Bat Survey: Former Palace Cinema and Rhymes Day Nursery, Bedwlwyn Road, Ystrad Mynach

Instructed by: Wales and West Housing

Reported by: Ecological Services Ltd
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1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 The former Palace Cinema and Rhymes Day Nursery is a terraced property situated in an urban environment along the residential and commercial street of Bedwlwyn Road in the town of Ystrad Mynach. The property is currently vacant and planning permission is sought to demolish the existing building and create an affordable housing development within the site boundary. 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 SEWBReC (0256-239) 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 175m from the property which is an historic record for an unidentified bat species maternity roost from 1990; 325m from the property which is a record for a Pipistrelle Species *(Pipistrellus sp.)* maternity roost from 2010 and 350m from the property which is an historic record for a Pipistrelle Species day roost from 1991.

1.5 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 145m from the property which is a field record for a Daubenton's Bat *(Myotis daubentonii)*; 325m from the property which is a field record for a Common Pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)* and 360m from the property which is a field record for an unidentified bat species.

1.6 There are records for Common Toad (*Bufo Bufo*) approximately 90m northwest, House Sparrow (P*asser domestics*) approximately 80m east, Swift (*Apus Apus*) approximately 90m south east and Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) approximately 130m east.

1.7 The site does not lie within or directly adjacent to any statutory or non statutory designated site. There are non statutory designated sites within 1km of the site. There are 7 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 1km of site, the closest being the Coed Penalta and Railway Line SINC located approximately 260m to the north east. There are 14 areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) within 1km of site, the closest being approximately 270m north west of site.

1.8 The property is not within 1km of a designated SAC or SSSI for bats.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The former Palace Cinema and Nursery is a terraced; stone building which is two storeys in height with a pitched slate roof. There are timber fasciae; soffits and barge boards present. To the rear (south east) of the building there is a small area of undeveloped land within the site boundary bounded by breeze block walls. At present this area has been used for storage with metal shipping containers, trailers and wood piles present. The remaining ground contains a mixture of bumble scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. Species noted within the area include false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), hedge mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*), buddleja

(*Buddleja daviddi*), cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), nettle (*Utica dioica*), creeping thistle (C*irsium arvense*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) and nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*)

2.2 The property dates back to in excess of 80 years and is situated within an urban environment. There are likely to be moderate amounts of ambient lighting along Bedwlwyn Road, to the immediate north west of the property.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourse is Rhymney River, approximately 335m to the south east of the property, with a smaller watercourse, Nant Cylla, approximately 125m to the west of the property at their nearest points.

2.4 The property is situated in an urban environment along the residential and commercial street of Bedwlwyn Road in the town of Ystrad Mynach. Despite being situated in an urban environment, the town of Ystrad Mynach is surrounded by substantial amounts of open land and areas of forestry. 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 1467 9447**

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.

3.4 The majority of the building consisted of suspended ceilings. There was a small attic space within the building, however, there were warning signs regarding the presence of asbestos and therefore no internal inspection was undertaken. However, it is suggested that this did not significantly alter the reports conclusions.

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 **11th July 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; areas of raised lead flashing and apertures between the soffits and the walls.

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:


Day Nursery
01443

7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 The majority of the building consisted of suspended ceilings. There was a small attic space within the building, however, there were warning signs regarding the presence of asbestos and therefore no internal inspection was undertaken. However, it is suggested that this did not significantly alter the reports conclusions.

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 **16th August 2025**

- Sunset: 20:31
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 10% cloud cover
- Temperature: 20 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Christian Bridgeman; Lloyd James; Ryan Offers; Richard Watkins and Scott Watkins

No bats were observed emerging from the building.

8.4 Second Emergence Survey on **8th September 2025**

- Sunset: 19:43
- Weather: Dry and calm with full cloud cover
- Temperature: 13 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Lloyd James; Kieran Meek; Debbie Parry; Caitlin Smith and Mason Smith

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	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

8.9 During the first emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. A small number of Common Pipistrelles were observed foraging along the rear alley and in the grounds to the rear of the property.

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 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 moderate amounts of ambient lighting along Bedwlwyn Road to the north 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 To comply with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, ecological gain will be included into the scope of works. **All proposed enhancements must be shown on architectural drawings.** This will consist of:

2 Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Boxes, built integral into the block work of the new builds. Care must be taken not to obstruct the access slots.

2 PRO-UK Rendered Build-In Swift Boxes, built integral into the block work of the new builds. Care must be taken not to obstruct the entrance holes.

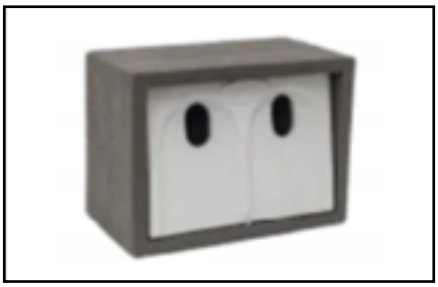
2 Vivara Pro WoodStone Sparrow Nest Boxes, built integral into the block work of the new builds. Care must be taken not to obstruct the entrance holes.

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

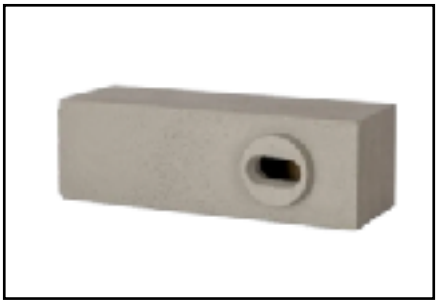
10.2 It is proposed that new roosting for bats be created by building two Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Boxes into the block work of the new builds; one on the south eastern elevation of Block 1 and one on the south eastern elevation of Block 2. **Care must be taken not to obstruct the access slots.**

10.3 Bat enhancements will benefit from the southern elevation or an elevation where there is direct access to sunlight as the bats can tolerate and prefer high levels of temperature in their roost.

10.4 Two Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Boxes will be built into the block work of the new builds; one on the north eastern elevation of Block 1 and one on the north eastern elevation of Block 2. **These will not be situated on a south facing elevation. Care must be taken not to obstruct the entrance holes.**



10.5 Two PRO-UK Rendered Build-In Swift Boxes will be built into the block work of the new builds; one on the north eastern elevation of Block 1 and one on the north eastern elevation of Block 2. **These will not be situated on a south facing elevation. Care must be taken not to obstruct the entrance holes.**



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

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

10.8 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.

10.9 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.

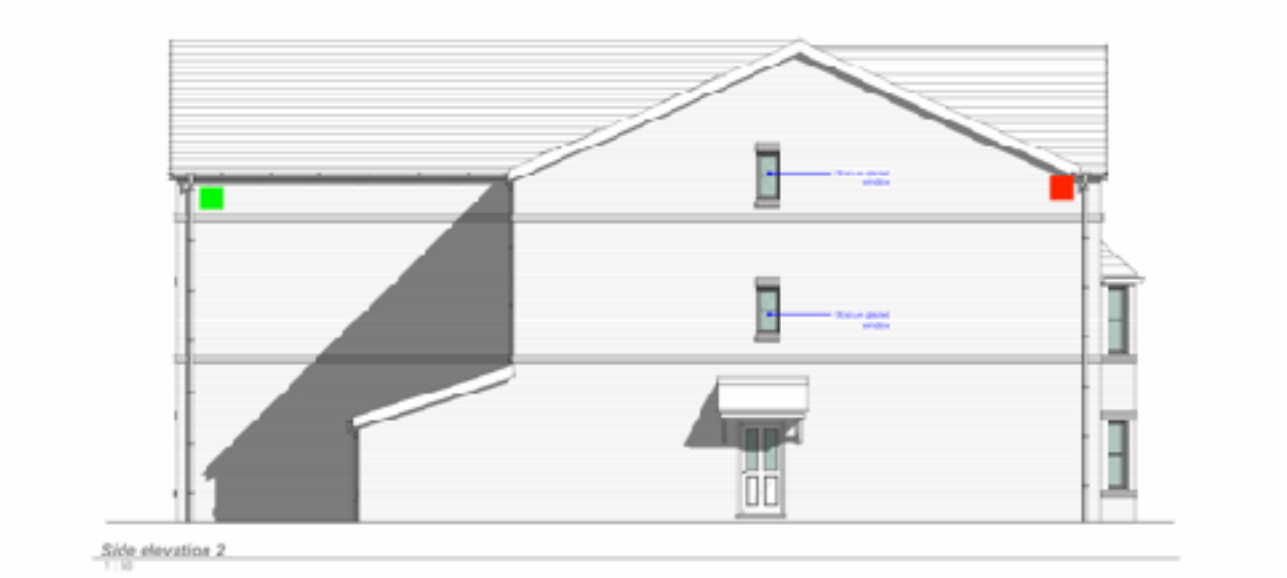
10.10 Recommended Locations of Bat and Bird Enhancements:

Location of Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

Location of PRO-UK Rendered Build-In Swift Box

Location of Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Box

Blocks 1 and 2 - South Eastern Elevation



Blocks 1 and 2 - North Eastern Elevation

Signed: *Richard Watkins* ***Date: November 2025***

11.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Site Photographs

Surveyor & NVA Positions

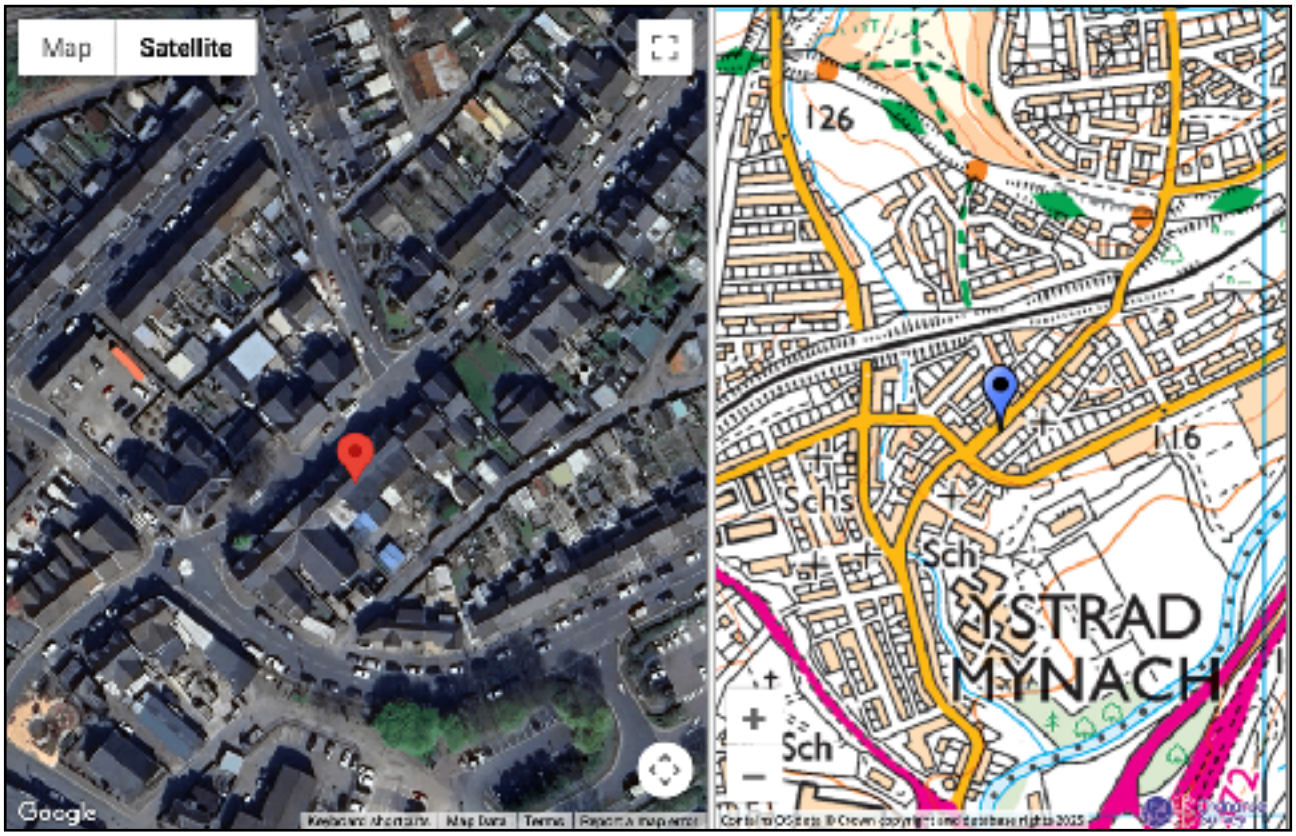
Guidance Note

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs

The site in its immediate environment.

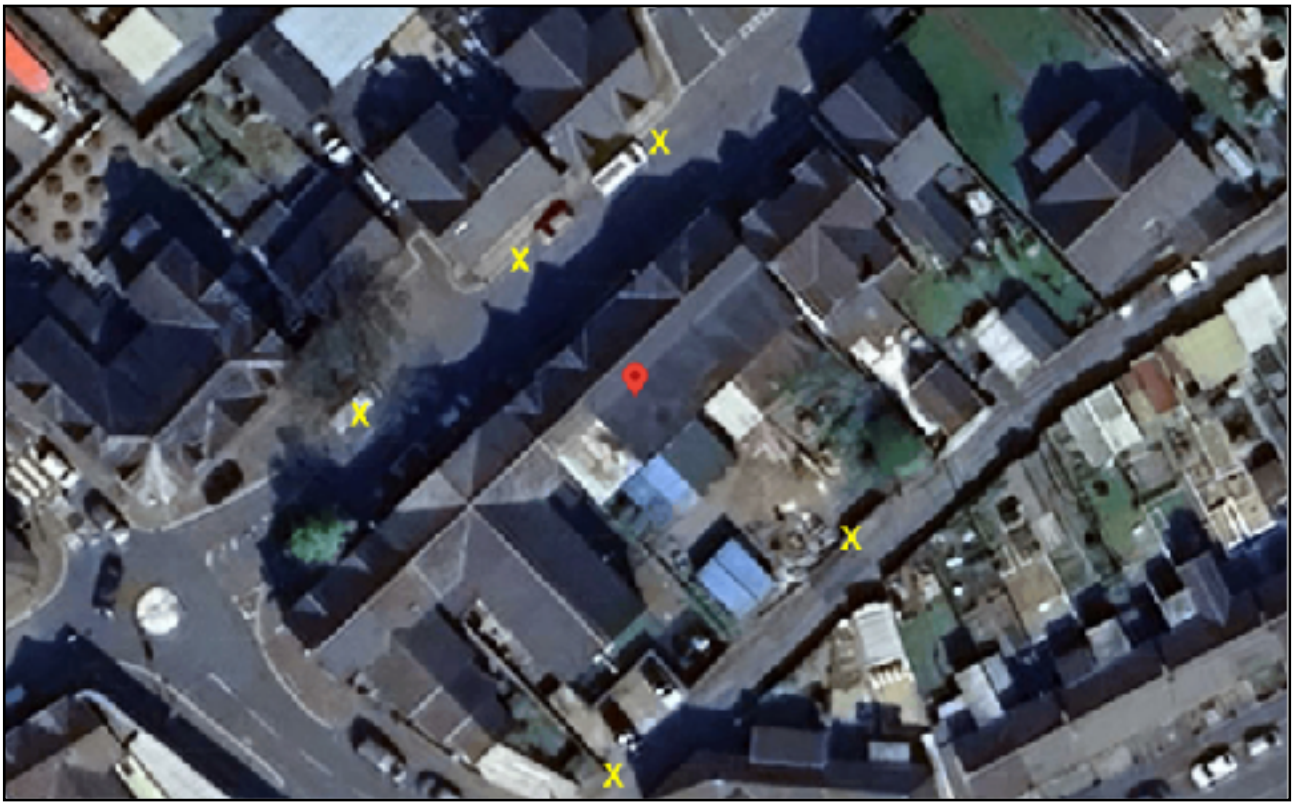
The site in its wider environment offering excellent ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 1467 9447



Appendix 3 Site Photographs

Appendix 4 Surveyor & NVA Positions



Appendix 5 Guidance Note

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

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*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.