

Bat Survey: Brynglas Annex Demolition



Instructed by: Newport Norse

Reported by: Ecological Services Ltd
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Author	Date	Version
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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 To support the planning 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 (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.

1.5 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.

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

1.7 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 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 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 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 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 6th May 2025

- Sunset: 20:44
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 10% cloud cover
- Temperature: 13 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Tyrone Evans; Allen Harvey; Debbie Parry; Keith Watkins and Scott Watkins

No bats were observed emerging from the building.

8.4 Second Emergence Survey on 12th June 2025

- Sunset: 21:30
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 25% cloud cover
- Temperature: 17 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Matthew Kedward; Ryan Offers; Debbie Parry; Caitlin Smith; Mason Smith and Matthew Thomas

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>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>

8.9 During the first emergence survey, a low number of bat calls were recorded. A small number of Common and Soprano Pipistrelles were observed foraging in the trees to the north and east of the building but did not emerge from the building.



8.10 During the second emergence survey, no bats were detected or 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 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 The building was assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats and there were a small number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building.

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

9.7 There was no ambient lighting within the vicinity of the building.

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 To comply with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, ecological gain will be included into the scope of works. This will consist of:

3 Schwegler 1FF Bat Boxes fitted to a suitable tree within the curtilage of the site.

3 Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes fitted to suitable trees within the curtilage of the site.

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

10.2 No development works are proposed for the site to replace the existing building and therefore there will be no new build in which to incorporate ecological enhancements. However, there are a number of mature trees within the curtilage of the site which Newport Council are responsible for. A scheme of bat and bird boxes in these trees has been recommended and it is suggested that these will be suitable ecological enhancement measures.

10.3 There are a number of mature trees within the curtilage of the site. It is recommended that three Schwegler 1FF bat boxes be located around the circumference of a tree in a group of three. **The boxes must have direct access to the sun and be at least 4 meters above the ground. No obstruction or limbs will be allowed within 30cm of the base of the bat boxes. The exact positions will be agreed with the retained ecologist.**



10.4 Three Schwegler 1B nest boxes will be fitted on trees within the curtilage of the site. Two boxes will have 32mm access holes and one will have a 26mm access hole. **The bird boxes must not be fitted facing south. The exact positions will be agreed with the retained ecologist.**



Signed: *Richard Watkins* Date: June 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 moderate ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 3102 9026



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.