



The Old Sawmill, Court Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Initial Bat Inspection Survey Report

March 2026 | Issue 1A



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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Background	6
1.2	Site description	6
1.3	Proposed development	8
2	LEGISLATION & POLICIES	9
2.1	Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	9
2.2	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981	9
2.3	The Environment (Wales) Act 2016	9
3	METHODOLOGY	11
3.1	Survey Objectives	11
3.2	Survey Summary	11
3.3	Data Search	11
3.4	Surveyor Information	11
3.5	Internal & External Inspection	11
3.6	Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)	12
3.6.1	Survey 1- 20th May 2026	12
3.7	Survey limitations	12
4	RESULTS	12
4.1	Inspection survey	12
4.1.1	External survey results	12
4.1.2	Internal survey results	13
4.2	Activity surveys	13
4.2.1	Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions	13
4.2.2	Activity Survey Results	13
4.2.2.1	Survey 1- 20th May 2026	13
4.3	Identified Roosts	13
4.4	Conclusion & Recommendations	13
4.5	Breeding Birds	14
5	INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT	14
5.1	Active Season Usage	14
5.2	Hibernation Season Usage	14
5.3	Ecological Impacts of development	14
6	ENHANCEMENT	15
6.1	Bats	15

6.2	Birds	15
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	15
7.1	Timing	15
7.2	Timber/roofing materials	15
7.3	Lighting	16
7.4	Bat Licensing	16
7.5	Supervision	16
7.6	Compliance	16
8	METHOD STATEMENT	16
9	REFERENCES	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to demolish a single skinned, single storey set of units at the Old Saw Mill, Court Street, Merthyr Tydfil.

An initial bat inspection survey of the site was undertaken on 2nd February 2025. No bats or evidence of bats was seen on the exterior or in the interior of the building.

The majority of buildings are industrial metal sheet roofed buildings, excluding one small unit that has a tiled roof.

Due to a number of factors justified within this report, it is considered that the building is of negligible/low potential for roosting bats. Low potential buildings would ordinarily require one evening survey between May and September. It is possible that further surveys may not be required and that all work can be undertaken under the auspices of a non-licensed method statement and ecological supervision as the building sits between low and negligible, however this approach would need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority Ecologist.

Should the above approach be deemed appropriate, in the 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.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey of a commercial building for the potential presence of birds and bats in order to support a planning application to demolish the units and replace them with new units and associated parking.

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

1.2 Site description

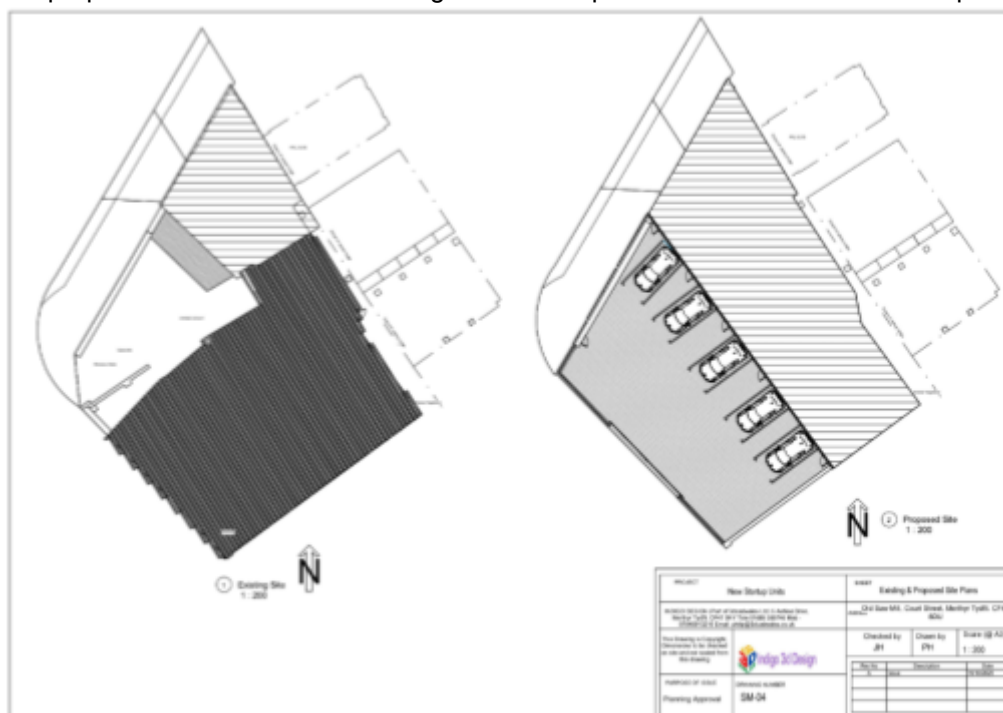
The buildings on site are brick and block built, single skin, single storey structure under a corrugated aluminium sheet roof. The building is located within the town centre and is bounded by commercial and industrial buildings and housing.

There is one small building that sits beneath a tile roof. Barge boards and fascias where present are a mix of timber and uPVC.

There are bridge arches present at the rear of the property. No bats or evidence of bats was identified in these at the time of survey. The site is located in a fully urban area but is partially connected to the surrounding countryside by small belts of woodland and scrub which lead to the wider landscape.

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to demolish the existing units and replace them with new units and parking



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)
- Single activity survey

3.3 Data Search

A data search was not undertaken in this instance due to the small size of the site. All of the works will be undertaken within the confines of the site.

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.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

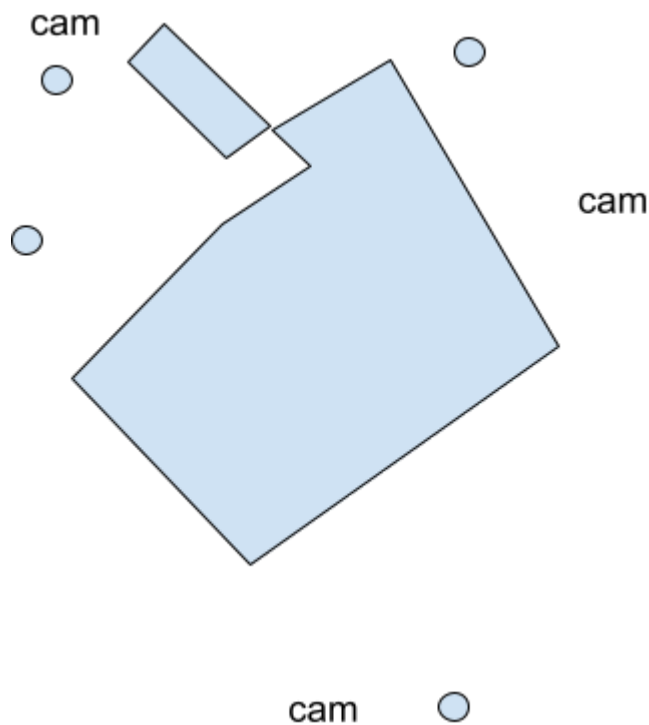
An initial inspection survey was carried out on 2nd February 2026 by Beth Evans to search the building, both internally and externally to identify potential bat roosting areas and signs of bat use including; live bats, dead bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks and discarded prey items. The buildings 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.

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.

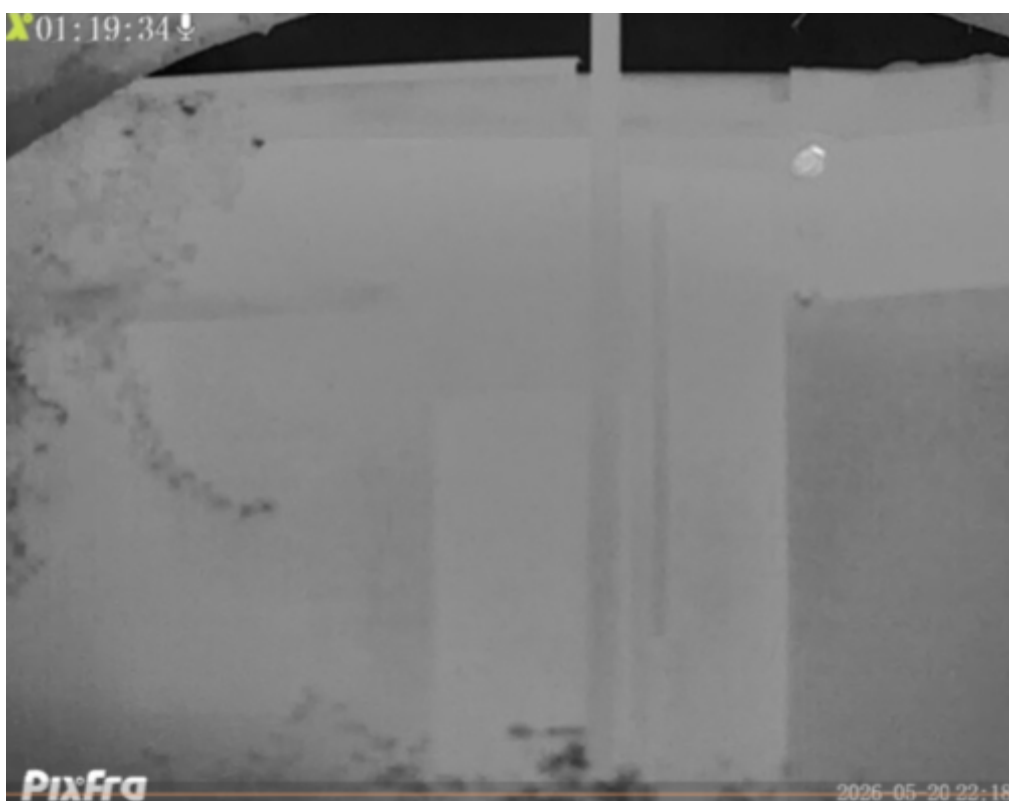
Survey 1- 20th May 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 20th May 2026 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.





Thermal camera 1



Thermal camera 2



Thermal camera 3

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.

Cameras are extremely difficult to position on the site due to narrow viewing angles and busy roads. Some elevations cannot be seen as they are built into walls.

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 buildings.

Whilst there are a small number of gaps into the buildings (above shutter doors, beneath metal sheets etc) the wall plates can be viewed. The building is draughty and clean. There is a small amount of ivy present on the rear elevation, however, the ivy is too young to provide appropriate roosting conditions. Generally fascias and soffits do not have gaps beneath them.

Whilst there are some ridge tiles missing on the small tiled unit, there does not appear to be many gaps into the roof via tiles.

The majority of brickwork is well pointed. There are some gaps present, however, they are generally blocked with mud and do not lead anywhere, particularly along the boundary wall.

No evidence of nesting birds was seen on the exterior or the interior of the building
Please see appended plates for photographs of the building exterior.

4.1.2 Internal survey results

Whilst joined, the buildings are split into separate areas. There is no roof space present within the building with the tile roof. There are no light ingress' within this part of the building at wall plate level. The area to the north east is entirely lined with corrugated metal that is sat on timber joists. There are some gaps to the exterior beneath the metal but the wallplates are exposed and can be viewed. There are numerous unbroken cobwebs around wall plates. No evidence or potential for bats was found in the interior of the building. No evidence of nesting birds was found within the interior of the building.

Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

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 20/05/26	21:00	Start End	20:40 22:30	14 13	Low Low	10% 15%	Dry evening, insects flying

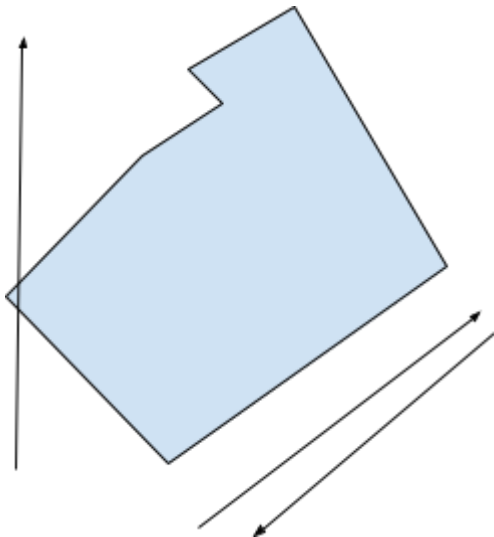
Activity Survey Results

Survey 1- 20th May 2026

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle, approximately 15 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen commuting along the road between the site and the supermarket to the south of the site.

Species heard throughout the course of the survey include common pipistrelle and noctule. Bat calls were heard intermittently, generally as bats commuted high in the sky. There was no consistent foraging activity at the site.

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



Identified flight paths

4.2 Identified Roosts

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

4.3 Conclusion & Recommendations

It is considered that due to the buildings architectural style, that despite the buildings location in close proximity to suitable bat foraging habitat, it is of a negligible to low ecological value to and for bats.

The property has not been identified as a bat roost. Activity at the site was moderate throughout the course of the survey with two species heard, common pipistrelle and noctule

No bats emerged from nor interacted with the building throughout the course of the survey.

As some areas cannot be viewed, all works will be undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

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.

4.4 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, it will be left until such a time that the birds have left the nest of their own accord. A pigeon was observed roosting on the rear of the building throughout the survey.

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 a lack of thermal mass (single skin, draughty).

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, due to the awkward viewing angles of the building, 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

The following bat box will be attached to the north eastern elevation of the building. https://www.arkwildlife.co.uk/products/vivara-pro-woodstone-build-in-bat-tube?variant=45167693103321&country=GB&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=17182013905&qbraid=0AAAAAD_f3t55Pt-bjfOdoK9e91uWcwtXv&gclid=Cj0KCQiA8KTNBhD_ARIsAOvp6DLstcSSu-6g6LeIBn7SpxlSD3XzrSJqtAiRYI-Cf4FajTbrff-6Bq0aAhyYEALw_wcB.

6.2 Birds

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

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. However, it is possible that birds will nest within the ivy on the building, as such, if work is to be undertaken between March and September, it is essential that the ivy is checked for the presence of nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist.

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

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/>

It is important that the arches to the north east remain unlit.

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 ivy and the roof will be required.

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 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. Before any work commences, the ivy on the exterior of the building will be checked by the ecologist for the presence of bats and birds.
4. All suitable bat roosting features will need to be removed by hand (metal sheets) and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist.
5. The sheets 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 (HMSO).

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

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

APPENDIX A- PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1- photograph of small tiled roof building



Plate 2- photograph of sealed fascias and soffits



Plate 3- photograph of entrance and front of units



Plate 4- interior of units



Plate 5- rear of units



Plate 6- example of interior



Plate 7- front of property



Plate 8- interior of tiled roof building

