



BAT AND BARN OWL SURVEYS

BATS

A surprising number of buildings and trees in Carmarthen provide roosting sites for bats and many areas of land provide feeding ground for bats. Bats and their resting places are protected by law and can be adversely affected by development and other works to buildings.

Your application has been highlighted as one that may affect bats. This may be due to the nature of the property, which is particularly likely to support bats or because it involves changes to trees or to an area of land where bats are particularly likely to feed, roost or hibernate.

All British bats are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have European protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), which implements the EC Habitats Directive in the UK. It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a European Protected Species or to deliberately damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place (roost) of such an animal or to obstruct its access. A roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time. 'Damage' would include operations such as timber treatment in roost areas. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb a bat that may significantly affect its ability to survive or the local distribution or abundance of that species.

The Requirements

The presence of protected species, such as bats, is a 'material consideration' when considering a planning application. This means the Local planning Authority has to take them fully into account when we consider your planning application. To enable to do this we need you to **commission a suitable bat survey by a licensed bat surveyor and submit the survey report** to us before we can make a decision on your application. Even if the presence of bats is only suspected, rather than certain, we still need you to commission a survey. The surveyor will be able to confirm whether or not bats are present, say what impacts the proposed development would have and advise mitigation measures. In cases where bats are found to be present there may be a requirement for a development licence, issued by the Welsh Assembly Government and the information needed for the bat survey report will also be required for the development licence. Having this information will now help speed up any future licence application.

The Survey

The bat survey and report should be undertaken in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (2007) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bats hibernate between October and April. They are virtually impossible to survey in winter as they crawl into crevice networks where they are unlikely to be detected. However, it may be possible for a surveyor to undertake a scoping survey during this time to assess the likelihood of the building being suitable for hibernating bats and/or to find evidence of an old summer roost. If potential/evidence of bats is found then emergence surveys during the flight period will be required.

The Report

The report by your surveyor should follow the template as detailed in the *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust (2007, p.27–28) to ensure sufficient information is provided to assess the nature of the use by bats and the mitigation measures required if bats are present. These are summarised below:

- Date of the survey;
- Location of the survey (including six-figure grid ref.);
- List of the personnel who undertook the survey (including details of relevant licences)
- Weather conditions
- Proposed works
- Aims of study
- Methodology
- Results
- Assessment – constraints to study/potential impacts considered
- Recommendations and mitigation required
- Summary
- Other: references, photographs, report forms

What happens if bats are found?

Your planning application is unlikely to be refused on the basis of bats being present. Mitigation should be integrated into your detailed plans, based on the results of the survey and recommendations therein. This is to show that the required mitigation can be incorporated into the proposed application so as to avoid harm to the bats and ensure legislation is complied with. This should be accompanied by a basic method statement, again reflecting the recommendations in the survey. It is likely that the surveyor will advise you in this respect. CCW will be consulted on the results of the survey and mitigation plans. There will likely be a requirement for a development licence, issued by the Welsh Assembly Government. Relevant conditions will be attached to your planning permission. Occasionally, if significant evidence of bat occupation is found, a further survey may be necessary at a later date.

BARN OWLS

Barn Owls are also fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the surveyor should also survey for the presence/signs of presence of this species.

Relevant applications submitted without a bat/barn owl survey complying with the above requirements, will be likely to attract a recommendation for refusal due to the lack of substantive information on a material consideration.

FURTHER INFORMATION

On bats:

Bat Conservation Trust Wales, Unit 7 Castleton Court, Fortran Road, St Mellons, Cardiff, CF3 0LT
Tel: 029 2036 2531.

WAG Development Licences:

Welsh Assembly Government, Unit 9 Cefnllan Science Park, Aberyswyth SY23 3AH.
Tel: 01970 610216

Advice/Mitigation/Legislation:

Steve Lucas, Regional Species Officer, Countryside Council for Wales, Llys Tawe, King's Road, Swansea, SA1 8PG. Tel.: 01792634 960, e-mail: s.lucas@ccw.gov.uk

Carmarthenshire CC Biodiversity Officer

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