



**CYFARTHFA DENTAL PRACTICE, ROOKWOOD HOUSE,
GWAELODYGARTH LN, MERTHYR TYDFIL**

INITIAL BAT INSPECTION SURVEY

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Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to replace the flat roof of a garage with a pitched roof at Cyfarthfa Dental Surgery, Rookwood House, Gwaelodygarth Ln, Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales.

An initial bat inspection survey of the site was undertaken on 18th September 2020. No bats or evidence of bats was seen on the exterior or in the interior of the building.

The building is a metal sheet, flat roofed building that is used regularly for storage and to house a compressor for the dental practice.

Due to a number of factors justified within this report, it is considered that the building is of negligible potential for roosting bats.

In the unlikely 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. No birds were observed during the visit.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by Mr Paul Jones to undertake an initial bat inspection survey of a garage at Cyfarthfa Dental Practice for the potential presence of birds and bats in order to support a planning application to remove the flat roof and replace it with a pitched roof in order to be able to use the building as additional space for the practice.

The surveys were undertaken in line with the current guidance on standards for bat surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.2 Site description

The garage is located within the grounds of Cyfarthfa Dental Practice, Rockwood House, Gwaelodygarth Ln, Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales.

The property is a single skinned, breeze block structure with a corrugated metal roof on a bed of timber purlins. Fascias where present are of uPVC. The garage is accessed by a roller shutter door on the northern elevation. The garage is currently used for storage and to house a compressor for the dental surgery.

The garage is adjoined (below eaves level) to another garage to the west. It is joined to the main dental surgery (again below eaves level) on the eastern elevation. There is a small lean too structure (again below eaves level) to the south of the garage.

The garage is set in a wholly urban environment, however, there are patches of vegetation that may act as stepping stones to the wider landscape that comprises of patches of broad-leaved woodland, playing fields, fields and mountains.



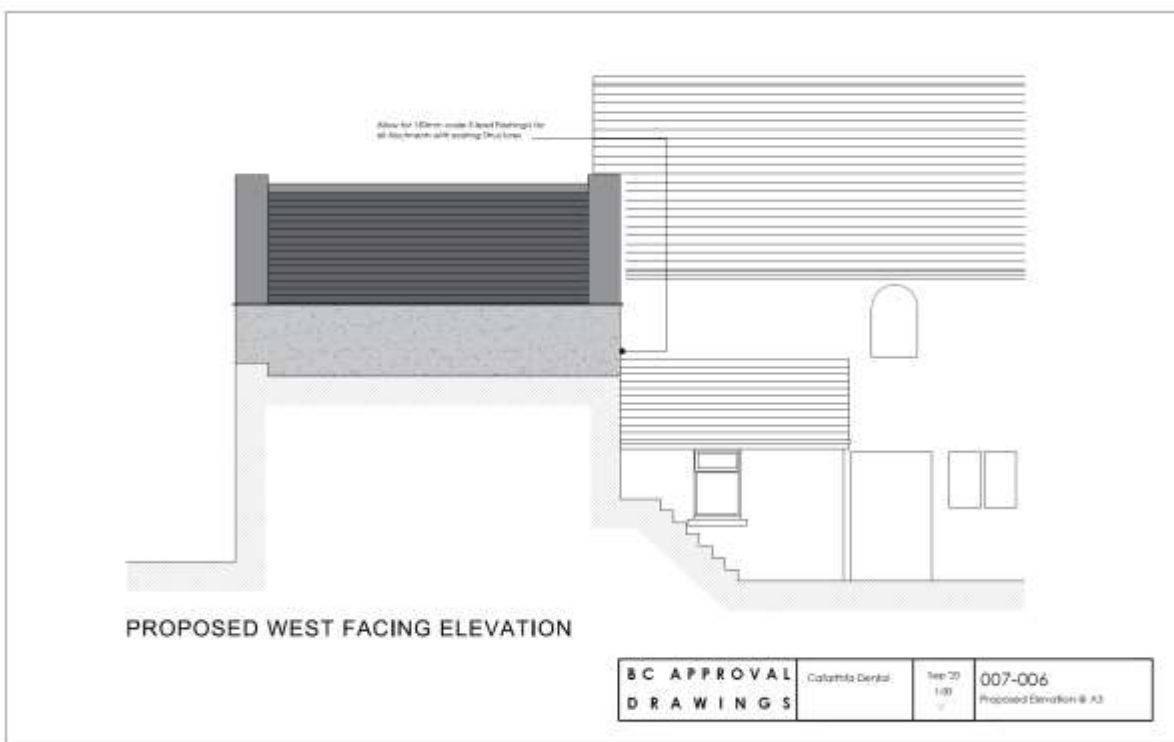
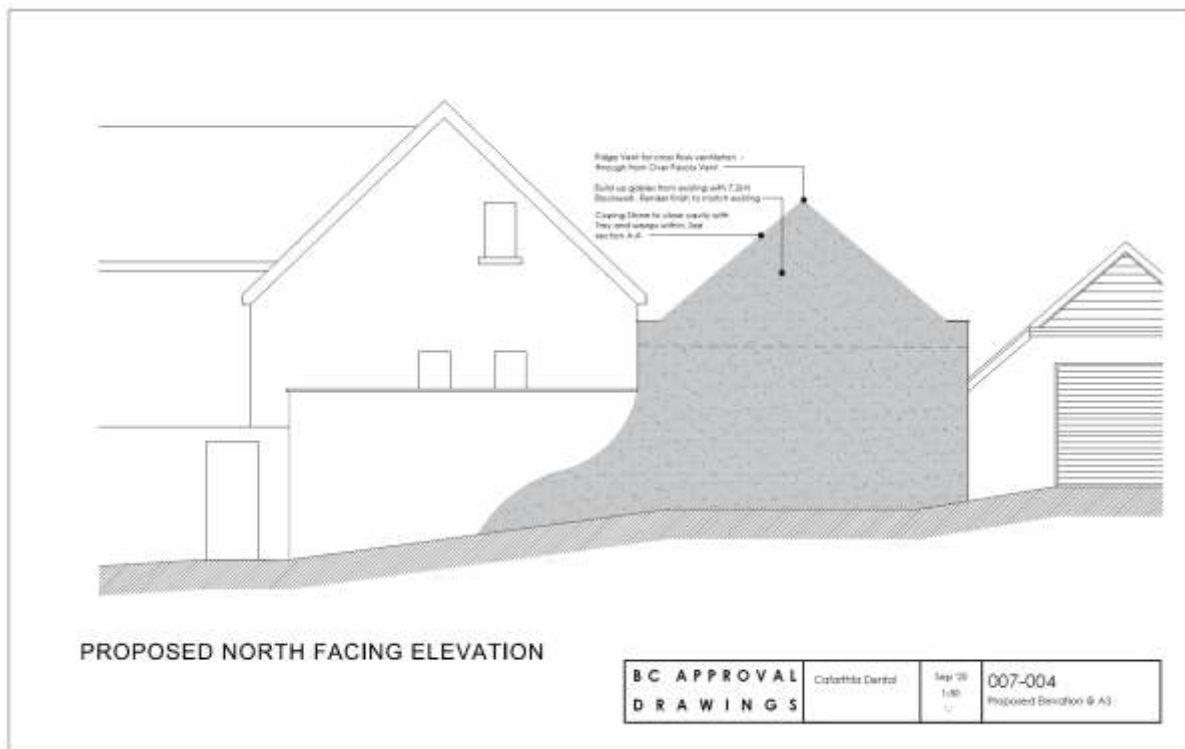
Figure 1- detailed view of site (boxed red)



Figure 2- view of wider landscape surrounding site (site arrowed red)

It is proposed to remove the flat roof and replace it with a new pitched roof along with other alterations and refurbishment.





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)
- Data Search (SEWBRc)

3.3 Data Search

The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) were formerly requested to supply a Bat and Roof-nesting Birds (BARB) survey for the site. 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 in September 2020. The data search reference number is 0201-394

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. Beth was accompanied on the survey by Hugh Dixon. Hugh has multiple years' experience of bat surveys and 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 18th September 2020 by Beth Evans and Hugh Dixon 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.

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.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Designated Sites

Information regarding statutory and locally designated sites for bats within a 10 km buffer study received from SEWBrEC revealed;

The search area **DOES NOT** fall within 10km of an SAC or SSSI that has been designated because of its bats.

4.2 Bat and Bird Records within the Local Area

The SEWBrEC search returned 261 records of bats within 2km of the development site. Species include, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, natterers, brown long-eared, myotis sp. and noctule. The majority of records refer to bats in flight. The closest known roost is a pipistrelle roost approximately 216m from the site.

There are 5 bird records from the data search, the closest of which is a house sparrow 195m from the site. Other species include peregrine falcon, blue tit and great tit.

4.3 Inspection survey

4.3.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the buildings and failed to find any suitable, obvious access points for roosting bats.

There does not appear to be any access into the garage. It is possible that bats may fly through the gaps of the wiggly tin metal, however, this is considered unlikely. The fascia board on the southern elevation is tightly sealed to the wall. There is potentially a small gap above the roller shutter door, however, it is considered unlikely that it is a suitable access point for bats..

No evidence of nesting birds was seen on the exterior. No birds were noted throughout the survey.

Please see appended plates for photographs of the building exterior.

4.3.2 Internal survey results

Internally the building is used for storing a compressor and other items associated with the dental practice.

The wall plates are visible on the interior, however, there are no light ingress' within the building at wall plate level.

The building is entirely lined with corrugated metal that is sat on timber joists. There does not appear to be any gap to the outside.

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.

4.4 Identified Roosts

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

4.5 Conclusion & Recommendations

It is considered that due to the buildings architectural style and a lack of identifiable access points the building in its current state is of negligible ecological value to and for bats.

The building appears to be entirely sealed with no obvious access points and roosting locations identified.

It is considered necessary that the removal of the roof is undertaken in line with an ecological method statement and supervision to safeguard the small possibility that bats may be present.

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.

4.6 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the building 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.

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 extremely unlikely that bats will use the building for hibernation due to a lack of access points.

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.

Raising the height of the building is unlikely to affect neighbouring bat roosts as the building will tie in below eaves level of the adjacent buildings and as a result will not obstruct any potential access points

The building has not been identified as a bat roost and as such impacts on roosting bats are unlikely to be present. However, 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

A Schwegler 1FF bat box will be attached to the southern elevations 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 northern 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.

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/>

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 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). If breathable roofing membrane is to be used to line the roof, the roof must be completely sealed to prevent any possible access by bats. E-mail confirmation of both 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. All suitable bat roosting features will need to be removed by hand (metal sheets) and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist.
4. 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.
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 (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 southern elevation



Plate 2- Gaps at wall plate level with no light ingress'



Plate 3- photograph of garage interior



Plate 4- Photograph of wall plate





