbing up the trunk or onto an adjacent tree or wall etc.

Some lower branches may need to be trimmed below the box to remove ready handholds or footholds for would-be tree-climbers (as well as any small branches crowding the entrance).

As far as possible, boxes should be placed in locations which are not conspicuous from the ground, so as not to attract unwanted attention from passers-by. This objective is assisted by selecting locations which are not visible/accessible from public footpaths, byways etc.

Double Roost Panel

An internal double front panel creates roosting opportunities for crevice-inhabiting bats such as common and soprano pipistrelles.



Bat Box Availability

The 2F bat box is available from a number of suppliers including Jacobi Jayne (www.jacobijayne.com), NHBS (www.nhbs.com) where it retails at approximately £35.95+VAT.

Appendix 5: Location of Bat and Bird Boxes



Appendix 6: Schwegler 1B General Small Bird Box

The Schwegler 1B Woodcrete nest box is available with different entrance hole sizes to attract a wide range of species and prevent competition between birds. The nest box can be attached to the tree or wall using an aluminium nail or by hanging over a branch. The nest box has removable front panel to aid inspection and cleaning.

Entrance hole sizes:

- **32mm entrance hole** will attract great, blue, marsh, coal and crested tit, redstart, nuthatch, collared and pied flycatcher, wryneck, tree and house sparrow and bats.
- **26mm entrance hole** suits blue, marsh, coal and crested tit and possibly wren. All other species are prevented from using the nest box due to the smaller entrance hole.
- **Oval entrance hole** (29 x 55mm) suits redstarts because more light enters the brood chamber. It is also suitable for all other species which nest in the 32mm boxes



The Schwegler 1B general small bird box will be preferably mounted on a stable tree trunk, rather than on branches which will sway. The mounting location will not be heavily shaded. Boxes should be mounted vertically on the tree.

Boxes will be mounted a minimum of 2m, and preferably 3m, above the ground, and as far as possible placed on the SE- or SW-facing surfaces of the tree trunks.