



Cefn Fforest Farm Treharris

Bat Activity Survey Report

August 2026 | Issue 2VB



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2	B	Updated to incorporate automated (static) detector survey results, expanded roost suitability interpretation, barn owl confirmation and compensation/enhancement proposals, in response to MTCBC ecologist comments	BE	12/08/26

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken by BE Ecological Ltd in 2026 in order to inform a planning application for the renovation and conversion of the buildings. The results indicated that the buildings are of moderate potential for roosting bats and as such further surveys were recommended.

Subsequent dusk emergence surveys revealed that the buildings are not a bat roost. Following consultation with the local planning authority, a further automated (static) detector survey was undertaken over eight consecutive nights (3rd to 11th August 2026) using detectors deployed at high level within the interior of both buildings, in order to determine whether the buildings are used for night-roosting. No bat calls whatsoever were recorded on either detector. The buildings are therefore not used by bats for day-roosting or for night-roosting, and a European Protected Species Licence will not be required. Foraging and commuting bat activity was, however, recorded around the buildings and grounds, and enhancement and sensitive lighting recommendations are made accordingly.

Two pairs of swallow were recorded nesting within the main farmhouse. No evidence of barn owl was found within either building. Compensation for the loss of roosting and nesting opportunities, together with a scheme of biodiversity enhancement, is set out at Section 9.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey and subsequent activity surveys at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

This report includes the findings of the aforementioned bat activity surveys undertaken in the appropriate season.

The surveys were undertaken in line with the current guidance on standards for bat surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023).

This report addresses bats and, in a scoping capacity, breeding birds.

1.2 Site description

The site comprises a traditional detached stone-built farmhouse with an attached stone barn range, located in a rural setting near Treharris. The farmhouse is two storeys and constructed of coursed local stone, beneath a pitched roof finished in clay/concrete interlocking tiles and served by stone-built chimney stacks at the gable ends.

The attached barn is of similar stone construction beneath a pitched corrugated metal (sheet) roof. The buildings are bounded by traditional drystone walls with grassland, hedgerow and tree cover in the wider surroundings, providing good connectivity to the surrounding landscape for foraging and commuting bats.

Both buildings are in a derelict and dilapidated condition. Internally the farmhouse has been gutted and is open from floor to ridge, exposing the full roof structure of rafters, purlins and ridge timbers; areas of the roof covering are missing, with daylight visible through gaps at the ridge and along the slopes. Internal walls retain areas of degraded lime plaster over bare stonework. The barn retains a suspended timber floor, above which is an open void that was accessed during the survey; its roof structure is similarly exposed, with gaps to the covering. Beneath the suspended floor is a ground-level area used for storage.

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

2 LEGISLATION & POLICIES

2.1 Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provides safeguards for European Protected Species (those listed under Annex IV Habitats Directive). With regards to bats, this makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) capture, injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) disturb a bat in a way that would (significantly in Scotland) affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy a roost (this is an 'absolute' offence)
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

2.2 Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the legislation for England and Wales for nature conservation, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost

2.3 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

The following sections are relevant:

6.2.8 The role of development as part of a spatial approach will be two fold. Planning authorities firstly must ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and secondly that it provides opportunities for enhancement within areas identified as important for the ability of species to adapt and/or to move to more suitable habitats.

6.2.9 Planning authorities must encourage the appropriate management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna and other statutory and non-statutory designated sites. The features concerned are those which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as 'stepping stones' or 'wildlife corridors', are essential for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange. The protection and creation of networks of statutory and non-statutory sites and of the landscape features which provide links from one habitat to another can make an important contribution to developing resilient ecological networks and securing a net benefit for biodiversity and in doing so improve the quality of the local place and its ability to adapt to climate change.

6.2.12 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

6.4.3 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. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems, and secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.

6.4.5 Planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species (not including non native invasive species), locally or nationally and must work alongside nature and it must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improve, or enable the improvement, of the resilience of ecosystems.

6.4.11 Planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.

6.4.12 Having worked iteratively through the stages of the step-wise approach, and providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity. Where biodiversity enhancement proportionate to the scale and nature of the development is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise, it will be necessary to refuse permission.

6.4.35 The presence of a species protected under European or UK legislation, or under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal which, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat and to ensure that the range and population of the species is sustained.

2.4 Building with Nature

Applicants should consider standards for development design “Building with Nature” which can be found at www.buildingwithnature.org.uk

2.5 Planning Policy Wales September 2009 (Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning)

Section 6.2.1 – the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal, that, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

Section 6.2.2 – It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

2.6 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 - The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

The Environment (Wales) Act became law on 21st March 2016 and replaces the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It puts in place legislation to enable Wales’ resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up manner and to form part of the legislative framework necessary to tackle climate change. The Act supports the Welsh Government’s wider remit under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council as a public body has obligations under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to demonstrate how the Local Authority will “seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems”.

The intention is to ensure that in carrying out their functions, public authorities will place biodiversity as a natural and integral part of policy and decision making; address biodiversity decline through positive actions that will result in maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity; and develop ecosystem resilience through maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

2.7 State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to publish a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) to provide information on the current state of our natural resources to enable Welsh Ministers to set priorities for action at the national level. The Authority is required to have regard to the findings of this report in exercising its functions. The SoNaRR report spells out the major threats to the proper functioning of ecosystems in Wales, which include climate change, land use change, over exploitation of natural resources, and nutrient enrichment and pollution.

2.8 Nature Recovery Plan

The Welsh Government launched the Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) which sets out its commitment to biodiversity in Wales and how Wales will address the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi biodiversity targets in Wales. The Nature Recovery Action Plan links to and complements The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The NRP highlights the issues to address through putting nature at the heart of decision making, increasing the resilience of our natural environment, and taking specific action for habitats and species.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Search

A commercial biological records search (BARB+) was not commissioned in this instance. The local planning authority's planning portal was checked for relevant ecological information and planning history pertaining to the site. Following consultee comments, the following justification is provided.

The buildings are derelict, structurally open and internally exposed. Full access was obtained to all parts of both structures during the inspection survey, including the exposed roof structures, the open void above the suspended floor of the barn and the ground-level storage area beneath it. The buildings could therefore be inspected directly and in their entirety, rather than being assessed by inference from surrounding records.

The survey strategy adopted was precautionary and was not contingent on third-party records. The site was treated throughout as having the potential to support any bat species occurring in the region, including lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) and greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), unless demonstrated otherwise by direct survey. BE Ecological Ltd holds its own survey records for the wider Merthyr Tydfil area and is aware that both horseshoe species are present within the surrounding landscape. The site was assumed from the outset to lie within the Core Sustainance Zone for lesser horseshoe bat (2km) and greater horseshoe bat (3km), and to be connected by suitable foraging and commuting habitat. The identification of these records through a commercial data search would not, therefore, have altered the assessment of the buildings, the survey design or the conclusions drawn.

It is nonetheless acknowledged that current best practice guidance (CIEEM, 2023) is for biological data searches to be undertaken prior to survey work in order to inform survey effort. Following consultation, an automated (static) detector survey has now been undertaken specifically to address the possibility of night-roosting by horseshoe and other species. The methodology is set out at Section 3.6.3 and the results are reported at Section 5.4.

3.2 Survey Objectives

- To carry out an initial bat inspection survey along with the recommended activity surveys
- To present the above details and if necessary recommendations for mitigation, future research and compensation within this report.
- To carry out a scoping survey for breeding birds

3.3 Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of four parts:

- Part 1 - Initial bat inspection survey
- Part 2 - A single activity survey
- Part 3 - A second activity survey
- Part 4 - An automated (static) detector survey of the building interiors

3.4 Surveyor Information

The survey was run by Beth Evans. Beth is the owner of BE ECOLOGICAL LTD and has a postgraduate degree in Environmental Biology: Conservation & Resource Management, specialising in British bats. Beth has 11 years' experience of ecological surveys, both in a small scale and large multi-disciplinary context. Beth also holds Natural Resources Wales and Natural England bat licences to disturb and handle bats.

Beth Evans was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rogers, Dion Rowles and Nadine Morgan.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out in May 2026 to search all buildings, both externally to identify potential bat roosting areas and signs of bat use including; live bats, dead bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks and discarded prey items. The buildings and all areas/items of interest were recorded and

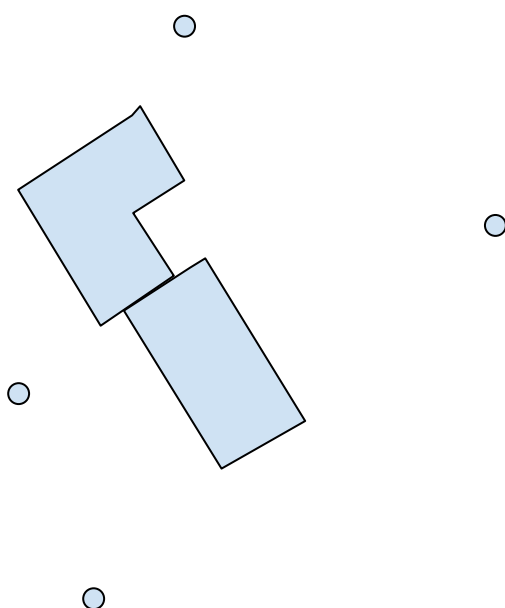
photographed. Extension ladders/steps were used to safely access roof areas and fascia boards etc; where no safe access was available the survey was conducted using close focus binoculars and/or a high powered lamp.

3.6 Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)

Building 'emergence' and 're-entry' surveys were carried out on the following dates, times and weather conditions. Climatic conditions including rain, wind, temperature and cloud cover were recorded for each survey using a hand held Kestrel 4500 weather station.

3.6.1 Survey 1 - 28th May 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 28th May 2026 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the buildings was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors, IR cameras and thermal imaging devices.



3.6.2 Survey 2 - 18th June 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 18th June 2026 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the buildings was visible to surveyors as possible (as above). Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors, IR cameras and thermal imaging devices.

3.6.3 Automated (static) detector survey – 3rd to 11th August 2026

Following consultation with the local planning authority's ecological adviser, an automated (static) detector survey was undertaken in order to determine whether the buildings are used by bats for night-roosting. Dusk emergence surveys alone cannot rule out night-roosting, and this survey was undertaken specifically to address that point.

Two Elekon BATLOGGER S2 full-spectrum static detectors were deployed on 3rd August 2026 and retrieved on 11th August 2026, providing eight consecutive nights of continuous overnight recording from each unit. This exceeds the five nights of deployment requested by the local planning authority.

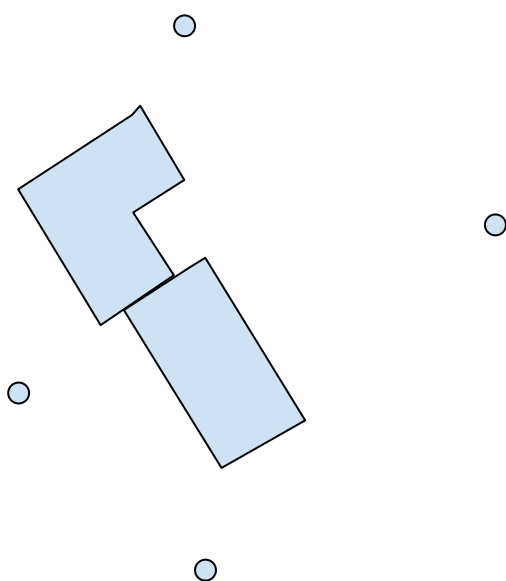
Detector positions. One detector was deployed within the barn and one within the farmhouse. In each case the detector was mounted at high level within the interior of the building, on the upper wall/roof structure, close to the apex. This is the position best placed to detect bats using the internal flight space and the ridge of the roof, and is where night-roosting bats – including horseshoe species, which hang free from the roof structure – would be expected to be present, and where droppings and culled insect remains would accumulate beneath.

Detector orientation. Both detectors were positioned deliberately away from doorways, window openings and other gaps in the building envelope, and were oriented inwards into the internal void of each building. This was done to ensure that any recordings obtained related to bats using the interior of the buildings, and to minimise the risk of capturing the calls of bats commuting or foraging externally, which would otherwise give a false indication of internal use. Given that the emergence surveys had

already established a notable level of external foraging and commuting activity around the buildings, this distinction was central to the survey design.

Settings. Detectors were programmed to record from 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise each night, at a sample rate of 312.5 kHz, with the trigger set across the frequency range 15–192 kHz in order to capture the full range of British bat species, including the high-frequency constant-frequency calls of lesser horseshoe bat (c.110 kHz) and greater horseshoe bat (c.82 kHz). The BATLOGGER S2 logs air temperature alongside each recording and at hourly intervals throughout deployment.

Analysis. Recordings were downloaded and analysed using Elekon BatExplorer. Computer-aided identification was checked manually by an experienced bat surveyor, with sonograms reviewed individually. All non-bat triggers (insect stridulation, mechanical noise, wind and vegetation noise) were identified and discounted.



3.7 Survey limitations

Any survey for bat species can only be a series of snapshots in time. Bats are highly mobile, long lived creatures (capable of living up to 30 years, sometimes longer) with complex social structures and utilising multiple roost sites within a year. The implications of this are that surveys and surveyors have to make informed assumptions based on observations, recorded data, local information and a detailed knowledge of the species.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Inspection survey

4.1.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the buildings. A number of potential access points were noted:

- Gaps beneath and between the corrugated roof sheets of the barn
- Missing and slipped roof coverings to the farmhouse, with open gaps at the ridge and along the slopes
- Open joints and gaps within the stonework and around window and door openings
- Gaps around exposed and weathered timbers at eaves and verges

Given the derelict condition of the buildings, the disturbance, the abundance of potential access points and crevices, and the connectivity of the site to surrounding foraging habitat, the buildings were assessed as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

4.1.2 Internal survey results

The farmhouse has been gutted internally and is open from floor to ridge, allowing the full roof structure to be inspected directly from ground level. No bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks or discarded prey items were observed. The exposed stonework, timbers and gaps were inspected; no evidence of bat use was found.

Within the barn, a suspended timber floor is retained, above which an open void was accessed and inspected. The void and its exposed roof timbers were searched for live bats and field signs; none were found.

Beneath the suspended floor of the barn is a ground-level area used for storage. This area was accessed and inspected; it was found to contain stored materials and items, with degraded plastered and bare stone walls and exposed ceiling timbers above. No bats or evidence of bats was found within this area.

No evidence of bats was recorded internally in either building.

4.1.3 Assessment of roost suitability (preliminary roost assessment)

In response to consultee comments, the following sets out the interpretation of the preliminary roost assessment undertaken as part of the initial inspection survey. It identifies the bat species groups and roost types for which the buildings were considered suitable, and the level of suitability assigned to each. Suitability has been assessed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

By way of general context, both buildings are derelict, structurally open and subject to a high degree of air movement and disturbance. The farmhouse has been gutted internally and is open from floor to ridge sections of the roof covering are missing at the ridge and along both slopes, and daylight is visible throughout the structure. The barn lies beneath a corrugated metal sheet roof with gaps beneath and between the sheets, a material which heats and cools rapidly and provides no thermal buffering. Neither building retains an intact ceiling, an enclosed roof void, or any thermally stable space.

Crevise-dwelling species (e.g. common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Natterer's bat, brown long-eared bat, Myotis spp.) – MODERATE suitability. The buildings retain a number of features capable of supporting individual or small numbers of crevice-roosting bats on a transitory or day-roosting basis: open joints and gaps within the stonework, gaps around weathered and exposed timbers at eaves and verges, gaps beneath and between the corrugated roof sheets of the barn, and gaps at the ridge and along the slopes of the farmhouse roof. The presence of these features, in number, is the sole basis for the moderate classification. Although numerous, the features are exposed, draughty and subject to rapid temperature fluctuation, and are therefore of limited quality.

Roof-void dwelling species (e.g. brown long-eared bat, Natterer's bat) – NEGLIGIBLE suitability. Neither building retains an enclosed roof void. The farmhouse is open from floor to ridge, with no ceiling at any level and no separation between the interior of the building and the roof structure. The roof

structure of the barn is likewise fully exposed. There is no dark, enclosed, thermally buffered void present in either building.

Species requiring an internal flight space and flying access into the roost (*Rhinolophus* spp.) – NEGLIGIBLE suitability for day-roosting; LOW suitability for night-roosting. It is accepted that both buildings provide an unobstructed internal flight space with multiple flying access points, and that the open nature of the structures allows bats to pass freely through them. Horseshoe bats, however, hang free within a roost and require a dark, undisturbed and thermally buffered space in which to do so. Both buildings are extensively daylit through missing roof covering and open window and door openings, are exposed to through-draught, and offer no dark hanging space at any point. Day-roosting by horseshoe species was therefore considered unlikely on structural grounds. Night-roosting was possible but unlikely given the lack of droppings and feeding remains.

Maternity roosting – NEGLIGIBLE suitability (all species). A maternity roost requires a warm, thermally stable and sheltered space in which females can aggregate and rear young over a period of several weeks. Neither building provides any such space. Both are open to the elements at roof level, extensively daylit, freely ventilated and subject to rapid diurnal temperature change. There is no enclosed void, no intact ceiling, and no crevice of sufficient depth or thermal stability to support a maternity aggregation. On this basis the buildings are not considered capable of supporting a roost of high conservation significance in relation to maternity use, and a classification of high roost suitability is not warranted on that ground.

Hibernation roosting – NEGLIGIBLE suitability (all species). Hibernation requires stable low temperature, consistently high humidity, and freedom from draught and disturbance over a prolonged period. Neither building provides these conditions. Both are open, draughty and subject to external temperature fluctuation throughout. The ground-level area beneath the suspended floor of the barn, whilst darker than the remainder of the structure, is neither sealed nor humidity-stable, is in active use for storage and is subject to regular disturbance. No hibernation features – deep crevices, cellars, sealed voids, vaulted or subterranean structures – are present in either building. The buildings are not considered capable of supporting a roost of high conservation significance in relation to hibernation use, and a classification of high roost suitability is not warranted on that ground either.

Summary and justification of survey effort. The buildings were classified as being of MODERATE suitability for roosting bats overall, that classification being driven by the number of crevice features available to crevice-dwelling species. For the reasons set out above, the buildings were assessed as being of negligible suitability for roosts of high conservation significance (maternity and hibernation), and were therefore not classified as being of high suitability. In accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023), a structure of moderate roost suitability requires two separate activity surveys, and two dusk emergence surveys were accordingly undertaken during the optimal survey period, on 28th May and 18th June 2026. Following consultation, a further eight nights of automated static detector survey were undertaken in August 2026 to address night-roosting specifically. The total survey effort therefore exceeds that indicated by the roost suitability classification.

5.0 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

5.1 Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions

Table 1: Schedule and weather conditions

Visit	Sunset	Start – End	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud Cover	Notes
Survey 1 28/05/26	21:18	20:58 – 22:48	17	Low	60% / 60%	Dry throughout; suitable survey conditions
Survey 2 18/06/26	21:35	21:15 – 23:05	19	Low	40% / 50%	Dry throughout; suitable survey conditions

5.2 Activity Survey Results

5.2.1 Survey 1 - 28th May 2026

A dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 28th May 2026 with surveyors/cameras positioned to maintain visibility of all elevations of both buildings.



Bat activity on this date was little and intermittent.

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle at 23 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen flying high from east to west above the property. A small number of passes by common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle were recorded foraging and commuting in the vicinity of the buildings. No bats were observed emerging from, or interacting with, either building.

5.2.2 Survey 2 - 18th June 2026

A dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 18th June 2026 by the same surveyors and using the same equipment (as above).



Bat activity was markedly higher than on the first survey. Approximately six bats (common and soprano pipistrelles) were recorded foraging around the buildings and grounds throughout the survey.

Species recorded included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* sp., foraging and commuting across the site.

Despite this level of activity, no bats were observed emerging from, or returning to, either building.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the buildings on this date.

5.2.4 Identified flight paths (arrowed red)

No discrete flight paths to or from the buildings were identified throughout the surveys; recorded activity comprised foraging and commuting bats moving throughout the site and grounds.

5.3 Identified Roosts

5.3.1 Survey 1

The property was not identified as a bat roost on this date.

5.3.2 Survey 2

The property was not identified as a bat roost on this date.

5.4 Automated (static) detector survey results

Both BATLOGGER S2 detectors operated continuously for the full deployment period. No power failure, microphone fault or data loss occurred, and eight complete nights of recording were obtained from each unit.

No bat calls were recorded on either detector at any point during the eight-night deployment. This applies both to the detector deployed at high level within the barn and to the detector deployed at high level within the farmhouse. No calls of lesser horseshoe bat or greater horseshoe bat were recorded, and no calls of any other bat species or species group were recorded within either building.

Table 2 sets out the deployment schedule and associated conditions.

Table 2: Automated (static) detector deployment schedule and weather conditions

Night	Sunset	Sunrise	Min overnight temp °C	Wind	Cloud / rain
Night 1 – 03/08/26	20:59	05:40	19	None	None
Night 2 – 04/08/26	20:58	05:42	18	None	None
Night 3 – 05/08/26	20:56	05:43	19	None	None
Night 4 – 06/08/26	20:54	05:45	20	None	None
Night 5 – 07/08/26	20:52	05:46	18	None	None
Night 6 – 08/08/26	20:50	05:48	17	None	None
Night 7 – 09/08/26	20:49	05:50	19	None	None
Night 8 – 10/08/26	20:47	05:51	19	None	None

The result of the static detector survey is consistent with the findings of the internal inspection survey, in which no droppings, feeding remains, urine staining or grease marks were recorded anywhere within or beneath either building. Roosting and night-roosting bats, including horseshoe species, characteristically deposit droppings at points of use, and night-roosting horseshoe bats characteristically leave culled insect remains beneath hanging positions. The complete absence of field signs, combined with the absence of any recorded bat call within the buildings across eight consecutive nights during the peak activity period, provides a robust basis for concluding that the buildings are not used by bats for night-roosting.

It is of note that the dusk emergence surveys recorded foraging and commuting activity of up to four species/species groups in the immediate vicinity of the buildings. Bats are therefore demonstrably active around the site, but are not entering or using the interior of either building. The internal positioning of the detectors, away from doors, windows and other openings, was specifically designed to distinguish between these two situations.

6.0 Conclusion

The buildings have not been identified as a bat roost. While no bats were observed emerging from or re-entering either building on either survey, the site supports notable foraging and commuting bat activity, with up to approximately six bats and four species/species groups (common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* sp.) recorded around the buildings and grounds.

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris. As the buildings have not been identified as supporting a bat roost, impacts on roosting bats are considered unlikely. No bats or evidence of bats was found throughout the interior of either building.

The subsequent automated (static) detector survey, undertaken over eight consecutive nights between 3rd and 11th August 2026 using detectors positioned at high level within the interior of both buildings and away from external openings, recorded no bat calls whatsoever. Night-roosting by bats, including horseshoe species, is therefore also discounted. Taken together with the absence of any droppings or other field signs internally, the buildings are concluded not to be used by bats for day-roosting, night-roosting, maternity or hibernation purposes. A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are found during the works.

7.0 Breeding Birds

There are swallows nesting within the main farmhouse (two pairs).

Barn owl

In response to consultee comments, the absence of barn owl (*Tyto alba*) from the buildings is confirmed. The interior of both buildings was inspected in full during the initial inspection survey, including the exposed roof structures of the farmhouse and barn, the open void above the suspended floor of the barn, and the ground-level storage area beneath it.

No evidence of barn owl was recorded at any point within either building. Specifically, no whitewash or splash droppings, no pellets (whole or degraded), no moulted feathers or down, no nest scrape or nesting debris, and no live or dead birds were found. No suitable nesting feature is present: both buildings are open from floor to ridge with missing roof covering and extensive daylight throughout, and neither retains the dark, enclosed loft or cavity space that barn owl requires for nesting.

In addition, the two dusk emergence surveys (28th May and 18th June 2026) were undertaken with surveyors, infra-red cameras and thermal imaging equipment maintaining visibility of all elevations of both buildings from before sunset until well after dark. No barn owl was observed entering, leaving, or otherwise associated with either building on either occasion.

8.0 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Active season usage

The property was not identified as a bat roost, either as a day-roost or as a night-roost. The site is, however, used by foraging and commuting bats of several species.

8.2 Hibernation season usage

Neither building provides the stable low temperature, high humidity and freedom from draught and disturbance required for hibernation, and both are open and exposed throughout. Hibernation use is therefore considered negligible. Notwithstanding this, and as a precaution against the presence of an individual bat in torpor within a crevice, the winter period will be avoided for the works.

8.3 Breeding birds

Two pairs of swallows were noted flying in and out of the farmhouse.

8.4 Ecological Impacts of development

The impacts of the development have been assessed using the current information of the proposed works. Should any changes be made to the proposed works, the assessment will need to be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The buildings have not been identified as a bat roost and therefore impacts on roosting bats are unlikely. To maintain and enhance the foraging and commuting value of the site, enhancement measures and sensitive lighting are recommended below.

9.0 MITIGATION, COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENT

9.1 Bats

No bat roost has been identified within either building, and no bat mitigation is therefore required. Notwithstanding this, the buildings currently provide a number of crevice features of moderate suitability for crevice-dwelling bats, together with an internal flight space of some potential value to night-roosting bats. These features will be lost through the proposed demolition and works. Compensation for that loss is therefore proposed, in accordance with the step-wise approach set out at paragraph 6.4.11 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and the Section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The following will be provided:

- 2 no. integrated bat boxes or bat bricks (e.g. Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box, Habibat 001 or equivalent) built into the fabric of the retained and extended farmhouse at a minimum height of 4m, distributed across south, south-east and south-west facing elevations, and sited away from external lighting.
- 1 no. night-roosting feature suitable for horseshoe bats, provided as direct compensation for the loss of internal night-roosting opportunity within the existing barn. This will comprise a dark, open-access covered structure with an unobstructed internal flight space, free hanging space to the apex, and permanent flying access (minimum 300mm x 200mm opening) – for example an open-fronted store, cart shed or purpose-built night-roost structure – sited adjacent to the vegetation where possible

All boxes and features will be installed prior to first occupation and will be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

9.2 Birds

Two pairs of swallow are currently nesting within the main farmhouse. Nesting opportunities for this species will be lost through the proposed works, and compensation is proposed as follows:

- 4 no. artificial swallow nest cups installed beneath the eaves of a retained building or within an open-sided structure to which the birds will retain permanent flying access.
- Retention of a permanently open access point (minimum 50mm x 50mm) into an open-sided outbuilding, so that swallows retain the ability to nest on site.
- 1 no. integrated house sparrow terraces built into the fabric of the extended farmhouse at a minimum height of 3m.

All vegetation clearance and works to the buildings will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August inclusive). Where this is not practicable, a pre-commencement nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours before works commence, and any active nest will be retained in situ with an appropriate exclusion zone until the young have fledged.

9

All compensation and enhancement measures will be secured by planning condition and will be retained and appropriately managed for the lifetime of the development. A proportionate Green Infrastructure Statement will be submitted separately, demonstrating the application of the step-wise approach and a net benefit for biodiversity in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Timing

It is considered that the buildings are not a bat roost and therefore the works can be undertaken at any time of year. The winter period must be avoided due to the unlikely, but possible presence of hibernating bats.

10.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A – the property has not been identified as a bat roost.

10.3 Lighting

Newly created access points and bat boxes will not be directly illuminated. All external lighting will face downwards and be set on timers to ensure that bats can use the area should they wish. In addition to this, any onsite lighting will conform to the following guidelines:

<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

Flight paths to the bat boxes and the newly created bat mitigation will be kept dark at all times.

10.4 Bat Licensing

A European Protected Species Licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales will not be required before any works commence.

10.5 Supervision

A suitably experienced ecologist will not be required to supervise the works, as no roost is present. Should any bat be found at any time during the works, all works will cease immediately and Natural Resources Wales and BE Ecological Ltd will be contacted for further advice before works recommence.

12.0 REFERENCES

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Welsh Government (2024) Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12. Welsh Government, Cardiff.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004) The bat workers' manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (HMSO).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (as amended) (HMSO).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO).

APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

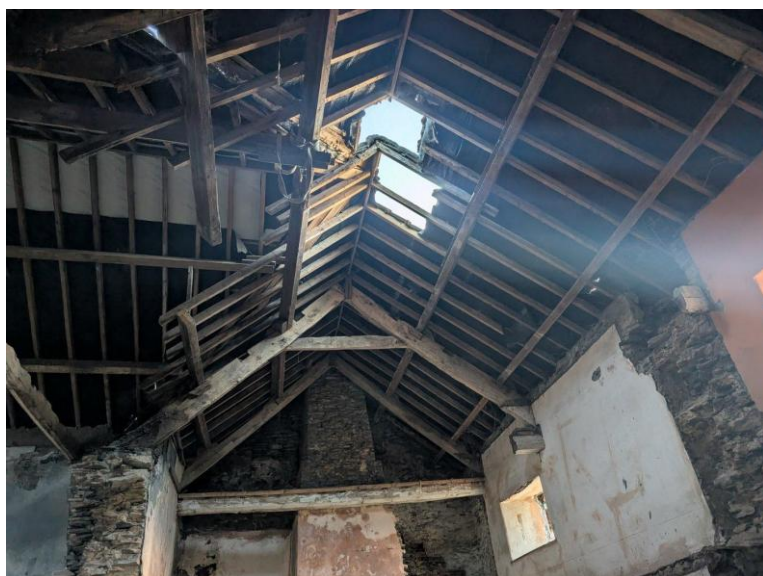


Plate 1 - Farmhouse interior, gutted and open from floor to ridge, showing the exposed roof structure of rafters and purlins with a section of missing roof covering at the ridge, and bare stone gable wall and chimney breast.



Plate 2 - Farmhouse roof structure viewed from below, showing exposed pitched roof timbers and rafters over degraded plaster and bare stone walls, with a small square window opening to the gable.



Plate 3 - Internal corner showing exposed roof timbers meeting a stone chimney breast,



Plate 4 - Derelict internal area with peeling plastered walls, exposed ceiling timbers, an acrow prop and stored materials



Plate 5 - Gutted ground-floor room showing multiple small window openings, exposed bressummer/ceiling beams and a bare earth and rubble floor.



Plate 6 - Internal storage room with degraded plaster over stone walls, exposed ceiling beams, stored tools and materials and a blocked former opening.



Plate 7 - Barn interior used for storage beneath exposed ceiling beams and timber roof structure, with an open doorway and stored materials



Plate 8 - Barn/store corner showing a mesh-covered window



Plate 9 - External elevation of the stone-built barn with corrugated metal roof and boarded loft opening



Plate 10 - Site context: the farmhouse and attached barn range viewed from the rear, showing tiled and corrugated roofs, chimney stack.