



**Cambrian Ecology Ltd**  
Anwyllfan  
Croesor  
Penrhyndeudraeth  
Gwynedd  
LL48 6SS

[eryriecology@aol.co.uk](mailto:eryriecology@aol.co.uk)

07760 909574 (Kate Williamson)

## **Bethesda Rugby/Bingo Club**

### **Protected Species Survey**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2015**



**Report by:** Kate Williamson, Cambrian Ecology Ltd

**Client:** Gwynedd Council, c/o Derek Parry Williams, Uned Datblygu Eiddo, Adran Rheoleiddio, Caernarfon

**Planning Authority:** Gwynedd Council

**Grid Reference:** SH 618 668

## **CONTENTS**

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Methodology
4. Site Description
5. Results
6. Survey Limitations
7. Ecological Impacts
8. Conclusions
9. Mitigation & Recommendations
10. Legal Implications
11. Appendices

## **BAT & PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY:-**

**Bethesda Rugby and Bingo Clubs  
Old Station Yard  
Station Road  
Bethesda  
Gwynedd  
LL57 3NE**

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

### **1 Summary**

A preliminary bat and protected species survey was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015 on the building currently housing the rugby and bingo clubs in Bethesda and an emergence survey undertaken on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The survey is part of a scoping exercise by Grwp Cynefin to look at the feasibility of demolishing the building and developing the site for affordable housing.

The surveys involved methodically searching for signs of bats and other protected species, in particular nesting birds. The building was also assessed on its potential to support bats or any other protected species. The bat emergence survey was carried out using 5 surveyors to adequately cover all potential emergence points identified.

No sign of bats or birds was recorded during either the internal or the emergence surveys. Numbers of common (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and a single soprano (*P. pygmaeus*) pipistrelle were recorded foraging within the vicinity of the buildings during the emergence survey but these animals were not associated with the site being surveyed.

However, as there was some roosting potential identified on exterior features on the building, reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to ensure there is no inadvertent breach of legislation if bats utilise these areas on occasion at other times of year. Some ecological supervision will be undertaken during the removal of the exterior timberwork in places identified as having the potential to support roosting bats. An induction will be given to all contractor staff by the site ecologist, to ensure that everyone is aware of the possibility of encountering bats and the procedure to follow if they are found. It may be that a development license from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is then required in order to proceed with the works. If the building is not demolished within two survey seasons, another emergence survey should be carried out to ensure the status of the building remains the same.

### **2 Introduction**

Cambrian Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Trystan Evans, on behalf of Grwp Cynefin, to conduct a bat and protected species survey of the current rugby and bingo club building in Bethesda, as part of a package of scoping work for development of the site. Whatever the final proposals, it will involve the demolition of this current

building. A bat and protected species survey is required by Gwynedd Council as part of the planning process.

Bethesda Rugby/Bingo Club is located at Grid Reference SH 618 668.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Bats**

The internal survey, was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015 by licensed bat workers Kate Williamson (60821:OTH:CSAB:2014) and Chris Hall (59784:OTH:CSAB:2014). Kate has been working as an independent ecologist for 5 years and has held a bat license from the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) since October 2004. Chris Hall has held a bat license from Countryside Council for Wales (now NRW) since 1996 and has vast experience of consultant bat and ecological surveys.

The emergence survey was then carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> August by licensed bat workers Kate Williamson, Chris Hall and Sam Dyer, (60825:OTH:CSAB:2014), plus two assistants. Sam has been working as an independent ecologist for 7 years and has held a bat license from the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) since March 2008. Sam has vast experience of bat surveys and research. Both assistants have previous experience of bat survey work with Cambrian Ecology Ltd since at least 2014.

Objectives of the bat surveys:

- Identify any signs of the presence of bat species within the building
- Assess the potential of the building to support bat species
- Identify any crevice-dwelling species roosting within internal or external features of the buildings and identify the features they are using
- Assess the levels of potential disturbance and loss of roosting opportunities due to the proposed development
- Recommend mitigation and compensation measures to ensure the continued ecological functionality of the site for bats
- Identify any other protected species issues associated with the development proposals

All crevices and other likely roosting areas were methodically searched for signs of bat occupation, such as droppings, feeding remains and marks on timbers from oils in the animal's fur. A Voltcraft BS-10 USB endoscope was used to investigate any accessible cracks or crevices within the stonework or behind timber fascia boarding.

The emergence survey commenced ½ hour prior to sunset and continued for at least 90 minutes after sunset to allow for the possible presence of late emerging species. Weather conditions were appropriate for the survey with a dusk temperature of 13.2°C, a very slight breeze and 10% cloud cover. Sunset was at 20.53.

‘Bat Box Duet’ bat detectors were used to pick up the echo-location calls of any emerging bats, the identity of which was then confirmed using computer analysis of recordings made on ‘Anabat’.

### 3.2 Other Protected Species

In accordance with the guidelines from the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management, (CIEEM) the presence of any other protected species was also recorded. In particular, this building was searched for signs of breeding birds, including droppings, old nests and feeding pellets.

## 4. **Site Description.**

### 4.1 Building

The building surveyed is in a poor condition, with a lot of damp encroaching on the interior. There are no internal roof voids, merely a series of flat roofs. There is no bat potential within the building itself.

The exterior is a series of flat roof sections, with mainly rendered walls. There are a few walls which are covered with stone cladding or are unrendered breeze block, but there are few cracks and crevices in any of the walls. Some sections have large timber-cladded boarding on the top part of the walls and other sections have well sealed, small fascia boards. The timber cladding has a few sections with missing boards and/or gaps along the bottom edge, giving potential bat access.

#### Building/Construction Detail:

Walls	Presumed brick/block work. Internally walls are plastered. Externally walls are generally rendered, but some sections clad with stone. This results in virtually no potential for bats to roost in walls.
Roof	All sections have flat roofs, with a 4-5 inch gap between them and false ceilings. There is considerable water damage above the false ceilings in places. The roof is generally well sealed and has little bat potential.
Doors / Windows	Fitted and functional.
Light Levels	High, especially around the front elevation.
Rain Water Goods	Fitted and functional.

### 4.2 Habitat

The Bethesda Rugby/Bingo club is situated on an open, tarmacked site, opposite a very well lit new building. However, running to the West are areas of scrub and mature woodland, along the Ogwen river valley. There is good foraging habitat around mature shrubs and trees nearby and known bat roosts within adjacent houses.

## **5 Results**

### **5.1 Bats**

No evidence of past or current bat usage was found within the building during the internal survey and no bats were recorded emerging from the building during the emergence survey.

A number of both common and soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging in the vicinity of the building during the emergence survey, but these were not associated with the club building.

### **5.2 Other Protected Species**

There was no evidence of the past or current presence of any other protected species.

## **6 Survey Limitations.**

Bats are highly mobile animals and some species move roosts on a regular basis. It is often possible to find signs of bat occupation outside of the time that they are resident, in the form of droppings and feeding remains, however, these dissipate over a period ranging from a few days to several months. Many species are crevice-dwelling and signs may be impossible to find during internal surveys. However, the combination of internal and emergence surveys should adequately assess the situation.

## **7 Ecological Impacts**

If the proposed demolition goes ahead with no mitigation or compensation work for bats, the potential impacts are;

- Possible loss of occasional roosts used by individual crevice-dwelling species of bats  
Although the surveys did not record any bats emerging from the building, there is some good potential behind the large timber clad fascias on some sections of the building, which could be used by individual bats on occasion through the year.
- Possible disturbance to roosting bats  
Although the surveys did not record any bats emerging from the building, as above, there is the possibility of individual animals being present on occasion.

## **8 Conclusions**

### **8.1 Bats**

It is concluded that the building proposed for demolition in Bethesda, does not currently constitute a bat roost and therefore, a development license from NRW will not currently be required.

However, there is some potential for crevice-dwelling species to be present on occasion and even a whole suite of seasonal surveys could fail to confirm if this is the case due to the nomadic nature of single bats. Because of this, reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to ensure that there is no inadvertent breach of legislation with regard to disturbance of bats.

Any removal of the exterior timber cladding will be undertaken under the direct supervision of a licensed bat worker in order to minimise the chance of any direct disturbance to the animals themselves and adhere to all current legislation relevant to the species. If the demolition is not undertaken within a two year period from the time of this survey, a single emergence survey will be undertaken to refresh the survey results.

## 8.2 Other Protected Species

No evidence was recorded of any other protected species within the building. However, there is some potential for nesting birds to be present during the recognised breeding bird season due to the deteriorating condition of exterior timberwork.

## 9 Mitigation & Recommendations

### 9.1 Bats

Although there is no confirmed bat roost within the building on this site, there is the presence of some roosting potential behind exterior timber cladding. For this reason, reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to ensure that there is no inadvertent breach of legislation.

- The removal of the exterior timberwork on the building will be directly supervised by a licensed bat worker
- A single emergence survey will be undertaken prior to the demolition if no works commence within a two year period of this survey.
- All contractors will be made aware of the potential presence of bats and the legal issues involved via a site induction prior to the commencement of works.

### 9.2 Other Protected Species

None

## 10 Legal Implications

### 10.1 Bats

Bats are protected under UK law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and also under European law by the Habitat and Species Regulations 2010. Under these laws it is an offence to deliberately kill or injure a bat, to disturb a bat or to damage, destroy or block access to a roost. Bat roosts are protected under these laws whether the animals are present at the time of survey or not. Under both laws Natural Resources Wales are empowered to issue licences to carry out work to bat roosts for reasons of overriding public interest.

## 10.2 Nesting Birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, all nesting birds and their nests are protected. Once a bird places a single piece of material then it constitutes a nest. It is then an offence to cause damage to the bird, nest, eggs or chicks and immediate habitat which is likely to result in damage by causing the bird to desert its nest. This covers all bird species, with a small number of exceptions (pest species which can be controlled by special license).

In 2001, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) was made law, strengthening the legal protection for many species and introducing a 'reckless disturbance' offence.

## 11 **Appendix**

### 11.1 Photos of the buildings



Front elevation



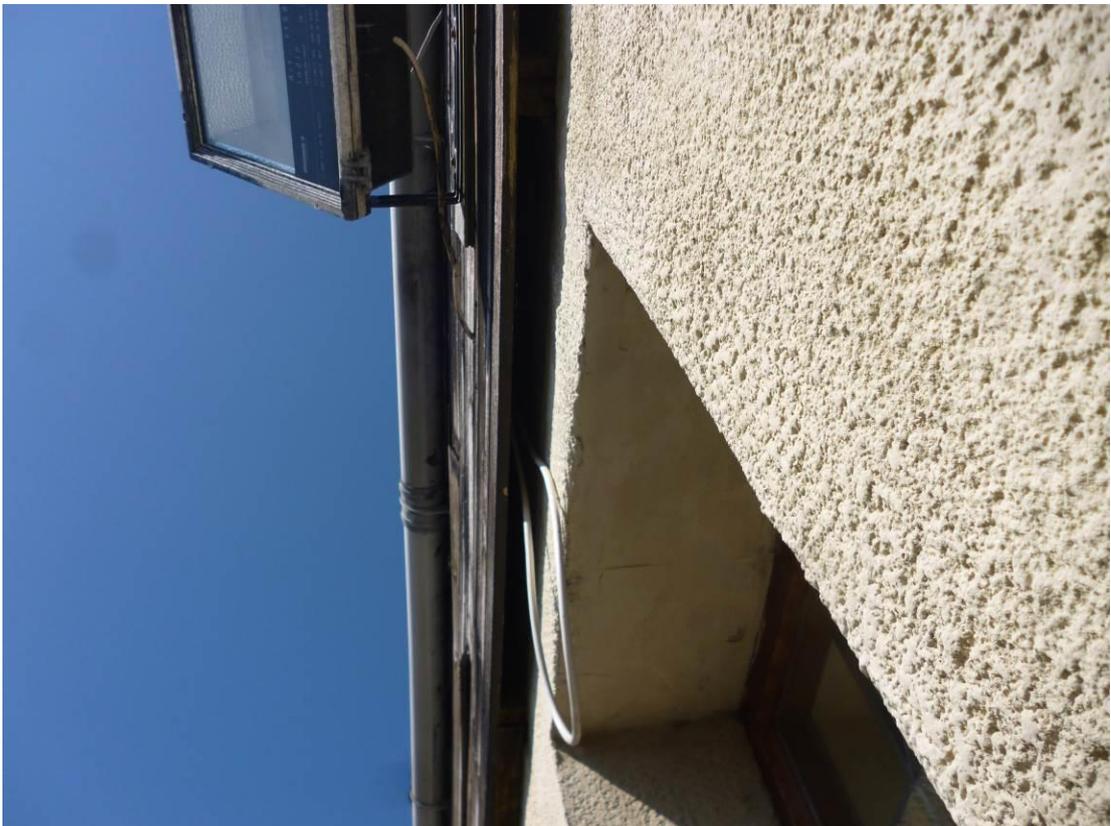
Front elevation (northern end), with potential bat roosting areas behind timber fascias



Southern, rear sections, with more bat potential behind fascias



Northern end of the building



Example of the gap behind fascias