

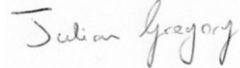


2024



Park View Cottage,
Merthyr, CF48 4HU
Grid Ref: SO 06851 02934
Preliminary Roost Assessment



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1 TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The summary below is based on the current understanding of the survey remit. Recommendations for the future remit of the project are based on the best available information on potential future requirements. Further consultation will be required for future works undertaken by the client.
- 1.1.2 Please refer to Section 5 for legislative context and more detailed description of recommendations.

Table 1: Technical Summary Table

Feature or Species	PRA Recommendations Summary
Habitat	The site is located within Troedyrhiw, Merthyr. The cottage sits on a patch of hardstanding and is accessed via a shared driveway onto the property. The cottage is a single-story brick house, that has had two of the outside walls and the internal ceilings removed. A full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on the site and for further information regarding habitat, please refer to the original PEA report. The site sits within a busy urban residential area, with a large industrial building to the north-west of the site and an active site compound to the south of the site that is illuminated with large external flood lights throughout the night. The site has linear features provided by treelines and hedgerows within the wider area however within the property footprint itself there is no vegetation. There are 6 water courses within 2km of the cottage, with the closest being the river Taff, running 250m to the south-west of the site.
Designated Sites	There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the survey area, and an extended search for designated bat sites up to 10km from site was also undertaken and there are no designated bat sites within 10km of the cottage. There are no non statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary: There are 66 sites of ancient woodland within 2km of site. These sites are a mixture of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW), Restored Ancient Woodland Sites (RAWS), Ancient Woodland Site of Unknown Category (AWSUC) and Plantation on Ancient Woodland (PAWS). The closest is a patch of ASNW sitting 291m to the west of the site.
Bird Species	A full PEA was undertaken on the site; therefore bird species were not assessed as part of this Preliminary Roost Assessment. For more information pertaining to birds please refer to the original PEA report.
Bats	A PEA was undertaken on the site in August 2024, during this PEA it was requested that further assessment by a licensed bat ecologist is undertaken. Isabella Stephens, an NRW bat survey licensed ecologist attended site, and undertook a PRA of the site. The building had its internal ceilings, and two outer walls removed before the PRA was undertaken. This meant that internal features such as the loft space could not be fully assessed. The roof tiles were overall in good condition, with no obvious fallen or slipped tiles. The soffit and fascia boards were plastic and the ones that remained were in good condition with no gaps, cracks or crevices that could be utilised as potential roosting features (PRFs). The external walls were in good condition however the removal of two outer walls has left these cavity walls exposed. The walls were assessed and could be viewed the full length of the cavity, which was filled with thick cobwebs indicating no recent usage of the feature by crevice dwelling bat species. The walls being removed also left the internal aspects of the cottage open, which could be utilised



	by foraging bat species. The building overall was very open to the elements, the internal aspects of the cottage were damp and wet due to the walls being removed and did not create a suitable environment with stable temperatures that would be suitable for free hanging or crevice dwelling species. Due the cavity walls being exposed and creating a 'low' potential feature, it is recommended that one dusk activity surveys is undertaken on the site. Optimal survey season is between May and August; however surveys can be undertaken in September if the features are not likely to support a maternity roost and the weather conditions are suitable. Due to the health and safety concerns of the active site and external aspects of the building being left exposed all winter, it was deemed suitable to undertake as survey within September. If evidence of bats utilising the structure is found during the September survey or bat activity isn't recorded due to sub-optimal conditions, then surveys will need to be undertaken in optimal season.
Recommendations	The features on the site were deemed to be of 'low' potential for roosting bats and it is recommended that one dusk activity survey is undertaken. Due to the health and safety concerns of the active site and external aspects of the building being left exposed all winter, it was deemed suitable to undertake an activity survey within September. If evidence of bats utilising the structure is found during the September survey or bat activity isn't recorded due to sub-optimal conditions, then surveys will need to be undertaken in optimal season (May-August).



2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1.1 EcoVigour was instructed by the client to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of Park View Cottage. Isabella Stephens, an NRW and NE level 2 Bat Licensed ecologist and lead bat ecologist for EcoVigour Ltd completed the PRA assessment.

2.1.2 The objectives for the survey were:

- ◆ To undertake a visual assessment to identify potential to support roosting bats;
- ◆ To undertake an inspection of any potential roosting features for bats and / or evidence of occupation by bats;
- ◆ To make recommendations for further survey as considered necessary;
- ◆ if required, identify potential mitigation measures in order to maintain the continued ecological functionality of the roost and the conservation status of the bat species present;
- ◆ Determine whether a European Protected Species (EPS) licence is required to ensure legal compliance; and
- ◆ Undertake a visual assessment to identify the potential for other protected species e.g. birds.

2.1.3 The survey methodology followed best practice detailed in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins (Ed), 2023) and Bat Mitigation Guidelines (CIEEM, 2023) and. The PRA consisted of a visual assessment for the presence of any potential roost features (PRFs), together with a general appraisal of the suitability of the site for foraging and commuting bats. An initial ecological overview of the site is provided, and potential ecological constraints and impacts of the current proposals are assessed. Recommendations for further surveys are provided where necessary.

2.2 SURVEY AREA DESCRIPTION

2.2.1 The survey area consists of Park View Cottage, Merthyr Road, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr, CF48 4HU. Grid Reference: SO 06851 02934. The survey area was the single-story building, that had its ceilings, and two walls removed prior to the PRA being undertaken. The survey area is outlined below (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Survey Area

2.3 WORKS REQUIRED

2.3.1 The works on the property involve:

- ◆ Removing and replacing the roof;
- ◆ Construction of a new garage;
- ◆ An extension onto the current residential property;
- ◆ Complete internal renovation on the cottage.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESK STUDY

- 3.1.1 A desk study was conducted to assist with the overall site assessment. Statutory and non- statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary were identified and any bat sites within 10km of the survey area. Broad habitat boundaries and types were identified from online aerial imagery.
- 3.1.2 The relevance of the reasons for designation of the protected sites within 2km of the site boundary has been considered during subsequent assessment of whether the proposed works will have any impact upon the biological integrity of such sites.
- 3.1.3 The desk study also included the following sources:
- ◆ Defra's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website;
 - ◆ Online aerial imagery resources;
 - ◆ A 2km data search provided by the local records centre (SEWBREC).



3.2 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

3.2.1 The PRA was conducted by Isabella Stephens, an experienced EcoVigour Ltd, NRW and NE level 2 Bat Licensed, ecologist on the 3rd August 2024. The PRA was undertaken following Bat Mitigation Guidelines (CIEEM, 2023) and Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins (Ed), 2023). The survey consisted of a visual survey of the site, identifying potential to support roosting or hibernating bats and any potential roosting features that could house bats within the building. A visual search for nesting birds was also undertaken during the survey.

3.2.2 Some examples of potential access points and PRFs within structures are:

- ◆ Raised, slipped or missing roof tiles / slates;
- ◆ Cracks/crevices within the masonry;
- ◆ Loose/fallen bricks / masonry;
- ◆ Behind and under external timberwork; and
- ◆ Behind vegetation on/in the structure such as ivy.

3.2.3 Trees are assessed separately, with PRFs including:

- ◆ Knot holes;
- ◆ Rot holes;
- ◆ Woodpecker holes;
- ◆ Hazard beams (cracks/splits in major limbs);
- ◆ Other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits (e.g. frost cracks)
- ◆ Loose and partially detached bark;
- ◆ Tear outs;
- ◆ Man-made holes;
- ◆ Cankers with cavities;
- ◆ Other hollows e.g. butt rots;
- ◆ Double leaders forming compression joints;
- ◆ Gaps between overlapping branches / stems;
- ◆ Gaps behind partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm; and
- ◆ Bat, bird and dormouse boxes.

3.2.4 Evidence of bats can include:

- ◆ Live and dead bats;
- ◆ Bat droppings;
- ◆ Staining below PRFs;
- ◆ Characteristic scratches;
- ◆ Smell of bats and/or droppings; and
- ◆ Noise (squeaking) made by bats.

3.2.5 An intrusive survey was also undertaken on any PRFs, which could be accessed to determine the condition and potential use of these by roosting or hibernating bats. A torch, telescopic ladder and an endoscope were used to search the PRFs for evidence of either current or previous use by bats.

3.2.6 Based on the PRFs present, the survey area was assessed using the suitability classes detailed within Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) as detailed in the table below.



Table 2 - Classification of Structures with Bat Potential

Suitability	Description
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat.
Moderate/Medium	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed)
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, conditions, or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by large numbers of bats.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

- 3.3.1 The results of the survey and assessment undertaken by EcoVigour Ltd are representative of the site at the time of survey.
- 3.3.2 Third party biological records do not represent a full species list for the area. The absence of records does not necessarily indicate absence of a species or habitat but rather that these have not been recorded or are perhaps under-recorded within the search area.

4 RESULTS

4.1 BIOLOGICAL RECORDS

Bats

- 4.1.1 52 records were returned within a 2km radius, consisting of 5 confirmed bat species. The closest record to site was an unidentified bat species, recorded 129m from site in 2007. There was also a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) recorded foraging 360m from site in 2011. The most recent records are recorded in 2018 and consist of two greater horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), being recorded over 2.6km away in 2018. A lack of records does not represent a lack of species, just what has been recorded. Figure 2 below shows bat records within 2km of site, some records have been recorded using the same grid reference so may only appear as one point on the map.



Bat Species within 2km of Park View Cottage

Park View Cottage
Preliminary Roost Assessment
Author: Isabella Stephens

Key

- Bat Species within 2km
 - Bat
 - Brown Long-eared Bat
 - Common Pipistrelle
 - Greater Horseshoe Bat
 - Myotis Bat species
 - Noctule Bat
 - Pipistrelle Bat species
 - Soprano Pipistrelle
- 2km Buffer
- Park View Cottage
- Google Satellite

Source: QGIS, Ordnance Survey Data Crown and Database copyright 2023
EcoVigour Ltd, Hardwick Farm, Five Lanes, Caerwent, Monmouthshire,
NP26 5PH

Figure 2 - Bat Species within 2km of site.

4.2 DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.2.1 A search was undertaken of designated sites within a 2km radius of the site and bat sites within 10km of the site.
- 4.2.2 There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the survey area and no designated bat sites within 10km of the survey area.
- 4.2.3 There are 8 non-Statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary. These can be seen in table 3 below.

Table 3 - Non-statutory Sites within 2km

Site Name	Designation	Reason for Designation	Distance from Site (m)
Afon Taf (River Taf)	SINC	Wildlife Site	194m
Troed-Y-Rhiw	SINC	Wildlife Site	274m
Merthyr Common South	SINC	Wildlife Site	441m
Buarth-waunydd	SINC	Wildlife Site	525m
Pentrebach Fields	SINC	Wildlife Site	532m
Graig Gethin	SINC	Wildlife Site	553m
Pentrebach Tip	SINC	Wildlife Site	672m



Site Name	Designation	Reason for Designation	Distance from Site (m)
Cnwc	SINC	Wildlife Site	987m

4.3 WATER COURSES

- 4.3.1 There are 6 watercourses within 2km of the site. The closest water course to site is the river Taff, flowing 250m to the south-west of site. Details can be found in figure 4 below.

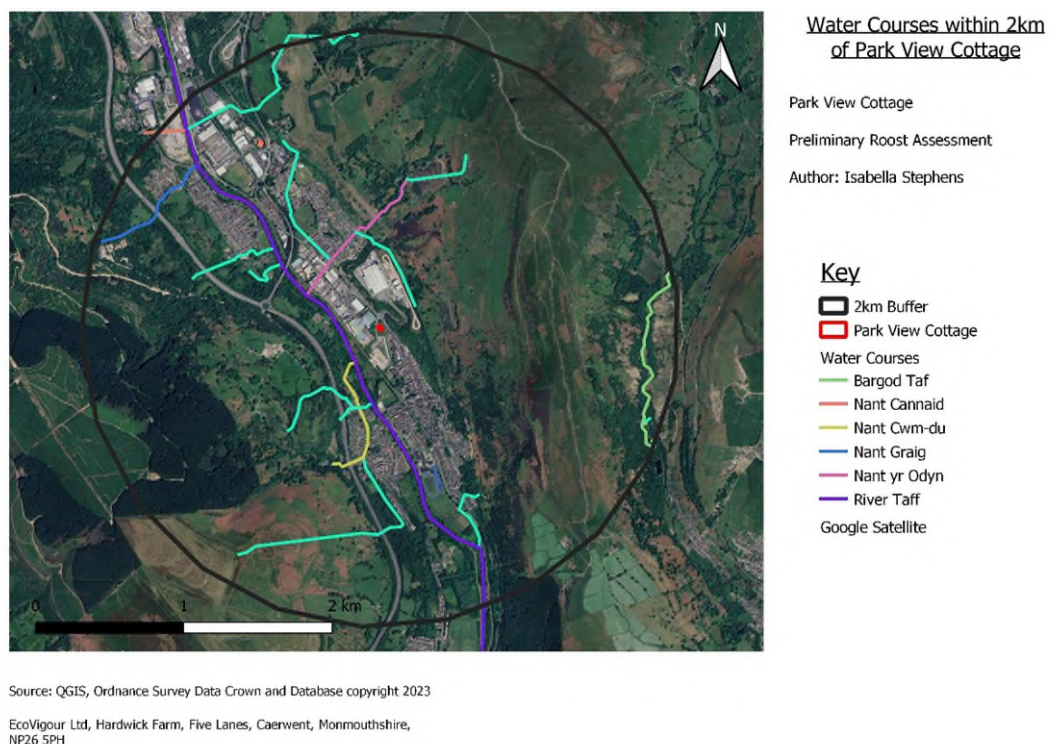


Figure 3 - Water courses within 2km.

4.4 ANCIENT WOODLAND

- 4.4.1 There are 66 sites of ancient woodland within 2km of the survey area. These consist of mainly small patches of woodland, with a mixture of ANSW (Ancient Semi Natural Woodland), PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site) and RAWs (Replanted Ancient Woodland Site). The closest is a site of ASNW sitting 291m away.

4.5 PHOTOS

- 4.5.1 The plates below provide a visual summary of the survey. This is not an extensive collection of the images collected from the survey. Additional images are available upon request.



Plate 1 – The internal ceilings.



Plate 2 - The two outer walls being removed.



Plate 3 – The roof tiles in good condition.



Plate 4 – The cobwebs within the cavity walls.



Plate 5 – The works occurring on site.



Plate 6 – The plastic soffit and fascia boards.

4.6 BATS

- 4.6.1 The cottage held 'low' potential for roosting bats.
- 4.6.2 Full access around the site was possible as part of this PRA, however the internal ceilings had been removed as well as two external walls therefore there was no loft space to inspect as part of this PRA. The roof and roof tiles on the property were in good condition with no gaps, loose, slipped or raised tiles creating potential roosting features (PRFs). The remaining walls are red brick covered in pebble dash and did not contain any features suitable for PRFs. The plastic soffit and fascia boards were in good condition with no gaps, cracks or crevices identified. Overall the property had limited PRFs identified externally. The works on the building, including the removal of two external walls has opened up the cavity walls and created a potential roosting feature suitable for crevice dwelling species. The cavity walls were inspected during the PRA using an endoscope and high-powered red-light torch by the licensed ecologist. The cavities were filled with thick, undisturbed spiderwebs indicating that nothing had entered or exited these walls prior to the PRA.
- 4.6.3 These cavity walls are open to the elements and are likely disturbed by wind and rain due to the protective outer walls being removed, which does reduce the suitability of any long-term roosting by crevice dwelling bat species. The removal of the walls also leaves the internal aspects, including the wooden foundations of the ceiling exposed creating features that could be used by free hanging bat species; however this is unlikely due to how open the house is. The beams and internal aspects of the property were all damp, and likely extremely exposed to any bad weather that is likely to occur during the winter months.
- 4.6.4 The site is currently subject to sound, light and vibration disturbance caused by some minor works on site as well as the disturbance caused by the active site compound to the south of site that is largely illuminated by flood lights at night. The site sits within a busy urban residential area. The site has linear features provided by treelines and hedgerows within the wider area however within the property footprint itself there is no vegetation. The linear features created by the treelines and the river Taff itself provide suitable commuting habitat for bat species, as well as the surrounding agricultural fields and woodland within the wider habitat creating suitable foraging habitat.

5 ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a broad assessment of the information gathered and scopes out potential ecological vectors before remaining considerations and actions are proposed in the following recommendations and opportunities sections below.



5.1 DESIGNATED SITES

- 5.1.1 The designated bat sites are some distance away from the development area. The nature of the works are small, and the development of a garage within an already developed site is unlikely to affect any bats known to be utilising the bat sites. Bat activity surveys will be undertaken, and these will aid in understanding if the site sits within any main commuting routes for the known bat sites within 10km.

5.2 PROTECTED SPECIES - BATS

- 5.2.1 All British bats and any place used for shelter or protection, or breeding site or resting place (their roosts) are fully protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

- 5.2.2 Together these protect bats from:

- ◆ Selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of the sale or publishing advertisements to buy or sell a protected species.
- ◆ Deliberate, intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking of bats.
- ◆ Damage to or destruction of or, obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding (roost) or rest.
- ◆ Disturbance of an animal occupying a structure or place.
- ◆ The deliberate disturbance of any bat species in such a way as to be significantly likely to affect;
 - their ability to survive, hibernate, migrate, breed, or rear or nurture their young; or
 - the local distribution or abundance of that species.

- 5.2.3 The cottage was deemed to be of 'low' potential for roosting bats, this is due to the exposed cavity walls creating a suitable potential roosting feature. The feature was deemed to be of low potential due to the exposure of the cavities to the elements, the disturbance from the construction on site and the fact that the cavities are filled with undisturbed cobwebs indicating no movement internally.

- 5.2.4 It is therefore recommended that one dusk activity survey is undertaken. Due to the fact that the building cannot be left open all winter and the construction site is currently a health and safety risk it was decided that the activity surveys should be undertaken outside of the optimal season (May – August). Surveys can be undertaken during September, providing weather conditions are within the recommended range, as well as the fact that the features identified are unlikely to support a maternity roost which would not be able to be surveyed for at this time of year. This recommendation is based on information within the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). If bats are found emerging during the survey or no bats are recorded at all due to the sub-optimal time of year / weather conditions, then further surveys will need to be undertaken on the property between May-August 2025.



- 5.2.5 The surveys will be undertaken utilising two surveyors to maintain line of site onto both the cavity walls and suitable NVA (night vision aids). The night vision aids used will be a combination of Night Fox Vulpes night vision cameras, Canon XA11-60 IR cameras and Pixfra ARC thermal camera. Each surveyor will be equipped with a bat detector (Echometer touch 2 or a bat logger M2). The surveys will commence at 15 minutes before sunset and proceed up to 2 hours after sunset. Figure 5 below shows the survey design.



Figure 4 - Bat Survey Design



6 REFERENCES

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