



THE RAILWAY INN, HIGH STREET, BEDLINOG, TREHARRIS

INITIAL BAT INSPECTION SURVEY

ISSUE 1, VERSION D

JULY 2020

Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to convert a former public house to three dwellings.

An initial bat inspection survey of the site was undertaken on 24th June 2020. No bats or evidence of bats was seen on the exterior or in the interior of the building.

The building is a two storey-rendered property beneath a slate roof.

Due to a number of factors justified within this report, it is considered that the building is of low potential for roosting bats. However, works to the property are largely complete and therefore any remaining works to be undertaken would not effect any roosting bats should they be present. All remaining works are below ceiling level. The property was re-roofed under permitted development prior to the planning application. Due to the structural damage associated with the property, the current internal ceilings will not be removed and will subsequently be boarded over.

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 seen or heard 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 former pub for the potential presence of birds and bats in order to support a planning application to convert the property to three residential dwellings.

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

1.2 Site description

The building is a double storey, presumably brick/block built structure that is rendered on the majority of elevations. The property is located on High Street, Bedlinog, Treharris, South Wales (figures 1&2) The property is bounded by commercial and other residential dwellings and associated infrastructure.

The building is “L-shaped” with the ridges running north to south and east to west. The property has recently been re-roofed under permitted development due to the structural issues surrounding the roof and repeated water damage. Fascias and rain water goods are new and in good order.

There is a small outbuilding to the north of the property. The building is of block and currently does not have a roof. There are doors present, however, these are rotted shut and entangled with sparse vegetation.

The site is located on the edge of Bedlinog and is well connected to surrounding countryside by vegetation and small belts of woodland which lead to the wider landscape.



Figure 1- detailed view of site (boxed red)



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

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 June 2020. The data search reference number is 0201-200.

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 24th June 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 SEWBRc 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 SEWBRc search returned 18 records of bats within 2km of the development site. Species include, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, myotis sp. and noctule. The majority of records refer to bats in flight. The closest known roost is a roost of an unknown species located approximately 200m from the site.

There are 12 bird records from the data search, the closest of which are 179m from the site. The search refers to pied wag tail, great tit, blue tit and swallow.

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. However, a number of potential access points were noted including:

- Gaps beneath newly fitted fascias and barge boards
- Gaps beneath newly fitted ridge tiles

No evidence of nesting birds was seen on the exterior. No birds were seen or heard on the site during the time of survey.

There is no potential for bats in the outbuilding due to the removal of the roof.

The flat roof structure to the rear is extremely low to the ground (it is almost buried into the slope). There were no visible suitable access points for bats at this location.

Please see appended plates for photographs of the building exterior.

4.3.2 Internal survey results

Internally the building has deteriorated drastically prior to the new roof being installed. Most areas of the building are not safe to access due to rotting floors and walk ways. The building is extremely damp.

Those areas that are accessible are below ceiling level. There are a few holes into the living spaces.

No bats or evidence of bats were found throughout these locations. Internally, the outbuilding is not suitable for roosting bats in its current form.

There was no evidence to suggest that bats could get access from the flat roof to the interior of the building.

No evidence of nesting birds was found throughout the property.

4.4 Identified Roosts

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

4.5 Conclusion & Recommendations

It is considered that any works that may affect bat roosts has already been undertaken prior to the survey. The roof has been renewed under permitted development as an attempt to save the buildings interior.

The client has informed BE Ecological Ltd that all works from now on are internal only. New boarding of ceilings will be carried out over the existing plaster work.

At the request of the Local Planning Authority Ecologist, gaps beneath fascias and barge boards will remain open. As no bat activity surveys have been undertaken it remains the case that the building could have bat roosts in these areas. Filling the gaps could potentially destroy roosts and entomb and kill bats causing offences to be committed under the relevant legislation.

As the work has already been undertaken it is recommended that enhancements are included in the final design.

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 buildings at the time of survey. If a birds nest is identified within the building or the ivy, 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 thought unlikely that bats will use the building for hibernation, however it is always possible.

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.

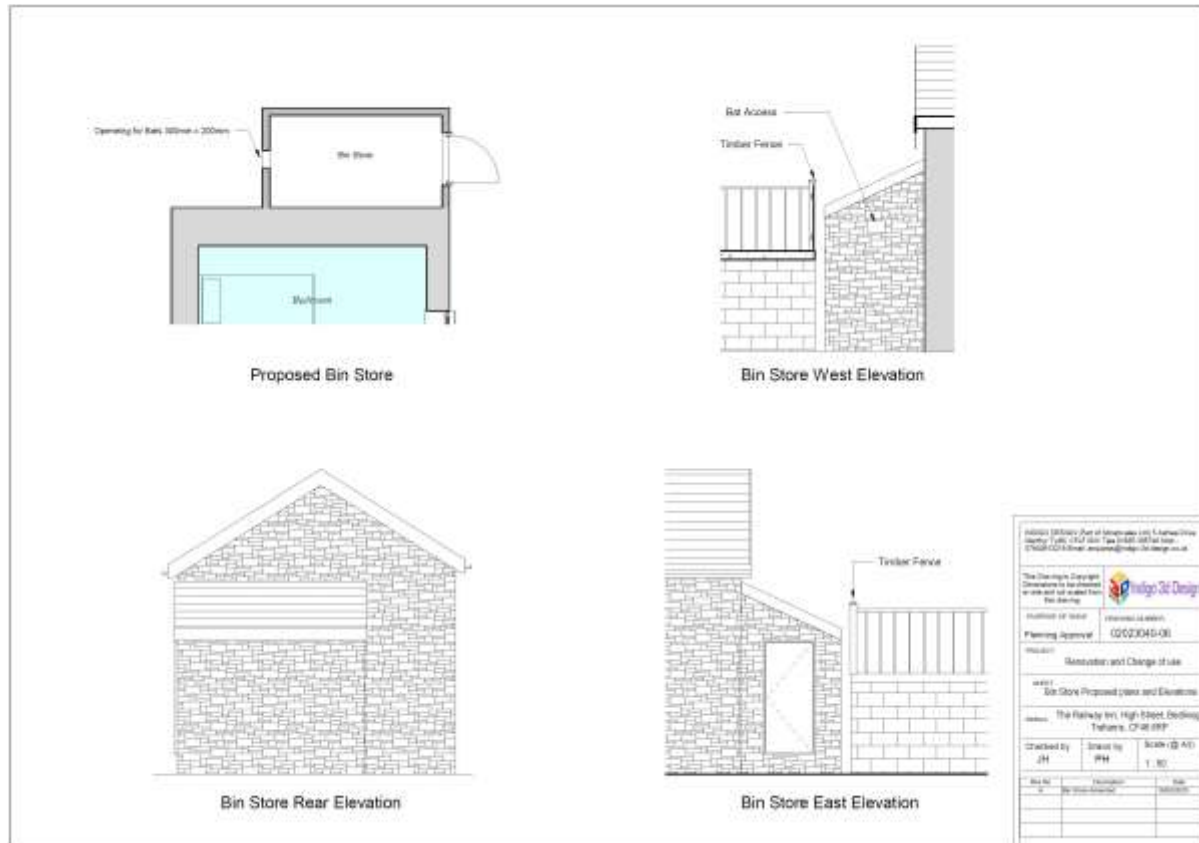
The building has not been identified as a bat roost and as such impacts on roosting bats are unlikely to be present due to the fact that all of the works likely to affect bats have been completed in advance of this report. BE Ecological cannot comment due to a lack of information as to whether bat roosts were present prior to the works being completed.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

A Schwegler 1FF bat box will be attached to the north western gable 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.

A bin store has been located to the rear of the property that bats may use should they wish. The design of the structure can be found below.



6.2 Birds

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

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 Timing

N/A the work has already been completed.

7.1.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A the work has already been completed.

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/>

The property is surrounded by third party ownership and lighting cannot be controlled at these locations. However, there will be no lighting within the clients ownership on the north western elevation.

There bat access on the western elevation of the bin store must remain unlit at all times. There will be no lighting at this location.

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

N/A the works have already been completed.

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 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









