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METHOD STATEMENT

This document follows the standard headings and structure of the Natural Resources Wales template (2018).

FORMER TY DARRAN CARE HOME, RISCA

DOCUMENT REF: WWE20112.MS.A | DECEMBER 2020

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Client: Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site/Job: Former Ty Darran Care Home, Risca
Report title: Method Statement
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QUALITY ASSURANCE AND VERSIONING

| Issue | Stage | Date | Author(s) | Reviewed by | Approved by |
|-------|-------|------------|--|---|---|
| A | Draft | 16/12/2020 | Richard Dodd CEcol MCIEEM Principal Ecologist | Alex Wilson MCIEEM Principal Ecologist | Alex Wilson MCIEEM Principal Ecologist |

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Background and Supporting Information

A EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Former Ty Darran Care Home in Risca is the subject of complete demolition followed by subsequent redevelopment.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats and nesting birds was undertaken at the site in April 2019. This identified the building as having bat roosts present, with droppings found within the roof void characteristic of pipistrelle bat species. Further bat activity surveys (x2) were therefore recommended to ascertain roost type and species and were undertaken on the 18th May and 4th June 2020.

Three day roosts for individual common pipistrelle (x3) were confirmed for the Former Care Home.

In the absence of mitigation the demolition of the former care home will result in the loss of resting places (x3) and the potential disturbance to and killing or injury to a small number (maximum count of 3) of common pipistrelle bats.

The proposed measures include timing of works to avoid impacts to bats, a tool-box talk (site induction briefing) followed by a pre-commencement check to ensure the likely absence of bats and preliminary supervision of works where bat roosts are known or likely to be present. If bats are present, then they will be transferred to a pre-installed bat box suitable for common pipistrelle bats as an interim measure.

These measures will ensure that there are no long-term impacts upon individual bats and that the favourable conservation status of the species concerned is maintained at the local level in the form of suitable replacement resting places.

B INTRODUCTION

B.1 Background to activity/development

The Former Ty Darran Care Home in Risca is the subject of complete demolition followed by subsequent redevelopment.

B.2 Full details of proposed works on site that are to be covered by the licence

Works to be covered by the licence:

Demolition of the former care home that contains three known resting places (day roosts) used by a commoner species of bat (common pipistrelle) and the potential disturbance, killing or injury to bats (maximum count of 3).

B.3 Actions requiring licensing

Demolition of the former care home will result in the permanent loss/destruction of three known resting places (day roosts) used by a commoner species of bat (common pipistrelle) and the potential disturbance (including capturing and handling) of bats (maximum count of 3).

C SURVEY AND SITE ASSESSMENT

C.1 Existing information on the bat species at the survey site

There are no records of bats at the site, or other ecological survey information at the site.

There are records of bats within the local 2km area; previous survey records in the local area include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, and Daubenton's.

C.2 Statutory sites notified for the species (SSSIs or SACs) within 10km

There are no sites within 10km designated for their bat populations.

C.3 Objectives of the survey

The purpose of the survey was to understand if and how bats are using the site currently, to inform the proposals and any required mitigation and compensation. A series of surveys were undertaken— a Preliminary Roost Assessment and two bat roost characterisation surveys.

C.4 Scaled plan/map of survey area



Figure 1 - Site location (red line) within wider local landscape. Imagery dated 25/06/2018 ©Google 2020



Figure 2 - Closer view of the site location (red line). Imagery dated 25/06/2018 ©Google 2020

C.5 Site/habitat description

The site containing the former care home building is within a relatively bright area, adjacent to a main road and residential streets, all of which are illuminated by street lighting.

Despite this, the site is close to the river corridor, with wooded and scrub linkages across the local landscape, providing good linkages for bats to reach foraging areas from any building roost.

C.6 Field survey(s)

C.6.1 Methodology

The building onsite was searched externally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016).

The suitability of the building to accommodate bats was assessed, along with a systematic search for signs of bats (e.g. droppings, moth wings, scratch marks, staining, etc.) or actual bats that were present. Particular attention was paid to the roof areas, with searches for any crevices or gaps in walls, droppings stuck to the walls, floors or other surfaces, in addition to a number of other factors and signs indicative of a bat roost.

In addition, the building was classified according to its suitability for bats, based on the presence of features within the structure and / or landscape.

Potential roost access points were identified during the building inspection. These points were surveyed during the dusk emergence and pre-dawn re-entry surveys.

Two bat roost characterisation surveys (2 x dusk emergence surveya) were undertaken at the onsite building.

The dusk emergence survey commenced approximately 15 minutes before the time of local sunset (source www.sunrisesunsetmap.com) and continued for approximately 1.5 hours after sunset. The dawn re-entry

survey commenced approximately 1.5 hours before the time of local sunset (source www.sunrisesunsetmap.com) and continued for approximately 15 minutes after sunset.

Note was made of all bat activity recorded including (where appropriate) roost access points, species, time of re-entry, direction of flight, behaviour (foraging or commuting) and use of landscape features. Minimal lighting was used during the surveys as this can alter the behaviour of the bats emerging from or entering a roost or foraging or commuting over a site.

Schedule and conditions

Table 1: Schedule and conditions

| Date | Type | Survey Timing | | | Conditions | | | |
|------------|----------------|---------------|-------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------|
| | | Start | End | Sunset / Sunrise | Temp [°C] | Cloud Cover [Oktas] | Wind Speed [Beaufort] | Rain |
| 20/04/2020 | PRA | N/A | N/A | N/A | 11 | 0 | 3 | Nil |
| 18/05/2020 | Dusk emergence | 20:48 | 22:33 | 21:03 | Start: 12 End: 11 | Start: 7 End: 7 | Start: 2 End: 3 | Nil |
| 04/06/2020 | Dusk emergence | 21:09 | 22:54 | 22:54 | Start: 11 End: 11 | Start: 8 End: 8 | Start: 2 End: 1 | Nil |

C.6.2 Personnel

The PRA survey was undertaken by Alex Wilson. The bat roost characterisation surveys were led by Alex Wilson and Amy Williams Schwartz and assisted by Jake Jones, Chloe Curran, Emma Douglas, and Max Dupré. See Table 2 for further information.

Table 2: Surveyor information

| Surveyor | Licences | Ecological experience |
|--|---|---|
| Alex Wilson Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.), MCIEEM, MRSB Principal Ecologist | Bat Dormouse Barn owl | Holds a Ph.D (Visual constraints in bird behaviour). Experienced in undertaking ornithological surveys, and bat surveys. A licensed bat ecologist in England and Wales and a licenced dormouse ecologist in Wales. Supervisor and advisor to undergraduate and postgraduate ecological research projects. |
| Field surveyors Stephen Shutt*, Marie Pugh, Lee Jenkins*, Elen Williams, Jenny O'Neill, Max Dupé | Those with asterisks hold a bat survey licence. | All survey assistants received training in use of bat detectors and survey methodologies. Deemed competent and confident to use bat detectors to observe bats in flight and conduct an emergence/re-entry survey in conjunction with a licenced ecologist. Assistants backed up by experienced surveyors and/or recording detectors where possible. |

C.6.3 Equipment

Surveyors were equipped with broadband bat detectors (Elekon Batscanner, Elekon BatLogger M, Anabat Scout).

C.7 Survey Results

C.7.1 Scoping

Table 3: Descriptions of onsite buildings

| Building section | Building type | Description | Development plans |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| A | Two-storey section | An approximate "L-shaped" structure, with a pitched tiled roof. The structure is brick built with pebble-dashed sections, and with windows and doors | Demolition |

| Building section | Building type | Description | Development plans |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| | | boarded over with metal sheeting. Deep overhanging eaves with timber fascias (painted). Interior roof void is partially boarded out, with pipework and water tanks present. Some vandalism (stolen copper). Insulated at ceiling level with mineral wool, and roof lined with bitumen felt. | |
| B | Single storey section | Flat-roofed part of structure to north-east of double height section. As before, brick and pebble-dashed, with timber soffits (painted). Felted roof. | Demolition |
| | Trees | A group of mixed trees are found to the eastern side of the site, at the entrance point and along Ravenswood Court | Potentially to be removed to facilitate access |

Table 4: Results of PRA

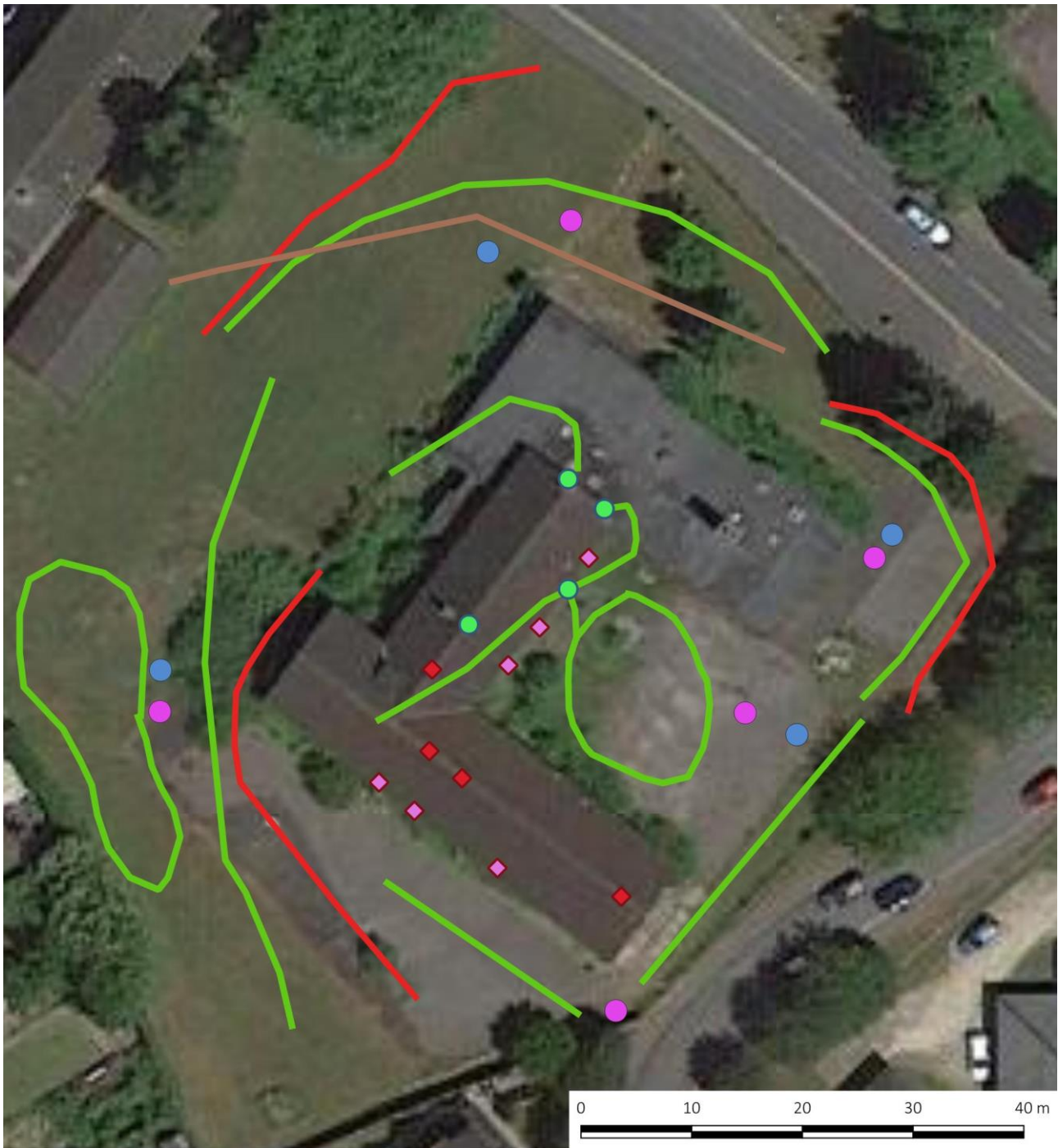
| Building | Use by bats | Use by birds | Bat signs and internal and external Potential Roost Features (PRFs) & access points |
|----------|-------------|--------------|---|
| A | Y | Y | Several droppings were found within the main roof void (more southerly void). These were characteristic of pipistrelle species. The building offers suitability for use by void and crevice dwelling species only, with no access large enough for access by horseshoe bats. There were many house martin nests along the eaves of the building, some of which were active. |
| B | N | N | There were no signs of any bat roosts found during the PRA, though some gaps were noted, accessible to void or crevice dwelling species of bats. No nests were evident during the PRA within the building, though the adjacent scrub was dense enough to be likely to be used by nesting birds such as house sparrow and blackbird. |
| Trees | N (roost) | Potentially | The trees offer negligible suitability for roosting bats, though do offer sufficient height and canopy for green infrastructure linkages (i.e. commuting and foraging resource), as well as for use by nesting bird species. |

C.7.2 Activity

Table 1 – Bat activity survey results. SS±xx refers to the time in minutes before/after sunset, and SR±xx refers to the time in minutes before/after sunrise.

| Survey type and date | Roosts and activity/points of particular interest | General observations |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Dusk emergence 18/05/2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First bats observed at SS+13 with emergence noted from the ridge of the northern most roof (two storey) - 1 x common pipistrelle Two other common pipistrelles were observed to emerge at | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular passes from common and soprano pipistrelles with occasional overhead passes from noctule and a single pass from <i>Myotis sp.</i> |

| Survey type and date | Roosts and activity/points of particular interest | General observations |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| | SS+22 and SS+37 from the south-eastern aspect eaves on the northern roof section, and from the northern gable end. TOTAL – 3 x common pipistrelle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Significant foraging and activity to south-west of site, towards river, and along trees to north-east. |
| Dusk emergence 04/06/2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o First bats observed from SS+3 (soprano pipistrelle) from offsite to the south-west. o Emergence of 1 x common pipistrelle from the northern gable at SS+28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Slightly lower activity levels with passes from common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule observed. |



Key

| Locations of bat/bird interest | Commuting routes | Surveyor locations |
|---|---|--|
| ● Common pipistrelle | — Common pipistrelle | ● 2020-05-18 |
| ◆ Bat droppings | — Soprano pipistrelle | ● 2020-06-04 |
| ◆ Birds' nest | — Myotis sp | |

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Figure 3 – Dusk emergence surveys. Image used under licence (©2020 Google).

C.7.3 Images



Figure 4 – Bat droppings within the former care home



Figure 5 – Towards eastern aspect of two-storey section, and part of single-storey section (to right hand side) and known emergence point (x1)



Figure 6 – South-eastern aspect of two-storey section and known emergence point (x1)



Figure 7 – Northern aspect and known emergence points (x2) with scrub and overgrown ornamental planting in foreground

C.8 Interpretation/evaluation of survey results

Bat roosts for common pipistrelle were confirmed within the onsite building, with a maximum count of three individuals using the northernmost roof area of the two-storey section.

There was no evidence found for maternity use, though the thermal stability and access means that winter use is likely for pipistrelle species.

There was no use of the flat-roofed section or the trees for roosting.

The key commuting areas were to the south-west of the site, over gardens and scrub, and over the grassland onsite; and along the trees to the west of the site (onsite trees).

The species present (commuting and foraging) onsite were mainly common pipistrelle, though occasional passes by soprano pipistrelle and noctule were observed.

The proposals will result in the permanent destruction/loss of all identified resting places (3x day roosts) and their access points and potential disturbance, killing or injury to individual commoner species of bat at the local level (maximum count of 3 x common pipistrelle).

D IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Table 2 – from Wray et al 2010

| Site location | Wales | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Type & complexity of linear features | Complex network or mature well-established hedgerows, small fields and rivers/streams | | | | | |
| Foraging habitat characteristics | Suburban areas / intensive arable land | | | | | |
| Species on site | Roost type | # of bats | Roosts/potential roosts nearby | Geographic frame of reference [score] | | |
| | | | | Roost | Commuting | Foraging |
| Common pipistrelle | Small numbers of non-breeding bats | Small | Moderate/unknown | Local | County [21] | Local [18] |

D.1 Short-term impacts: disturbance

In the absence of mitigation, bats will be directly disturbed during the works and may be killed or injured.

A small number of individual bats (maximum count of 3) common pipistrelle bats is currently present, with disturbance having a low impact, during the summer months. It is currently unknown whether any bats are utilising the roost over the hibernation period, though as pipistrelles are considered to use such structures as hibernation sites, any winter works may impact upon hibernating animals. The disturbance impacts will not impact upon any other roosts that may be present nearby.

D.2 Long-term impacts: roost modification

There will be no modification – the roost will be lost.

D.3 Long-term impacts: roost loss

In the absence of mitigation there will be a low impact at the local-level impact resulting in the loss of three known resting places (day roosts) used by individual common pipistrelle.

D.4 Long-term impacts: fragmentation and isolation

There will be the loss of some of the trees onsite though there will be continued vegetation present to the south and west of the site.

D.5 Post-development interference impacts

The compensation features within the site are unlikely to be interfered with. These features will be unilluminated and undisturbed. Negligible impact.

D.6 Predicted scale of impact

Table 3 - Predicted scale of impact in the absence of mitigation (in accordance with Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004)

| Roost | Roost status (Wray et al, 2010) | Disturbance | Roost modification | Roost loss | Fragmentation and isolation | Post-development interference |
|--------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Common pipistrelle | Small numbers of non-breeding bats (Local) | Low | N/A | Low | Negligible | Negligible |

In the absence of mitigation, the proposed works at the Former Ty Darran Care Home are anticipated to currently have a low impact on a small number of individual non-breeding commoner species (common pipistrelle) bats at the local-level.

Delivery Information – Mitigation, compensation, and monitoring

E WORKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Ecological support

The developer has appointed Wildwood Ecology to provide an ecologist to be retained throughout the works program, to provide toolbox talks, Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) duties during high risk activities, monitoring, and advice. The developer or their contractor will contact the ecologist giving at least 48 hours' notice of works commencing.

Prior to works commencing, a licensed bat ecologist from Wildwood Ecology Ltd. will deliver a 'toolbox talk' to all site personnel, to outline the status of the buildings, conditions of the licence and Method Statement, including working methods, 'no-go' areas, and action to be taken if bats are encountered during works (i.e. stop works, seek advice, act upon advice given.)

An ecological watching brief will be conducted by a licensed bat ecologist during the initial high risk works.

The licensed bat worker will be retained on an 'on-call' basis throughout the remainder of the works to give advice in case bats are encountered or other issues are raised. If bats are encountered at any time when the retained ecologist is not present on site, the developer will stop all works in that area, contact the retained ecologist for advice, and act upon that advice.

E.1 Capture and exclusion

Exclusion is not considered appropriate at this site.

Any bats encountered during the works will be allowed to fly away of their own accord, and only if unable to do so will further intervention be necessary.

In the unlikely event that they are unable to fly away of their own accord, bats will be captured by hand by the retained ecologist, species/sex/condition/health assessed, and either released that evening if conditions are suitable, or cared for until appropriate for release. If appropriate, bats will be moved to the bat box erected onsite – see E.3.3.

E.2 Bat roosts and habitat

E.2.1 In-situ retention of roost(s)

There will be no retention of roosts.

E.2.2 Modification of existing roost(s)

There will be no modification of roosts.

E.2.3 New roost creation

An interim crevice bat box will be installed on a suitable tree whilst works are being undertaken. This box will be suitable for use by crevice dwelling bats such as the Greenwood's Eco-habitats double crevice box (with curved back). This box will be installed prior to works being carried out and under the advice of the ecologist onsite. The box will be retained until the new development has been completed and that new bat features are installed. If it is used by bats at any time, then it will be retained permanently unless derogation for its removal is obtained.

If a suitable tree is not possible to use onsite, then either a pole mounted box (such as the Eco Rocket Box on a 4m pole, or similar) will be erected, or a bat box (Greenwood's Eco-habitats double crevice box with flat back) will be installed at double storey eaves height on a structure within the local (i.e. within 1km radius of the site) area, within the landholding of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Permanent replacement for the loss of roosts will be compensated by the integration of 3 x bat boxes (either Schwegler bat tube 1FR; Green and Blue bat block, or Bird Brick Houses bat box) within the re-development on site. See Figure 8 for the location of potential compensation sites.

E.2.4 Maintenance and/or modification of new and existing habitat

There will be removal of some of the onsite trees around the entrance way to facilitate access. There will be no other modification of the onsite vegetative habitats. No new temporary or permanent lighting is to be installed.

E.2.5 Scaled maps/plans



Figure 8 – Proposed location of the compensation features (blue circle – pole mounted bat box; red circle tree mounted bat box).

E.3 Mechanisms for ensuring delivery of mitigation and compensation measures

Installation of mitigation and compensation measures will be supervised by a licensed bat ecologist and reported back to Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Provision of the measures will be enforced under the terms of the licence under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and will be the ultimate responsibility of the licence holder.

E.4 Mitigation contingencies

If evidence of protected species not listed on this licence is found or numbers greater than those found, all work will cease and will not recommence until the ecologist named on the licence application (or Natural Resources Wales if the ecologist is not available) has advised that the work may continue under the existing licence, or if an amended licence is required, until the licensee applies for and receives an amended licence.

TWO CREVICE BAT BOX



Figure 9 – Double crevice bat box, from www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk. Other colour finishes are available.

E.5 Biosecurity risk assessment

If bats are encountered during the works, they will only be handled by rabies-vaccinated bat ecologists wearing clean and appropriate gloves for handling bats, and only when absolutely necessary to prevent harm. Hands will be washed after handling. Any bats captured will be inspected for signs of injury and placed into the bat boxes previously erected on the tree in the treelined corridor to the northwest of the site and the correct animal welfare guidance (as issued by the Bat Conservation Trust) will be followed at all times. No bats will be transported or released away from the site. No handling of bats will be permitted by any individual other than the licensed bat ecologist unless otherwise instructed. Any handling will follow current guidelines issued by BCT on 'Basic Bat Care' (<http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/containingabat.html>).

Additional safety measures are likely to be required in line with Defra guidance on handling mammals during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to wearing of gloves, a face mask will be worn by the ecologist (and anyone else) who handles any bats onsite. The gloves will be single-use and discarded appropriately after each bat handled. These measures are designed to protect bats (and other mammals) from potential infection from Covid-19, rather than the other way around.

Bats will not be handled by other contractors unless absolutely necessary to prevent injury – in such instance bats will only be briefly handled by an individual wearing appropriate gloves, with hands thoroughly washed with soap and dried afterwards.

It is considered that there is a very low risk of any biosecurity issues being encountered during the works.

F POST-DEVELOPMENT SITE SAFEGUARD

F.1 Habitat/site management and maintenance

Maintenance and management of the mitigation/compensation roost will be the responsibility of the licence holder and property owner.

F.2 Population monitoring, roost usage etc.

A check of the bat box (either climbed, via ladder, endoscope reach or these cannot be undertaken, a dusk emergence survey) will be made in Year 1 post-demolition between May and September.

F.3 Post-development mitigation contingencies

The licence holder/property owner and ecologist will liaise with Natural Resources Wales as to how improvements can be made if required.

F.4 Mechanism for ensuring delivery of post-development works

Provision of the measures will be enforced by the terms of the licence under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and will be the ultimate responsibility of the licence holder/ property owner.

G TIMETABLE OF WORKS

Table 4 – Timetable of works

| Phase | Timing | Stage | Works |
|---------------------------|---|-------|--|
| Pre-commencement of works | On receipt of licence | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolbox talk to all contractors • Installation of interim bat box |
| Demolition | After completion of Stage 1: Spring 2021 | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft strip of high-risk areas under direct ecological supervision by Named Ecologist • Mechanical demolition following ecological advice from Named Ecologist |
| Re-development | After completion of Stage 2: March 2021 – December 2021 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-development of site including integration of 3 x integrated bat boxes within the new building or on retained trees |
| Compliance | On completion of Post-works | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All mitigation and compensation features to be checked for compliance with this document and the NRW licence prior to all works being signed off |

H LAND OWNERSHIP – MITIGATION SITE

H.1 Mitigation Site/Compensation Site ownership

All mitigation and compensation measures will be provided on/within the existing site ownership.

H.2 Mitigation Site/Compensation Ownership post construction

The ownership will remain with the applicant (Caerphilly County Borough Council) post demolition.

I DECLARATION – TO BE FILLED OUT AT LICENSING STAGE.

| | | | |
|--|--|------|---|
| <p>I declare that should a licence be granted, the work as proposed in this Method Statement will be strictly adhered to. I understand that any deviation from the works as proposed in this Method Statement without agreement from NRW would result in a breach of the licence.</p> <p>NB. Applicants should note that it is an offence under regulation 59 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to knowingly or recklessly provide false information in order to obtain a licence.</p> | | | |
| Signature of the Applicant | | Date | |
| <p><i>For electronic submissions please insert an electronic signature above or place an x in the box opposite to confirm agreement with the declarations above.</i></p> | | | X |
| Full name in BLOCK LETTERS | | | |
| Signature of the Ecologist | | Date | |
| <p><i>For electronic submissions please insert an electronic signature above or place an x in the box opposite to confirm agreement with the declarations above.</i></p> | | | X |
| Full name in BLOCK LETTERS | | | |

J REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK; Bats and the Built Environment series (Guidance Note 08/18), The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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Rowse E.G., Lewanzik D., Stone E.L., Harris S., Jones G. (2016) Dark Matters: The Effects of Artificial Lighting on Bats. In: Voigt C., Kingston T. (eds) Bats in the Anthropocene: Conservation of Bats in a Changing World. Springer, Cham.

Wray, S., Wells, D., Long, E. & Mitchell-Jones, T. (2010) Valuing bats in ecological impact assessment. In Practice, No 70, Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

K ANNEXES

K.1 Pre-existing survey reports

Wildwood Ecology (2020) Ecological Impact Assessment Report (bats and nesting birds) – Former Ty Darran Care Home, Risca; Document ref: WWE20122/ECIA/REV_A; Dated 15/07/2020. Wildwood Ecology, Caerphilly.

K.2 Raw survey data

On request