



Bat Survey: 27 Backhall Street, Caerleon, Newport, NP18 1AR



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1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 27 Backhall Street is a Grade II listed property situated in a semi-urban environment along the residential street of Backhall Street in the town of Caerleon. The property is currently vacant and listed building consent is sought to carry out patch repairs to the roof and to replace the existing barge boards. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 To support the listed building application a bat report has been commissioned to investigate if bats use the current property in any capacity during the maternity season, and for any evidence suggesting that bats use the property at other times of the year.

1.3 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 15 years experience, license number S0931358-1.

1.4 A data search was undertaken with SEWBRc (0256-355) to provide information on local bat 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 195m from the property which is a record for an unidentified bat species roost from 2008; 850m from the property which is an historic record for a Brown Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) roost from 1990 and a Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) day roost from 2019 and 930m from the property which is a record for a Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) day roost from 2019.

1.5 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 150m from the property which is a record for a foraging unidentified bat species; 210m from the property which is a record for a Soprano Pipistrelle bat care call from 2013 and 410m from the property which is a record for a Common Pipistrelle live sighting.

1.6 The property is not within 10km of a designated SAC or SSSI for bats.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 27 Backhall Street is a substantial Grade II listed property which is two storeys in height with a pitched slate roof and a number of brick chimneys. There are a number of velux roof lights to the rear of the roof and there are timber fasciae and barge boards present. There is no cavity wall in the building.

2.2 The property is Grade II listed and dates back to the 1500's and is situated within a semi-urban environment. There are likely to be minimal amounts of ambient lighting along Backhall Street to the west of the property.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourses are the River Usk, approximately 325m to the south east of the property and the Afon Lwyd, approximately 430m to the north east of the property at their nearest points.

2.4 27 Backhall Street is situated in a semi-urban environment along the residential street of Backhall Street in the town of Caerleon. There are substantial amounts of open agricultural fields in the wider areas around the property. There are riparian corridors along both of the watercourses in the area and there is excellent ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is approximately: **ST 3404 9065**

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 behaviour. 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 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/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 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 **7th August 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 raised slates and ridge tiles; apertures between the barge boards and the walls and areas of slightly raised lead flashing.

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 **7th August 2025** by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 15 years experience, license number S0931358-1.

7.2 There were no internal attic spaces within the property. The property consisted of vaulted ceilings throughout.



8.0 Emergence Surveys

8.1 The emergence surveys were carried out during the maternity season and adhered to current best practice guidelines. These surveys were conducted from half an hour before sunset until two hours post sunset. The surveyors used are all experienced bat counters who have undergone sufficient training in basic bat ecology and bat activity. All sound analysis was undertaken by Richard Watkins.

8.2 The emergence surveys gave extra consideration to the features identified during the external scoping survey which could be utilised by bats.

8.3 First Emergence Survey on 7th August 2025

- Sunset: 20:49
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 95% cloud cover
- Temperature: 17 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Lloyd James; Keith Watkins and Richard Watkins

No bats were observed emerging from the building.

8.4 Second Emergence Survey on 29th August 2025

- Sunset: 20:05
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 45% cloud cover
- Temperature: 18 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Kieran Meek; Keith Watkins and Richard Watkins

No bats were observed emerging from the building.

8.5 The weather conditions were dry and calm with little wind and no rain and therefore conducive for bat activity. The temperature was above 10 degrees celsius during the emergence surveys.

8.6 The best viewing conditions were obtained.

8.7 Echo-meter Touch 2 Pro bat detectors were present to acoustically record any bat calls. Nightfox Night Vision Goggles with record features were also used alongside additional infrared spotlights. These were positioned with the surveyors.

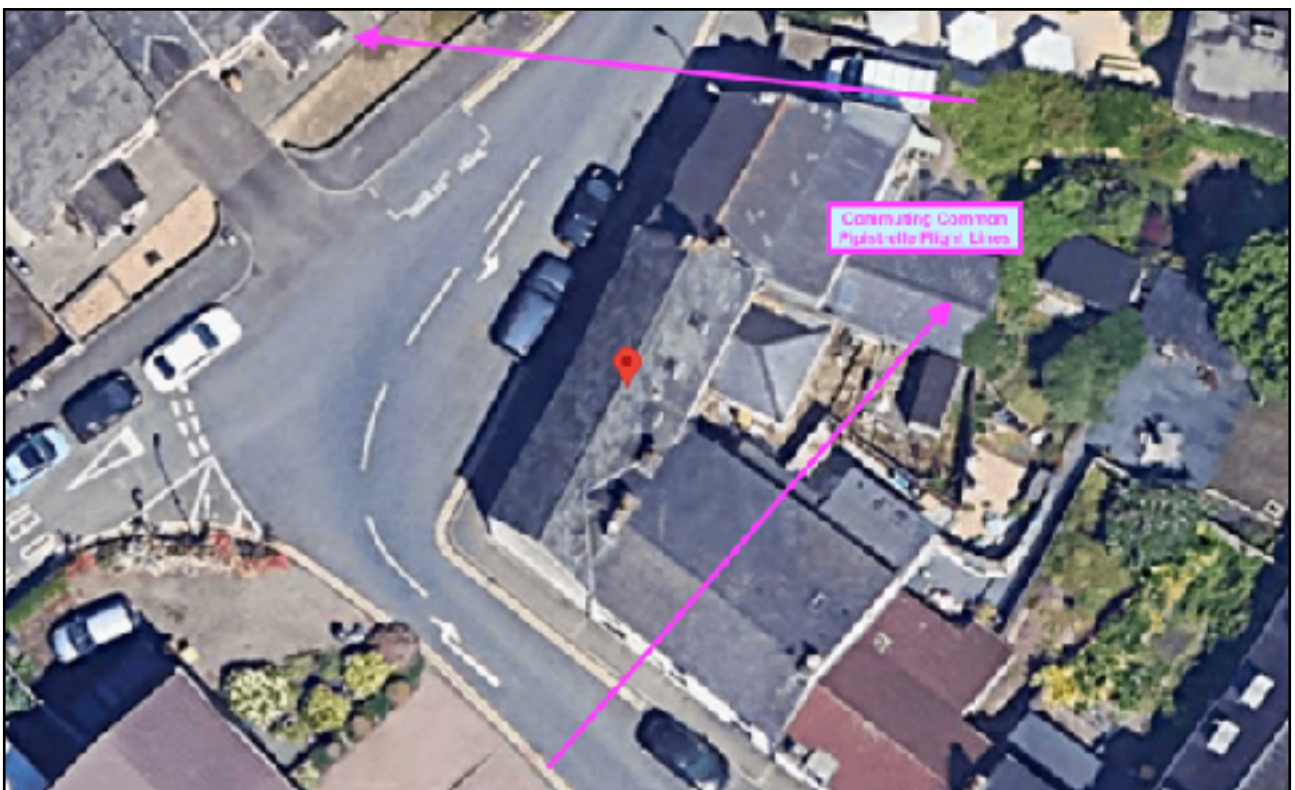
8.8 Analysis of sound recording on bat detectors:

Species of Bats Recorded in the Area:	
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>

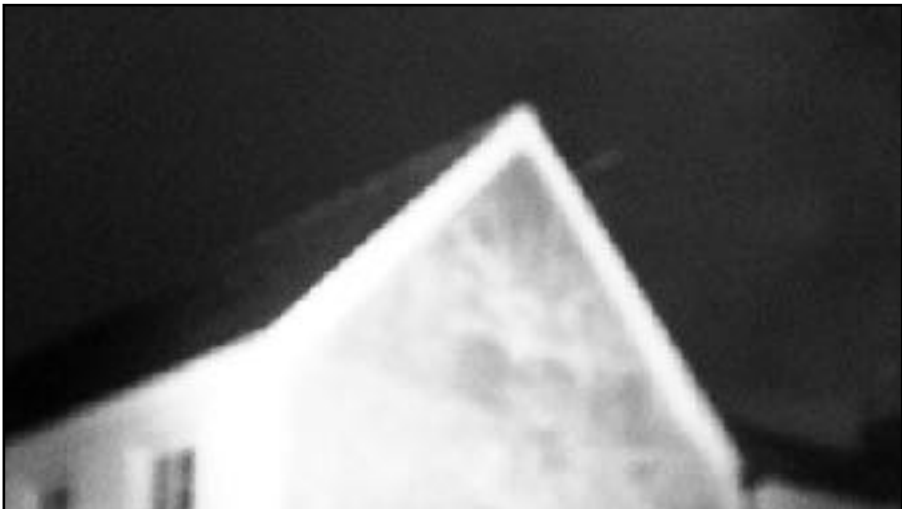
8.9 During the first emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. A small number of Common Pipistrelle passes were observed and a Common Pipistrelle was detected at the rear of the property but was not observed.



8.10 During the second emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. A small number of Common Pipistrelle passes were observed.



8.11 Examples of NVA Still Shots:





9.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

9.1 During the emergence surveys, no bats were observed emerging from the building.

9.2 Throughout the surveys, a very low number of bat calls were recorded and no bats were observed using the building. Therefore it is suggested that the proposed building works will have a negligible impact on the local bat population.

9.3 The building does not offer significant hibernation potential for bats.

9.4 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the surveys.

9.5 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 classed as having moderate potential for roosting bats.

9.6 The property is located in an area with excellent ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

9.7 There were minimal amounts of ambient lighting along Backhall Street to the west of the property.

9.8 Following commencement of works; outside any ecologically supervised period and in the unlikely event that the contractor encounters any bats during any works, then work must immediately stop and the bat worker summoned. If for any reason they cannot be contacted, advice must be sought from Natural Resources Wales, (Telephone Number 0300 065 3000). No works would recommence until a licence is issued by NRW sanctioning works going forward. The guidance note on finding bats found in the appendices must be followed.

9.9 There is potential to offer ecological gain for bats if the project proceeds. This would help satisfy the local planning authorities legal responsibility to preserve and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The creation of a bat roost for crevice dwelling bats can be incorporated into the new build element at very little expense and with no impact to the owners of the building. It is recommended that new roosts be created for crevice dwelling species of bats in the new build scheme and this should be added to the plans prior to submission for planning approval. Further ecological gain can be made by incorporating bird bricks into the new build design. Any new enhancements must not be directly illuminated and a dark corridor must be established allowing undisturbed access for any bat away from the site. If planning is granted then any ecological compensation/mitigation will be designed to maternity standards to ensure that there is no net biodiversity loss.

9.10 A suitable external lighting plan must be implemented to reduce any disturbance to the bats feeding and commuting around the building.

10.0 Proposed Enhancements

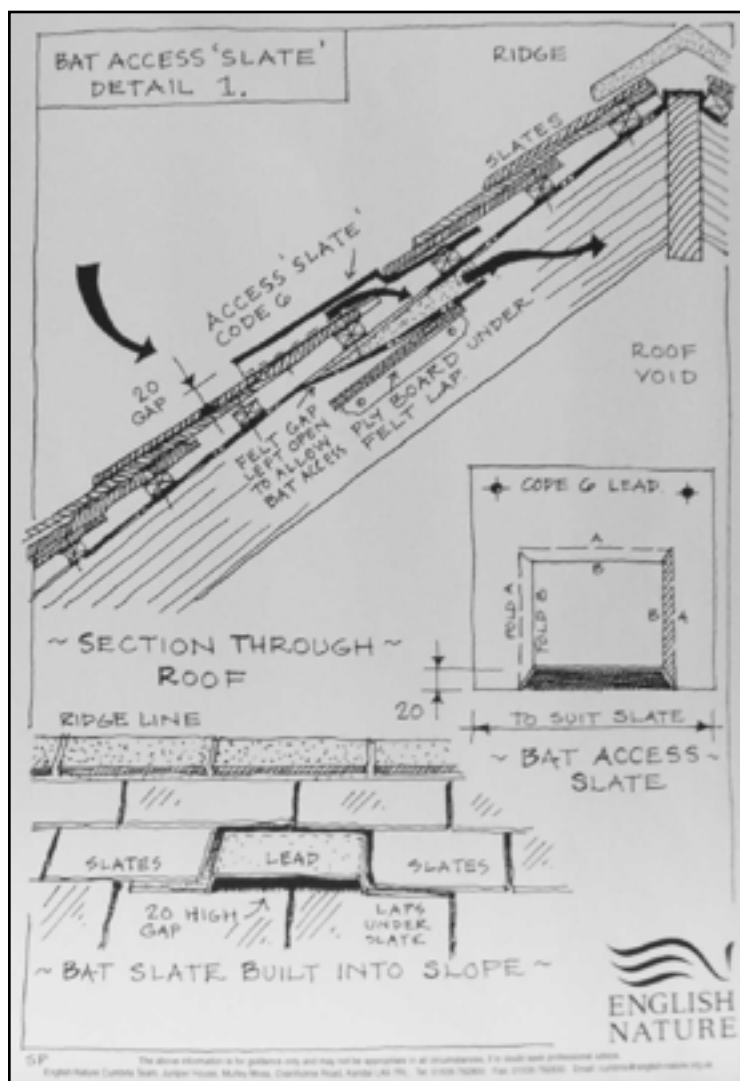
10.1 Due to the works only affecting the roof, there are no design drawings available. To comply with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, ecological gain will be included into the scope of works. This will consist of:

3 Lead Bat Access Slates

1 Surface Mounted Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

If the above products are not available, then further advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist regarding a suitable replacement product.

10.2 Various patch repair works are proposed to be carried out for slipped and missing slates around the roof. 3 lead bat access slates will be fitted; 2 on the rear of the main roof & 1 on the small area of the roof adjacent to the south western gable. These will be fitted in locations where current missing or slipped slates are present.



10.3 One Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box will be surface mounted the building. **This will not be situated on a south facing elevation. The location will be decided by a suitably qualified ecologist.**



10.4 Any nesting bird enhancements will not be suited on the south elevation as this may experience excess heat from the sun.

10.5 Direct and prolonged illumination of the building, especially near any roost entry points or bird boxes must be avoided as this will cause disturbance.

10.6 Where practical, all bat features should be located far enough from any windows to avoid any direct light spill, at least a minimum of 2 metres away.

10.7 On occasions the suggested enhancements can be in short supply. Please order the enhancements as soon as practical to avoid supply issues during the building phase. If supply is depleted please seek advice from a suitably qualified ecologist on a suitable replacement prior to the purchase.

Signed: *Richard Watkins* Date: September 2025

11.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Surveyor & NVA Positions

Guidance Note

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs

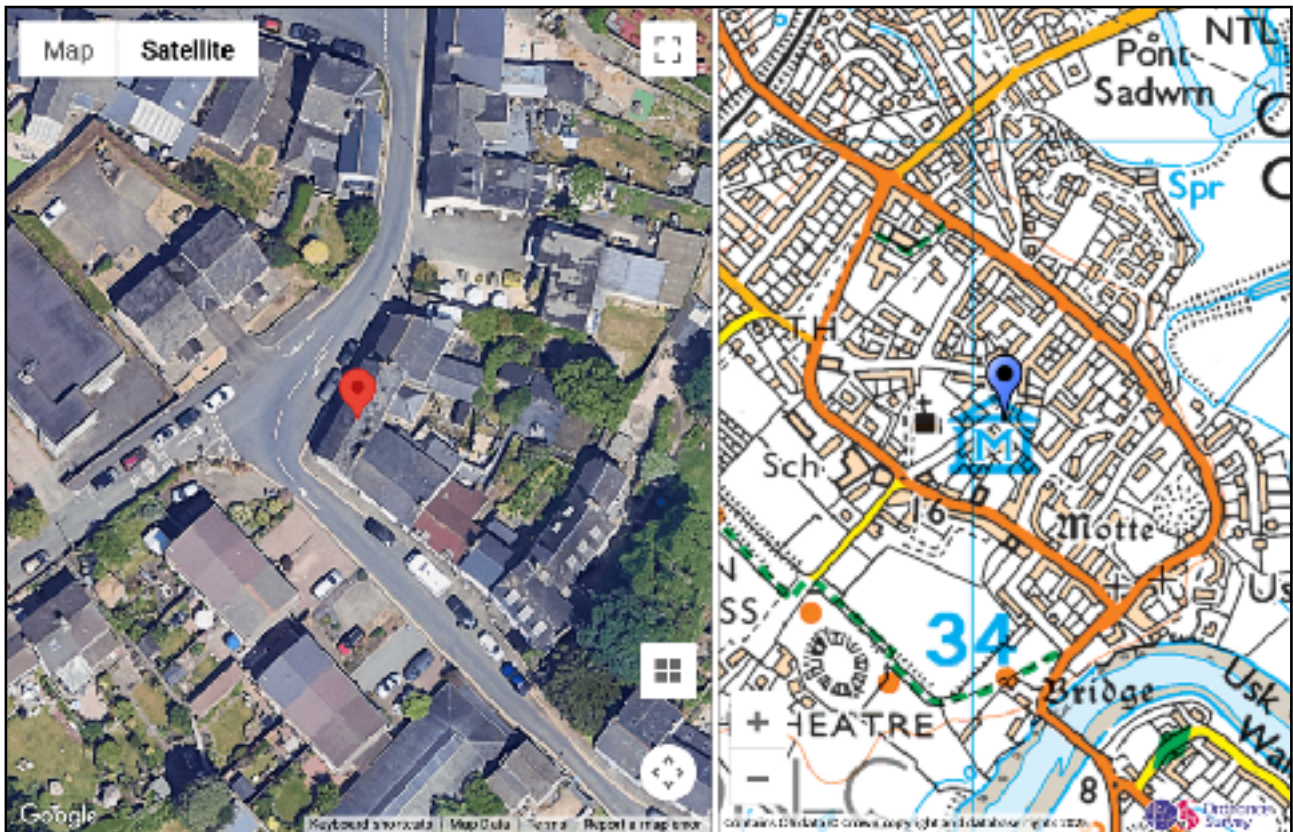


The site in its immediate environment.



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

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 3404 9065



Appendix 3 Surveyor & NVA Positions



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.