

BAT SCOPING & ACTIVITY REPORT  
for  
LAND ADJACENT TO BRYNHEULOG  
ST CLEARS  
CARMS SA33 4ET

CLIENT: Obsidian Developments Ltd

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**Habitat Matters Ltd**

This report was prepared for the specific purpose of carrying out a bat scoping survey on a building at Brynheulog, St Clears and no liability will be accepted for use for other purposes or by third parties. Information supplied by the client and third parties has been taken as being correct and no liability can be accepted for errors and omissions. It has been assumed that the client has disclosed all relevant information whether asked for or not.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The small shed is located on the edge of a block of land intended for a residential development. Due to the design layout, the building will need to be demolished.

A scoping survey in July 2021 indicated that although there was a very low potential for a bat roost, it would be prudent to complete an activity survey to ensure that all information was available as part of the proposed planning submission.

An exit survey was carried out in July 2021; no bat activity relating to the building was observed or recorded although there was bat activity within the general area.

It was concluded that there is no active roost associated with the buildings and work may proceed at any time, subject to planning consent. There is no need to apply for a European Protected Species (Bat) Licence.



## **CONTENTS**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Site Description & Background

1.2 Proposed Works

1.3 Aims of Survey

### **2.0 METHODS**

2.1 Summary of Survey Methods

2.2 Pre-survey data search

2.3 Surveyor Information

### **3.0 FIELD SURVEY**

3.1 Scoping Survey

3.2 Activity Surveys

### **4.0 ASSESSMENT**

4.1 Constraints on survey information

4.2 Constraints on equipment used

4.3 Discussions and conclusions

4.4 Potential impacts of development

### **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS and MITIGATION**

### **6.0 REFERENCES**

#### **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1:	Location of Site
APPENDIX 2:	Photographs
APPENDIX 3:	Results of Activity Survey
APPENDIX 4:	Legislation & Policy Guidance



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Description & Background**

Habitat Matters Ltd was commissioned by the client, Obsidian Developments Ltd, to carry out a scoping survey and, if necessary, activity surveys on a small store shed situated on land adjacent to Brynheulog, St Clears, in order to determine whether the building is being used by bats. The survey and report is required by the client to support a planning application for a residential development on the site.

The shed is a small garage-type building, located on the southern boundary of the proposed development site on the western side of St Clears at OS Grid Reference SN277159. It faces the adjacent narrow, sheltered council road, Heol Goi, and backs onto the two agricultural grassland fields which are to be developed as a residential estate. Although previously used as a store-shed, the building is now empty and effectively redundant.

### **1.2 Proposed Works**

The building will be demolished as part of the proposed residential development.

### **1.3 Aims of Survey**

The aims of the survey were to:

- establish if, and how, the building is being used by bats;
- assess the potential impacts on bats of the proposed works;
- recommend mitigation measures, if required.

## **2.0 METHODS**

### **2.1 Summary of Survey Methods**

The study methodology follows the guidelines set out in the Bat Conservation Trust document, '*Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*'.

### **2.2 Pre-survey data search**

Ordnance Survey maps, Defra MAGIC maps, Aderyn biodiversity data and satellite imagery from Google Earth was used to assess the site and the local landscape (see Appendix 1).

The building is located to the west of St Clears in a predominantly rural setting. It is next to a gateway which is used for regular machinery access to the road from the farm buildings at Brynheulog across the adjacent field. There are two houses nearby, a short distance to the east, and a minor road (Heol Goi) to the south which leads to a small residential development a short distance to the west of the



site; this road is well-illuminated with street lamps. Heol Goi is sheltered and narrow with a high hedge bank on the southern side and a lower, regularly trimmed hedge and linear garden on the northern side (ie: forming the southern boundary of the development site). There is a small group of trees, comprising two mature oak, an ash and a semi-mature sycamore, a short distance (c25m) to the west of the building.

In the wider landscape, there is good wildlife connectivity with a network of hedgerows, treelines, small areas of woodland and the Afon Dewi Fawr; these provide suitable bat commuting and foraging routes between roosts and feeding habitats.

There are no known sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated for bats, close to the property. The Aderyn data includes a record of Soprano and Common Pipistrelle bats approximately 165m to the east of the site, in Lower St Clears.

### **2.3 Surveyor information**

The scoping survey was undertaken by Philip Lanc who holds a bat licence with Natural Resources Wales (NRW ref – S089319). Philip is an experienced bat surveyor and has regularly carried out bat surveys on a range of different buildings. He also holds a Barn Owl licence (NRW S089321). He was assisted on the activity survey by Fiona Lanc MCIEEM; she is an accredited agent on the licence.

## **3.0 FIELD SURVEY**

### **3.1 Scoping Survey**

A scoping assessment was carried out by Philip Lanc on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to determine whether bats were using the building. An external examination was made of the building, to look for scuff marks, bat droppings (faeces) or urine staining around openings, doors, walls or other surfaces which could indicate bats were present. A similar inspection was carried out inside the building using a high-powered Clulite lantern and a powerful hand torch. The areas are described as follows:

The building is a small, single room, garage-type structure with a metal double door on the southern side and a smaller, single door giving access on the eastern side. There is a small window on the eastern side, now completely obscured by ivy. It is of concrete block construction with a corrugated asbestos-cement roof, laid onto the roof timbers; these appear to be in good condition with no rotted timber or gaps suitable for bats to roost. The ceiling and walls are unlined and there are no cavities. The building is covered in dense ivy across the roof and most of the sides, although the main door and side door are partly clear. The ivy will effectively reduce flight access for bats.

Ivy is encroaching inside the building (see photos). This reduces the available clear space for bats to fly, thereby making it less attractive as a roost.



No evidence of bats was found and it is considered that the building provides negligible potential as a bat roost.

### **3.2 Activity Surveys**

An exit survey was carried out on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021. The results and summary of conditions are included at Appendix 3.

There was general bat activity during the survey with predominantly Common Pipistrelles being seen and heard from approximately 25minutes after sunset until the end of the survey. A small number of bats were seen to fly along the road from east to west. A Noctule was heard but not seen. No bats were seen exiting the survey building or from the nearby group of trees on the southern boundary.

A nearby streetlight came on fairly early in the survey, making the roadway fairly light.

## **4.0 ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Constraints on survey information**

None

### **4.2 Constraints on equipment used**

None

### **4.3 Discussions and conclusions**

The building is considered to have a no potential for bats, due to the construction and being so overgrown with vegetation; there was no evidence of a bat roost being present.

The first bats (pipistrelles) were recorded some 24minutes after sunset; this indicates that there is a roost some distance away from the site and bats are flying into and across the area while foraging.

No bats were seen exiting the building or trees during the activity survey.

### **4.4 Potential impacts of development**

It is considered that the demolition of the building will have no negative impact on the local bat population. The new development will include integral bat boxes in 50% of the houses, including one box in each of the houses on the southern side of the site. This enhancement will create new roost



opportunities. (See report: *Land Adjacent to Brynheulog St Clears Preliminary Ecological Assessment Ver 2 Nov 2021*)

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS and MITIGATION

From a bat aspect, the work can proceed at any time, subject to planning consent. However, in case nesting birds (such as blackbirds, wrens or robins) are present, work should be carried out over the autumn to winter period to avoid the bird-nesting season.

A European Protected Species (Bat) Licence will not be required.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2010), *Bats and Buildings. Bats and the Built Environment series: Volume 1*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016), *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell Jones, A J & Robertson C J (Eds) *Bat workers Manual, 3rd Edition*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2004

Defra MAGIC Map





© Google Earth Images



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1. Northern elevation, from field



2. Eastern elevation



3. Roof sheets & timbers in good condition





4. Ivy growth inside shed



© Google Earth

5. Eastern elevation (taken several years ago but showing the building more clearly)



## APPENDIX 3: Results of Activity Survey

Exit survey 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2021 - Conditions	
Weather previous week	Hot & dry
Sunset	21.21
Start time	21.05
Finish time	22.40
Cloud cover at start	30%
Cloud cover at finish	30%
Wind	Slight breeze
Precipitation	Dry
Temperature at start	13 °C
Temperature at finish	11 °C

Exit survey, 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2021	
<b>Surveyor 1 (PJL)</b> located on road, detector – Bat Box Duet / Anabat Express	<b>Bat Activity</b> <i>No bats seen exiting the building /            trees.</i>
<b>Time</b>	
21.46	Noctule heard overhead
21.50	Common pip seen to W along road
21.57	C pip seen flying E-W on road
22.06	C pip seen above road to W
22.07	C pip flew N-S across road.
<b>Surveyor 2 (FL)</b> Located to NE of building Detector – EMT	<b>Bat Activity</b> <i>No bats seen exiting building / trees.</i>
21.45	Common pip heard, not seen
21.46	Noctule heard overhead
21.49	C pip heard, not seen
21.51	C pip heard, not seen
21.52	C pip heard, not seen
21.57	C pip seen on road, E to W
22.02	C pip heard
22.07	C pip heard
22.11	C pip heard



British bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Schedule 5 of this act makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any British bat. It is also an offence to intentionally damage or destroy their place of rest (the roost).

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) as amended which requires the United Kingdom government to provide bats with strict protection.

The Habitats Directive is transcribed into England and Wales Law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. This legislation states in Part 3, Protection of Species, paragraph 41(1) that a person who:

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
  - (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
  - (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
  - (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,
- is committing an offence.

Further, with regard to disturbance of EPS, Paragraph 41(2) that disturbance is an act which is likely to:

- (a) to impair their ability—
  - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
  - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In the case of a development involving the loss or modification of a building which may affect bats the above legislation must be considered and it may be necessary to apply to the Welsh Assembly Government for a European Protected Species Licence EPSL.

The introduction of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, has removed the defence of killing or injuring a protected species during a lawful operation, thus even in an instance where planning permission is granted, the presence of bats must be considered and mitigated for prior to commencement of works. Under the above regulations, a WAG licence can only be given if three tests are satisfied:

- The action proposed is in the interest of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment;
- That there is not a satisfactory alternative;
- That the action proposed will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.



Failure to satisfy the regulations and obtain an EPSL where required is likely to result in prosecution and can lead to severe fines of up to £5000 per bat and possible imprisonment.

Eight species of bat are Listed under Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (NERC) as Species of Principal Importance for Biological Conservation in Wales. This is a list of species considered at threat within Wales and in need of conservation management to maintain and enhance population numbers.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 replaced the NERC (2006) Act in 2016. This now imposes a stronger duty for Local Authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

