



Robinwood Belmont Hill, Caerleon, NP18 1JX

Bat Activity Survey Report

June 2026 | Issue 1VA



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Executive Summary

It is proposed to convert the existing detached garage/outbuilding into ancillary residential accommodation at Robinwood, Belmont Hill, Caerleon, NP18 1JX.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken by BE Ecological Ltd in May 2026 in order to inform a planning application to Newport City Council. The results indicated that the building is of moderate potential for roosting bats and as such further activity surveys were recommended.

Subsequent emergence surveys revealed that the building is not a bat roost. A European Protected Species Licence will not be required.

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 surveys at Robinwood, Belmont Hill, Caerleon, NP18 1JX.

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, 2023).

1.2 Site Description

Robinwood is a two-storey detached former outbuilding situated at Belmont Hill, Caerleon, NP18 1JX. The building is of traditional solid masonry construction, the walls being formed of random rubble sandstone (Old Red Sandstone) with brick dressings and quoins to the corners. Sections of the external walls have been rendered, with areas of render now missing or spalled, exposing the underlying stonework. The building is covered by a hipped roof clad with natural slate; the slates are weathered and a number are slipped or missing, with exposed sarking boards and rafter feet visible at the eaves and verges. Timber soffits, fascias and bargeboards are present but are weathered and in poor condition in places. At the time of survey the building was undergoing renovation, with replacement uPVC windows and doors part-installed and building materials stored internally.

The property occupies a steeply sloping, elevated plot off Belmont Hill on the wooded valley side above Caerleon. The immediate surroundings comprise mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland to the rear and side, with mature trees, dense scrub and climbing vegetation (including ivy) growing against and over parts of the building. This wooded backdrop, together with the nearby River Usk to the south, provides good habitat connectivity and foraging and commuting opportunities for bats within the wider landscape. The site lies within a semi-rural setting on the wooded fringe of Caerleon.

1.3 Proposed Development

It is proposed to submit a planning application to Newport City Council for the conversion of the existing detached garage/outbuilding into ancillary residential accommodation. The works will involve refurbishment of the existing building, including repair and renewal of the roof covering, soffits, fascias and bargeboards, alterations to window and door openings, and internal alterations to both floors. The external masonry walls of the building are to be retained.

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 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

The following sections are relevant. Section 6.2.8 requires planning authorities to ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and provides opportunities for enhancement. Section 6.4.3 recognises that development needs to take place but requires the planning system to ensure there is a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Section 6.4.5 states that development must not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity. Section 6.4.35 confirms that the presence of a species protected under European or UK legislation is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal.

2.4 Building with Nature

Applicants should consider standards for development design 'Building with Nature' which can be found at www.buildingwithnature.org.uk

2.5 Planning Policy Wales — Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning

Section 6.2.1 – the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat. Section 6.2.2 – it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted.

2.6 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 — The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

The Environment (Wales) Act became law on 21st March 2016. It puts in place legislation to enable Wales's resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up manner. Newport City Council as a public body has obligations under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to demonstrate how the Local Authority will seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems.

2.7 State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to publish a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) to provide information on the current state of our natural

resources to enable Welsh Ministers to set priorities for action at the national level. The Authority is required to have regard to the findings of this report in exercising its functions.

2.8 Nature Recovery Plan

The Welsh Government launched the Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) which sets out its commitment to biodiversity in Wales. The NRP highlights the issues that need to be addressed and the objectives for action to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, specifically through putting nature at the heart of decision making, increasing the resilience of the natural environment, and taking specific action for habitats and species.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data Search

A data search was not undertaken in this instance due to the low impact of the works.

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 first activity survey
- Part 3 — A second 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 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 Evans was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rodgers.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out in May 2026 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 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 — 29th May 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 29th May 2026 using surveyors positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible as possible. Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors.

Surveyors were positioned in such a way that as much of the building as possible was visible during the survey.

3.6.2 Survey 2 — 22nd June 2026

A second dusk survey was carried out on 22nd June 2026 using surveyors positioned in such a way that as much of the building was visible as possible, as above. Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors.

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.

Internal access to the first floor was not possible at the time of survey for health and safety reasons, owing to the condition of the building and the ongoing renovation works. The ground floor was inspected internally and is included within the photographs in Appendix A.

4 Results

4.1 Data Search

A data search was not undertaken in this instance due to the low impact of the works.

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. A number of potential access points were noted, including gaps beneath slipped and missing slates, openings at the eaves and verges where the roof timbers and sarking are exposed, and gaps within the weathered and partly missing render and pointing of the stone walls. Dense climbing vegetation (ivy) was present across parts of the elevations and beneath the eaves. The exposed stonework, slipped slates and gaps at the eaves provide a number of features of interest for roosting bats. The building was assessed as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

4.2.2 Internal Survey Results

Internal access was limited to the ground floor; the first floor could not be safely accessed at the time of survey owing to the condition of the building and the ongoing renovation works. The ground floor comprises an open space beneath exposed timber floor joists and the underside of the first-floor boards. The internal walls are of bare and part-rendered stone, with areas of cracked and missing plaster. The space was being used to store replacement window units and building materials. No bats, droppings or other evidence of bats was found within the ground floor of the building at the time of inspection.

5 Activity Surveys

5.1 Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions

Table 1: Schedule and weather conditions

Visit	Date (sunset)	Start / End	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud Cover	Notes
Survey 1	29/05/26	20:55 / 22:45	17°C	Low	60%	Dry; sunset 21:15
Survey 2	22/06/26	21:10 / 23:00	21°C	Low	50%	Dry; sunset 21:30

5.2 Activity Survey Results

5.2.1 Survey 1 — 29th May 2026

Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and *Myotis* sp. were recorded foraging over and around the site throughout the course of the survey. Bats were observed foraging along the wooded boundary and over the open area adjacent to the building, with activity continuing throughout the survey period. This reflects the good foraging and commuting habitat afforded by the adjacent woodland and the nearby River Usk.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the building in any way.

5.2.2 Survey 2 — 22nd June 2026

As with the first survey, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and *Myotis* sp. were recorded foraging over and around the site throughout the course of the survey. Foraging activity was again concentrated along the wooded boundary and over the open area adjacent to the building.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the building on this date.

5.2.3 Identified Flight Paths

No flight paths associated with the building were identified throughout either survey. Bats recorded were foraging over the site and along the adjacent woodland edge and were not associated with any specific features of the building.

5.3 Identified Roosts

5.3.1 Survey 1

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

5.3.2 Survey 2

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

6 Conclusion

The property has not been identified as a bat roost. Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Myotis sp. were, however, recorded foraging over and around the site during both surveys, reflecting the good foraging and commuting habitat afforded by the adjacent woodland and the nearby River Usk. No bats were observed emerging from or interacting with the building in any way during either survey.

The proposed works comprise the conversion of the existing detached garage/outbuilding into ancillary residential accommodation, with the external masonry walls retained. As no bats or evidence of bats was found within the building, and no bats were observed emerging from or using the building during either emergence survey, the proposed works are unlikely to impact upon roosting bats. To maintain and enhance the foraging and commuting value of the site, the lighting and enhancement measures set out in Sections 9 and 10 should be implemented.

No bats or evidence of bats was found throughout the interior of the building.

A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are found.

7 Breeding Birds

No evidence of birds was noted throughout the survey.

8 Interpretation & Impact Assessment

8.1 Active Season Usage

The property was not identified as a bat roost.

8.2 Hibernation Season Usage

The winter period must be avoided due to the unlikely, but possible presence of hibernating bats.

8.3 Breeding Birds

No evidence of breeding birds was noted.

8.4 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.

The building has not been identified as a bat roost and therefore impacts on roosting bats are unlikely.

9 Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement

9.1 Bats

An Elisa Bat Box (<https://www.nhbs.com/elisa-bat-box>) will be installed on the southern or eastern elevation of the building, at a height of at least 3m, away from windows and artificial lighting.

9.2 Birds

A 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace (<https://www.nhbs.com/1sp-schwegler-sparrow-terrace>) will be mounted on the western or northern elevation of the building, at a height of at least 2m.

10 Recommendations

10.1 Timing

It is considered that the building is not a bat roost and therefore the works can be undertaken at any time of year.

10.2 Timber/Roofing Materials

N/A — the property has not been identified as a bat roost.

10.3 Lighting

Newly created 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/>

Flight paths to the bat boxes and the newly created bat mitigation will be kept dark at all times.

10.4 Bat Licensing

A European Protected Species Licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales will not be required before any works commence.

10.5 Supervision

N/A — the property has not been identified as a bat roost.

11 References

Bat Conservation Trust. (2023) 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

Robinwood, Belmont Hill, Caerleon, NP18 1JX | Bat Activity Survey | June 2026



Plate 1 – Front (south-western) elevation showing the rendered first floor over exposed random rubble sandstone, slate hipped roof



Plate 2 – Eaves and soffit detail showing the painted timber soffit, lead flashing and a gap at the soffit/wall junction



Plate 3 – Eaves and verge detail showing exposed roof timbers, lead flashing and dead climbing vegetation against the rendered wall adjacent to a first-floor window



Plate 4 – Gable apex showing exposed random rubble stonework and brick quoins, weathered rafter feet and dead vegetation beneath the eaves

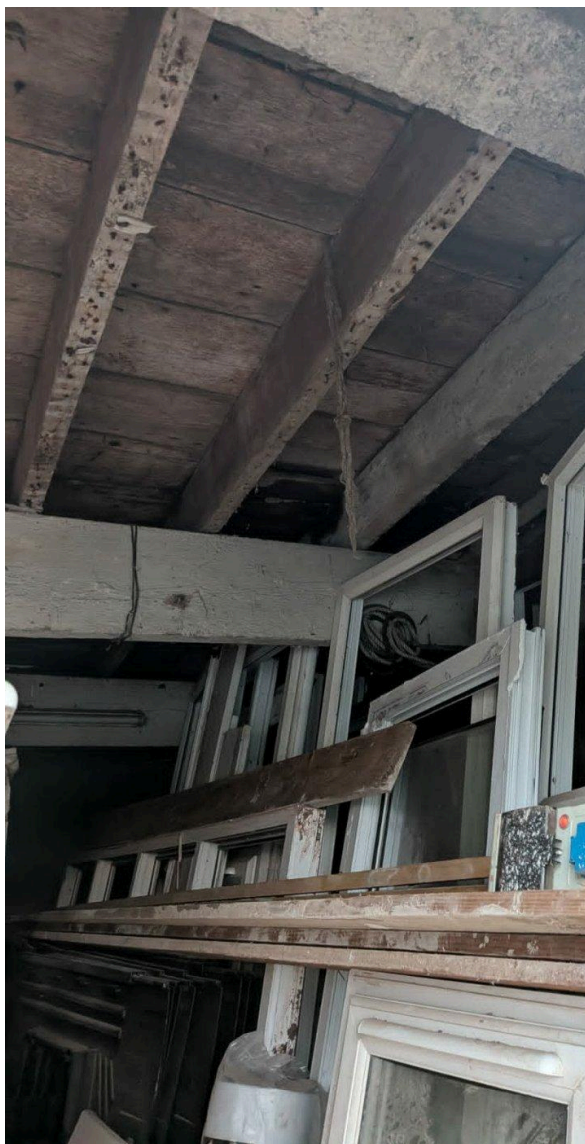


Plate 5 – Ground floor interior showing the underside of the exposed timber floor joists and boards above, with stored window units



Plate 6 – Ground floor interior showing exposed ceiling joists, cracked render and patched plasterwork to the stone walls

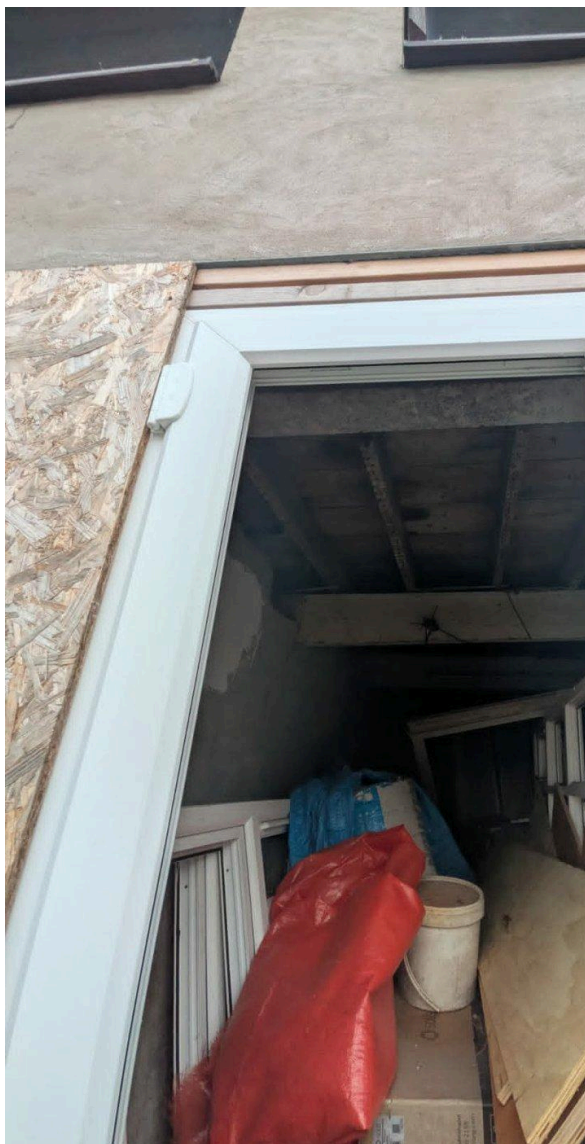


Plate 7 – View up into the ground floor ceiling through the opened doorway, showing exposed joists and stored materials



Plate 8 – Gable corner detail showing coursed stone and brick quoins, exposed rafter feet and dead ivy growth beneath the eaves



Plate 9 – Rear gable showing exposed stonework, brick quoins, timber rafters at the verge and dead climbing vegetation



Plate 10 – Rear elevation showing the slate hipped roof with slipped and missing slates, ivy growth and gaps at the eaves/wall junction



Plate 11 – view of the rear and side elevations