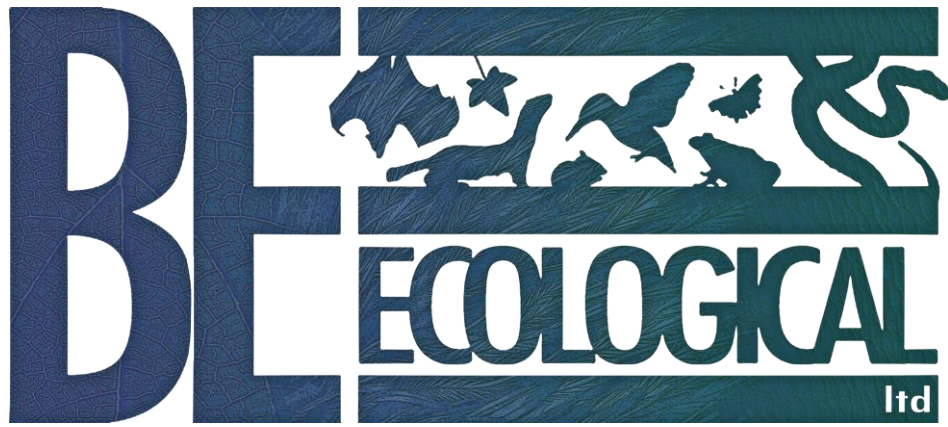




39, 42-43 PONTMORLAIS, MERTHYR TYDFIL

BAT SURVEY

ISSUE 1, VERSION A

SEPTEMBER 2022

39, 42-43 Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil

Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to change the use of an existing property at 39, 42 and 43 Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil. As part of these proposals, roof lights will be installed and there will be a reduction in eaves space of the upper floor.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken on 9th August 2022. The results indicated that the building is of low potential for roosting bats and as such a single emergence survey was undertaken.

The surveys failed to identify any bats roosting within the property.

A European Protected Species Licence will not be required in this instance unless bats or evidence of bats are discovered during the works. To safeguard this unlikely eventuality, works to the roof will be carried out in accordance with a method statement and supervision by an experienced licensed bat ecologist.

No evidence of breeding birds was found on the exterior or interior of the building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey and subsequent activity survey of 39, 42, 43 Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil in support of a planning application to change the use of the property.

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, 2016¹).

1.2 Site description

The property subject of this survey is located at 39, 42 and 43 Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil.

The property is a brick/block built structure beneath a slate roof. Barge boards and fascias where present are of timber and generally in good order with no obvious gaps beneath them. The property is a hipped end of terrace property with the main ridge running from north east to south west.

The property is set in a wholly urban environment with the River Taff to the east. There are patches of trees which lead to the river corridor and small patches of broad leaved woodland.

¹ *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, J (Ed). BCT, 2016)



Figure 1: Detailed view of the garage (arrowed red)

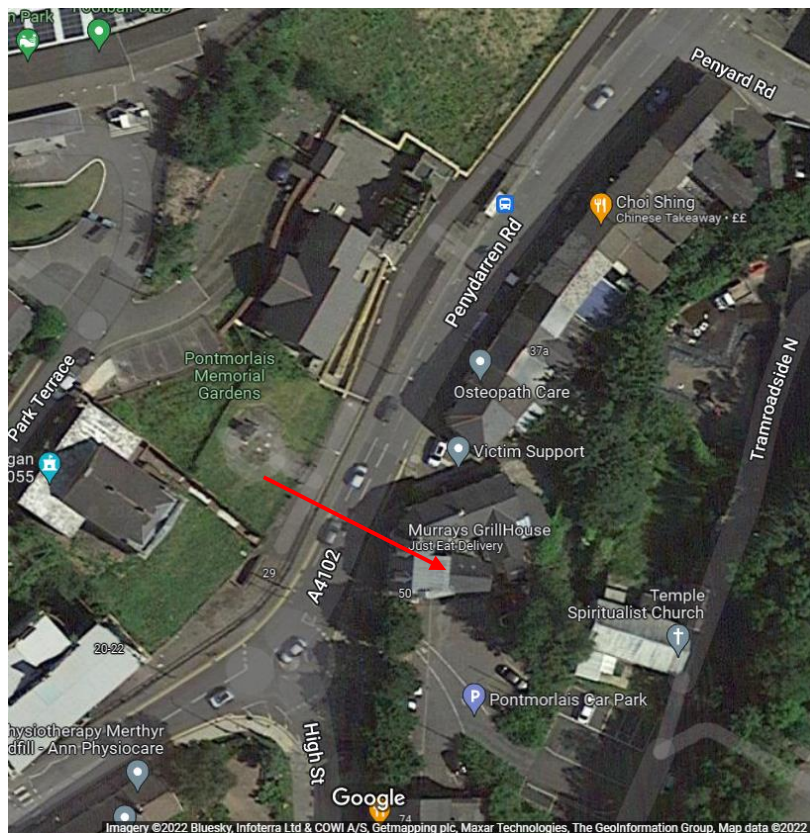


Figure 2: View of wider landscape surrounding the site (property arrowed red)

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to change the use of the building. As part of these proposals, new roof lights will be installed and there will be a reduction of eaves space of the top floor.

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 Data Search

The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) were formerly requested to supply a Bat and Roof-nesting Birds (BARB) survey for the site (0223-501). 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.

3.2 Survey Objectives

- To carry out an initial bat inspection survey along with the recommended activity surveys
- To present the above details and if necessary recommendations for mitigation, future research and compensation within this report.
- To carry out a scoping survey for breeding birds

3.3 Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of three parts:

- Part 1- Initial bat inspection survey
- Part 2- A data search
- Part 3- A single activity survey

3.4 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 six 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 Stephen Shutt and Sylvia Sanyalou. Stephen is an experienced licensed ecologist and Sylvia has undertaken a number of surveys with BE Ecological Ltd and is currently training to be an ecologist.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out on 7th May 2020 to search all buildings, both 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 roof areas and fascia boards etc; where no safe access was available the survey was conducted using, close focus binoculars and/or a high powered lamp.

3.6 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.

3.6.1 Survey 1- 31st August 2022

A dusk survey was carried out on 31st August 2022 using two surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors were equipped with cameras and Batlogger M detectors.



Figure 3: Approximate surveyor locations

3.7 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 Data Search

The site is not within 10km of either a SSSI or SAC that has been designated for bat species within Wales.

A total of 220 records were returned within the data search. The closest bat record appears to be of lesser horse shoe, brown long-eared and pipistrelle approximately 85m from the site. Other records in the wider vicinity include species such as pipistrelle, myotis sp., noctule, lesser horseshoe and daubentons.

28 bird records were returned within the data search. The closest of which (approximately 50m away) refer to blue tit.

4.2 Inspection survey

4.2.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the building, however, access and roosting potential for bats was identified in the form of:

- Small number of potentially lifted slates

Please see appended plates for photographs of the property exterior. Other than these areas, the building is well sealed with no obvious gaps. Barge boards and fascias appear to be tight with no obvious gaps beneath them.

As such, the property was categorised as being of low potential for roosting bats and further emergence/re-entry surveys were recommended.

Please see appended plates for photographs of the building exterior.

4.2.2 Internal survey results

Inside the property, there is no roof space as such. The upper floor has already been partially converted to a room. There are eaves boxes on the northern, western and southern side of the building. These are relatively small but do allow access into them for inspection. The roof is lined with bitumen felt in places and plastic membrane in others.

The eastern section of the property still has fiberglass insulation present on the floor, however, it is no longer a roof space as such due to it having been opened up for conversion.

No bats or evidence of bats was found in these locations. No obvious light ingress' were identified.

Please see appended plates for photographs of the building interior.

4.3 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

4.4 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 31.08.22	20:03	Start	19:40	16	Low	30%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	22:00	14	Low	15%	

4.5 Activity Survey Results

4.5.1 Survey 1- 31st August 2022

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle. The bat was seen commuting from north to south high above the properties. The next bat heard was a soprano pipistrelle, again the bat was seen commuting from north to south.

Numerous common and soprano pipistrelle calls were heard throughout the course of the survey, the majority of which came from a small number of bats that were foraging back and forth the vegetation at the rear of the property before commuting east.

Approximately one hour post sunrise, bat activity appeared to cease. No bats emerged from the property on this date.

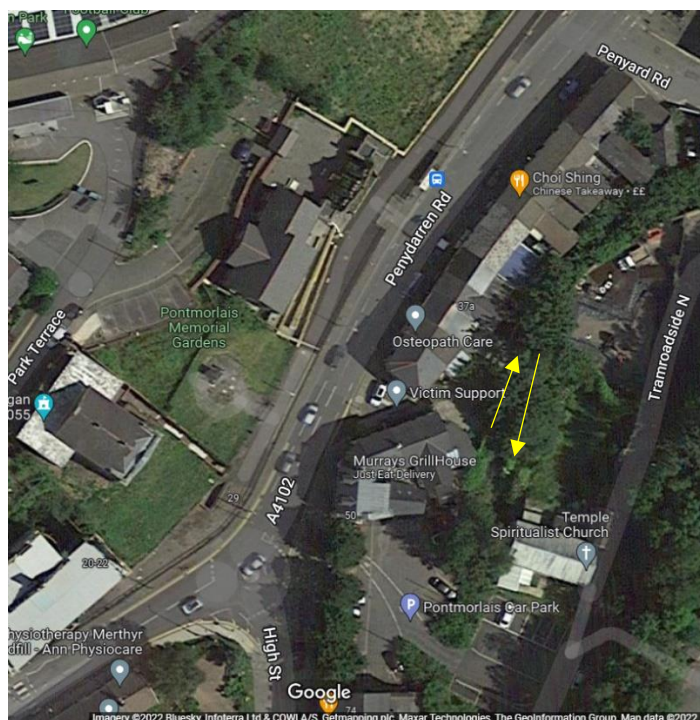


Figure 6: location of pipistrelle commuting and foraging route (arrowed yellow)

4.6 Identified Roosts

4.6.1 Survey 1

No bats emerged from the building on this date.

4.7 Conclusion

Overall levels of bat activity at the site were relatively low at the site with only two species seen and heard (common and soprano pipistrelle).

Based on the current evidence, it is considered that mitigation and an NRW development licence will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are encountered during the works.

In addition to the above, the proposed works do not remove the roof entirely. The work only involves a reduction in the eaves boxes and the addition of new roof lights.

As such it is considered that the works can proceed providing they are undertaken in line with a method statement and ecological supervision.

4.8 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the property. A single sparrow was observed on the main dwelling during the inspection survey.

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

5.3 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was found throughout the property.

5.4 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.

It is considered unlikely that the property is not a bat roost and no evidence of nesting birds was found throughout the property. As such bats and birds are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

Mitigation will not be required.

6 ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Bats

A Schwegler 1FF bat box will be attached to the south eastern elevation 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 north western 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

Potential 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/>

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 reduction of the size of the eaves boxes will be required along with supervision for the installation of the roof lights.

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. A check of the eaves boxes will be undertaken by the supervising ecologist.
4. All suitable bat roosting features will need to be removed by hand (slates) and inspected by the onsite bat ecologist (installation of the roof lights).
5. The tiles 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 (as amended) (HMSO).

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

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

APPENDIX A- SITE PHOTOGRAPHS









