

Gwenfro Community Primary School

Bat Survey Report

Wynne Construction Ltd

29 September 2015



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1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of reference

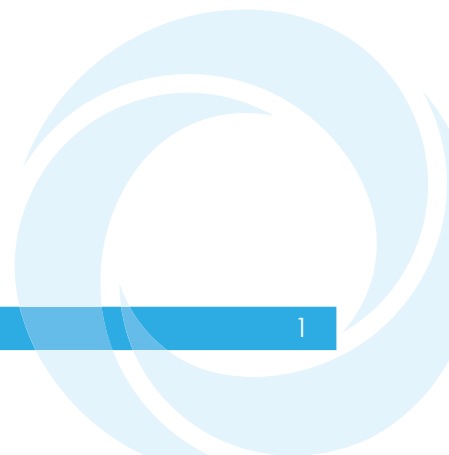
Atmos Consulting Ltd was commissioned in August 2015 by Wynne Construction Ltd to undertake a desk study and site visit of the proposed Gwenfro Primary School. The results of this study are found within Atmos Consulting Ltd report 26601/R1/Rev1 (BIM reference GPS-ATM-XX-XX-RP-Z-0001) which also contains the indicative development layout (Appendix E).

Due to the demolition of the main building complex and nursery building and felling of mature trees, Atmos was subsequently commissioned by Wynne Construction Ltd in September 2015 to carry out bat emergence and re-entry surveys to determine the presence or likely absence of summer bat roosts within the school buildings affected by the proposed development. Bat roost assessments were also carried out of the trees.

The planning application for this project has been submitted in mid-September 2015, with the above supporting ecology report. As the bat surveys were completed post-submission, the results of the bat surveys are presented in this report which is to be submitted as an addendum to the current planning application.

1.2 Site description

The proposed development site lies within Caia Park which is located on the outskirts of Wrexham. The site was found to comprise the main school building complex, three buildings to the south which formed the Flying Start building complex and the separate nursery school building located near the site access point at the northern boundary. The remainder of the site comprised areas of hardstanding broken up by areas amenity grassland with pockets of ornamental planting and rows of mature Lombardy poplar trees at the western and eastern boundary where the River Gwenfro runs adjacent to the site.



2 Survey Methodology

The extended Phase I habitat survey (carried out on 01 September 2015) included a preliminary external assessment of the buildings and trees on site and their potential to support a bat roost/s. In addition a brief internal inspection was undertaken within the disused Boiler House which was part of the school building complex.

The buildings were assessed by a bat licensed ecologist (Lee Bagnall 67362:OTH:CSAB:2015) to have no greater than low potential to support bats. In accordance with the published guidance (Bat Conservation Trust, 2012), low risk buildings require at least one survey to provide confidence in a negative results and for large buildings/building complexes more than one survey is usually required.

All surveys were carried out in good weather conditions to establish the presence or likely absence of roosting bats in the Gwenfro School buildings. Details of these surveys are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Emergence and Re-entry Surveys

Visit	Building	Date	Time	Surveyors	Temp. (degrees C)	Wind speed (Beaufort Scale)	Rain
1 (dawn re-entry)	Nursery	11/09/15	05.00-06.38	L. Bagnall, A. Kenny	10	0	None
2 (dusk emergence)	Main complex	15/09/15	19.20 – 21.30	L. Bagnall, Z. Hinchcliffe E. Clark A. Kenny C Hibbert	12	0/1	None
3 (dawn re-entry)	Main complex	17/09/15	05.00-06.45	L Bagnall El. Slingsby A. Kenny E. Clark	10	2	None

For the dusk survey of the main complex, five surveyors were stationed around potential roosting points around the main building complex to ensure coverage of all potential roost exit points whilst four surveyors were adequate for the re-entry survey of the main complex to observe potential re-entry points. Two surveyors were required for the re-entry survey of the nursery building.

Bat activity was recorded using a combination of visual observation and frequency division bat detectors (Echo Meter 3), which enable bats' ultrasonic calls to be heard and recorded for later analysis. Dusk emergence surveys started 30 minutes before sunset and continued for 2-3 hours afterwards hours. The dawn emergence surveys started 1½-2 hours before sunrise and continued until sunrise.

2.1 Limitations

There were no significant limitations to any of the surveys.

3 Results

3.1 Preliminary Assessment

3.1.1 Buildings

All buildings were examined externally from ground level to determine their potential to support roosting bats. An internal inspection was also made of the boiler house due to its slightly higher potential (whilst still considered to have low potential) to support bats.

As described above the site comprised five separate buildings. The largest of which was the main building complex which was largely of one storey of brick construction with flat, felt roofs although there were occasional two storey sections including the two hall buildings which had pitched, felt roofs. The building complex was generally in good condition with no obvious entrance points for bats and of at most low potential due to the potential for crevice dwelling species to roost behind wooden soffit boards. No roosts or signs of roosting bats were found during the survey. However to provide confidence in a negative result for bats dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys were undertaken covering all potential access points.

The flying start complex located south of the main building complex comprised three one storey buildings, two flat roofed buildings and one with a pitched felt roof. These buildings were in good condition and were assessed to be of negligible potential for use by bats, in addition these buildings will be retained as part of development proposals and no further survey was considered necessary.

The nursery building to the north comprised a brick built, flat felt roofed building, roosting potential was considered to be limited to behind wooden soffit boards. As above the building was considered to have at most low potential to support bats due to the potential for crevice dwelling species to roost behind wooden soffit boards. No bat roosts or signs of roosting bats were found during the survey but to provide confidence in a negative result for bats a dawn bat survey was undertaken as described above.

3.1.2 Trees

The trees on site were inspected from ground level to determine their potential to support bat roosts. The mature trees which could provide potential roosts for bats were typically Lombardy poplars *Populus nigra* along the western boundary. None of the trees within the site boundary contained features such as cracked or broken limbs with cavities, hollows or lifted bark which could provide roosting opportunity for bats. Due to the large size of some of the trees it is possible that small features were not visible from ground level that could very occasionally accommodate a single, or very small number of bats, however the overall roosting potential of the trees on site is considered to be negligible to low and better roosting opportunities are available offsite to the south and west associated with the wooded River Gwenfro corridor and residential housing.

3.2 Emergence/re-entry surveys

No bats were observed emerging from or entering into any of the Gwenfro School buildings during any of the three emergence/re-entry surveys.

Foraging activity was greatest along the south western edge of the main complex where common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats were observed foraging near scrub at south west corner extending north to the row the mature Lombardy poplars treeline along the western boundary. Foraging common pipistrelles were also recorded to a lesser extent around the east side of the main school building where a single pass of a soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* was also recorded. Bats were recorded at the earliest 17 minutes after sunset and at the latest 24 minutes before dawn, suggesting that there may be a roost nearby but not immediately adjacent.

4 Summary and Conclusions

The site is considered to offer largely poor quality habitat for bats. Dusk emergence and dawn re-entry bat surveys did not find any evidence of roosting bats within the buildings and the trees are considered to provide negligible-low potential to support roosting bats. However as bats use some roost sites only occasionally or may take up residence in new roost sites it is recommended that the demolition contractor has on file the contact details of a local, licenced bat worker who can be available in case of the unlikely event that a bat is found during demolition of buildings or tree felling.

Any artificial lighting installed as part of the development should be contained in such a way that it is directed away from boundary features that may be used by bats such as the River Gwenfro corridor.

Appendices

Appendix A. Legal Protection for Bats

Bats and their roosts (irrespective of whether bats are present at the time) are afforded full statutory protection as bats are a European protected species listed on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2010, as amended. These regulations, commonly known as the 'Habitats Regulations', transpose into British law EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (known as the 'Habitats Directive') and supersede previous legislation known as The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended.

Under the terms of Regulation 41, with certain exceptions, a person commits an offence if he/she:

“(1) ...

(a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any [bat],

(b) deliberately disturbs wild [bats],

... or

(d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of [a bat],

...

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely —

(a) to impair their ability –

(i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or 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 [bats].”

“(3) It is an offence for any person —

(a) to be in possession of, or to control,

(b) to transport,

(c) to sell or exchange, or

(d) to offer for sale or exchange,

[a bat].”

All of the above protections apply regardless of the stage of the life of the animal and, in the case of roosts, irrespective of whether bats are actually in occupation at the time of any disturbance/damage.

Protection of bats is also provided for in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. All species of bat in Britain are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act, and are afforded partial protection under the terms of sections 9(4)(b) and (c) and (5). This makes it an offence if any person:

“9 ...

(4) “... intentionally or recklessly ... (b) ... disturbs any [bot] while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or (c) ... obstructs access to any structure or place which any [bot] uses for shelter or protection.”

(5) “... (a) sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead [bot], or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal; or (b) publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things”.