

Bat Report Title:	Abermad Mansion
Version Number:	1
Issue Date:	02/09/24
Site Address:	Abermad Aberystwyth
Lifespan of report	2 years
ECOLOGIST	DAVE ROGERSON, S090164-1

Surveying team:

D. Rogerson (MCIEEM) has over fifteen years of bat work experience, working for CCW as the West Wales Species officer, and over five years as a private contractor. He has also volunteered with a number of bat groups, including the Snowdonia and Montgomeryshire group.

Rh. Adams, she has over 2 years' experience of undertaking bat surveys, and was trained by D.Rogerson.

D. Garside, he has over 6 months experience of undertaking bat surveys, and was trained by D. Rogerson.

M. Jones, he has over 8 years experience of undertaking bat surveys, and was trained by D. Rogerson.

1. Background and Supporting Information

1.1 Executive Summary

This bat report was commissioned to support the application for planning consent as the client wishes to convert the buildings under investigation into a luxury flats. The observations made during the scoping survey, and the activity surveys found that Soprano Pipistrelles (occasional roost) and Brown Long Eared (maternity roost) bats are roosting in the buildings due for conversion.

This report confirms the findings of those surveys, completed by an experienced, licensed bat ecologist in accordance with the advice in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guidelines, 4th edition (Collins, J. (Ed.) 2023) & The Bat Workers' Manual, 4th edition. (Mitchell-Jones, A.J., & McLeish, A.P. (Ed.), 2004). This report has also been written with reference to the CIEEM (2015) Guidelines as well as BS42020 where possible.

The building under investigation is a stone block mansion. The buildings are found outside the hamlet of Abermad, SN 60029 76088.

2 Survey and site assessment

2.1 Existing information on the bat species at the survey site.

No records exist, based on LRC data search.

2.2 Statutory sites notified for the species (SSSIs or SACs) within

10km

N/a

2.2.1 Desk survey methodology

Survey methodologies were implemented as appropriate, based on the surveyors' assessment of the site features and with particular reference to the advice in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guidelines, 4th edition (Collins, J. (Ed.), 2023) & The Bat Workers' Manual, 4th edition. (Mitchell-Jones, A.J., & McLeish, A.P. (Ed.), 2004). This report has also been written with reference to the CIEEM (2015) Guidelines as well as BS42020.

2.3 Objectives of the survey.

To determine the presence of bats within the structure, which species are present, and finally how the bats are using the building.

2.4 Scaled plan/map of survey area

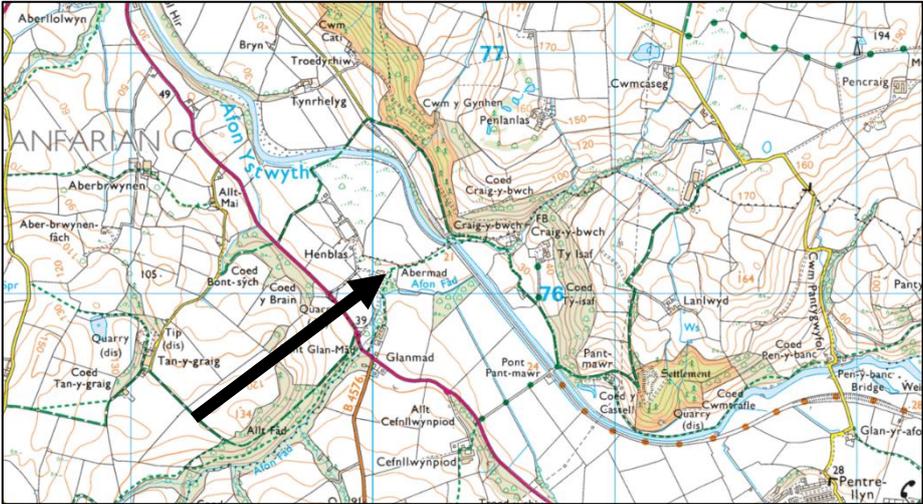


Fig.1: Location of site



Fig.2: Aerial image

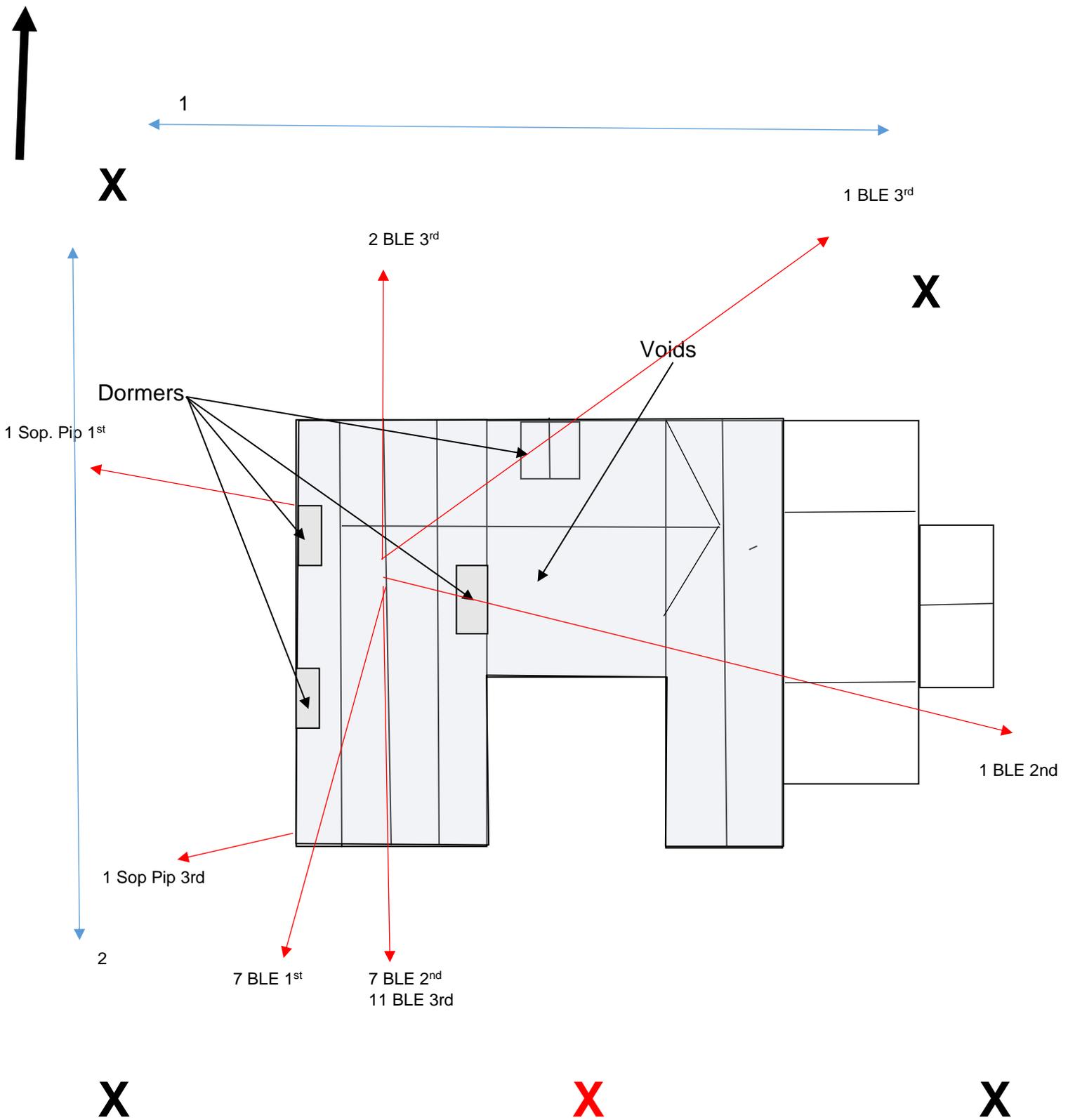


Fig.3: Plan of building (not to scale). The X's show the location of the surveyors. The blue lines show the direction of travel of passing bats, the red arrows are the bats which emerged.

3 Habitat description

The surrounding habitat is rural. The holding is surrounded by agricultural fields, most of which are improved to the south, and semi-natural to the north. Directly north flows the Afon Ystwyth. The location has scattered woodland, with medium pockets of deciduous woodland. The location is interconnected with hedgerows, which appear strong hedges. There are historic bat records for Soprano Pipistrelle and Pipistrelle spp. to the west, east and south of the site. The landscape is thought to have a high desirability for bats.

3.1 Scoping survey

The scoping survey of the buildings took place on 15th June 2024 to identify any potential access points which could be utilised by bats. A thorough search of the buildings was carried out using a high power torch, looking for evidence of bats, i.e. droppings, grease staining on the walls, etc... This was followed by an examination of the external structures, particularly of the areas where the walls meet the roof, and the roof itself. An endoscope was used to check any crevices in walls, etc.

The survey consisted of a visual inspection of the interior and exterior of the building for evidence of bat use, including droppings, and marking around roost access points. The general condition of the building(s) is examined, including the structure of the roof, condition of walls, the potential for disturbance, and the position of the building in relation to connectivity to desirable bat habitat.



Fig. 4: Front elevation



Fig.5 Rear elevation

3.2 Scoping Results

- The walls of this historic building are bare stone walls, with Bedford stone and brick embellishments. The pointing of these wall is in good order, with no obvious crevices. All walls were checked for bat sign, using high powered binoculars.
- The eaves appear to be sealed.
- All windows, doors, sills and lintels were checked for bat sign. None was found
- The roofs are slate and appear to be in good condition.
- There are four roof voids within the house, see Fig. 3. The voids are separate but are connected by crawl ways. All voids are very large, approximately 2.5-3m high. The woodwork is well sawn and jointed timbers. All flat surfaces were checked for bat sign. Bat sign was found throughout all the voids. The droppings were well spread out, with no obvious clusters. There appeared to be two types of dropping, possibly Pipistrelle species and Brown Long Eared. Two of the voids have skylights which create large amounts of light pollution.
- There is a cellar under the house. The cellar is large and extensive. The cellar has historically been converted into wash areas and offices.
- Bird nests were found within the voids.

The building is thought to have a high potential for bats.

3.3 Field survey(s).

The dusk survey were undertaken by the named ecologist and his assistant, the named ecologist and assistants used Echometer Touch detectors. Nightfox Red infra-red goggles were also used, as well as Canon XA20 video recorders.

Dusk:

Date: 16/05/2024
Weather: Clear, no wind, 19degC
Start: 20:52
Finish: 22:52

Dusk:

Date: 25/06/2024
Weather: Clear, no wind, 18degC
Start: 21:27
Finish: 23:27

Dusk:

Date: 15/08/2024
Weather: Clear, no wind, 21degC
Start: 20:25
Finish: 22:25

3.4 Survey Results.

Night	No. of Bats	Species	Flight Path
1 st	1 7	Soprano Pipistrelle Brown Long Eared	Fig.3
2 nd	7	Brown Long Eared	Fig.3
3 rd	1 14	Soprano Pipistrelle Brown Long Eared	Fig.3

Passing bats were observed during the survey:

1. Common/ Soprano Pipistrelle: 21:01 (1st), 21:07 (1st), 21:12 (1st), 21:16 (1st), 21:57 (2nd), 21:59(2nd), 22:25(2nd), 21:00 (3rd), 21:22(3rd)
2. Common/ Soprano Pipistrelle: 21:04 (1st), 21:14 (1st), 21:24 (1st) 21:52 (2nd), 22:17(2nd), 22:19 (2nd)
3. Common/ Soprano Pipistrelle: 21:12 (1st), 21:20 (1st), 21:58 (2nd), 22:11(2nd), 22:28 (2nd), 21:01 (3rd), 21:33 (3rd)

Noctules were detected on all occasions but not observed.

4. Discussion of survey results

The scoping surveys found extensive evidence of bat use in the roof voids of the building. The building was found to have a high potential for bats, due to the complex nature of the roof void system, and the plethora of potential roosting points.

The locations suitability for bats was found to be high, as all of the features which bats would find desirable, water courses, woodlands, open semi-natural fields, are present.

The activity surveys confirmed the presence of a maximum of one (1) Soprano Pipistrelle, and a maximum of fourteen (14) Brown Long Eared bats. The activity surveys were undertaken during the active season of bats, therefore it can be concluded that a true representation of the use of the building by bats was seen. It is believed that the buildings is being used as occasional roosts by Soprano Pipistrelles, and a maternity roost for the Brown Long Eared bats.

Wray et al (2010) categorise Soprano Pipistrelles as a common species. Therefore the Soprano Pipistrelle occasional roost is considered to have low significance to the Local/ County bat population. Brown Long Eared bats are categorised as Rarer species, therefore a Brown Long Eared maternity roost, even a small one, is considered to have medium significance to the Local/ County bat population.

The proposed development is therefore considered to have a low impact on the Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long Eared bat population. The impact will be reduced with the strategies detailed in the method statement, and proposed the mitigation measures, as well as the fact that the works are mainly a like for like repair and maintenance operation.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The building was found to have a high potential for bats, and one Soprano Pipistrelle bat and fourteen Brown Long Eared were observed exiting the roof area on the eastern side of the mansion. The precise location of the exit point could not be seen. It is believed that a wooden vent is being used by the bats.



Fig.6: Image of the vent from a drone

The building is now to be classified as a bat roosts and is therefore protected by Law. Bats are specifically protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (The Habitat Regulations). The Habitat Regulations are the way in which EU legislation is transposed into UK law. All species protected via this legislation are defined as 'European Protected Species'. The Habitat Regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the European Protected Species (i.e. those listed on Schedule 2), of which all UK bats are included. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of a license by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes but only after the LPA and NRW is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and that such actions will have no detrimental effect on the wild populations of bats.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981) is the primary legislation by which most species are protected in Wales. Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981, which makes it an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost; intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat a roost; or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost. Because bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time

As all the proposed works are proposed on the sections of the building where the roost is located of the building, and will be breaking into the roofs of the building an European Protected species licence will be required to allow the works to take place.

A method statement **MUST** be written, which will detail the necessary strategies to mitigate for the impacts on the roosting space, and the impact felt by the local Soprano pipistrelle and Brown Long Eared bat populations.

The method statements strategies will include:

- Erection of two bat box to mitigate for any disturbance (noise/ vibration)
- Contractors will be informed to carry out works in a methodical manner as there is a low significant roost in the roof. Minimising noise and vibration, especially during the sensitive periods for bats, ie between May and the end of August/ Sept..
- No lighting will be place near any known or suspected bat access points. If any new external lighting is provided, low level, low wattage lighting (e.g. bollard lights and lights below 1m) will be used. All lights will be angled or screened to minimise light spill up onto the soffits/leaves, and onto the surrounding vegetation. If required, illumination of any access paths to the property will be low level, low wattage lighting, and will not be left on all night (e.g. triggered by PIR sensors on short illumination timers).
- The named ecologist will be available for advice.

6. References and Bibliography

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd ed)*. The Bat Conservation Trust. London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. 2004. *Bat Worker's Manual*. JNCC.

Wray, S., Wells, D., Long, E., & Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2010. *Valuing bats in ecological impact assessment*. In Practice, No 70, Institute of Ecology and Environmental management.

Annex



Fig.7: Scattering of droppings



Fig.8: Void



Fig.9: Section of the roof



Fig.10: Converted cellar



Fig.11: Cam 1



Fig.12: Cam 2

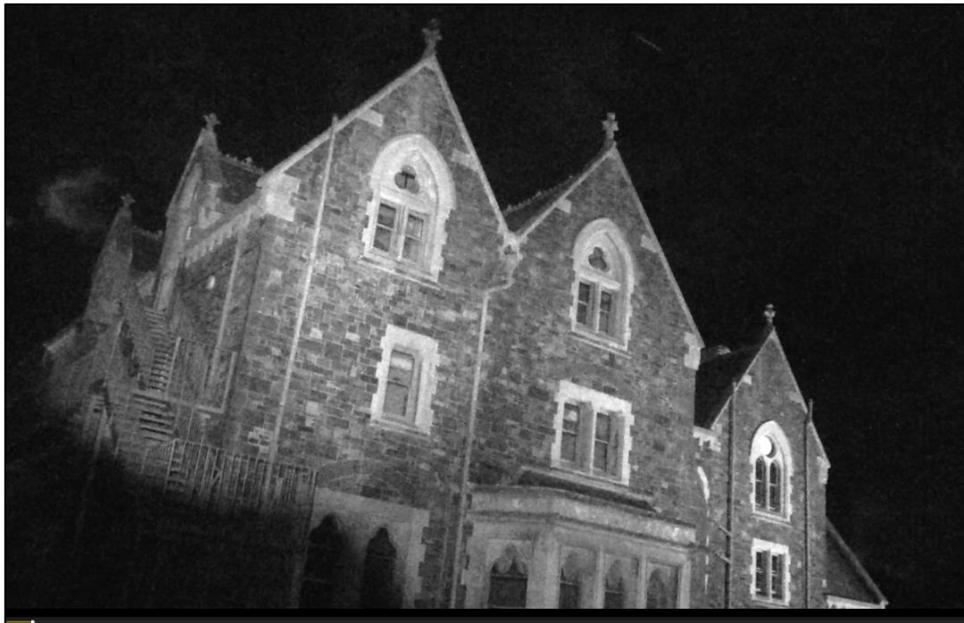


Fig.13: Cam 3



Fig.14: Cam 4

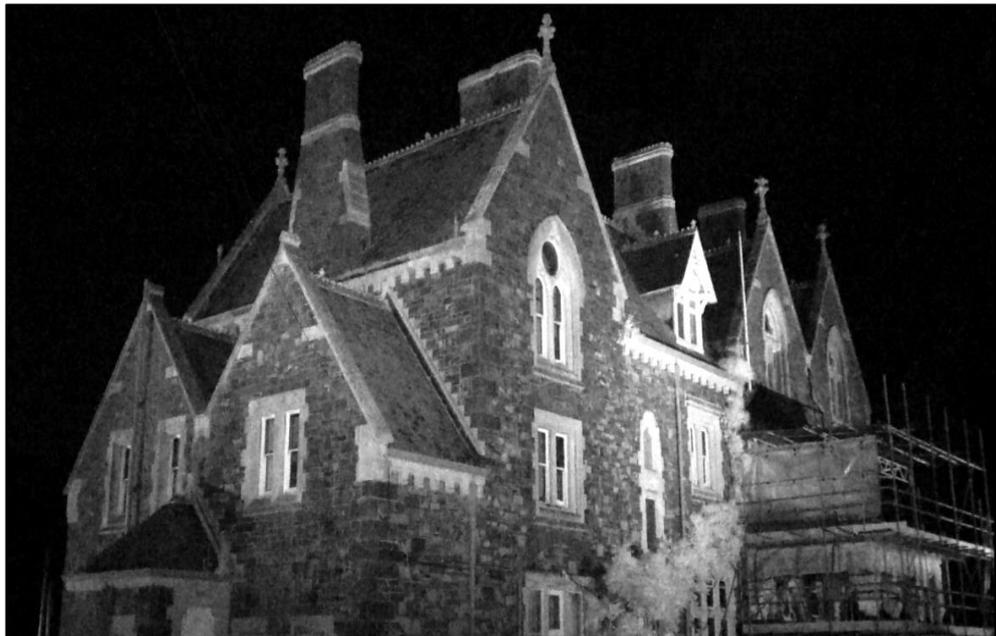


Fig.15: Cam 5