



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

40 MOUNT PLEASANT, HEOLGERRIG, MERTHYR TYDFIL

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT 2025

ISSUE 1VB

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40 Mount Pleasant Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil

Ecological Assessment

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CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY.....	1
1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 OBJECTIVE.....	2
1.2 METHODOLOGY.....	2
1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION.....	2
1.4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	3
1.5 STUDY AREA.....	4
2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.....	5
2.1 INTERNATIONAL.....	5
2.2 NATIONAL (UK).....	6
2.3 NATIONAL (WALES).....	6
2.4 PREVIOUS SURVEYS.....	10
2.5 CONSTRAINTS.....	10
2.6 RESULTS.....	11
2.7 PREVIOUS SURVEYS.....	11
3 PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY.....	12
3.1 SUMMARY.....	12
3.2 BACKGROUND.....	12
3.3 METHODOLOGY.....	12
3.4 CONSTRAINTS.....	13
3.5 RESULTS.....	14
4 CONCLUSION.....	21
5 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21
6 REFERENCES.....	23
APPENDIX A - PHOTOS.....	24
APPENDIX B– Target Notes.....	27

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

A preliminary ecological assessment was undertaken of land at 40 Mount Pleasant, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil.

The work involved a phase 1 habitat survey to categorise the habitats present, an assessment of the site's ability to provide suitable habitats for protected species and recommendations for further survey and actions if considered necessary.

The habitats on and adjacent to the site comprise of building, overgrown garden and hedgerows.

It is probable that bats will forage over the site and use the site boundaries as commuting routes. There is no suitable bat roosting features within the trees scheduled for removal. The buildings have been surveyed for bats (results within) however, no bat roosts were identified.

There were no ponds on or immediately adjacent to the site which could be suitable for use by breeding great crested newts (or other amphibians).

It should be assumed that all hedgerows will be utilised by nesting birds during the breeding season. It is unlikely that the site will be used by ground nesting species due to disturbance.

The site provides reptiles with some limited potential habitat for foraging, basking and sheltering purposes, particularly around the interface of the site.

It is considered that the areas to be affected by the development has a generally low ecological value at a local level and that further ecological surveys are unnecessary.

It is recommended that:

- The site / development areas within the application boundary are cleared in accordance with a method statement to prevent causing harm to reptiles, dormice and amphibians;
- There will need to be compensation and enhancement contained within a green infrastructure statement in line with Chapter 6 and Planning Policy Wales.

This report will be valid for 18-24 months.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this report are to:

- identify the habitats present on the site;
- identify the potential for protected species to be present on site;
- using the information gathered to determine whether there may be any impacts (both positive and negative) on protected species present;
- provide recommendations for further survey as necessary; and
- suggest outline mitigation and enhancement ideas and principles

1.2 METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives set out above, the following actions were taken:

- Field based assessments in respect of
 1. Habitats;
 2. Protected species, primarily:
 - i. Bats;
 - ii. Dormice;
 - iii. Amphibians
 - iv. Badgers
 - v. Reptiles; and
 - vi. Breeding birds

The impact assessment has been undertaken by ecological feature rather than by section i.e. each subject is discussed and assessed separately and summarised in conjunction with the others.

1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located at 40 Mount Pleasant, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil.

The property is a flat roofed building beneath a bitumen felt roof. Walls comprise of stone and brick and are rendered on some elevations. Generally the building is in good order

Fascias where present are of uPVC, again in good order excluding a broken section on one elevation.

The property is situated within its own small grounds that comprise of overgrown garden. There are mature hedgerows surrounding the site but they are not very well connected to the wider landscape.

1.4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with a new dwelling.

1.5 STUDY AREA

The field survey looked at the red line development area itself and up to 20m from the site boundaries wherever possible.

2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTERNATIONAL

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 known as the “Habitats Regulations” transpose the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive) into UK law. The Directive is the means by which the European Union meets its obligations under the [Bern Convention](#). The most vulnerable and rarest of species are afforded protection under this legislation. The species listed on Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations are termed “European Protected Species” and are afforded the highest levels of protection and command strict licensing requirements for any works which may affect them. The species include all British bats, Otter, Dormouse and Great Crested Newt. They are fully protected against disturbance, killing, injury or taking. In addition, any site regarded as their “breeding site or resting place” is also protected. It is generally regarded that the site is protected whether the animals are present or not.

The Habitats Regulations clearly outline the role of Planning Authorities in the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives; by stating [Section 10]

10.—(1)a competent authority must take such steps in the exercise of their functions as they consider appropriate to secure the objective in paragraph (3), so far as lies within their powers.

(3) The objective is the preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of a sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds in the United Kingdom, including by means of the upkeep, management and creation of such habitat, as appropriate, having regard to the requirements of Article 2 of the new Wild Birds Directive (measures to maintain the population of bird species).

Habitats Regulations Licensing

Where works will affect a protected species, then a protected species licence may be required and would need to be obtained prior to undertaking the works. The licence can only be issued if the “3 tests” are satisfied, these are:

Test 1 – the purposes of “preserving public health or safety, or for reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.

Test 2 – there must be “no satisfactory alternative”; and

Test 3 – the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

Licences are issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), with NRW assessing Test 3, and the Local Planning Authority assessing tests 1 & 2 (where proposals are not subject to planning, then NRW alone will assess all three tests). Where Planning regulations apply, the NRW will only issue a licence after determination of the planning application. The 3 tests must also be assessed at the planning determination stage.

2.2 NATIONAL (UK)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended)

The WCA protects the UK's most vulnerable and rare species as outlined below.

Section 1 – breeding birds.

The basic protection afforded to all birds is:

- *Protection from killing, injury or taking of any wild bird*
- *Protection from taking, damaging or destroying the nest of any wild bird*
- *Protection from taking or destroying the egg of any wild bird*

Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Act are afforded extra levels of protection:

- *Disturbance whilst nest building,*
- *Whilst at or near a nest with eggs or young,*
- *Disturbing the dependant young of such a bird.*
- There are exemptions from this basic protection for, for example: sale, control of pest species and sporting eg. game birds outside of the close season; development is not considered an exemption.
- **Section 9 (Schedule 5) - protected animals (other than birds)**
- All animals listed on Schedule 5 are protected against killing, injury or taking. Any structure/place used for shelter or protection is protected against damage, destruction or obstructing access to. It is also an offence to disturb an animal whilst using such a structure / place. Some species such as the more widespread species of reptiles (slow worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake) are afforded "Part Protection" meaning that only some of the protection outlined above applies – eg the animals may be protected from killing/injury, but not their structure used for shelter/protection.
- **Section 13 (Schedule 8) – protected plants.**
- Protected plants are protected from: being picked, uprooted or destroyed, sale and advertising for sale.

THE PROTECTION OF BADGERS ACT 1992

Badgers are protected from killing, injury and taking; or attempting to kill, injure or take. Badger setts are also afforded protection and it is an offence to:

- *Damage a badger sett or any part of it*
- *Destroy a badger sett*
- *Obstruct access to any entrance of a badger sett*
- *Disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett*

Development which will destroy or disturb a badger sett (within 30m) is subject to licensing; by NRW.

2.3 NATIONAL (WALES)

PLANNING POLICY WALES (EDITION 12, FEBRUARY 2024)

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. secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.

6.4.4 It is important that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. Where adverse effects on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated/restored, and as a last resort compensated for, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission.

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 minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.....

6.4.12 Having worked iteratively, in line with Figure 12, through the stages of the step-wise approach below, 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.....

6.4.15 (2). When all locational, siting and design options for avoiding damage to biodiversity have been exhausted, applicants, in discussion with planning authorities, must seek to minimise the initial impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.....

6.4.15 (5). Each stage of the step-wise approach must be accompanied by a long term management plan of agreed and appropriate avoidance, minimisation, mitigation/restoration and compensation measures alongside the agreed enhancement measures. The management plan should set out the immediate and on-going management of the site, future monitoring arrangements for all secured measures and it should clearly identify the funding mechanisms in place to meet the management plan objectives. The management plan must set out how a net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved within as short a time as possible and be locally responsive and relevant to local circumstances.

6.4.15 (6) Finally, where the adverse effect on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience clearly outweighs other material considerations, the development should be refused.

6.4.16 Potential applicants should not conduct any pre-emptive site clearance works before submitting a planning application as this can make it more difficult for a development proposal to secure a net

benefit for biodiversity. Where a site has been cleared prior to development its biodiversity value should be deemed to have been as it was before any site investigations or clearance took place. A net benefit for biodiversity must be achieved from that point.

6.4.31 Although non-statutory designations do not have a statutory process for their protection, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Regionally Importance Geodiversity Sites make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given protection in development plans and the development management process. Non-statutory sites can form the core of a vital network of threatened habitats, play an essential role in protecting, maintaining, connecting and restoring biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery and a net benefit for biodiversity. Before authorising development likely to damage a local wildlife designation, planning authorities should give notice of the proposed operation to the local authority Ecologist and third sector environmental organisations. In all cases a written opinion must be secured from the local authority Ecologist.....

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.

6.4.42 Permanent removal of trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where individual or groups of trees and hedgerows are removed as part of a proposed scheme, planning authorities must first follow the step-wise approach as set out in paragraph 6.4.15. Where loss is unavoidable developers will be required to provide compensatory planting (which is proportionate to the proposed loss as identified through an assessment of green infrastructure value including biodiversity, landscape value and carbon capture). Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost.....

6.4.43 Ancient woodland, semi-natural woodlands, individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees, woodlands and hedgerows are to be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deterioration unless very exceptionally there are significant and clearly defined public benefits; this protection must prevent potentially damaging operations and their unnecessary loss.....

6.8.1 There is a need to balance the provision of lighting to enhance safety and security to help in the prevention of crime and to allow activities like sport and recreation to take place with the need to:

- protect the natural and historic environment including wildlife and features of the natural environment such as tranquillity;

BUILDING WITH NATURE

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

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.

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 Governments wider remit under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 so that Wales may benefit from a prosperous economy, a healthy and resilient environment and vibrant, cohesive communities. Caerphilly 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 within public bodies, embedding it in its plans, policies and projects and day-to-day activities*
- *Address biodiversity decline through positive actions that will result in maintenance or enhancement of our biodiversity*
- *Develop ecosystem resilience through maintaining and enhancing biodiversity*

The reporting associated with the Section 6 duty will report against the 6 NRAP objectives (see section on Nature Recovery Plan, below)

A resilient ecosystem is one that is healthy and functions in a way that is able to address the pressures and demands that are placed on it, and is able to meet current social, economic and environmental needs whilst being able to also provide the same benefits for future generation. A resilient ecosystem is the cornerstone of the “Resilient Wales” goal in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

STATE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT (SONARR)

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 [EWA] requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to publish a State of Natural Resources Report¹ (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, finalised in September 2016 recommends a proactive approach to building resilience and for the first time links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales. This Report will underpin Natural Resources Policy.

The economic and social benefits that a fully functioning environment can provide to human society include agricultural production, forestry, building materials, tourism and leisure, energy generation, flood prevention, pollination services for crops, clean water, clean air and healthy soils. 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*

¹ <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en>

- *Nutrient enrichment and pollution*

NATURE RECOVERY PLAN

The Welsh Government launched the Nature Recovery Plan² (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 Act (Wales) 2016.

The NRP highlights the issues that we need to address and the objectives for action to show how, in Wales we can address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. Specifically through:

- *Putting nature at the heart of decision making*
- *Increasing the resilience of our natural environment*
- *Taking specific action for habitats and species*

The Nature Recovery Plan consists of three parts:

Part 1: Sets out the position with regard to biodiversity in Wales

Part 2: actions identified to support biodiversity, (**The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP)**)

Part 3: Under development: The Nature Recovery Framework

2.4 PREVIOUS SURVEYS

There are no known previous surveys of this site.

2.5 CONSTRAINTS

N/A

² <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Nature-Recovery-Action-Plan>

2.6 RESULTS

2.6.1 Statutorily protected sites

2.6.1.1 European designated sites

There are no European Designated Sites that will be affected by the development.

2.6.1.2 United Kingdom designated sites

There are no United Kingdom Designated Sites that will be affected by the development. There is one SSSI (Cwmglo Y Glyndyrys) approximately 350m from the site.

2.6.2 Non-statutory designations

The following SINCS are within 1km of the development site:

Winchfawr West (792m)

Cwm Taf Fechan (766m)

Afon Taf (980m)

Winchfawr East & Clwydyfagwr (560m)

Cwm Taf Fawr (921m)

Cwm Taf Fields & Cefn Coed Tip (583m)

Cwm Glo (338m)

None of the above SINCs will be impacted by the development.

2.7 PREVIOUS SURVEYS

None known.

3 PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

3.1 SUMMARY

A number of habitats were recorded across and adjacent to the survey area. These included:

- Amenity grassland
- Mature hedgerows
- Buildings

The potential for a number of protected species was recorded, including habitats suitable for:

- Bats
- Breeding birds;
- Reptiles;
- Invertebrates;

The habitats are shown on **the phase 1 map located below.**

3.2 BACKGROUND

The Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out to assess the existing habitats, identify any protected habitats or species that may be present, determine the impact of the proposed works on them, and identify any mitigation measures that may be necessary. This was done by undertaking both a desk study and field survey.

The survey was undertaken on 17th July 2025.

Phase 1 habitat survey is a way of recording the basic habitat data to form a baseline level of knowledge of the ecology of a site and provide recommendations for future surveys if considered necessary.

Data search

The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) was consulted in order to provide biological information on the presence of species and sites on or adjacent to the site (0256-370)

A 1000m search buffer was applied to priority and protected species, species of local conservation concern and other species of conservation concern, statutorily designated sites (for nature conservation purposes) and 1000m locally designated sites.

The Multi-Agency Geographical Information System (MAGIC) website (www.magic.gov.uk) and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for MTCBC were also consulted

3.3 METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Field survey:

Experienced surveyors from BE Ecological Ltd carried out a habitat assessment and mapping exercise in July 2025 using the Phase 1 habitat survey technique. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997)³. The survey was carried out by Beth Evans.

³Stace, C (1997). *New Flora of the British Isles* (2nd Ed.). Cambridge University Press

Features of note are assigned Target Notes (TN) and referenced accordingly and described at the **Appendix**

3.4 CONSTRAINTS

N/A

3.5 RESULTS

3.5.1 Habitats

The following habitats were found on and adjacent to the site and are mapped below

- Overgrown garden
- Mature hedgerows
- Buildings

Photos are located at **Appendix A**

3.5.1.1 Overgrown garden

This habitat is found the main body of the site. Generally species are non-native with a small number of native species beginning to encroach

3.5.1.2 Buildings

The buildings on site are generally of a low ecological value. No bats or birds were identified roosting within them. The buildings will be mentioned further within the bat and bird sections of this report.

3.5.1.3 Mature hedgerows

There are large mature outgrown native hedgerows surrounding the boundaries of the site. The hedgerows along the western and southern boundaries will be removed as part of the development. The southern hedgerow will be reinstated as far as practicable, as shown on the submitted plans. The remaining boundary hedgerows will be retained and existing entrances will be made use of.

Phase 1 habitat survey map



3.5.2 Protected species assessment

3.5.2.1 Bats.

Habitat suitability

There are records of bats within the data search, namely common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, myotis sp., greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, noctule and brown long-eared. The closest bat record is of a common pipistrelle approximately 450m from the site. It is likely that bats will forage along the boundaries of the site, that said, none were identified within the surveys below. The boundaries will be protected from site lighting.

It is likely that bats will use the site for foraging and commuting. The house was assessed as being of low potential for roosting bats. The results of the bat surveys are found below.

Survey Objectives

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

Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of three parts:

- Part 1- Initial bat inspection survey
- Part 2- A single activity survey (main house only)

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 Dion Rowles and Michael Rodgers

Internal & External Inspection

An initial inspection survey was carried out on 17th July 2025 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.

Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)

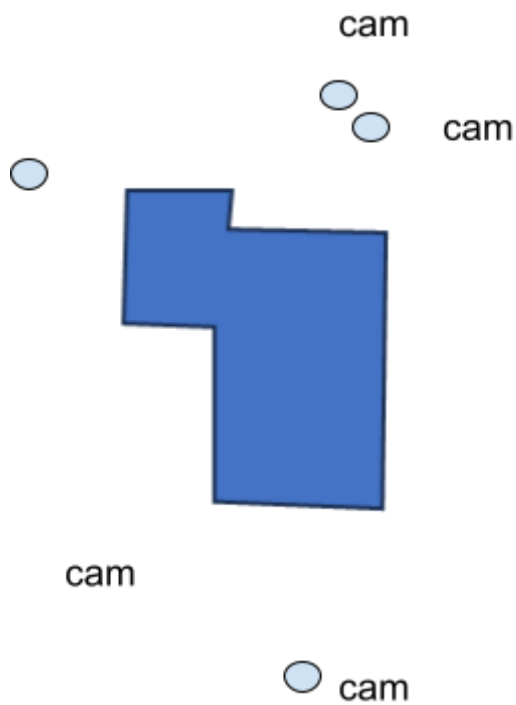
Building 'emergence' and 're-entry' surveys were carried out on the following dates, times and weather conditions. Climatic conditions including rain, wind, temperature and cloud cover were recorded for each survey using a hand held Kestrel 4500 weather station.

Constraints

N/A

Survey 1-28th June 2025

A dusk survey was carried out on the main building on the 28th June 2025 using surveyors, thermal imaging devices and Batlogger M detectors. Surveyors and cameras were positioned as follows:



Thermal imaging views







Inspection survey

External survey results

Main House

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

- Gaps beneath fascia on one elevation only (gaps are very small)
- There is an area of broken fascia board at the front of the property

Generally the building appears to be in relatively good order. The majority of fascias do not appear to have gaps beneath them

The building was assessed as being of low potential for roosting bats and one further survey was recommended.

Internal survey results

There is no roof void present within the property. No bats or evidence of bats was found in the interior of the building.

Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions

Table 1: Schedule and weather conditions

Visit	Date (sunrise) (sunset)	Start End	Time	Temp C	Wind	Cloud Cover	Notes
Survey 1 28/07/25	21:08	Start	20:50	18	Low	40%	Dry evening, insects flying
		End	22:40	18	Low	50%	

Activity Survey Results

Survey 1- 28th July 2025

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle, approximately 20 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen commuting high above the main house from north to south. This was closely followed by a second and third common pipistrelle exhibiting the same behaviour.

Common and soprano pipistrelle activity was noted throughout the survey but only intermittently. Quiet calls were heard on a number of occasions, however, no obvious flight paths were noted.

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

Identified Roosts

Survey 1

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

Conclusion

The property has not been identified as a bat roost. Activity at the site was low throughout the course of the survey with only a small number of common and soprano pipistrelles heard.

A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are found.

Impacts without mitigation

Negative impacts may include disturbance from construction works, loss of foraging habitat and light spill onto commuting corridors and roosting features within the adjacent hedgerow. These will need to be mitigated for.

3.5.2.2 Amphibians & great crested newt

Habitat Assessment

There are records of great crested newt within the data search from approximately 500m away. These are isolated by roads and infrastructure. There are no ponds present on the development site which could be used by this group for breeding purposes.

Impacts without mitigation

There is unlikely to be any impact on great crested newt. Appropriate method statements and supervision during the works will safeguard this species along with more common species of amphibian.

3.5.2.3 Dormouse

Habitat suitability

There are no dormouse records within the data search. Dormice are generally not known in the locality. The only habitats suitable for dormice on the site are the hedgerows. The hedgerows along the western and southern boundaries will be removed as part of the development, with the southern hedgerow reinstated as far as practicable as shown on the submitted plans.

Impacts without mitigation

N/A- dormice are unlikely to be present.

3.5.2.4 Badgers

Habitat suitability

It is unlikely badger will use the site due to it being too disturbed.

Impacts without mitigation

There is unlikely to be any impact on badger as a result of the development.

3.5.2.5 Breeding birds

Habitat suitability

There are numerous records within the data search, the closest three refer to peregrine falcon, house sparrow and starling approximately 250m away. There is suitable habitat in the hedgerow and the boundaries of the site.

The habitats on the site are not considered to be suitable for ground nesting birds given the small overlooked nature of the site, the high levels of disturbance on the site, the availability of avian predator perches and the presence of predators (cats from neighbouring houses).

Impacts without mitigation

If hedgerow is to be removed as part of the development, there may be a negative impact on nesting bird species as a result of the proposed development. Without mitigation there may be disturbance or damage of active nests and young.

3.5.2.6 Reptiles

Habitat assessment

There are records of reptiles within the data search, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm. The closest record being a grass snake from approximately 450m away. The site offers some limited habitat for this species for foraging, basking, sheltering and hibernation purposes and it is likely that slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) and grass snake (*Matrix natrix*) use the site. It is likely that small numbers of reptiles may be present on the interfaces between grassland habitat and hedgerows. These are likely to be extremely low in number given the shading of the site.

Impacts without mitigation

Without mitigation the proposals will likely have a negative impact on reptiles, such as injury or death of individuals during construction, and loss of foraging and hibernation habitat should they be present.

3.5.2.7 Invertebrates

Habitat assessment

It is likely that common and widespread invertebrates will utilise the site.. It is possible that some Section 7 species will use the site. There are records of section 7 species within the data search. There is a varied mosaic of habitats on the site. There is abundant invertebrate habitat within the surrounding areas.

There are some food plants present on site for numerous invertebrates including section 7 species

Impacts without mitigation

It is considered that there will be a loss of breeding and foraging habitat for this group.

3.5.3 Other features

None.

4 CONCLUSION

BE Ecological Ltd was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site.

On the 11th October 2023, ahead of PPW12 being published, the new Chapter 6 came into force with immediate effect. Net benefit must be secured via planning applications using the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management.

A Green Infrastructure Statement will be required to demonstrate the step wise approach.

Local Authorities have a duty (known as the 'Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty') under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.

Any new planting should be native and of local a provenance of possible.

This report will be valid for 18 months from the date of survey.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

New native wildflower planting will be included within the development This will be managed to benefit wildlife.

Those areas marked as wildflower garden on the associated plan will be managed as follows: The areas will be seeded with Emorsgate EM2.

Preparation of ground

A seed bed will be created by first removing any weeds via manual cultivation. The bed will be dug to bury any surface vegetation, the area will then be raked and compacted to form a firm surface.

Sowing

The seeds will be sown either in autumn or spring. The seeds will be sown by hand at a rate of 4g/m². The seed will be sown on the surface and firmed down but not covered.

Year 1 management

Weeds will not be removed until mid to late summer, in order to provide shelter for seedlings. In late summer (early august), the weeds will be cut, removed and placed in compost piles around the wider site. Perennial weeds such as dock will be dug out by hand. The young meadow will then be strimmed short (50mm) through to the end of March the next year.

Management once established (years 2-5)

The grass cutting regime would be designed to allow wildflowers to seed the area for the following season. The wildflower strip will be cut twice per year for at least five years using hand tools once in March/April and again no earlier than 15th July in order to mimic hay meadow management. The cut following the 15th July will reduce the height of the meadow to approximately 50mm, arisings will be left in place on site to dry and seed for at least 3 days but no more than 7 before being removed from the area. Re-growth will be strimmed back to 50mm through to late autumn/winter and again in spring if required.

All lawned areas will be seeded with EL1 flowering lawn mixture that responds well to regular short mowing

<https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/special-habitat-mixtures/flowering-lawn-mixture/>

Native species planting will be required in the site. All species should be as local a provenance as possible.

Bats

Bat surveys have been undertaken. The buildings were not identified as bat roosts. Due to the presence of foraging and commuting habitat mitigation will need to include minimising light spill onto the boundaries during and after the construction phase.

A sensitive lighting plan will need to be produced to ensure a dark buffer zone along all boundaries of the site.

There will need to be measures to benefit bats within the site (bat boxes)

All lighting will be in line with the following guidance <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/> This will also safeguard the potential presence of dormice within the boundaries of the site.

The following bat box will be integrated within the house on the most southern or eastern elevation, or those elevations facing retained boundary vegetation <https://www.nhbs.com/ib-vl-05-vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-batbox?bkfno=252213>

Dormouse, Great Crested Newt and amphibians

A method statement and ecological supervision will be required for these groups. The method statement can be found within the appendix. New planting will enhance the site for this group.

Hedgehog

Gaps will be left in any fencing to allow the passing of hedgehog.

Breeding birds

All vegetation and brash removal should be undertaken outwith the breeding season i.e. between mid-August / September and April inclusive

Any clearance close to the start and end of this period should only be undertaken following an assessment by a suitably experienced ecologist as the breeding season is not fixed and is subject to annual variation

Where clearance is required during the breeding season, all areas should be subject to an assessment no more than 48 hours in advance to check for the presence of breeding birds

Should evidence of breeding birds, in particularly nests, be recorded, no clearance may be undertaken within 15m of any nest site until such time as the nest is vacated naturally

Any post-development landscaping plan will include the provision of hedgerow/scrub habitats that can be utilised by breeding birds.

Bird boxes will need to be included within the final design. The following will be integrated in the most northern or western elevation of each house. <https://www.nhbs.com/dual-chamber-sparrow-terrace>

Invertebrates

Enhancement measures will include native species planting to support a wide range of pollinators and other invertebrates

6 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK; Bats and the Built Environment series (Guidance Note 08/18), The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (April, 2013) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. CIEEM, Winchester.

Institute for Environmental Assessment (1995). Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment. E & FN Spon, Hong Kong.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey; A technique for environmental audit. Reprinted by JNCC, Peterborough.

APPENDIX A - PHOTOS

PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY PHOTOS

Plate 1- hedge to front of property



Plate 2- close up of sealed eaves



Plate 3- sealed eaves along rear elevation



Plate 4- side garden



Plate 5- example of small gap beneath fascia on side elevation



Plate 6- sealed eaves and retaining wall at rear



APPENDIX B– METHOD STATEMENT

1. All clearance will be supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist until such time as the ecologist states that direct supervision is not necessary.
2. The ecologist will be on call for the duration of clearance works.
3. Vegetation will be cleared from directly affected areas only and the area minimised wherever possible.
4. all areas to be cleared must be subject of a finger-tip search by an ecologist where appropriate immediately prior to and during any clearance work; the ecologist should also be present while all post hole excavation (or other ground breaking should it be required) is being undertaken. This will ensure no reptiles are present with the areas to be cleared.
6. Should evidence of breeding birds, in particularly nests, be recorded, no clearance may be undertaken within 5m of any nest site until such time as the nest is vacated naturally.
7. No spraying of vegetation to be carried out. Vegetation will be maintained close to ground using repeated cutting only.
8. Woody vegetation will be cleared (ONLY IF NECESSARY) to ground level using a chainsaw with all arisings stacked in unaffected areas NOT on areas of tall vegetation (over 300mm). Where necessary, stumps and roots will only be removed by machine (under ecological supervision) once the clearance is complete.
9. All woody vegetation will be checked by the ecologist prior to cutting for the presence of dormouse or bird nests
10. Vegetation will be cut in three phases. The first phase will reduce the vegetation height to 150mm; the second will reduce it to ≈50mm; the third phase will reduce the height to as close to ground level as possible. All cuts will have a period of 24 hours between each cut.
11. All vegetation cutting will be directional. This ensures that any animals present will be pushed from the site into adjacent retained habitats.
12. After clearance, if the vegetation is allowed to regrow above 150mm high, it will be cut and raked as described above.
13. Where necessary, potential hibernacula (brash, log piles, stumps, roots etc) will only be cleared during the active season (March-October) while day time temperatures are consistently over 12°C for a period of at least seven days prior as otherwise reptiles may be killed or injured as a result of inconsistent (low) temperatures (during the day and night) and/or low prey availability. Potential hibernacula will only be dismantled by hand unless the supervising ecologist gives the approval for machine dismantling.
14. If a bird's nest is observed on the site, the ecologist will assess it to determine whether or not it is active, the species concerned, the lifecycle state of any occupants and provide advice on next steps.
15. In the unlikely event that reptiles are observed within the clearance area during the works, a decision on how to deal with them will be made on site in light of the conditions on site at the time and the state of the animals themselves. There are three options for dealing with them:
 - It may be possible to leave the animals alone to find their own way into cover, depending on where they are seen, what they are doing and their apparent activity levels; or
 - Capture, remove from site and take into temporary captivity until such time as they can be released adjacent to the cleared area (a vivarium has been prepared in case it is required); or
 - Should conditions allow, capture and translocate the animals to a safe area within the site boundary
16. Habitat and the unlikely presence for other species (e.g. dormice, otter, great crested newts & other amphibians etc.) can be identified and avoided by following this method statement.
17. In the event that a European Protected Species such as great crested newt or dormouse is observed during the

clearance,, all work will stop, and the ecologist consulted. It will be necessary to consult with Natural Resources Wales; further surveys and a development licence may be required before work can recommence.

In the unlikely event that large numbers of reptiles are discovered, an offsite receptor area should be suggested to be agreed by the County Ecologist.

NOTE: should it be required, a Natural Resources Wales development licence for European Protected Species is likely to take up to 40 working days to be issued following submission

APPENDIX C— SPECIES LIST

Bramble, dogwood, ash, sycamore, beech, dandelion, herb robert, buttercup, perennial ryegrass and numerous non-native species.