



Bat Scoping Survey: The West of England Tavern, 44 Mill Parade, Newport, NP20 2JS



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1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 The West of England Tavern is a substantial detached property which is situated in an urban environment in the city of Newport. The property has not been used as a tavern for a number of years and is currently derelict. Planning permission is sought to convert the property into a number of residential flats which may include re-roofing the property. The proposed works to the property will be carried out in two phases. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 The first phase of works includes internal works to the ground; first and second floors. During this phase of the works, no works will be carried out to the attic spaces; roofs or roof-lines. The ceilings between the uppermost floors and the attic spaces will also be excluded from phase one of the project and will not be removed without additional survey work. The second phase of the works affect the roofs and roof-lines including the fasciae; soffits and barge boards. These works will only be carried out after a suite of bat activity surveys are undertaken in the core maternity season of bats of May to August inclusive. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

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

1.4 A data search was undertaken with SEWBRc (0234-560) 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 in the property. The nearest recorded roosts are approximately 450m from the property which is a record for a Brown Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) roost from 2011 and 1,440m from the property which is a record for a Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) day roost from 2023.

1.5 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 480m from the property which is a record for a Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) care call from 2017; 800m from the property which is a record for a foraging Common Pipistrelle and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and 1,145m from the property which is a record for a foraging Common Pipistrelle.

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

1.7 The property 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 West of England Tavern is a substantial detached, brick building which is three storeys in height with a slate roof and a number of brick chimneys. There are timber fasciae and soffits present and there is unlikely to be a cavity wall in the building. There is a two storey, brick built, lean-to extension to the northern elevation of the building with a slate roof and timber fasciae. There are also a number of brick built extensions to the western elevation of the building including a two storey, shallow hipped, slate roofed extension; a single storey, slate roofed, lean-to extension and a two storey, pitched slate roofed extension.

2.2 The property dates back to the 1800s and is situated in an urban environment. There are likely to be moderate amounts of ambient lighting along Brunel Street to the south of the property and Mill Parade to the east of the property.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourses are the River Usk, approximately 105m to the east of the property and the Ebbw River, approximately 1.3km to the south west of the property at their nearest points. Additionally, there are a number of small reens within the wider areas around the property.

2.4 The West of England Tavern is situated in an urban environment in the city of Newport. The property is immediately situated where the residential streets of Brunel Street and Mill Parade intersect. There are tree-lined open spaces approximately 365m to the west; 400m to the north west and 710m to the south west of the property. The nearest significant foraging ground is Belle Vue Park, approximately 1.1km to the north west of the property. There are partial riparian corridors along the Ebbw River and the River Usk and there is relatively poor ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is: **ST 3160 8630**

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 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.

3.2 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 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 and will be valid for eighteen months from the date of issue. 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. Natural Resources Wales will only consider reports up to eighteen months old.

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/ukxi/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 averted 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 **27th October 2023** 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 number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and due to the height of the building, not all areas of the roof could be visualised. Therefore, following the survey guidelines, the building was classed as having moderate potential for roosting bats. There were apertures in the soffits; areas of missing fasciae; slipped and missing slates; broken and open windows and a recent aperture made in the brickwork.

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:





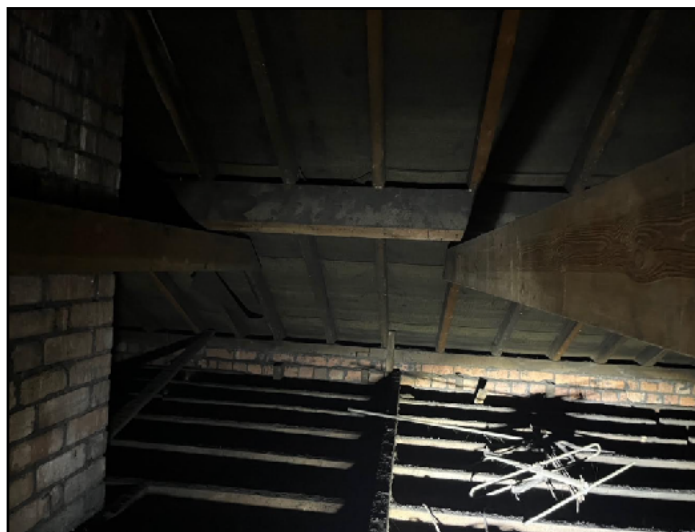
7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 The internal scoping survey was undertaken on the **27th October 2023** by Richard Watkins, a Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist, license number S0931358-1.

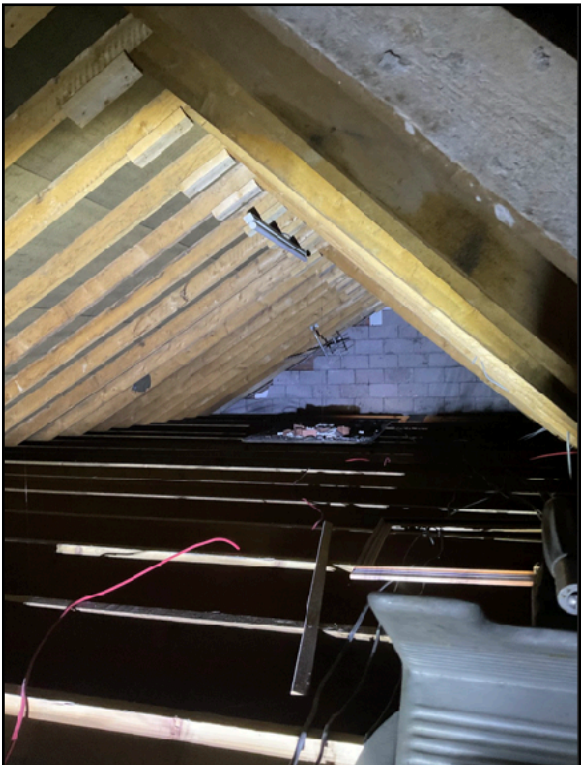
7.2 There were two accessible attic spaces within the property; one in the main building and one in the northern lean-to extension. There was also a cellar present within the property. Both of the attic spaces were lined and boarded out. There was an extensive amount of daylight emitted into the main attic space whereas there was no daylight emitted into the attic space in the extension. No direct access was possible for bats into the cellar.

7.3 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any internal features.

Main Attic Space



Northern Lean-to Extension Attic Space



Cellar



8.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

8.1 No direct evidence of bat use was identified during the scoping survey. All areas of the building were accessible during the site visit.

8.2 The proposed works to the property will be carried out in two phases. The first phase includes internal works to the ground; first and second floors. During this phase of the works, no works will be carried out to the attic spaces; roofs or roof-lines. The ceilings between the uppermost floors and the attic spaces will not be removed without additional survey work. No additional bat surveys are required at this time to carry out the internal works to the ground; first and second floors. If the scope of works change at any time, these changes must be discussed with a suitably qualified ecologist prior to the further works commencing.

8.3 The second phase of the works affect the roofs and roof-lines including the fasciae; soffits and barge boards. These works will only be carried out under a new planning application after a full suite of bat activity surveys are undertaken in the core maternity season of bats of May to August inclusive.

8.4 The property is located in an area with relatively poor ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

8.5 There are likely to be moderate amounts of ambient lighting along Brunel Street to the south of the property and Mill Parade to the east of the property.

8.6 Due to the age and condition of the building, there were a number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and due to the height of the building, not all areas of the roof could be visualised. Therefore, following the survey guidelines, the building was classed as having moderate potential for roosting bats.

8.7 The property does not offer any significant hibernation potential. There was no direct flight access for bats into the cellar. The external walls were also sound with no visible apertures for bats preventing access into the wall structure. When considering the limited bat access points into the building, the hibernation use of the building is considered to be very low.

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

8.9 The second phase of works to the property will be undertaken under a separate planning application and will only be carried out after a full suite of bat activity surveys are undertaken in the core maternity season of bats of May to August inclusive. The second phase of the works affect the roofs and roof-lines of the building including the fasciae; soffits and barge boards.

8.10 The property does offer a number of opportunities for bats to access and use the building and those that were available were deemed as having moderate potential for roosting bats. Prior to the second phase of works commencing, 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.

8.11 A minimum of six 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 2016*”

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.**

8.12 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: October 2023

9.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

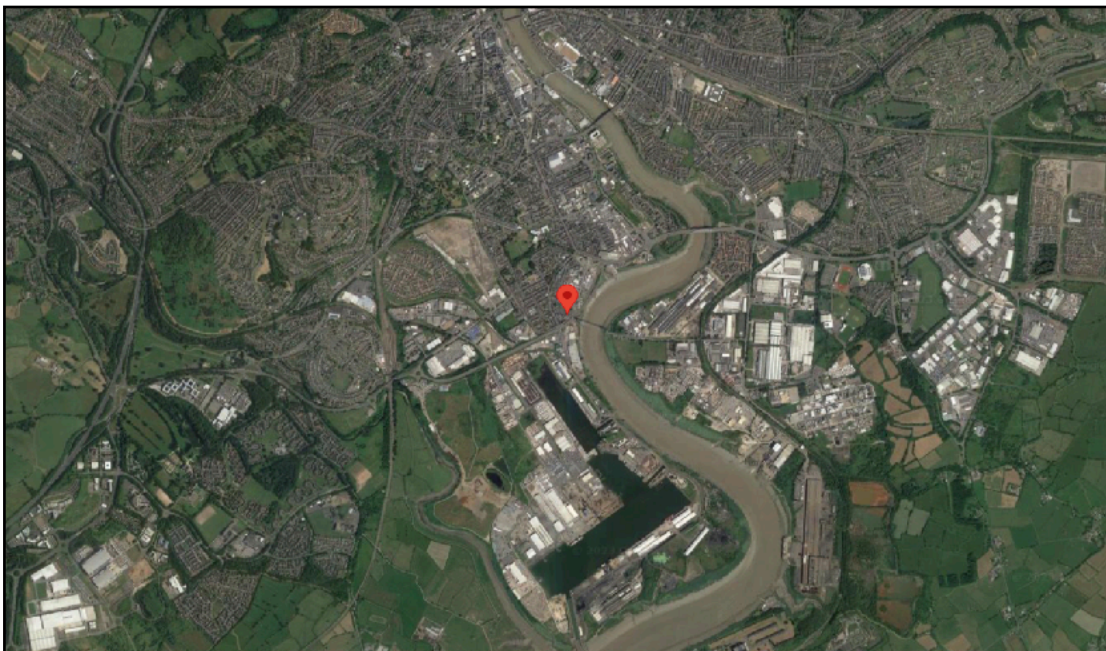
OS Map

Guidance Note

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs

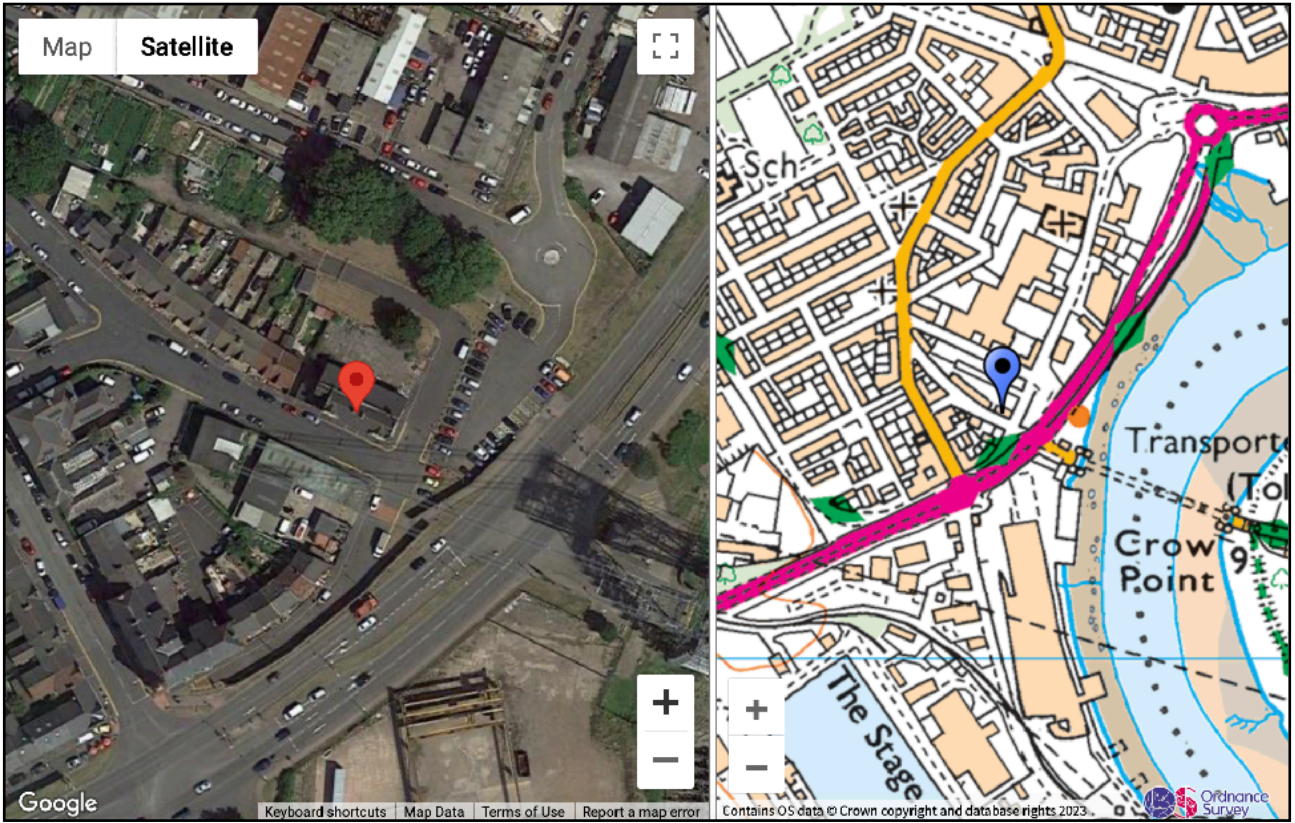


The site in its immediate environment.



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

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 3160 8630



Guidance Note (Important information in the unlikely event that bats are discovered)

Where any building or demolition work is to commence, all contractors should remain vigilant at all times during the course of the works, looking for signs that bats are present or that bats have formerly occupied the building. Whilst this survey has been undertaken and no visible evidence of bats found within the building, the possibility of a bat or bats being present cannot be absolutely ruled out. In the extremely unlikely event that bats are discovered during the works, then work must **stop** as soon as it is safe to do so, The bat worker must be contacted immediately and Natural Resources Wales informed in order for a licence to be granted to complete the works. No works will be permitted until such time a license is approved.

If in the unlikely event a roost is accidentally opened up, any loose bats should be returned to the roost and apertures closed to prevent their escape until they can be examined for injury by a bat worker. Dead bats should be retained. Bats are very fragile and should be handled by a professional, and unless absolutely necessary should not to be approached and disturbed. However, where a bat is clearly injured and distressed, the contractor should carefully collect them and place in a light proof box. Gloves must be worn when handling bats*

In the Event of a Bats being discovered the bat worker must be contacted immediately that it is safe to do so on 07866461726

If the bat worker is not available, Natural Resources Wales must be contacted on 0300 065 3000

*Bats can potentially carry European Bat Lyssa Virus (EBLV) which is a strain of rabies virus that is found in some bat species although extremely uncommon, a potential risk occurs; therefore, all bats must be handled with thick gloves.