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## Report on scoping survey for Bat Roost sites

In  
Garage and Out building  
At  
The Heritage Coast Centre,  
Dunraven Bay,  
Southerndown,  
Vale of Glamorgan.

Report by

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License number - 50440:OTH:CSAB:2013

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ENVIRONMENTAL  
AND ECONOMIC  
REGENERATION

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A scoping inspection was made of the garage and out building at the Heritage Coast Centre, Dunraven Bay, Southerndown, Vale of Glamorgan (see map in appendix), grid reference SS 88695 / 73253 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 for the presence of roosting bats. A detailed inspection was made of the buildings and **no evidence** was found to suggest that the site is currently used by Bats.
- 1.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Council have requested that a scoping survey is undertaken prior to any demolition of the structures by a licensed Bat worker to establish if there are any signs of bat activity within the structures.
- 1.3 No evidence was found to suggest that bats were using the buildings as a roost site.
- 1.4 The out building is unsuitable with regard to roosting locations for bats as it is open to the elements and provide little or no cover. The garage has low potential as a roosting location and no further exploration will be required.
- 1.5 However, despite the absence of any positive signs, bats are highly mobile animals and may set up new roosts at any time. Therefore, as a precautionary measure, during any works on the building, especially in respect to operations such as removal of roofing materials and fascias etc if any bats are found or if there is any reason to believe that a bat roost has been established in the interim, as a legal requirement, all works should cease immediately while further advice is sought from the local office of Natural Resources Wales.
- 1.6 In addition, staff at the Heritage Coast Centre have indicated that the main visitor centre, 10m to the south west of the surveyed buildings has been used as a historical roost site for bats. Due to this as a precautionary measure contractors should be informed that they should check for the possible presence of bats beneath or on the undersides of any potential refuge (e.g. roof coverings, fascia, barge boards etc) before demolishing and dumping them.
- 1.7 In the unlikely event that bats are found, while undertaking works to the buildings, work on the structures should stop while further advice is sought from the local office of the Natural Resources Wales.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Council have applied for planning consent to demolish the garage and out building at the Heritage Coast Centre, Dunraven Bay, Southerndown, Vale of Glamorgan, grid reference SS 88695 / 73253.
- 2.2 The works proposed will be to demolish the buildings and to replace them with 5 metal storage containers (see appendix).

- 2.3 The Vale of Glamorgan Councils Ecologist has requested that a baseline assessment for possible usage by Bats is carried out prior to planning consent being granted, under the Councils protected species guidelines.
- 2.4 Emma Harding, Assistant Regeneration Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council consequently commissioned Mr Steve Pickering, Licensed Bat Worker to undertake a scoping survey for the presence of bats. This report documents the results of a survey undertaken on the 2nd October 2014.

### 3. Constraints

- 3.1 No problems were encountered in finding or accessing the site, the roof void was fully accessible for inspection.

### 4. Surveyor Experience

- 4.1 The surveyor, and principal author of this report, was Steve Pickering, a Natural Resources Wales licensed bat worker trainer with over ten years experience. Steve has over 15 years of experience in countryside management and worked on many projects related to bat conservation. He has taken part in a multi-year project to ring and study the movements of Daubenton's bat on Welsh river systems as well as undertaking numerous building and tree surveys for bats.

### 5. Site Description

- 5.1 The buildings are situated to the north of the Heritage Coast visitor centre, which lies to the south of the B4524 St Brides to Ogmere road and is set within a coastal bay. The area is bounded on all sides by improved farmland and large areas of unimproved maritime grassland, with small deciduous woodland copses to the north, east and west, all offering good foraging opportunities for bats.
- 5.2 The out building is 6.25m x 1m x 1.75m with a slate roof with no under felt and no insulation. The building is open to the west elevation and has a wooden framed structure. The building is tied into a retaining wall to the west elevation.
- 5.3 The garage is constructed out of pre-cast concrete and measures 4m x 2m x 2.1m. With a tile roof, with under felt and no insulation. The garage is accessed via a metal up and over door to the west elevation.
- 5.4 As previously mentioned a detailed inspection was made of the buildings and **no evidence** was found to suggest that the site is currently used by bats.

## **6. Survey Methodology**

- 6.1 The survey methods follow those recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (2012) and 'The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2004).
- 6.2 The principal aim was to survey the main structure of the building for the presence of bat roost sites. First an external examination was made of the design and structure of the building to assess the suitability for use by bats and for potential access points. Evidence such as bat droppings (faeces) or urine staining on windows, doors, walls or other surfaces were looked for, plus prey remains.
- 6.3 The building was then inspected internally and a search was carried out for the presence of bats or the remains of dead bats and for signs of bats such as droppings, urine staining, staining on timbers and discarded fragments of insects such as moth wings. The survey was carried out with the aid of close focusing binoculars and a 1,000,000 candlepower spot lamp and endoscope.
- 6.4 Although the survey was conducted outside of the normal survey season, due to the continued clement weather and the fact that bats were still active, the surveyor carried out an evening bat activity survey to record any bats emerging / entering the structures. This was carried out with the aid of a Anabat SD1 & SD2 frequency division bat detectors. Frequency division recordings of any bat calls were recorded onto CF card and analysed with anabat sound software on a computer to aid with verification of species identity. The observation was conducted of areas highlighted as potential access points in the building survey.

## **7. Site Survey**

- 7.1 The physical survey was carried out on the 2nd October 2014. The weather conditions were very good, with good viability and no rain.
- 7.2 All areas of the building were inspected with the use of a 3m ladder, close focusing binoculars and a 1,000,000 candlepower spot lamp and endoscope.
- 7.3 No evidence was found to suggest that multiple-animal activity is occurring (e.g. maternity roost). No evidence of other e.g. single or small numbers of bats were found.
- 7.4 The evening assessment was carried out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2014 - Sunset was established to be 18:49hrs British Summer Time. The weather was good with a light southerly breeze. The temperature was 15.8°C at sunset and 14.5°C at 21:45hrs. The survey commenced at 18:15hrs and concluded at 22:00hrs
- 7.5 No bat activity was observed.

## 8. Historical and Other Relevant Information

- 8.1 A search for recent local bat roost records from the local wildlife trust and bat group and SEWBREC revealed no further information on the buildings. However staff have indicated that bats have historically roosted in the visitor centre 10m to the south of the buildings. Staff were unable to confirm numbers or species.

## 9. Ecology of Bats

- 9.1 There are at least 16 species of bats breeding in the United Kingdom. Most of them are regarded as threatened due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and disturbance/damage to roosts. Of these species a number regularly use buildings or trees at certain times of year in order to find safe secure roost sites.
- 9.2 Bats are highly mobile flying mammals, which in the United Kingdom, feed entirely on insects. Having evolved over seventy million years they have developed sophisticated mechanisms to allow them to effectively 'see' in the dark by using sound. Called echo location this system allows them to track and hunt down small moving insects whilst in flight, rather like radar does in a modern military fighter aircraft
- 9.3 In winter, when their prey is scarce, British bats hibernate in cool parts of caves, buildings and tree cavities. They may wake occasionally and will feed if evening temperatures are greater than 7°C, when flying insects will be active. Generally however, activity in winter is very limited and bats only become fully active in spring.
- 9.4 In late spring female bats will gather together in maternity roosts in order to give birth and rear their single baby in June. Such maternity roosts are often near to foraging areas in order to minimise energy usage as flight requires vast energy resources.
- 9.5 Whilst females form maternity colonies, usually in warmer roofs or trees, male bats tend to seek out cooler sites which may not be so close to the foraging areas. Males are often solitary and do not exhibit the social behaviour that marks out females during the birthing period.
- 9.6 Several British bat species are known to rely heavily on buildings to roost. The common pipistrelle appears to be well represented in the Vale of Glamorgan and might normally be expected to be encountered in built structures. The midge pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, is another species which commonly roosts in buildings as will the brown long-eared bat, *Plecotus auritus*. Another two bat species, which can often be found in buildings are the closely related whiskered, *Myotis mystacinus*, and Brandt's bats, *M. brandtii*.



## **10. Relevant Legislation**

- 10.1 The marked decline of all British bats has resulted in their being given protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Schedule 5 of this act made it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any British bat. It also made it an offence to intentionally damage or destroy their place of rest (the roost).
- 10.2 Further all bat species are protected under Annex IV of the European Communities Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitats Directive) which requires the United Kingdom government to provide bats with strict protection.
- 10.3 Schedule 12, Section 5a of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 makes a number of important changes to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. One of the most significant is the addition of the word 'reckless' within offences under Section 9 (4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This covers all bat species.
- 10.4 In the case of a development involving the loss or modification of a building, which is not a dwelling house, which may affect bats, it may be necessary to apply to the Welsh Government for a European Protected Species Development Licence.

## **11. Discussion**

- 11.1 No evidence was found to suggest that multiple-animal activity is occurring (e.g. maternity roost) within the garage and out building at the Heritage Coast Centre, Dunraven Bay, Southerndown, Vale of Glamorgan, grid reference SS 88695 / 73253.
- 11.2 No evidence of other e.g. single or small numbers of bats were found.
- 11.3 The out building is unsuitable with regard to roosting locations for bats as it is open to the elements and provide little or no cover. The garage has low potential as a roosting location and no further exploration will be required.
- 11.4 However, despite the absence of any positive signs, bats are highly mobile animals and may set up new roosts at any time. Therefore, as a precautionary measure, during any works on the building, especially in respect to operations such as removal of roofing materials and fascias etc if any bats are found or if there is any reason to believe that a bat roost has been established in the interim, as a legal requirement, all works should cease immediately while further advice is sought from the local office of Natural Resources Wales.
- 11.5 In addition, staff at the Heritage Coast Centre have indicated that the main visitor centre, 10m to the south west of the surveyed buildings has been used as a historical roost site for bats. Due to this as a precautionary measure contractors should be informed that they should check for the possible presence of bats beneath or on the undersides of any potential refuge (e.g. roof coverings, fascia, barge boards etc) before demolishing and dumping them.



- 11.6 In the unlikely event that bats are found, while undertaking works to the buildings, work on the structures should stop while further advice is sought from the local office of the Natural Resources Wales.

## 12. Recommendations

- 12.1 The lack of evidence to support the presence of roosting bats within the garage and out building suggests that the site is **not currently used for roosting purposes** and that it is reasonable to assume there will be **no adverse impact** upon this group of protected species as a result of the proposed development. Furthermore, since no evidence of bats using the buildings was found and the fact that the buildings are unsuitable for roosting purposes, there is considered to be no specific requirement for any mitigation in that respect, although in the interest of nature conservation, the new buildings could incorporate 'bat friendly' features in the design, such as bat boxes if feasible.
- 12.2 However, despite the absence of any positive signs, bats are highly mobile animals and may set up new roosts at any time. Therefore, as a precautionary measure, during any works on the building, especially in respect to operations such as removal of roofing materials, wood cladding and fascias etc if any bats are found or if there is any reason to believe that a bat roost has been established in the interim, as a legal requirement, all works should cease immediately while further advice is sought from the local office of Natural Resources Wales.
- 12.3 As a precautionary measure contractors should be informed that they should check for the possible presence of bats beneath or on the undersides of any potential refuge (e.g. roof coverings, fascia, barge boards etc) before demolishing and dumping them. In the unlikely event that bats are found, while undertaking works to the buildings, work on the structures should stop while further advice is sought from the local office of the Natural Resources Wales.
- 12.4 A appropriately qualified and licensed bat specialist will be engaged on an 'on-call' basis throughout the duration of the works, and would attend the site in the event of any bats being found which require specialist attention, in order to ensure their safe removal using the appropriate methods.

## 13. References

*Action Plan for the Conservation of Bats in the United Kingdom*, Hutson, A.M. (1993), The Bat Conservation Trust.

*Bats and the law: What to do when the law is broken*, Childs, J. (2001), The Bat Conservation Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

*Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland: 1980 – 1999*, Richardson, P. (2000), The Bat Conservation Trust.

*'Focus on Bats'*, Mitchell-Jones, T. (1992), English Nature.

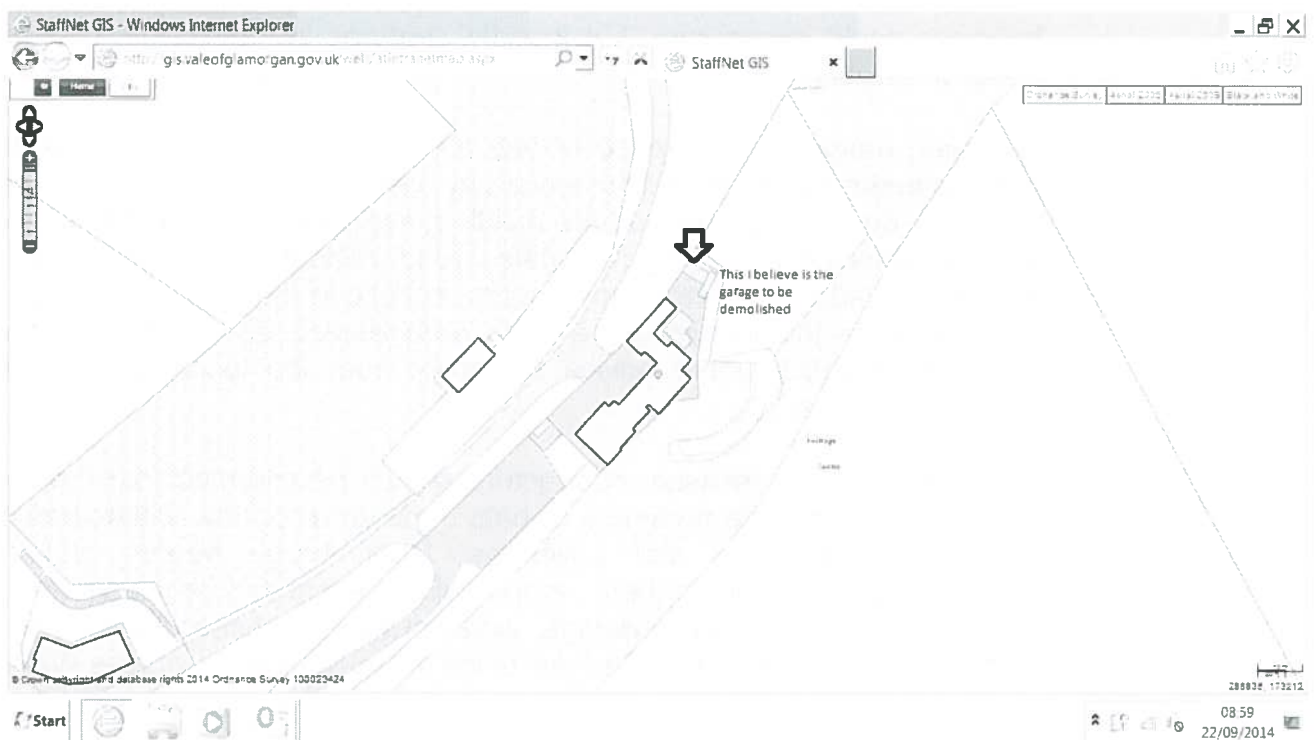
*'The Bat Workers Manual'*, Mitchell-Jones, T (2004), JNCC.

*'Tracks & signs of the birds of Britain and Europe Roy Brown'*, John Ferguson, Michael Lawrence & David Lees (1994). Helm.

*'Bat surveys': 'Good practice guidelines' 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Bat Conservation Trust 2012.

*'British Bat Calls' 'A guide to species identification'.* Jon Russ (2012)

#### 14. Appendix i – Location map.



15. Appendix ii – Photographs

**Garage entrance**



**South elevation**



**East gable end**



**Roof void**







**Roof void of out building**



## **17. Appendix iii - Report Conditions.**

### **Ecology Bat Risk Assessment Survey – Garage and Out building at the Heritage Coast Centre, Dunraven Bay, Southerndown, Vale of Glamorgan. Grid reference SS 88695 / 73253**

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