UNITED WELSH HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CLARENCE EMBANKMENT, BUTETOWN, CARDIFF

BUILDING INSPECTION AND BAT SURVEY REPORT

JULY 2019



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Document Ref: E1988501 Doc 01 - 15 JULY 2019

Issue	Revision	Stage	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Signed
1	-	Final for issue	15 July 2019	Dr D. Fry (Senior Ecologist)	Dr. M Watts (Director)	M. Date

CONTENTS

Summary

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Methodology

Desk study

Building Inspection Survey

Bat Survey

3.0 Results

Desk study

Walkover Survey & Building Inspection

Bat Survey

4.0 Legislation, Policies and Plans

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

References

Appendices

Appendix I Site Location Plan

Appendix II Building Inspection Results
Appendix III Activity Surveys Results
Appendix IV Recommended Bat Boxes

SUMMARY

Soltys Brewster Ecology were commissioned by United Welsh Housing Association (UWHA) to undertake an

ecological appraisal to inform a planning application for a proposed demolition of the existing building in place of 12

new 1 and 2 bedroom apartments at Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff. In order to inform the planning

submission for the proposed works, a survey to establish the ecological baseline with particular regard to bats is

required in the first instance.

The desk study consultation via the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) confirmed that the

building is not within any form of nature conservation designation and is unlikely to be ecologically connected to any.

The SEWBReC species data returned 210 bat records, the vast majority of which were for foraging and commuting

bats. The majority were for pipistrelle species (Pipistrellus pipistrellus, P. pygmaeus) but also for Myotis, Noctule

(Nyctalus nathusii) and a few records for Nathusius pipistrelle (Pipistrellus nathusii) Brown long-eared (Plecotus auritus)

and Lesser Horseshoe (Rhinolophus hipposideros). The closest roost record is for a Pipistrelle roost (species unknown)

at 364m away from the proposed development site. The search did not identify any records of bats specifically

associated with The Church building at Clarence Embankment or any neighbouring properties. Records for roof

nesting birds returned 50 records and included Swift Apus apus, House Martin Delichon urbicum, Swallow Hirundo

rustica, Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba, House Sparrow Passer domesticus, Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros, Starling

Sturnus vulgaris, Wren Troglodytes troglodytes and Barn Owl Tyto alba. No records specific to the proposed

development site or immediately neighbouring properties were returned.

The internal and external building inspection survey undertaken in May 2019 identified no evidence of roosting bats

but observed some features that had the potential to be used by bats. A single dusk survey was undertaken and the

building was identified as a bat roost. The location of this roost exit was on the north-west gable end of the main

building where there is an observable gap between the fascia and the soffit. The survey also identified that Common

pipistrelle and Noctule bats roost in the vicinity of the property and that there is activity around the property during

what is the expected emergence time (Russ, 2012).

The available evidence suggests intermittent roosting by small numbers of Soprano pipistrelles. Demolition of this

building would therefore require a licence from NRW. Recommendations are made in respect of suitable mitigation

measures to enable the proposed demolition of the building:

Recommendations are made also made in relation to the nesting birds.

United Welsh Housing Association

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Soltys Brewster Ecology were commissioned by United Welsh Housing Association (UWHA) to undertake an ecological appraisal to inform a planning application for a proposed demolition of the existing building in

place of 12 new 1 and 2 bedroom apartments at Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff (see location plan

in Appendix I).

1.2. The property is located approximately 25m from the banks of the River Taff. It is located on the final bend

before the river discharges into Cardiff Bay on the southern edge of Cardiff City. It is therefore a heavily built

up area with residential dominating the immediate surroundings and the commercial area of Cardiff bay area

to the east. Beyond this lies the dock yards and heavy industry. Despite this, being on the City limits there are

numerous green spaces within a few hundred metres including Hamadryad Park and the Cardiff Bay

Wetlands Reserve to the south and The Marl on the opposite western side of the River. The River itself

provides an ecological habitat which links the green spaces and provides a commuting corridor for many

species. In order to inform the planning submission for the proposed works, a survey to establish the

ecological baseline with particular regard to bats is required in the first instance.

1.3. The current report presents the findings of an ecological desk study, building inspection and bat survey

undertaken in May and June 2019.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1. In order to establish the baseline ecological conditions on site, a combination of desk-based consultation and

building inspection survey was undertaken in May 2019. The scope of survey work was based on best

practice guidelines (BCT, 2016). Following the initial building inspection further bat survey was

recommended and subsequently undertaken in June 2019.

Desk study

2.2. The desk study primarily involved consultation with the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre

(SEWBReC) to identify any existing ecological records of bats or roof nesting birds in the surrounding area

(2km for bats, 150m for birds). Given the location and conditions at the site, a wider search for designated

sites and other species was not considered of benefit although information on designated sites was reviewed

via the planning pages of the Cardiff Council and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) website.

Building Inspection Survey

2.3. The fieldwork was undertaken on 29th May 2019 by a suitably experienced ecologist¹ and comprised of an

external/internal check of the building to search for evidence of bats or nesting birds. The survey aimed to

identify:

if bats are, or have been, present within the building and, if so, which species are present;

• the type of roost (e.g. maternity roost, day roost used by males or non-breeding females, feeding

perch, night roost, mating roost, transitional roost, hibernaculum);

how bats use the buildings (e.g. location of roosting bats, flight paths and flight behaviour, exit and

entrance points to the roost); and

the intensity of use (e.g. likely number of bats, time and duration of use).

2.4 External surveys at the site involved the use of binoculars to identify possible access/entry points into the

building and aimed to identify any evidence of use by bats such as droppings, staining, prey remains etc. The

survey was undertaken from ground-level around the exterior of the site buildings with ladder access (up to a

maximum of 4m) where required.

2.5 The surveyor searched for roost evidence (droppings, staining, scratch marks, noise, etc.) as described above

and an assessment of the buildings potential to support nesting birds was also undertaken. The scope of the

bat inspection survey, including timing, survey effort etc., was based on guidelines published by the Bat

¹ NRW bat licence no: SO85043/1

United Welsh Housing Association

Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff

Conservation Trust (BCT, 2016). The potential of the building to support roosting bats was determined

based on the following categories (BCT 2016):

Known or confirmed roost

• **High** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger

numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size,

shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

• Moderate – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to

their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of

high conservation status.

• Low – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats

opportunistically.

• **Negligible** – Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.

2.6 Any evidence of use of the building or surroundings by other protected species such as nesting birds was also

noted.

Activity Survey

2.7. A single activity survey was undertaken at the property. A single dusk survey was undertaken on 24th June

2019 by four suitably experienced and qualified surveyors (including two bat licence holders). All calls were

recorded on either an Anabat SD2, Peersonic or ipod Eco Meter Touch 2 and identified on computer-based

sonogram analysis software (Kaleidoscope Pro 5 and AnalookW). Excel was used to calculate passes per

minute and create the illustrative charts.

Constraints

2.8. The basement was not accessible for a visual inspection due to the identified presence of asbestos (Enquin

Environmental Ltd. 2017).

2.9. The weather was intermittent light rain during the day-time survey. This was not felt to be a significant

constraint as it was possible to carry out much of the external inspection between showers. No

environmental constraints were experienced during the activity survey.

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3.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

3.1 The site does not fall within a SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site. The nearest designated

site is the Severn Estuary approximately 1700m to the east of the site which is designated as a Ramsar site,

SSSI and a SAC. The Taff River provides an ecological connection from immediately to the north of the

proposed development site to the designated site and whilst this designated site contain habitats which are

likely to be used by local bat populations (e.g. scrub on cliffs etc.) it is not designated for any bat species or

features pertaining to bats and was not considered of ecological relevance to the submitted development

proposals.

3.2 The SEWBReC species data returned 210 bat records, the vast majority of which were for foraging and

commuting bats. The majority were for pipistrelle species (Pipistrellus pipistrellus, P. pygmaeus) but also for

Myotis, Noctule (Nyctalus nathusii) and a few records for the rarer Nathusius pipistrelle (Pipistrellus nathusii).

There is a single record for Brown long-eared (Plecotus auritus) and Lesser Horseshoe (Rhinolophus

hipposideros) but at distances of 1445m and 1878m respectively. The closest roost record is for a Pipistrelle

roost (species unknown) at 364m away from the proposed development site. The search did not identify any

records of bats specifically associated with The Church building at Clarence Embankment or any neighbouring

properties.

3.3 Records for roof nesting birds returned 50 records and included Swift Apus apus, House Martin Delichon

urbicum, Swallow Hirundo rustica, Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba, House Sparrow Passer domesticus, Black

Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros, Starling Sturnus vulgaris, Wren Troglodytes troglodytes and Barn Owl Tyto alba.

No records specific to the proposed development site or immediately neighbouring properties were

returned.

Building Inspection Survey

3.4 A summary of the site features and building inspection survey is provided in the following sections with

further detail including target notes and supporting photographs in Appendix II.

3.5 The building is of fairly modern red brick gable construction. The main building is a single storey rectangular

structure with an extension on the south eastern end creating an L shaped footprint. The ridge line of the

main structure runs along a north-east to south-west axis and the smaller extension having a north-west to

south-east axis. The roof covering is slate with clay ridge tiles and there are two chimneys visible externally.

United Welsh Housing Association

- 3.6 The roof ridge tiles are in generally good repair but there are some slipped and missing slates on the roof face itself. The facias and soffits are painted timber and they are weathered in places causing cracks and warping which have created some suitable features for bats to use. The basement entrance is open allowing free flight if bats are present. No evidence of use by bats was observed externally.
- 3.7 Internally the main building is open to the eaves and apex which are timber clad and painted with the exception of the small room which contains the prayer room immediately to the left of the main entrance. There is a false ceiling here and an enclosed loft space. The loft space was accessible through a loose ceiling board and the loft space was un-boarded and the roof was timber clad and painted as throughout the rest of the main building. The inspection observed no evidence of internal use by bats.
- 3.8 The extension element to the building has an enclosed loft space along its entire length. This was accessible through a loft hatch. The construction is timber with roof felt present. The space is very clean and tidy and there were no obvious access points. A sparse scattering of mouse dropping was observed throughout the space. No evidence of bats was observed within this loft space.
- 3.9 Where the main building and the extension meet, internally there is water ingress and this is causing damage to the fabric of the building. It may highlight an area where bats could find access externally.

Activity Survey

Dusk Survey

3.10 Climatic conditions were suitable during the survey as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Dusk Survey - 24th June 2019

Weather conditions:				
Temperature (°C) at start and finish	Rain	Cloud cover (%)	Wind	Sunset
15	0	100 at beginning of survey and clearing throughout	Slight breeze	20:34

3.11 Surveyor locations for the survey period are illustrated in Appendix III. A single bat was observed to exit the

property during the dusk survey. The location of this roost exit was on the north-west gable end of the main

building where there is an observable gap between the fascia and the soffit (Target Note 1 in Appendix II &

Appendix III). The bat was seen to emerge by the surveyor at location 1 but it was not calling and no

recording was made. The surveyor at location 2 observed this bat coming over the wall and reliably identified

it as a Soprano pipistrelle.

3.12 The surveyor at location 4 may have had an individual emerge either from the extension element of the

building or the adjacent residential property but this was not conclusive.

3.13 The Charts 1-4 below illustrate the bat passes recorded at location 1. These are given as an example as all

four survey locations experienced similar results. The species emergence times are taken from British Bat

Calls; A Guide to Species Identification (Russ, 2012). By far the most numerous passes were made by

Noctule (Chart 1). The majority were observed foraging out over the adjacent river but there were several

commuting backwards and forwards across and around the site towards and from the direction of

Hamadryad Park and the Wetlands Reserve. The earliest observed timings would support the idea that there

are roosts in the immediate vicinity.

Soprano pipistrelle were the next most numerous and again based on the timings it is likely that as well as the

roost observed there are others in the immediate vicinity.

3.15 There were occasional passes by common pipistrelle and Serotine (Chart 3 & 4). Common pipistrelle are

likely to roost in the surrounding buildings and again timings suggest a roost in very close proximity to the

proposed development site. The Serotine calls are from a foraging individual/s but the timings do not provide

any indication as to the proximity or direction of a roost.

United Welsh Housing Association Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff Building Inspection and Bat Survey Report

3.14

Chart 1 Surveyor/Location 1 - Noctule

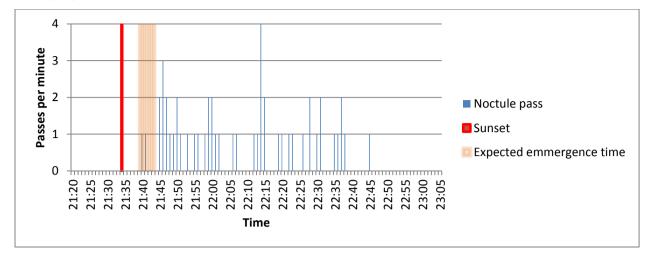


Chart 2 Surveyor/Location 1 - Soprano pipistrelle

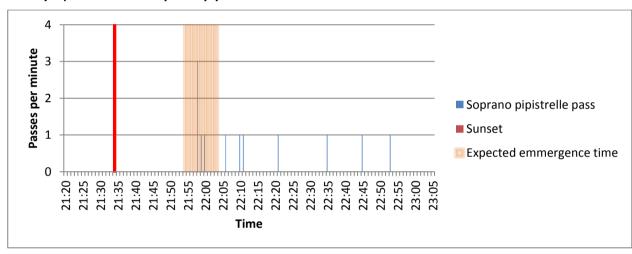


Chart 3 Surveyor/Location 1 - Common pipistrelle

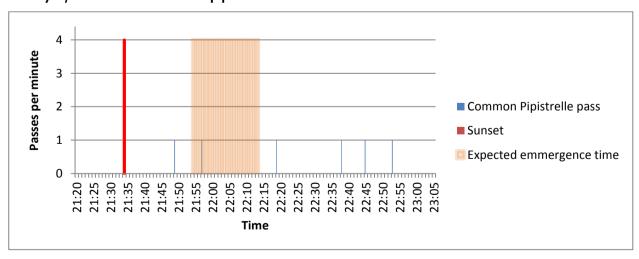
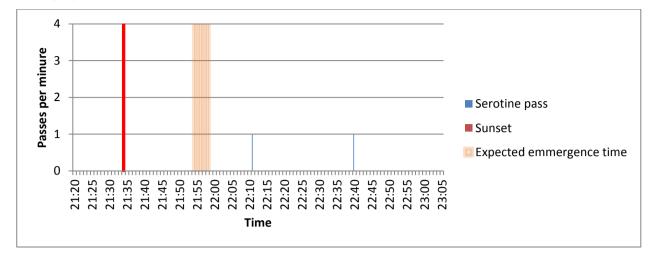


Chart 4 Surveyor/Location 1 - Serotine



4.0 LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PLANS

4.1 The following legislation and planning policy relating to nature conservation and biodiversity are considered of

relevance to the area surveyed and to the proposed demolition and redevelopment at the site.

Legislation Pertaining to the Protection of Bats

4.2 Under Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild

Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) some bat species are listed as of Community Interest, the

conservation of which requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Under Annex IV of the

EC Habitats Directive all bat species are listed as of Community Interest, in need of strict protection. In

England and Wales, the EC Habitats Directive has been transposed into law in 1994 and, following recent

amendments is set out in the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulation 2017 to give bats, their breeding

sites and resting places a high level of strict protection making it an offence (subject to certain specific

exceptions) to deliberately capture or kill/injure a bat, to damage or destroy a place used for shelter or

protection or to deliberately disturb a bat in such a place. Case Law has placed an onus on local planning

authorities to satisfy 'three tests' under the Habitats Directive when determining applications that could

affect European Protected Species. Essentially, these three tests are: i) that there is no satisfactory

alternative; ii) that the proposed development is in the over-riding public interest (including those of a social

or economic nature) and iii) the proposed development would not adversely affect the Favourable

Conservation Status of the species locally

4.3 Bats are also afforded protection within England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

(as amended); Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act

2006.

Legislation Pertaining to Birds

4.4 Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) all wild birds are protected against killing or injury

and their nests against damage or destruction whilst they are being built or contain eggs/dependent young.

United Welsh Housing Association

Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff

5.0 **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The building was identified as a bat roost. The available evidence suggesting intermittent roosting by small

numbers of Soprano pipistrelles. Demolition of this building would therefore require a licence from NRW.

Such licences can only be applied for following receipt of planning approval and the licence application is

supported by a Method Statement setting out the timing of works and mitigation measures to ensure bats are

not adversely affected.

5.2 The following recommended mitigation measures are considered appropriate to the demolition of the

building:

Provision of alternative roosting opportunities prior to demolition - 3 no. Schwegler woodcrete

boxes Type 2FN (Appendix IV) suitable for use by Pipistrelle bats to be installed. Early installation of

the boxes will ensure no net loss of roosting habitat locally in the short term and may increase the

likelihood of use as bats will be able to investigate/locate boxes. This would ensure no net loss of

roosting habitat locally in the short term. It is suggested that the trees along the river bank to the

north west of the site would be most suitable location for these boxes but this will need to be

discussed and agreed with the Local Authority Ecologist. There are no suitable locations within the

site boundary;

At the start of the works a tool box talk will be given to the contractors to make them aware of the

potential presence of bats, what bats look like and what measures will be put in place to limit any

impacts to bats;

Start of demolition works to be programmed from spring (March/April) or autumn

(October/November) so as to avoid the period of the year when bats are most susceptible to

disturbance particularly avoiding the hibernation period. Any bats encountered will be moved to

replacement roost (bat box) by a licensed ecologist;

All fascia, soffits ridge tiles and slates on the building will be removed using hand-tools (e.g. crowbar)

prior to demolition of the main fabric of the building;

As part of the new build, a total of 4no. Schwegler 1FR bat tubes (Appendix IV) will be installed on

the brick gable ends of new accommodation.

5.3 No trees with potential to support roosting bats will be impacted as a result of the proposals.

United Welsh Housing Association Clarence Embankment, Butetown, Cardiff Other Considerations - Nesting Birds

The day-time inspection survey identified no evidence of nesting birds associated with the buildings to which the work is proposed. However in the event that works are progressed in the nesting season (March to August inclusive) a precautionary check prior to commencement of works would be recommended to ensure that no active birds nests were present. Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) all wild birds are protected against killing or injury and their nests against damage or destruction whilst they are in use or being built.

REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Enquin Environmental Ltd. (2017) Asbestos Management Plan and Record of Re-Inspections for Archdiocese or Cardiff of St Cuthberts Parish, 14a Pomeroy Street, Cardiff. J012757. March 2017. Enquin Environmental Limited. 1 Ringside Business Centre, Heol-y-Rhosog Centre, Wentloog, Cardiff. CF3 2 EW.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines; January 2004. English Nature. Peterborough.

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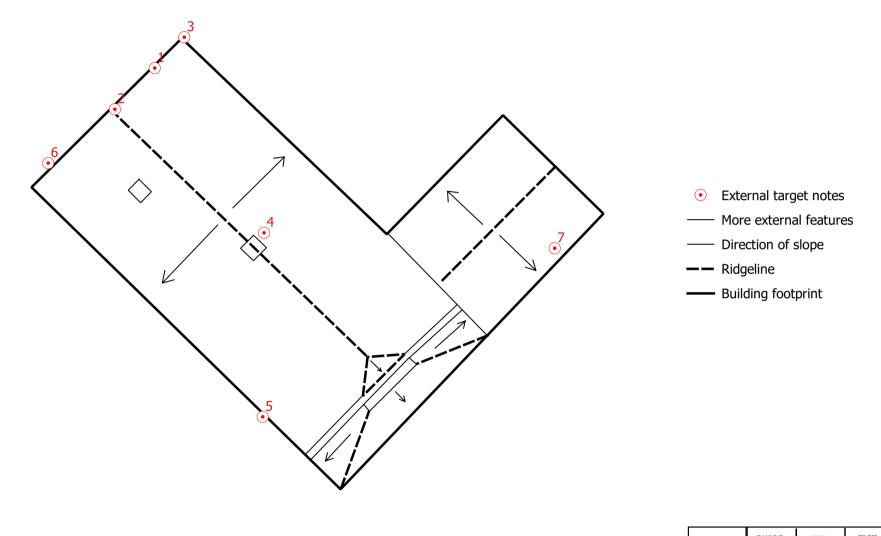


APPENDIX I SITE LOCATION PLAN

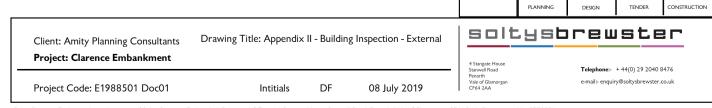


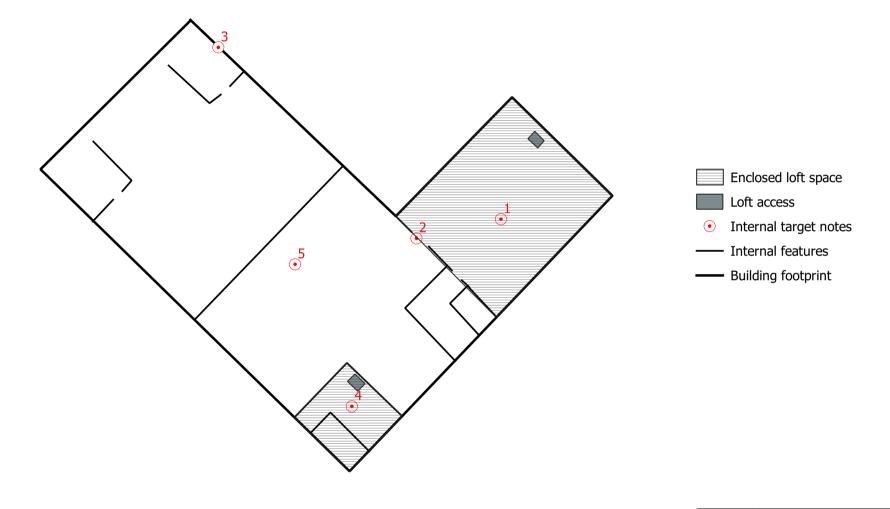


APPENDIX II: BUILDING INSPECTION RESULTS

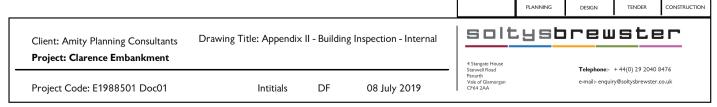


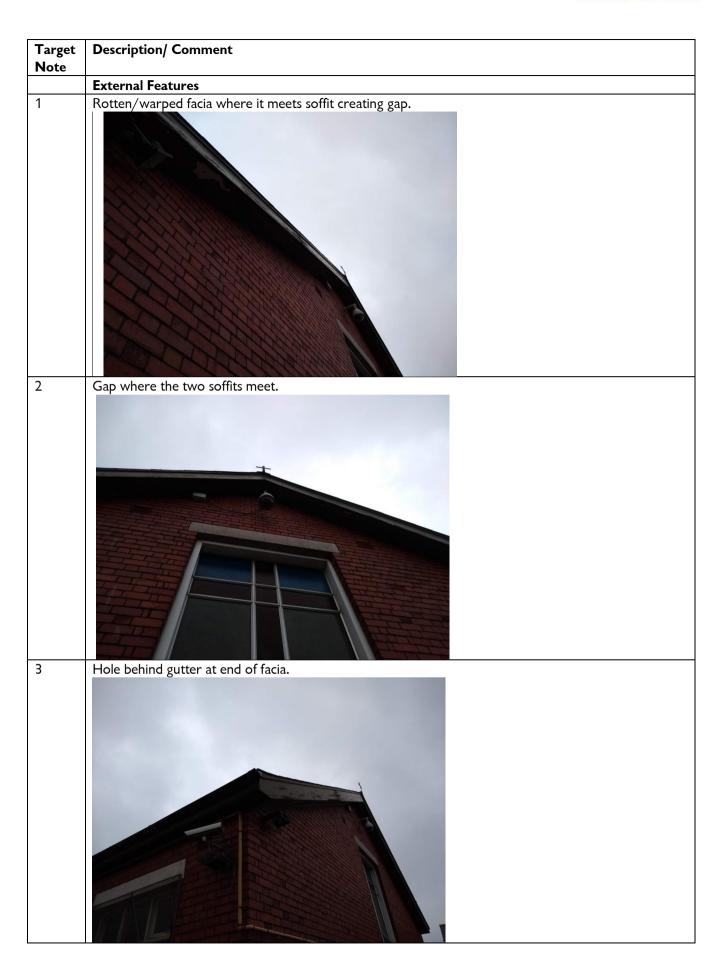












4 Tiniest bit of lifted flashing at base of chimney/vent. Otherwise flashing flat and in good condition.



5 Rotten facia creating small gaps.



6 Basement door open providing access.



7 Two missing slates, some lifted.



Internal Features

Small number of scattered mouse droppings observed in loft space. Holes in felt where vents are but cobwebby. Otherwise loft space is well sealed. No evidence of use by bats observed.







Water ingress. Plaster has failed.



Window does not shut fully. Very narrow (2mm) gaps around frame. Wire mesh on outside but gaps large enough for bats to enter.



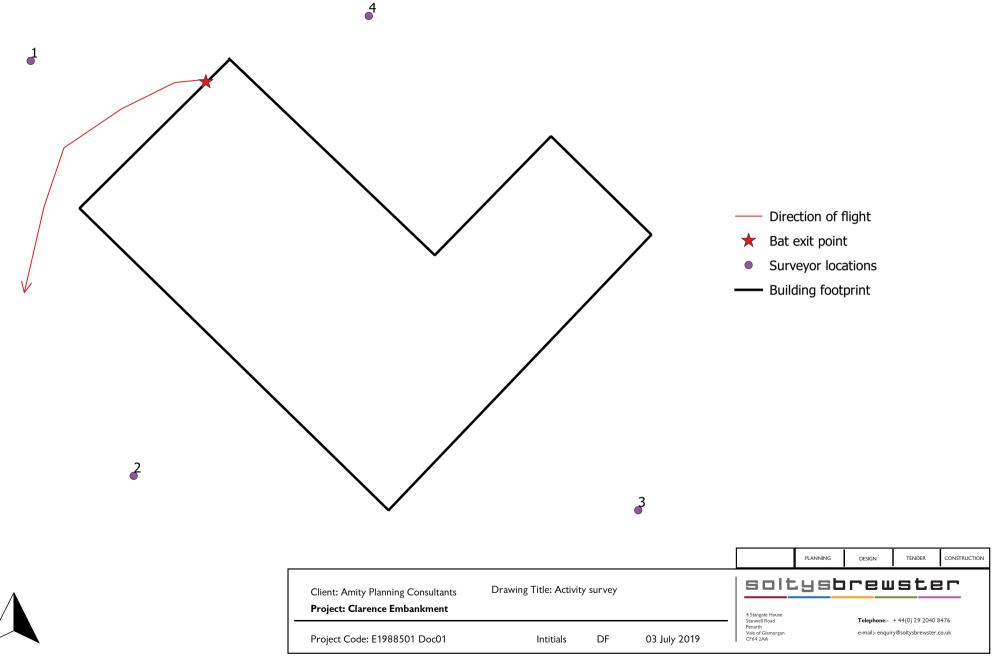
4 Loft space at eaves. Painted timber cladding on eaves with very small gaps between, otherwise loft space is well sealed. No evidence of use by bats observed.







APPENDIX III ACTIVITY SURVEY RESULTS



APPENDIX IV RECOMMENDED BAT BOXES

Schwegler woodcrete boxes Type 2FN



https://www.wildcare.co.uk/bat-box-55.html

Schwegler 1FR bat tubes



https://www.wildcare.co.uk/schwegler-bat-tube-1fr.html