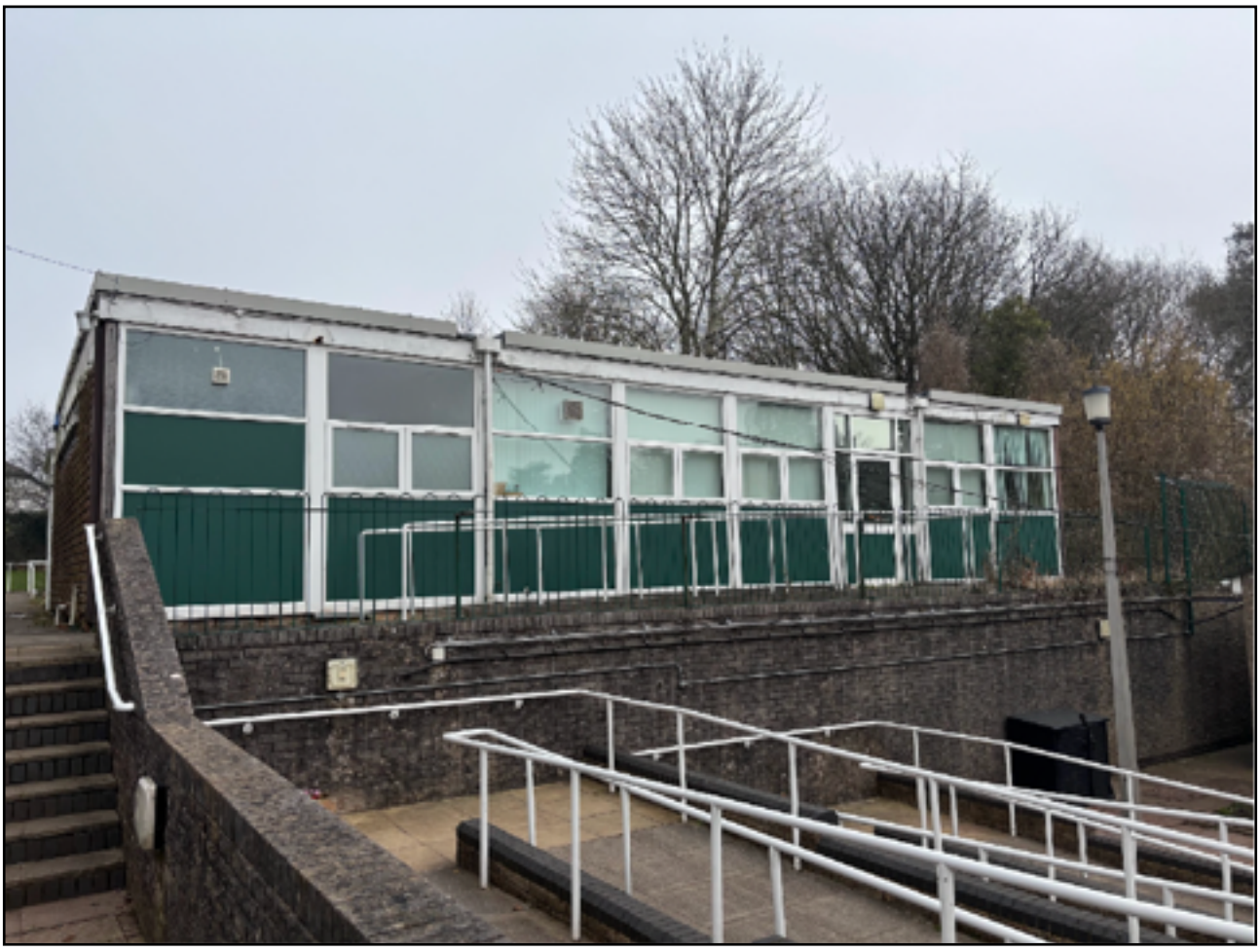
Bat Scoping Survey: Brynglas Annex Demolition



Instructed by: Newport Norse

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1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 The building being surveyed is a single storey annex building which forms part of the wider complex of the former Brynglas Adult Training Centre. The site is situated in an urban environment along the residential street of Brynglas Road, to the north of the city of Newport. The building is currently used for storage and planning permission is sought to demolish the existing building which has timber posts supporting the roof which have failed, resulting in the roof dropping. There are currently no plans to replace the annex. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 13 years experience, license number S0931358-1.

1.3 A data search was undertaken with SEWBReC (0245-853) to provide information on local bat and bird species in the area. The data search did not identify any historic records of bats being present within the building. The nearest recorded roosts are approximately 510m from the site which is a record for a Brown Long Eared Bat *(Plecotus auritus)* maternity roost and a Lesser Horseshoe Bat *(Rhinolophus hipposideros)* day roost from 2009; 580m from the site which is a record for a Pipistrelle Species *(Pipistrellus sp.)* small summer roost from 2009 and 840m from the site which is a record for a Whiskered Bat *(Myotis mystacinus)* day roost from 2013.

1.4 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 510m from the site which is a record for a foraging Common Pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)* and Soprano Pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pygmaeus)*; 530m from the site which is a record for a foraging Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle and 750m from the site which is a record for a Whiskered Bat care call from 2013.

1.5 No records for nesting birds were returned as part of the data search within 500m of the proposed development site.

1.6 The site is not within 10km of a designated SAC but is within 10km of 1 SSSI for bats, (Ruperra Castle & Woodlands), however, due to the localised nature of the proposed works, this protected site will not be adversely affected.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The building being surveyed is a single storey, flat roofed annex building which forms part of the former Brynglas Adult Training Centre. The southernmost section of the building is clad in tiles and has areas of wooden fasciae and metal verge protectors. The northernmost section of the building is of prefabricated construction with areas of wooden fasciae and metal verge protectors.

2.2 The building dates back to in excess of 20 years and is situated in an urban environment. There is likely to be security lighting from the buildings present within the site boundary.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourses are the River Usk, approximately 300m to the east of the site; Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, approximately 830m to the south west of the site and Ebbw River, approximately 4.5km to the south of the site at their nearest points. Additionally, Ynysyfro Reservoir lies approximately 2.7km to the south west of the site and Alexandra Docks lie approximately 4km to the south of the site.

2.4 The site is situated in an urban environment along the residential street of Brynglas Road, to the north of the city of Newport. There are a number of trees surrounding the residential area of Brynglas and there are a number of residential gardens within the immediate vicinity of the site. The site backs onto the A4042 which then backs onto substantial amounts of open land and the River Usk. There are riparian corridors along all of the watercourses in the area and there is moderate ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is approximately: **ST 3102 9026**

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviours. The survey methods employed can provide evidence for the potential presence of bats at the times when the site was visited. Although the methods follow best practice guidance and were carried out in such a way as to maximise the chances of detection, failure to detect the target species cannot be considered as definitive proof of their absence.

3.2 The report is solely concerned with bats in relation to this building. Trees and other buildings not mentioned directly have not been included in this report.

3.3 Bats use different roosts throughout the year. Bats hibernate in torpor for weeks at a time throughout the cold months, mainly underground in caves and in deep rot holes at the centre of large mature trees. Bats are habitual and can live upwards of twenty years. During the summer months they will normally return annually to the same roost, usually in attics of buildings to form maternity colonies. Outside the maternity season, a scoping survey can be limited as the majority of any bats using the structure as a summer roost may not be present. External evidence such as droppings and staining which can identify bat use may have been removed by the rain. Therefore this survey will evaluate potential for bat use, in addition to searching for evidence of bats.

3.4 Even though bats are habitual creatures they can still move to new roosts if more suitable. Therefore this report cannot predict the status of the structure in regard to bat occupancy in the future. This report should be acted upon as soon as practical. Natural Resources Wales will only accept survey data up to two years old from date of issue for licence applications, although some Local Planning Authorities will only accept survey data up to eighteen months old. If planning or building works are delayed, it is the responsibility of the client to discuss and gain approval from the *author* before work commences.

4.0 Legal Constraints

4.1 Bats, and any place a bat uses for breeding or shelter, either currently occupied or unoccupied are protected by European and British law, predominantly by **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**, which are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed from European directive into law in England and Wales.

4.2 In summary this law states that it is an offence to:

- **Deliberately capture or kill a bat**
- **Deliberately disturb a bat**
- **Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat**

- **Keep; transport; sell; exchange or offer for sale or exchange a living or dead bat or any part of a bat**

4.3 'Deliberately' may also be interpreted, as not intending to injure or kill a bat but having done so due to being insufficiently informed and unaware of the consequences of the action.

4.4 For a more comprehensive description and exact wording of the legislation please refer to:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made

4.5 Where there is a risk that a bat roost may be present, it is incumbent upon the owner to commission a specialist bat survey to identify bat roosts before any work commences. Maximum penalties for offences relating to disturbance to bats or their roosts can amount to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or fines of up to Level 5 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982/1991 (i.e. £5000 in April 2001) per roost or bat disturbed or killed, or to both.

4.6 If a bat roost is discovered, no work that could affect the roost can be undertaken until Natural Resources Wales grants a licence endorsing the work. A thorough method statement and adequate mitigation proposal will need to be submitted to support any licence application.

4.7 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts an onus onto responsible bodies such as Local Planning Authorities to not only preserve, but also to enhance biodiversity meaning that planning applications must offer an element of ecological gain as well as preserving any aspects of ecological importance.

5.0 General Information

5.1 Bats are unable to build roosts themselves but instead rely on both man made and naturally occurring features to provide suitable accommodation. Bats generally prefer older buildings built with traditional materials, as traditional building methods provide more opportunities for gaps and entrances to buildings. Traditional cut roofs are preferred to a roof with trusses. Bats also prefer to roost where the external roost area has access to sunlight during the day such as south facing roof elevations.

5.2 Bats can utilise the following features on a building; end tiles, barge boards, soffit, gable ends, porches, lead flashing, hanging tiles**,** ridge tiles**,** broken tiles**,** eaves**,** sash window frames**,** wood cladding**,** fascia boards**,** window sills and internal roof spaces and timbers. Although this list demonstrates the most popular roosting sites it is by no means definitive. Bats can use apertures as small as 10mm in diameter to gain access.

5.3 The U.K bat population is divided into two distinct families, Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae. In general, Rhinolophidae (Horseshoe) bats differ in their roosting requirements to Vespertilionidae (the remainder of UK bat species). Horseshoe bats prefer to roost in large areas such as internal attic spaces and hang in the open from the roof of the roost. They tend to roost in visible clusters to maintain the high temperatures that a maternity colony needs. Horseshoe bats also prefer free flight access and egress into the roosting area. Horseshoe bats tend to be more light averting to other UK bat species, and routinely fly around the internal roosting area to warm up before exiting. It is noted that Plecotus (Long Eared) bats share some of these preferences. Vesper bats are, on the whole, crevice dwelling bats who squeeze into small apertures to access the roost. These, like Horseshoe bats, will cluster in maternity colonies, but are normally hidden from view. Vesper bats, with the exception of Long Eared bats, do not require a large internal

roost to fly around before exit. Long Eared bats, although part of the vesper family, are very light averting and will, on occasions share the roosting patterns of both Horseshoe and crevice dwelling species.

6.0 External Scoping Survey

6.1 The external scoping survey was undertaken on the **5th March 2025** in conditions of good natural light. All external aspects of the building were comprehensively evaluated for roost potential. Evidence was also sought for any staining or droppings which could suggest bat occupation.

6.2 The building was inspected for overt evidence of bat presence and occupation such as:

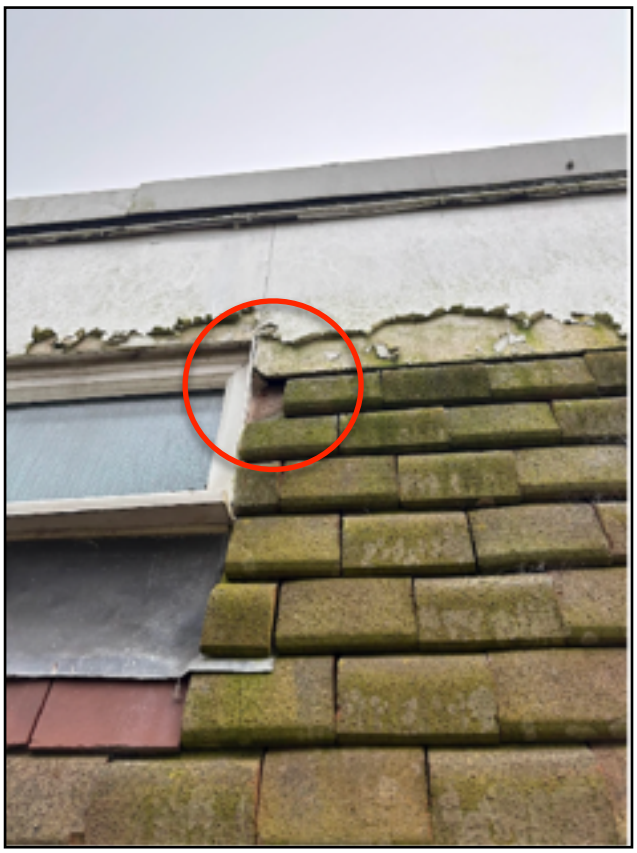
- Staining around the entry of roosting point caused by oils secreted by the bat into its fur
- Scratching on surfaces caused by the bat in the acts of take off and landing
- Bat droppings on walls; floors; roof voids; window sills or panes and barge boards
- Urine stains below a possible entrance site, within the entrance to a cavity or on timbers used for roosting
- Bats can produce chatter on warm evenings prior to leaving the roost. A heterodyne bat detector is used to help determine this
- Flies around the entrance or on the floor of possible roosts, which may be attracted to bat guano

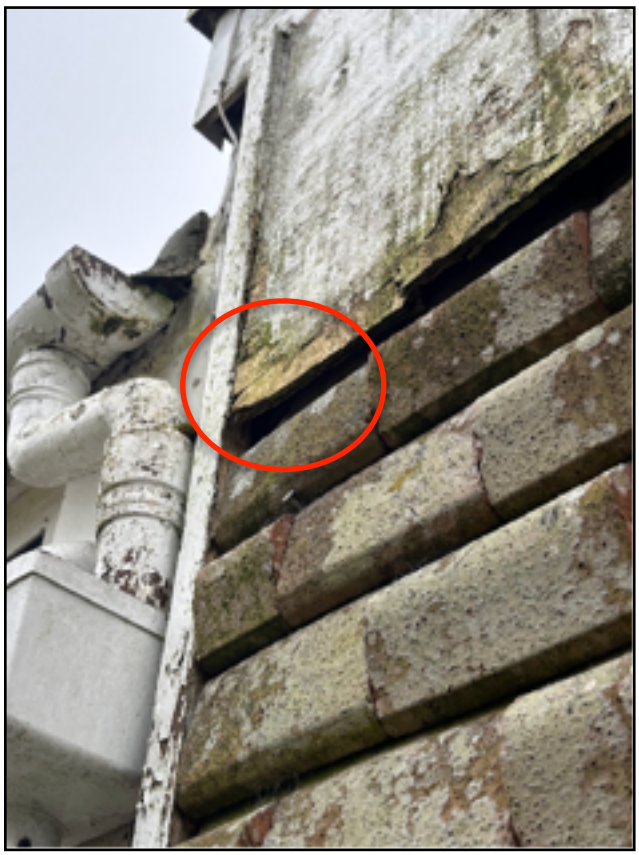
6.3 Due to the age and condition of the building, there were a small number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and those that were available were deemed as having moderate potential for roosting bats. There were apertures in the tile cladding on the southernmost section of the building; apertures underneath the timber fasciae; apertures underneath the metal verge protectors and areas of damaged / missing fasciae.

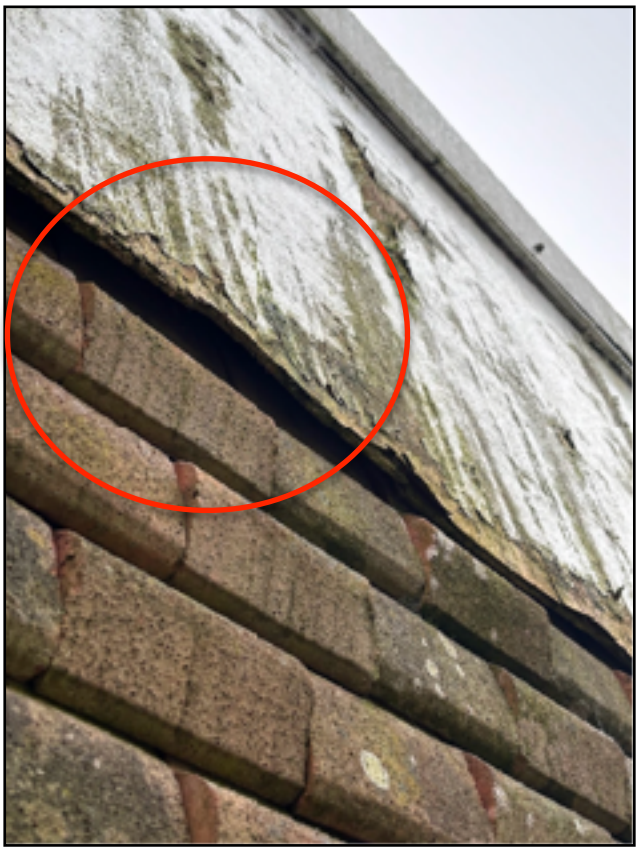
6.4 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any external features.

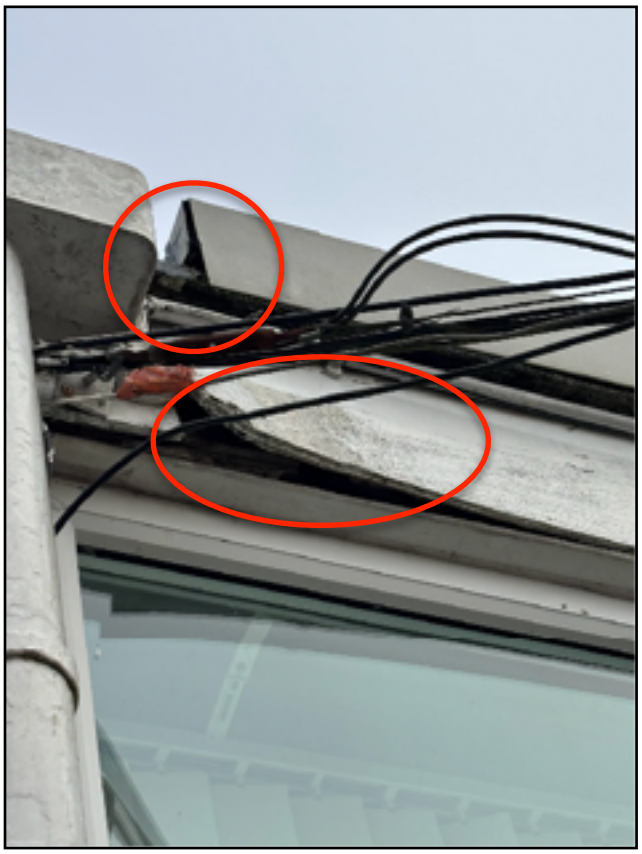
6.5 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the scoping survey.

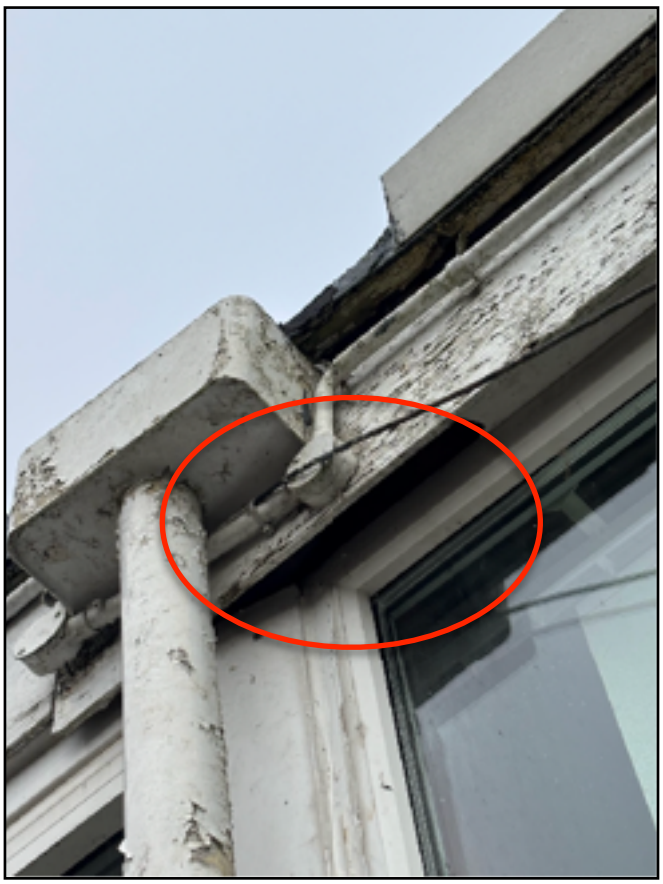
6.6 Examples of apertures allowing access to cavities in the building:

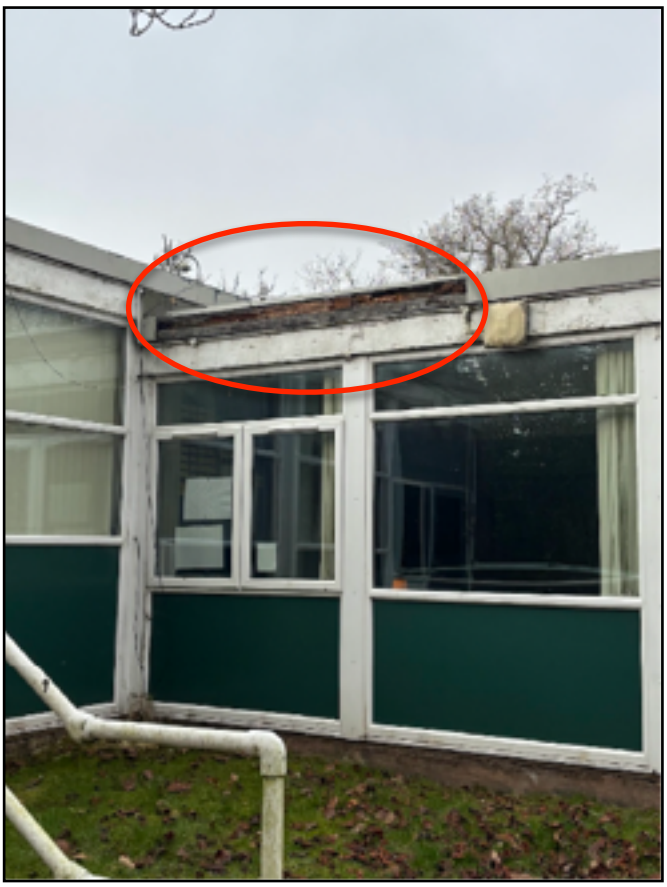


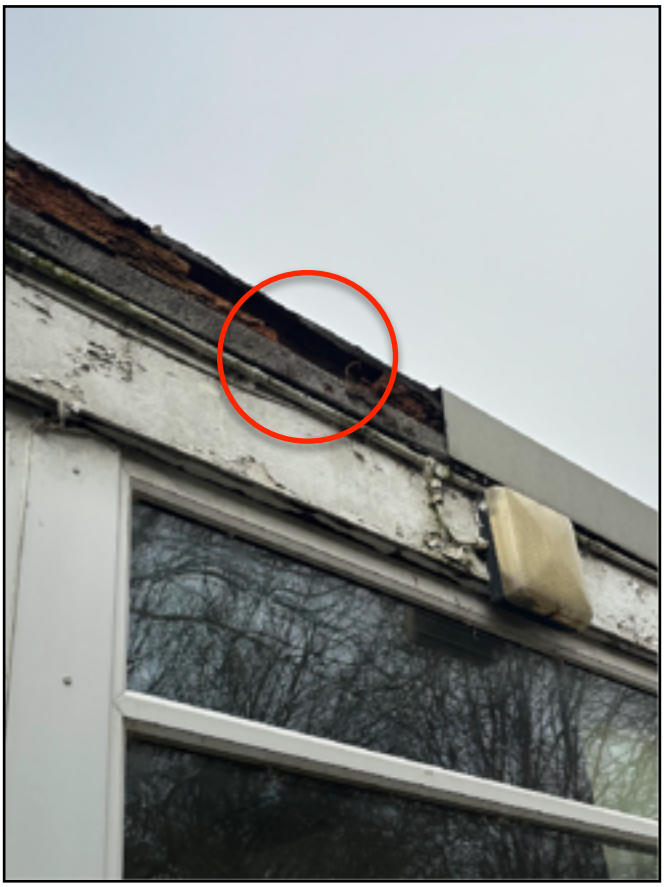












7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 An internal scoping survey was not undertaken as there was no internal attic space within the annex building due to the presence of a flat roof.

8.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

8.1 No direct evidence of bat use was identified during the scoping survey.

8.2 The site is located in an area with moderate ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

8.3 There is likely to be security lighting from the buildings present within the site boundary.

8.4 The building was assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats and offered a small number of opportunities for bats to access and use the building.

8.5 The building does not offer significant hibernation potential for bats. The external walls were sound with no visible apertures for bats preventing access into the wall structure. When considering the absence of bat access points into the wall structure, the hibernation use of the buildings is considered to be limited.

8.6 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the scoping survey.

8.7 At least two bat activity surveys are recommended to establish the presence or absence of bats within the building. The general shelf life of activity surveys is eighteen months. Updated survey work may be required after this time.

8.8 A minimum of five experienced bat surveyors will be used to adequately cover the building during the emergence surveys. The surveys will conform to the "*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines 2023"* and will be undertaken in the core maternity season for bats of May to August inclusive. The surveys will be undertaken in weather conditions conducive for bat activity. Suitable bat monitoring equipment will be used to acoustically analyse any bat calls which are present to allow for accurate species identification. Once the further surveys are completed, detailed mitigation and enhancement measures can be designed into the development.

8.9 If bats are found to be resident within the building, a development licence from Natural Resources Wales may be required for any works which affect the structure. This process is separate to planning consent and can only be applied for once planning consent has been granted.

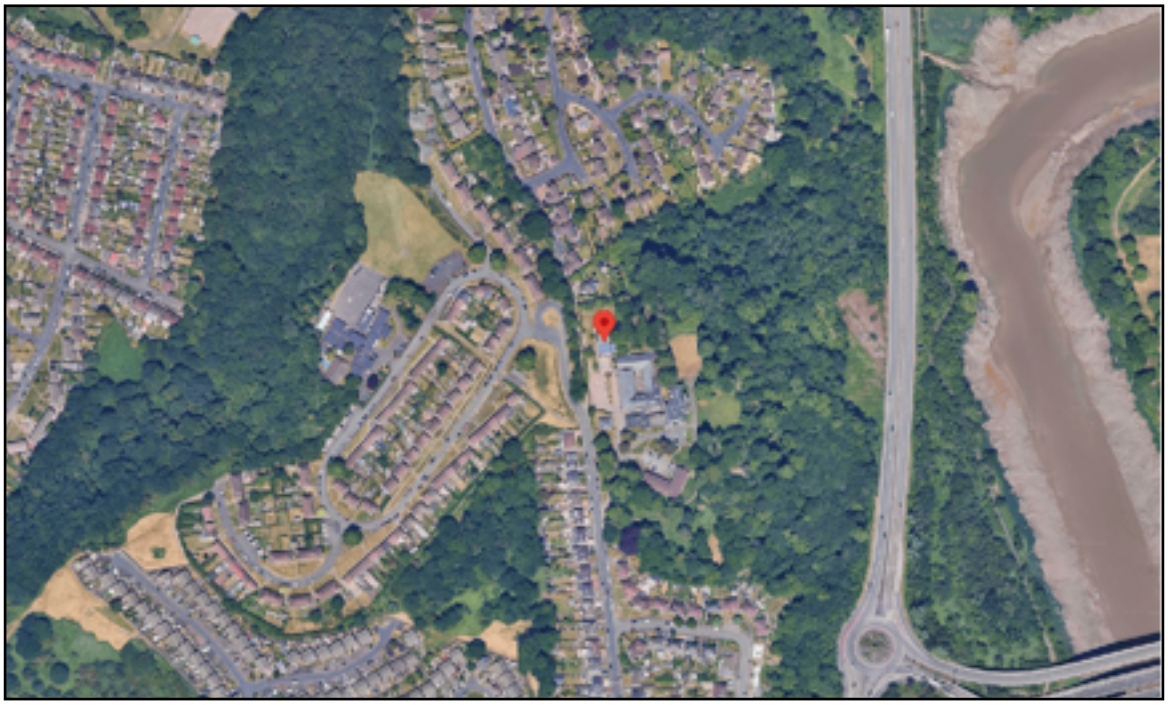
Signed: *Richard Watkins* ***Date: March 2025***

9.0 Appendix

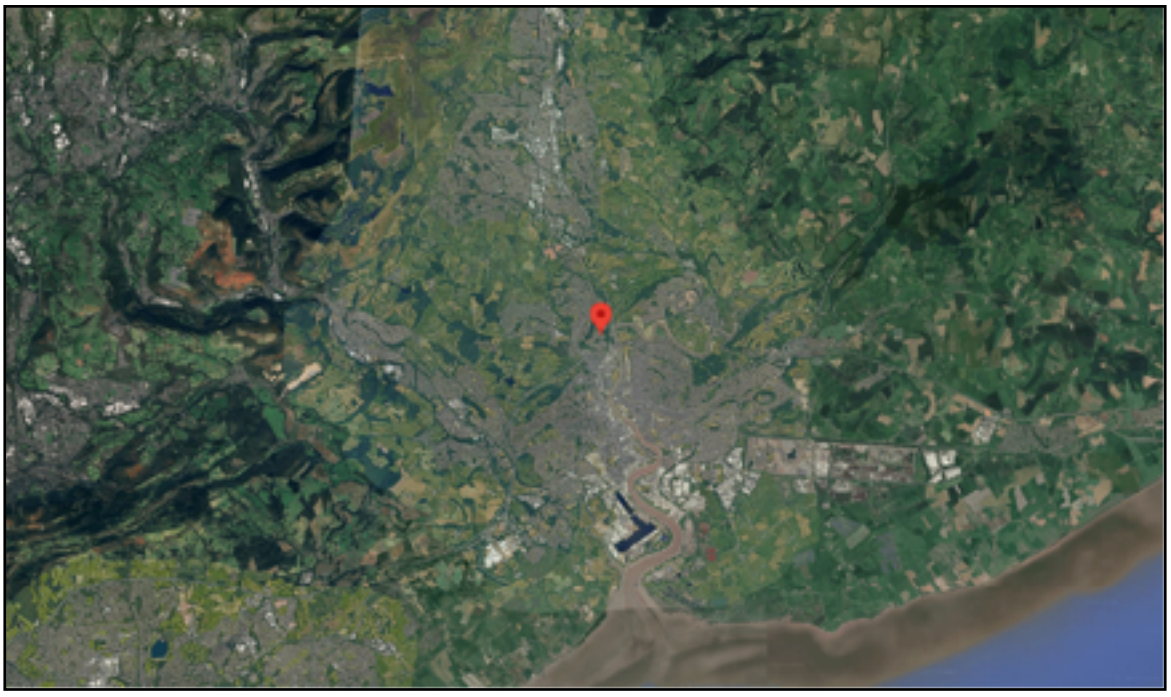
Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs



The site in its immediate environment.



The site in its wider environment offering moderate ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 3102 9026