EAST ECOLOGY

LAND AT WINCHFAWR ROAD, HEOLGERRIG, MERTHYR TYDFIL

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL 2024

Produced for Nigel Smith

QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Revision	Notes

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SUMMARY

Nigel Smith has obtained planning permission from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for the construction of a single dwelling and garage on land at Winchfawr Road, Heolgerrig, but now wishes to add a small area of land to the plot and is making a new application under a new reference.

A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) was commissioned in support of the previous application and undertaken by BE Ecological in 2023 highlighting the need for precautions with respect to reptiles and ecological supervision of the demolition of a small block-built garage on the plot.

The building was demolished under the supervision of Rebecca Sheahan-East (licensed bat ecologist) of East Ecology where no bats or signs of bats were found.

A reptile mitigation strategy was produced to ensure reptiles were protected should they enter the site.

A new report was commissioned following the addition of a small area of land to the plot for the new dwelling. The site was visited in October 2024 for an updated preliminary ecological appraisal by East Ecology.

The desk study found no statutorily designated sites close enough to the site to be directly affected by the proposals and none designated for highly mobile species within 10km.

The PEA found that the habitats recorded within the survey boundary were, tall ruderal vegetation, bare ground, two containers, introduced shrubs and some small areas of mixed material wall. The habitat affected by the proposals would be the tall ruderal vegetation and bare ground.

Since no habitats of biodiversity value were located at the plot, no further surveys or mitigation is required.

Biodiversity enhancements include the provision of one bat box to the chimney exterior, two bird boxes for the garage building and 25 crevices in the stone facing of the boundary walls to provide shelter for reptiles.

INTRODUCTION

The land at Winchfawr Road, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1RD lies at an approximate National Grid Reference: **SO02280627**. The site was a former storage yard and site of a garage building, demolished under ecological supervision in January 2024. The site also contained a former sewage soakaway. To the rear of the plot (west) lay a small terrace of four or five houses with modest rear gardens and beyond this open grassland and scrub with some scattered buildings. To the south and east were similar habitats with ponds to the east and a greater density of dwellings to the north. The grassland and scrub habitats covered former mining activity. The relative location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

This report is intended to contribute to the information required for a planning application by Nigel Smith for the extension of the plot of land at Winchfawr Road, where there is existing planning permission for a dwelling and improved access granted by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The new planning application reference is: P/24/0162. The new proposal will take a small area of land previously under the ownership of a neighbouring dwelling and incorporate it into the garden of the proposed dwelling following installation of new sewage treatment infrastructure. The proposals are shown in Figure 3.

This report aims to assess the habitats at land at Winchfawr Road of the existing plot and the extended boundary for biodiversity value and potential for protected and priority species to be present including bats, reptiles, amphibians, birds, invertebrates and mammals providing any proposals for mitigation or enhancement where necessary.

A report by BE Ecological was issued following their surveys in 2023 for the previous planning application. The information in their report has been references in this report.

The author of this report, Rebecca of East Ecology has over twenty years post graduate experience in ecological consultancy and nature conservation and holds Natural Resources Wales survey licences for protected species including bats. Rebecca is also a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Environmentalist.

SPECIES ECOLOGY AND LEGISLATION

Reptiles

There are four common species of reptile present in Wales common lizard, slow worm, adder and grass snake with one further species which has a very restricted range in north Wales. Slow worms by far are the more common species occupying a variety of habitats such as tall grasslands and scrub, railway embankments and derelict sites. Adders require a good supply of small mammal prey as do grass snake, but will also take amphibians and small birds. Grass snake are often associated with still water habitats and adders with heath and upland areas. All reptiles require habitat in which to bask and warm their bodies, nearby cover and foraging opportunities and shelter for winter where they go into a type of hibernation called brumation. Hibernaculum can consist of gaps between tree roots, rubble, stone walls and log piles.

Nesting birds

Different bird species make use of a variety of habitats. Woodland, trees and scrub provide habitat for a great many species, but others require grassland, cliffs, buildings or bare ground for ground nesting. Food preference dictates the habitat in which they are found including mudflats, grassland, agricultural land, rivers, moorland and woodland although some are more generalist.

Bats

Bats are nocturnal insectivorous mammals which have been a conservation priority for many years mainly due to habitat loss. Bats occupy a variety of structures including houses, barns, churches and halls as well as other structures, rock faces and tree hollows and move throughout the seasons. The species of bat and life stage dictates the habitat preference, which may be large fly-in spaces or small crevices as well as their foraging style and prey preference. Some species have more specific prey while other such as the pipistrelle species are more generalist. Bats require shelter with nearby unlit vegetation with an abundance of small flying invertebrates on which to feed but can fly several kilometres per night to find good foraging.

Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (Amendment) 2017

All bats, great crested newts, dormice and otters found in the UK are Higher Level Protected Species (HLPS) being protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

Under the Habitats Regulations, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an HLPS,
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species,
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Disturbance is defined as that which is likely:

1. To impair the animal's ability:

- to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
- in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species (e.g. bats), to hibernate or migrate; or

2. To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Other offences also exist relating to possession, transport and sale.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) offers varying degrees of protection to species including otter, bats, dormice, amphibians and reptiles. Animals listed on Schedule 5 of the Act are protected against one or more of the following:

- intentional killing, injuring or taking (not applicable to bats due to overarching legislation);
- intentional or reckless damage or destruction, or obstruction of access to any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- disturbance of any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose;
- sell, offer or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from such an animal.

Wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds, intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it's being used or built, intentionally take or destroy a wild bird's egg, possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of them, or their eggs, sell wild birds or put them on display for sale, use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds.

Environment Act (Wales) 2016

Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act has replaced the Section 42 of the NERC Act 2006 in Wales. Section 7 lists the living organisms and types of habitat in Wales which are considered to be of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales.

The Act states that Welsh Ministers must take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section and encourage others to take such steps.

Planning Policy (Wales) 2024

Section 6.4.3 of Planning Policy Wales states that: 'The planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement124. Recognising that development needs to take place and some biodiversity may be impacted, the planning system should ensure that overall there is a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, resulting in enhanced well-being'

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

places a duty upon public bodies to produce well-being objectives, in addition, the Act also establishes Public Service Boards for each Local Authority area in Wales, who must prepare and publish a local Well-Being Plan, setting out objectives and how the board or it's individual members will achieve them.

METHODOLOGY

Data search

A search was made for available information relating to sites designated for bats within a 10km area, including internationally and nationally important sites; Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the highly mobile nature of this group. The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) supplied a data search for protected and priority species and other species and sites within a 2km radius of the land at Winchfawr Road (LERC Report Reference: 0245-683). Freely available information was obtained from internet source Multi Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The data search was conducted to the latest ecological survey guidelines.

Site survey - preliminary ecological appraisal

The site survey broadly followed a recognised survey method sometimes known as extended Phase 1.

The Phase 1 habitat survey technique is a standardised habitat mapping system used by consultants, wildlife organisations and agencies throughout the UK. Habitat information is conveyed by means of colour coded maps and symbols with descriptive text and target notes regarding features of wildlife interest (NCC 1990).

Limitations of the method, common to all surveys, are that it provides a 'snapshot' of plant species present and animals tracks and signs at the time of survey. Other plants may be more apparent at different times of year, but most plants are thought to be visible during the summer months. Phase 1 habitat surveys are ordinarily carried out between April and September, but broad habitat types may be identified outside of this season.

Rebecca Sheahan-East of East Ecology, a surveyor experienced in Phase 1 habitat survey carried out a site visit on 23/10/2024 using the extended Phase 1 habitat survey technique. The weather on the day of the survey was cool and overcast. The most dominant plant species were identified to assist in placing the habitat into the correct classification.

Any species not immediately identified were examined with the use of a hand lens and several wildflower keys.

Tracks and signs of fauna were also searched for, including examining opened hazel nuts, droppings, footprints and burrows.

Constraints

There were no constraints to the survey which would produce invalid results.

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Data search

Designated sites

Two statutory designated sites fell into the search area; Cwm Glo a Glyndyrys SSSI (787m) and Cwm Taff Fechan Woodlands SSSI (1958m) with an additional designation, Cwm Taff Fechan Woodland LNR (1958m)

Fourteen Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) lay within the search area, the nearest being Winchfawr West designated for its heathland habitats and great crested newt populations. The full list of SINC's are listed below:

- Winchfawr West (100m)
- Winchfawr East & Clwydyfagwr (119m)
- Cwm Glo (717m)
- Cwm Ffrwd (978m)
- Coed Meirig Pastures (878m)
- Gellideg North Fields (918m)
- Gethin Forest (986m)
- Bryn-ddu & Ty'n-y-coedcae (1366m)
- Cwm Taf Fields & Cefn Coed Tip (1432m)
- Cwm Taf Fawr (1546m)
- Cwm Taf Fechan (1659m)
- Blaencanaid (1699m)
- Rhydycar West (1791m)
- Afon Taf (1970m)

One regionally important geodiversity site Nant Ffrwyd fell in the search area. Also within the search area were 4 semi-natural ancient woodlands, one restored ancient woodland and one plantation on ancient woodland. One NRW priority woodland area and 2 NRW priority grassland and heath priority areas. The majority of the search area fell within a B-Lines policy area.

The plot lay within the B-lines area only.

Habitats

Within the data search was habitat information for the area. The plot of land at Winchfawr Road had not been mapped but some of the habitats outside of the neighbouring dwellings and domestic gardens had. These were bare ground and spoil, dense scrub, wet heath/acidic grassland mosaic and semi-improved acidic grassland.

The previous report for the land at Winchfawr issued by BE Ecological following their survey in February 2023 found the site to contain poor semi-improved grassland with tall ruderal elements, buildings and a stone wall with areas of concrete.

Species records

1226 priority and protected species records were found within the search area and summarised in table 1. 446 species of conservation concern and 723 locally important species records were also found within the search area but not included in the table. Records occurring at the same distance from the central grid reference are typically submitted by the same recorder visiting the same site.

Scientific name	Common name	Proximity	Number of records	Conservation status
Euphrasia officinalis subsp. anglica	English sticky eyebright	1140m	1	S7, RDB1 (Wales) - VU, RDB1 (UK) - EN, LBAP (GWY), LI(SEWBReC), LI(VC47), LI(VC48, LS), LI(VC49, LR)
Euphrasia officinalis subsp. pratensis	Large flowered sticky eyebright	1365m	4	S7, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (GWY, VOG), LBAP (NPT, VOG), LI(SEWBReC), LI(VC43), LI(VC47), LI(VC49, LS)
Hieracium angustatiforme	Small leaved hawkweed	2528m	1	S7, RDB1 (Wales) - CR, RDB1 (UK) - CR, RDB2 (UK) - R
Hycinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	1094m	19	WCA8, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, FLI, SNP, TRA, TRF)
Platanthera bifolia	Lesser Butterfly-orchid	1739m	1	S7, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (CON, GWY, TRA), LI(VC43), LI(VC47), LI(VC48, LS), LI(VC49, LR), LI(VC50, LR), LI(VC51, LS), LI(VC52, LS)
Pseudorchis albida	Small-white Orchid	1340m	1	S7, CITES, RDB1 (Wales) - CR, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (DEN, GWY, TRA), LI(VC48, LR), LI(VC49, LR), WS_P
Sorbus leyana	Ley's whitebeam	2230m	1	S7, RDB1 (Wales) - CR, RDB1 (UK) - CR, RDB2 (UK) - R, LBAP (BBNP, POW), WS_P
Trollius europaeus	Globeflower	1289m	1	S7, LBAP (NPT), LI(VC43), LI(VC49, LS), LI(VC50, LR)
Lycopodium clavatum	Stag's-horn Clubmoss	798m	4	HDir, S7, CITES, LI(VC50, LS), LI(VC51, LR), LI(VC52, LR), WS_P
Punctelia jeckeri		1156m	1	S7, RDB1 (Wales) - LC, WS_P
Usnea articulata		1215m	2	S7, RDB1 (Wales) - VU, RDB1 (UK) - NT, LI(VC42, R), WS_P
Clavaria zollingeri	Violet Coral	969m	1	S7, LBAP (CON, FLI, POW), WS_P
Entoloma bloxamii s. lat.	Big Blue Pinkgill	1087m	1	S7, WS_P
Microglossum olivaceum agg.	Olive Earthtongue	969m	1	S7, LBAP (BBNP, CER, MON, POW), WS_P
Poronia punctata	Nail fungus	1434m	1	S7, WS_P
Acronicta psi	Grey dagger	1926m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Acronicta rumicis	Knot grass	810m	17	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Agrochola lychnidis	Beaded chestnut	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Allophyes oxyacanthae	Green brindled crescent	2340m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Amphipoea oculea	Ear moth	1221m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Amphipyra tragopoginis	Mouse moth	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Anchoscelis helvola	Flounced chestnut	2340m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Anchoscelis litura	Brown spot pinion	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY)
Apamea remissa	Dusky brocade	1121m	11	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Arctia caja	Garden tiger	1195m	5	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)

Boloria euphrosyne	Pearl bordered fritillary	2222m	1	WCA5, S7, RDB1 (UK) - EN, LBAP (BBNP, CER, CON, DEN, FLI, PEM, POW), LI(SEWBReC), LI(VC43), WS_P
Boloria selene	Small pearl bordered fritillary	358m	17	S7, RDB1 (UK) - NT, LBAP (BGW, BRG, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, MTR, NEW, POW, RCT, SNP, SWN, TRF, VOG), LI(SEWBReC), LI(VC43)
Bombus humilis	Brown banded carder bee	1782m	2	S7, LBAP (CER, CON, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, VOG)
Bombus ruderarius	Reed shanked carder bee	1926m	1	S7, LBAP (FLI, MTR, VOG)
Brachylomia viminalis	Minor shoulder-knot	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Caradrina morpheus	Mottled rustic	2340m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Ceramica pisi	Broom moth	305m	19	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Chiasmia clathrata	Latticed heath	1121m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Cirrhia icteritia	Sallow	2222m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Coenonympha pamphilus	Small heath	305m	17	S7, RDB1 (UK) - NT, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Cupido minimus	Small blue	622m	3	WCA5, S7, RDB1 (UK) - NT, LBAP (CON, PEM, VOG), LI(SEWBReC), WS_P
Diarsia rubi	Small square spot	810m	9	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Ecliptopera silaceata	Small phoenix	1172m	8	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Ennomos fuscantaria	Dusky thorn	2524m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Erynnis tages	Dingy skipper	1434m	6	S7, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (BGW, BRG, CON, FLI, GWY, SWN, VOG), LI(SEWBReC)
Eugnorisma glareosa	Autumnal rustic	798m	4	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Euphydryas aurinia	Marsh fritillary	764m	76	HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CON, CRM, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRA, VOG), LI(SEWBReC)
Graphiphora augur	Double dart	1755m	2	S7, LBAP (BRG)
Hemaris tityus	Narrow bordered bee hawk moth	1926m	2	S7, LBAP (CER, CON, GWY, POW), WS_P
Hepialus humuli	Ghost moth	2222m	3	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Hipparchia semele	Grayling	286m	8	S7, RDB1 (UK) - VU, LBAP (BRG, CDF, GWY, RCT, VOG), LI(SEWBReC), LI(VC43), WS_C
Hoplodrina blanda	Rustic	810m	3	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Hydraecia micacea	Rosy rustic	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Lasiommata megera	Wall	1926m	1	S7, RDB1 (UK) - NT, LBAP (GWY, VOG), WS_C
Leucania comma	Shoulder striped wainscot	810m	11	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Litoligia literosa	Rosy minor	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Lycia hirtaria	Brindled beauty	1926m	1	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Macaria wauaria	V moth	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (BRG)
Melanchra persicariae	Dot moth	1121m	4	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Mniotype adusta	Dark brocade	810m	7	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Orthosia gracilis	Powdered quaker	1630m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Pelurga comitata	Dark spinach	2222m	1	S7, LI(BIS)
Perizoma albulata	Grass rivulet	1782m	2	S7, LBAP (VOG)
Rheumaptera hastata hastata	Argent and Sable	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (BBNP, CON, MON, POW)

Satyrium w-album	White letter hairstreak	1950m	1	WCA5, S7, RDB1 (UK) - EN, LBAP (BRG, FLI, NEW, SWN, VOG), LI(SEWBReC), WS_C
Scotopteryx chenopodiata	Shaded broad-bar	2222m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Spilosoma lubricipeda	White ermine	1121m	12	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Spilosoma lutea	Buff ermine	1121m	13	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Stilbia anomala	Anomalous	798m	2	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Tholera cespitis	Hedge rustic	798m	3	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Tholera decimalis	Feathered gothic	2222m	1	S7
Timandra comae	Blood vein	1926m	2	S7, LBAP (VOG)
Tyria jacobaeae	Cinnabar moth	305m	12	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Xanthorhoe ferrugata	Dark-barred twin-spot carpet	1185m	3	S7, LBAP (GWY, VOG)
Xestia castanea	Neglected rustic	798m	4	S7, LBAP (GWY)
Xylena exsoleta	Sword grass	2222m	1	S7, LBAP (CON, DEN, POW), WS_P
Anguis frgilis	Slow worm	810m	4	WCA5, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, VOG), WS_C
Bufo bufo	Common toad	516m	13	WCA5, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, TRA, VOG)
Lissotriton helveticus	Palmate newt	841m	6	WCA5, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, POW, TRA), LI(BIS), WS_C
Natrix helvetica	Grass snake	1048m	1	WCA5, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, VOG), LBAP (ANG, CLY, DEN, FLI, POW, SNP, TRA, VOG)
Rana temporaria	Common frog	305m	19	HDir, WCA5, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, FLI, POW, TRA)
Triturus cristatus	Great crested newt	318m	52	EPS, HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, MON, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG, WRE), WS_P
Zootoca vivipara	Common lizard	185m	4	WCA5, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG)
Anguilla anguilla	Eel	1744	1	S7, RDB1 (UK) - CR, LBAP (CLY, CON, GWY, VOG), WS_P
Salmo trutta	Brown/sea trout	1220	11	S7, LBAP (BGW, CLY, CON, GWY, MTR, RCT, TRA, TRF, VOG), LI(BIS), WS_P
Salmo salar	Atlantic salmon	1611	6	HDir, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, TRA, VOG), WS_P
Acanthis cabaret	Lesser redpoll	305m	19*	S7, LBAP (CON), LBAP (DEN, POW, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Accipiter gentilis	Goshawk	1682m	9	WCA1.1, WCA9, CITES, LBAP (CLY, CON, POW, VOG)
Alauda arvensis	Skylark	305m	22	BDir22, S7, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRF, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Alcedo atthis	Kingfisher	1718m	6	Bdir1, WCA1.1, Bern, LBAP (CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, TRA), WBAm(RSPB), UKBAm(RSPB)
Anthus trivialis	Tree pipit	798m	14	S7, Bern, LBAP (CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Bucephala clangula	Golden eye	2524m	1	BDir22, WCA1.2, LBAP (CON, POW), UKBAm(RSPB)
Caprimulgus europaeus	Nightjar	1434m	9	BDir1, S7, Bern, LBAP (BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, MON, PEM, POW, SNP, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), LI(VC43), UKBAm(RSPB)
Charadrius morinellus	Dotterel	3006m	1	

Chroicocephalus ridibundus	Black headed gull	1011m	8	BDir22, S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (GWY, VOG), UKBAm(RSPB), WS_P
Circus cyaneus	Hen harrier	5814m	2	BDir1, WCA1.1, S7, CITES, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, VOG), LBAP (BBNP, DEN, FLI, POW, SNP, VOG), LI(VC43), WS_P
Crex crex	Corncrake	1718m	1	BDir1, WCA1.1, WCA9, S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (ANG, CON, GWY, PEM), UKBR(RSPB)
Cuculus canorus	Cuckoo	798m	15	S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Dryobates minor	Lesser spotted woodpecker	1717m	1	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, VOG), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB), WS_P, WS_C
Emberiza schoeniclus	Reed bunting	305m	14	S7, Bern, LBAP (BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), UKBAm(RSPB), WS_C
Falco columbarius	Merlin	1718m	2	BDir1, WCA1.1, Bern, CITES, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB), WS_P, WS_C
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine	516m	13	BDir1, WCA1.1, Bern, CITES LI(VC43)
Falco subbuteo	Hobby	2222m	1	WCA1.1, Bern, CITES, LBAP (CON, GWY, POW, VOG), LI(VC43), WS_P
Falco tinnunculus	Kestrel	557m	8	S7, Bern, CITES, WBR(RSPB) LI(VC43), UKBAm(RSPB)
Ficedula hypoleuca	Pied flycatcher	1718m	2	S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (CON, GWY, POW, SNP, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Fringilla montifringilla	Brambling	1455m	4	WCA1.1, LBAP (CON), WBAm(RSPB)
Larus argentatus	Herring gull	798m	19	BDir22, S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (CON, GWY, POW, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Linaria cannabina	Linnet	516m	22	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, DEN, FLI, PEM, VOG), LBAP (CON, GWY), UKBR(RSPB)
Locustella naevia	Grasshopper warbler	976m	12	S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, VOG), UKBR(RSPB), WS_C
Loxia curvirostra	Crossbill	1310m	20	WCA1.1, Bern, LBAP (CON, POW), LI(VC43)
Lyrurus tetrix	Black grouse	3006m	1	BDir22, S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CER, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP), UKBR(RSPB)
Milvus milvus	Red kite	810m	17	BDir1, WCA1.1, WCA9, CITES, LBAP (CON, CRM, GWY, POW), WBAm(RSPB), WS_P
Muscicapa striata	Spotted flycatcher	1782m	2	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Numenius arquata	Curlew	3006m	1	BDir22, S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, VOG), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB), WS_C
Passer domesticus	House sparrow	305m	20	S7, WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Phylloscopus sibilatrix	Wood warbler	1434m	5	S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (CON, GWY, SNP, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Poecile montanus	Willow tit	1817m	4	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, DEN, FLI, POW, VOG), LBAP (CON, GWY), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB)
Poecile palustris	Marsh tit	2340m	1	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Prunella modularis	Dunnock	305m	29	S7, Bern, LBAP (CON, POW, VOG), UKBAm(RSPB)
Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Bullfinch	557m	37	S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, TRF, VOG), UKBAm(RSPB)
Sturnus vulgaris	Starling	305m	18	BDir22, S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, FLI, GWY, VOG), UKBR(RSPB)
Tringa ochropus	Green sandpiper	1718m	2	WCA1.1, Bern, LBAP (CON, VOG), WBAm(RSPB), UKBAm(RSPB)

Turdus iliacus	Redwing	1128m	16	BDir22, WCA1.1, WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Turdus philomelos	Song thrush	305m	32	BDir22, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRF, VOG, WRE), WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare	616m	14	BDir22, WCA1.1, WBAm(RSPB), UKBR(RSPB)
Turdus torquatus	Ring ouzel	1416m	3	S7, Bern, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (BBNP, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, VOG), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB), WS_P
Tyto alba	Barn owl	2000m	19	WCA1.1, WCA9, Bern, CITES, LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRA, VOG, WRE), LI(VC43), WS_C
Vanellus vanellus	Lapwing	406m	10	BDir22, S7, WBR(RSPB), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, MON, PEM, POW, SNP, TRF, VOG), LI(VC43), UKBR(RSPB)
Arvicola amphibius	Water vole	835m	2	WCA5, S7, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VoG), WS_P
Chiroptera	Bat	1926m	21	EPS, WCA5, LBAP (ANG, DEN, FLI, RCT, SNP, TRA, TRF)
Erinaceus europaeus	European hedgehog	561m	20	S7, Bern
Lepus europaeus	Brown hare	557m	3	S7, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, PEM, POW, SNP, TRF, VOG)
Lutra lutra	Otter	500m	27	EPS, HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, CITES, RDB2 (UK),
Meles meles	Badger	1365m	7	BA, Bern, LBAP (CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, PEM, POW, TRF, WRE), WS_C
Micromys minutus	Harvest mouse	1434m	1	S7, LBAP (BRG, CON, FLI, GWY, VOG), LI(BIS), WS_P
Mustela nivalis	Weasel	1657m	2	NRW, Bern, LBAP (ANG, BGW, BRG, CON, FLI, NEW, POW)
Mustela putorius	Polecat	1096m	2	HDir, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (BGW, BRG, CON, FLI, GWY, NEW, POW, SNP, VOG)
Myotis	Myotis bat species	509m	25	EPS, HDir, WCA5, Bern, LBAP (ANG, DEN, FLI, SNP, TRA, TRF)
Myotis daubentonii	Daubenton's bat	1681m	13	EPS, HDir, WCA5, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF), WS_P
Myotis nattereri	Natterer's bat	1935m	9	EPS, HDir, WCA5, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF), WS_P
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule	2146m	3	EPS, HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG), WS_P
Pipipstrellus	Pipistrelle bat species	917m	28	EPS, WCA5, LBAP (ANG, DEN, FLI, SNP, TRA, TRF)
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common pipistrelle	424m	51	EPS, Hdir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK),
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano pipistrelle	1611m	29	EPS, Hdir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK)
Plecotus auritus	Brown long-eared bat	509m	8	EPS, HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, CLY, CON, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG)
Plecotus	Long eared bat species	2218m	1	EPS, HDir, WCA5, Bern, LBAP (ANG, DEN, FLI, SNP, TRA, TRF)
Rhinolophus ferrumequinum	Greater horseshoe	1623m	13	EPS, HDir, WCA5, AnII, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CER, CLY, CRM, DEN, FLI, MON, PEM, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG), WS_P

Rhinolophus hipposideros	Lesser horseshoe bat	1198m	25	EPS, HDir, WCA5, S7, Bern, RDB2 (UK), LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CLY, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, MON, PEM, POW, SNP, TRA, TRF, VOG, WRE)
	Red squirrel	2524m	1	WCA5, S7, Bern, LBAP (ANG, BBNP, CON, CRM, DEN, FLI, GWY, POW, SNP), WS_P

Table 1. Summary of data search results relating to bats from SEWBReC.

UKBAP = UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species, UKBAP (R) = UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Research only species), BDir1 = EC Birds Directive Annex 1 Species, BDir21 = EC Birds Directive Annex 2.1 Species, BDir22 = EC Birds Directive Annex 2.2 Species, Bern = The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats Bonn = The Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild, Animals Species, CITES = Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, EPS = European Protected Species, HDir = EU Habitats Directive Species, NRW = Natural Resources Wales Priority Species, RD1 (Wales) = Welsh Red Data Book listing based on IUCN guidelines RD1 (UK) = UK Red Data Book listing based on IUCN guidelines, RD2 (UK) = UK Red Data Book listing not based on IUCN guidelines (Nationally, Rare and Scarce), WBR (RSPB) = RSPB Welsh Red listed birds (not based on IUCN criteria), WBAm (RSPB) = RSPB Welsh Amber listed birds (not based on IUCN criteria), UKBR (RSPB) = RSPB UK Red listed birds (not based on IUCN criteria), UKBAm (RSPB) = RSPB UK Amber listed birds (not based on IUCN criteria) S7 = Environment Act (Wales), Section 7 Species, WCA1.1 = Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 1 Part 1 Species, WCA5 = Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 5 Species, WCA8 = Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 8 Species, WCA9 = Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 9 Species, INNS = Invasive Non-Native Species, WSG.P = Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales – Primary, species, WSG.C = Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales -Contributory species, WVP = IUCN Threat Listing of Welsh Vascular Plants, LBAP (xxx) = Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species (see key below), LI (SEWBReC) = Locally Important Species (as identified by local specialists) in SEWBReC area, LI (BIS) = Locally Important Species (as identified by local specialists) in BIS area, LI (BRYO-MON) = Locally or nationally scarce or rare bryophyte in Monmouthshire, LI (VC##) = Locally Important Species (as identified by local specialists) in Vice County ##, LI (VC##, LS) = Locally Scarce in Vice County ##, LI (VC##, LR) = Locally Rare in Vice County ##, LI (VC##, EX) = Extinct in Vice County ##, LI (VC##, UR) = Under Recorded in Vice County ##

Previous report (2023)

The previous report following a site visit by BE Ecological in February 2023 reported wood pigeon and house sparrow at the site on the day of the survey. It was reported that the site may be suitable for common reptile and amphibian species, but not great crested newt.

Japanese knotweed was also reported present at the site.

Site survey

Habitats

The study area consisted of the disturbed land at Winchfawr Road including the previous planning application area and the additional land and contained the following habitats: bare ground, tall ruderal/marshy grassland, scattered ornamental shrubs, containers and mixed material walls. The habitats have been mapped in Figure 2. Photographs of the site are provided in Appendix A.

Tall Ruderal/Marshy grassland

A small are of land near to the roadside was less disturbed and contained a small range of native plant species of tall ruderal communities. It was dominated by broad leaved willowherb *Epilobium obtusifolium* but contained occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and soft rush *Juncus effusus* which was more abundant in one corner to the north. The ground in the northern corner of the plot was no longer wet due to the changes in drainage at the site following the removal of the sewage soakaway for the neighbouring property.

Introduced shrub

Scattered Leyland Cyress *Cupresus x leylandii* and other small shrubs in containers were present in the western end of the plot.

Bare ground

The majority of the plot was bare earth where levels had been changed to accommodate new sewage treatment for the adjacent property and to accommodate a temporary vehicle parking area.

Building (containers)

Two metal shipping containers were located on the site and are due for removal to enable the dwelling construction.

Mixed material wall

Two small length of stone and brick wall were noted on the site. These had been partly dismantled and the remaining areas were low to the ground and fairly well pointed with minimal gaps.

Potential for Priority and Protected Species

Due to the highly disturbed nature and small size of the site, isolated from good quality habitats it was considered largely unsuitable for priority and protected species. A minor road separated the plot from the nearest Site of Importance for Nature Conservation where low populations of great crested newts have been recorded.

Bats may pass over the plot as it currently unlit and has trees and shrub in the joining boundary to the south in adjacent property ownership.

No Japanese knotweed was found on this survey visit (reported previously in 2023).

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS, FURTHER SURVEYS OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATION

Designated sites

The site did not fall within or close enough to any statutorily designated sites to cause any direct or indirect impacts. The nearest designation was Winchfawr West SINC which is designated for its habitats but also great crested newt population. The construction of the new dwelling, garage, garden and access is unlikely to cause disturbance to the designated area but great crested newts are a mobile species and may be found up to 1km from breeding ponds. However the land at Winchfawr was found not to hold any potential terrestrial habitat for this species.

Habitats

The areas most affected by the proposed new buildings, garden and access is bare ground and the tall ruderal vegetation.

Ruderal/marshy grassland

This habitat is thought to be of negligible biodiversity value and its loss represents neither a positive nor negative impact.

Introduced shrub

No impacts are anticipated as the non-native shrubs are of negligible biodiversity value.

Bare ground

Since the bare ground has minimal biodiversity value, no impacts are expected during or after the construction of the house, garage, garden and access.

Building (containers)

The metal shipping containers have no biodiversity value.

Mixed material wall

The small areas of wall were not thought to hold any value as shelter for amphibians and reptiles. The removal of the walls is not thought to present any negative impact but enhancement of proposed walls for amphibians and reptiles is recommended.

Species

No impacts are anticipated on protected and priority species since recent changes to the site. The addition of a small area of land to the garden of the new dwelling will be of no consequence to priority and protected species and the degree or recent site disturbance is high , therefore decreasing the likelihood of amphibians and reptiles being present. However, contractors should remain vigilant to the potential for great crested newt and common reptiles

close to the plot which could occasionally move within the boundary. In the unlikely event that a great crested newt, reptile or other higher level protected species is found, work will cease in that area until advice and potentially a licence is obtained from Natural Resources Wales.

Enhancements for the plot will be a durable bat box of integrated into the highest part of the south wall of the completed dwelling with two bird boxes to be placed on the detached garage.

Suitable models include the Vivara Pro woodstone bat box https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-bat-box?bkfno=252139&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA0--6BhCBARIsADYqyL9iiV6idQ5iGfErgOqf5ti3YY0Zxmsf0PnsuOt8PshLsopRkJQxTWcaAkRlEALw_wcB

Bat Access brick https://www.wildcare.co.uk/wildlife-nest-boxes/bat-boxes/bat-access-brick-10601.html?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA0--6BhCBARIsADYqyL9BA3gXFwjMbPB-0cEmQH-M26-sDpXNEQgiNwlDCW3cHp2z-wd955IaAnv7EALw_wcB

Sparrow terrace https://www.birdfood.co.uk/woodstone-estella-house-sparrow-nest-box?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA0--6BhCBARIsADYqyL9KwnhQiox2HheDN4YtHx_w3tvhbXzcwrGYquHQ9QGbjVgfwiRVvVIaAoe8EALw_wcB

Vivara Pro Seville bird box https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-seville-32mm-woodstone-nest-box?bkfno=234956&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA0--6BhCBARIsADYqyL-jFBYreOdJJVahCfBBX0Cl18SaSOCCPNc-Rq_K3dU6ckf9DWimTEIaAiweEALw_wcB

External lighting will comply with the bats and lighting criteria specified within guidance document 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK produced by the ILP and Bat Conservation Trust. https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/. No lighting must be allowed to spill onto the bat box entrance and the southern boundary to the adjoining property must remain unlit to retain a dark assumed commuting corridor for bats.

In addition to this, 25 crevices will be created in the stone facing of the boundary walls at ground level to create shelter for reptiles and amphibians. The crevices will be scattered throughout the stone-faced walls will be of no more than 2.5cm width and height but of at least 15cm depth in any direction. Recommended locations for the enhancements are shown in Figure 4.

CONCLUSIONS

No nationally, internationally important or locally designations fell at the site but one was in relatively close proximity. The scale of the work to extend the garden and build the dwelling and garage is thought to be small enough not to have any direct or indirect impacts on the sites.

The habitats found at the site were mainly bare ground with a small area of ruderal vegetation and scattered introduced shrubs. The habitats affected directly will be the bare ground which is of negligible biodiversity value.

No further ecological survey or mitigation is thought to be necessary as the habitats affected are of negligible biodiversity value.

To enhance the site for species and groups identified nearby in the data search one durable bat box and two durable bird boxes will be mounted on the completed structures.

Several areas of stone-faced block wall are proposed to border the plot. These will have built within them 25 missing mortar crevices for amphibians and reptiles to shelter and potentially hibernate within.

Work will stop if higher level protected species are found while advice and potentially a licence is sought from Natural Resources Wales at any point during the work.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Location of Land at Winchfawr Road. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013

Figure 2 Phase 1 Habitats of Land at Winchfawr Road

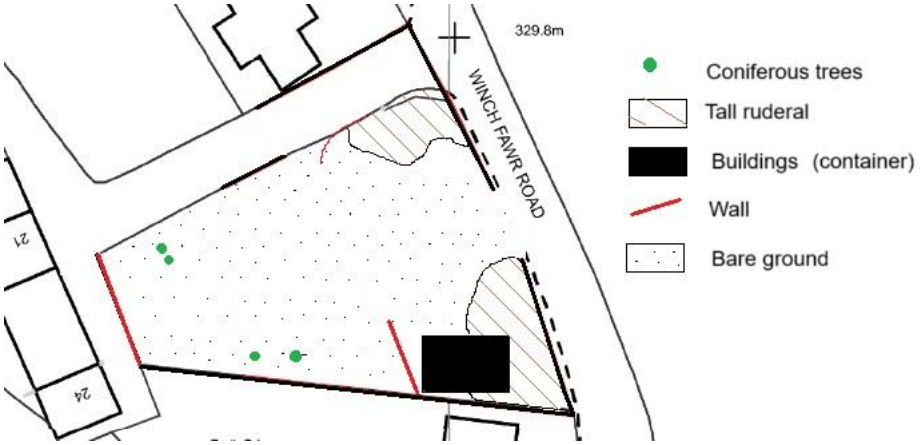

Figure 3 Proposed site layout for land at Winchfawr Road

Figure 4.Proposed ecological enhancement measures for land at Winchfawr Road

Bat Box

Bird boxes

Wall crevices for reptiles

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APPENDIX A. SITE PHOTOS

	Photo 1. Upper level of the site previously in different ownership.
	Photo 2. Upper level of the site
	Photo 3. Remains of boundary wall

	Photo 4. Upper level of site
	Photo 5. Lower level of site and former soakaway
	Photo 6. Whole site from the roadside
	Photo 7. Small area of ruderal vegetation to the plot corner

	Photo 8. Rushes of a former sewage soakaway