

HAWKESWOOD ECOLOGY

Specialists in Ecological Survey and Assessment

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PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS, LAND AT MEADOW ROAD, NEATH.

On behalf of

JONES BROTHERS AND TAI TARIAN LTD

July 2021

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Issue 1

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We confirm that in preparing this Report we have exercised reasonable skill and care, taking into account the project objectives, the agreed scope of the work, prevailing site conditions and the degree of manpower and resources allocated to the project.

All habitat and protected species surveys present a ‘snapshot’ of conditions existing and species present, or considered having potential to be present, at the time of survey. Many species are mobile and distributions can vary across time. Results and findings presented in this report should be considered with these factors in mind.

Protected species surveys are recognised as having a ‘shelf life’ of two years maximum. Surveys older than this are unlikely to be accepted by a Local Planning Authority or Natural Resources Wales as viable documentation.

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SUMMARY

Following an earlier Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Hawkeswood Ecology carried out protected species surveys for bats on land at Meadow Road, Neath. These surveys included transect surveys, placement of passive detectors and tree climbing and tree observation surveys. Final climbing and observations surveys are to be undertaken in August (to comply with current guidance). Surveys to date are reported here with an addendum to follow with the final tree climbing and observations results.

In addition, following comments received after consultation with Natural Resources Wales, a survey of the Cryddan brook and a pond adjacent to the Site was undertaken in respect of its potential to support water vole.

The bats surveys noted use of the Site by four species of bat, common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* bats which most resembled whiskered/Brandt's bat on sonogram analysis. The *Myotis* species was particularly noted at the Eaglesbush Valley LNR boundary and the woodland but was also recorded near Eaglesbush House on occasion. A recorder left in position near the trees on the southern boundary during the transects in 2021 also recoded a *Myotis* species bat with call analysis showing characteristics of both whiskered and Brandt's bats.

The tree surveys were recommended following a ground based preliminary Roost Assessment and are currently being undertaken. At this stage, both climbing and observation surveys have proved negative.

A water vole survey was undertaken in July and concentrated on the off site pond and stream to the Cryddan Brook, plus a section of the Cryddan Brook itself. No evidence of water vole was found and it was concluded that the Site was generally in an unsuitable condition to support them.

A number of recommendations are made in relation to the proposed development of the Site. These will be re-assessed and finalised following the final reporting of the tree climbing and tree observation surveys.

The conclusions of this report are considered valid for two years from the final survey dates noted in Section 1 of the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following an earlier Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment on land at Meadow Road, Neath, and receipt of comments from Natural Resources Wales regarding water vole, a series of protected species surveys were undertaken to properly categorise the importance of the Site for value to bats in particular, and to assess the adjacent watercourse for the likely presence or absence of water vole. The Site lies at approximate central Grid Reference SS 750 961. It is proposed to develop the Site for residential purposes.
- 1.2 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was reported in March 2021 and considered that the mature trees and woodland on Site, plus the Site location, offered opportunities for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. The ground based Preliminary Roost Assessment found a number of trees that were considered to be of potential value to bats and recommended further survey on trees that were of potential and programmed for removal in the development process.
- 1.3 The objectives of the protected species surveys were:
- To undertake transect and passive bat activity surveys across the Site;
 - To carry out climbing and observations surveys of relevant trees on Site;
 - To undertake a water vole survey on adjacent watercourses;
 - To provide recommendations for further survey or mitigation proposals to safeguard any protected species found.
- 1.4 The bat transect and passive detector surveys were undertaken over the period of 9th September 2020 to 2nd July 2021. Tree climbing surveys commenced in June 2021 and are expected to be concluded in August; currently two climbing surveys and two observation survey have been undertaken.
- 1.5 A habitat assessment and survey for water vole was undertaken on 24th July 2021.

2. METHODOLOGY

Desk Top Study

- 2.1 A desk top study was undertaken as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). Relevant findings were given in the report '*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Land at Meadow Road, Neath – Hawkeswood Ecology, April 2021*'.

Field Survey

Bats - Activity

- 2.2 A series of three activity surveys were undertaken using both transect surveys and passive detectors placed at various locations around the Site. The routes taken and locations of passive machines are shown in Figure 1.
- 2.3 Activity surveys were based upon recommendations made in the Bat Conservation Trust Document '*Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines for Professional Ecologist, 2016*'. Three visits to Site were involved with three transect surveys carried out over the period

9th October 2020 to 1st July 2021. At each survey event, passive detectors were located across the Site and left in place recording for at least six nights.

- 2.4 The transect survey involved the use of EM3+ and Anabat Scout machines. These machines continually record, the recordings available for later analysis.

Bats - Passive

- 2.5 In addition passive detecting machines were Anabat Express machines which were set to record on a pre-determined schedule allowing at least 15 minutes before sunset to at least 15 minutes after sunrise. The machines were placed at various positions to assist in quantifying the use of the Site by bats.
- 2.6 The recordings were analysed using AnalookW and Batsound software, by use of which it is possible to separate most species present from the sonograms produced.

Bats – Trees, Climbing Roost Assessment

- 2.7 The trees were assessed by experienced climbing bat ecologists following an earlier ground based assessment by Hawkeswood Ecology in September 2020. This climbing assessment confirmed trees of high potential where further survey was required. Following this, four trees were identified which were surveyed for the purposes of this report. Where a tree was considered to be unsafe to climb (T14b) observation surveys were undertaken with the aid an Infra-Red camera system, all surveys carried out in accordance with the published guidelines.
- 2.8 The surveys were undertaken in accordance with current best practice guidance and carried out by licensed bat ecologists.

Water Vole

- 2.9 A water vole survey was undertaken which followed the guidelines given in the Water Vole Conservation Handbook (second Edition) 2006. Effectively, the pond and watercourse to the Cryddan Brook, and a section of the Cryddan Brook either side of the entrance of this for a distance of approximately 200 metres each way.
- 2.10 The survey consisted of an assessment of the habitats present and a search for field signs including lush vegetation growth, burrows, latrines and feeding lawns.

Constraints

- 2.11 No specific constraints to the surveys were noted.

3. SURVEY TEAM EXPERIENCE

- 3.1 The lead surveyor and report author is Eric Hawkeswood. Eric has many years experience of broad habitat and detailed botanical and species surveying. Eric has been an active member of the Brecknock Bat Group since 1999 and been involved in a number of long running surveys within the county. He is a Natural Resources Wales (NRW) licensed bat worker (no. S088903-1, 2021) and has extensive experience of activity surveys, roost inspections and emergence work. He has been a professional in

the nature conservation field for thirty two years formerly working as Reserves Manager and Conservation Officer at Gwent Wildlife Trust and Woodland Manager for the Ruperra Conservation Trust. Eric has worked as an Ecological Consultant as joint proprietor of Hawkeswood Ecology since 2001.

- 3.2 Eric has also surveyed Sites for water voles when working as an employee of the Wildlife Trusts where he was trained in survey techniques in 2000, and as a consultant at a variety of sites across south Wales.
- 3.3 The tree climbing survey and tree observations surveys were undertaken by Aaron Davies and Matt Dowling. Aaron and Matt are experienced and licensed tree climbing bat ecologists with a wealth of experience in all types of bat work. Aaron is heavily involved in voluntary bat work with the Glamorgan Bat Group. Aaron's Natural Resources Wales licence number is S085246-1, Matt's is S087707-1.
- 3.4 Eric Hawkeswood was accompanied by Niki Hawkeswood and Lam Kelly during the transect surveys as a safety precaution only, neither actively recording. Both, however, have extensive experience of bat survey and were able to assist with physical observations.

4 FIELD SURVEY

Bats – Activity Surveys

- 4.1 Bat activity surveys were undertaken over the period of September 2020 to July 2021 with passive machines left on Site for a period before or after a transect survey as described in Section 2, Methodology.
- 4.2 Table 1 below shows the conditions at the time of the transect surveys and Table 2 shows the temperatures over the passive detector survey periods.

Table 1: Weather conditions for survey:

Date	Survey type	Times	Weather conditions
9 th September 2020	Evening activity transect	19.30 – 21.40 (sunset 19.40)	13-11°C, clear, dry, good visibility, F1/2 NW breeze.
27 th May 2021	Evening activity transect	21.00 – 23.20 (sunset 21.17)	14-14°C, ~20% high cloud increasing 100% at survey conclusion, dry, good visibility, F1/2 SW breeze.
1 st July 2021	Evening activity transect	21.20 – 23.40 (sunset 21.35)	18-18°C, ~60% high cloud, mild and humid, dry, good visibility, F2/3 W breeze.

Table 2: Conditions over passive detector periods:

Date	Temp °C range low to high* and reported weather
September 9-14 2020	
9/9/20	9.75-15, mostly cloudy, NW breeze
10/9/20	11.75-15, partly cloudy, SW breeze increasing strength
11/9/20	14-16.25, overcast, wind swinging to SE
12/9/20	14.75-17, mostly cloudy, SE to SW breeze
13/9/20	14.75-17, mostly cloudy, SW breeze
14/9/20	12-17.25, clear, SW to SE breeze
May 20-26, 2021	
20/5/21	10.5-11, rain and strong winds from SW
21/5/21	9.5-10.25, light rain, strong winds from SW reducing from NW
22/5/21	8.5-10, cloudy, fresh SW breeze
23/5/21	8-9, light rain, strong SW breeze lessening to light NW
24/5/21	7-10.75, cloudy, westerly breeze
25/5/21	5-9.75, partly cloudy, light W breeze
26/5/21	5-9.75, partly cloudy with long clear spells, light W breeze
June 25-30, 2021	
25/6/21	12.75-14, mostly cloudy, some light rain, NW to NE light breeze
26/6/21	14.75-17.75, mostly cloudy, freshening NE breeze
27/6/21	16.5-18.75, light rain, lessening NE breeze
28/6/21	15.75-17, overcast, occasional light rain, light NE breeze
29/6/21	13.5-18, overcast, light NE breeze swinging to SW
30/6/21	13-20.25, mostly cloudy

*Temperature recorded by a machine on Site.

Transects

9th September 2020

- 4.3 The transect recorded constant activity throughout with the first bat recorded at 19.54 when a common pipistrelle was recorded flying from the Eaglesbush House area towards the woodland. The majority of recorded activity was of pipistrelle species with common pipistrelle recorded more frequently than soprano pipistrelle. Noctule was recorded overflying at around 20.00 and a *Myotis* most resembling call characteristics of whiskered bat was recorded at 20.38 near the sycamore trees lining the track to the south of the Site.
- 4.4 Key areas of activity were along the woodland edge on the on-site woodland, the row of mature trees to the south and a lot of both common and soprano pipistrelle activity around the boundary with Eaglesbush House.

27th May 2021

- 4.5 Activity was less noted than in September 2020 and only three species recorded, the first at 21.29 when a pipistrelle species bat was noted at the SINC boundary in the east of the Site. By far the most frequently recorded was soprano pipistrelle with frequent common pipistrelle also. At 22.15 a Myotis bat was recorded near the SINC boundary where frequent soprano and common pipistrelle activity was also noted.
- 4.6 Key areas of activity reflected those found in September 2020 but there was noticeably less activity around the Eaglesbush House area and it became generally much quieter in the second hour after sunset.

1st July 2021

- 4.7 Fairly constant activity throughout the survey, with less towards its conclusion. All bats recorded were soprano and common pipistrelle with soprano once again the most frequently noted.
- 4.8 Significant activity was noted along the SINC boundary and in the north eastern corner of the Site with early activity noted near Eaglesbush House, probably representing bats emerging from the known roost there.

Passive Detectors

- 4.9 The detectors were placed out on three occasions for a minimum of six nights, the locations are shown in Figure 1, and with minor changes remained on those locations for all three sessions.
- 4.10 Looking at the results for each general location, Location 1 had a passive detector located on the east of the Site at the boundary with Eaglesbush House. Results here showed some temporal changes in the species present, in September 2020 the recordings are dominated fairly equally by common and soprano pipistrelle bats with occasionally whiskered bat passes. In May and June 2021, soprano pipistrelle passes far outweighed the other species suggesting a greater activity from them in this location. Other species included common pipistrelle which was recorded only occasionally with rarely recorded passes of whiskered and noctule bats.
- 4.11 Location 2 was based around the woodland on the north of the Site. Again, changes in the species composition recorded were noted from September 2020 to those recorded in May and June 2021. The vast majority of passes recorded in September were of whiskered bat as well as frequent passes of soprano pipistrelle. Common pipistrelle was recorded occasionally.
- 4.12 In May 2021, whiskered passes remained frequent as did soprano pipistrelle, but common pipistrelle as far more frequently recorded along with occasional noctule passes. In June both common and soprano pipistrelle passes were frequent with only occasional whiskered passes noted.
- 4.13 Location 3 was sited on the border with Eaglesbush Valley LNR. At this location, through all three sessions, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle were the most frequently recorded species. Whiskered bat was noted but not throughout the survey

periods. In May 2020 and June 2021, whiskered bats appeared to be very frequent for a night or two, but were not recorded at other times. In the May session, they appeared occasionally across the survey. Noctule was also occasionally recorded.

Bats, Tree Climbing and Observation Surveys

- 4.14 The tree climbing and observation surveys are ongoing. Currently two climbing survey have been undertaken and one observation with the final survey being undertaken during August. The two climbing surveys undertaken to date on trees T19a And T19c comply with the guidance as they were considered as being of moderate roost suitability after the initial assessments, no evidence of bats was found using either tree.
- 4.15 Tree numbers T14b and T20 were considered to be of high suitability to support roosting bats. T14b was not safe to climb and observations surveys are being undertaken on this tree. To date, following two climbing surveys and one observation survey, no evidence of them being use by bats has been found.

Water vole

- 4.16 The survey can be split into two sections, firstly the pond just adjacent to the Site in the north eastern corner and an associated stream leading to the Cryddan Brook, and secondly, the Cryddan Brook downstream to a culvert and upstream for approximately 200 metres from the outflow from the pond. Photographs of the pond, stream and the Cryddan Brook are given in Appendix 1.
- 4.17 The pond is heavily silted with little open water. Where this is open water, it is under shade and at no point more than a few centimetres deep. Brooklime is abundant in the pond with frequent floating sweet-grass and pendulous sedge. The open banks are densely vegetated with bramble or bare and trampled. The outflow to the Cryddan Brook is in an artificial stone lined channel and is considered unsuitable for use by water voles.
- 4.18 The Cryddan Brook is largely flowing in a rocky channel with little earth for burrowing. The bed is shallow and stony and is generally unsuitable for water vole. In addition, the channel is overshadowed for most of the survey length by mature woodland. Much of the banks are bare, vegetation consists of locally abundant bramble and Himalayan balsam with frequent male fern and enchanter's nightshade. Hairy brome occurs occasionally and remote sedge is locally frequent.
- 4.19 No suitable locations were found where animals could burrow and lengths of the banks were rivetted with stone as well as outcrops of naturally occurring rock to support the access road running alongside. No evidence was found of burrows, latrines or feeding lawns and no sightings of the animals was found. It is concluded that the Cryddan Brook is unsuitable in this locations for water vole.

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Bats

- 5.1 At this point it is clear that the Site is used by four species of bat of which common and soprano pipistrelle are dominant with *Myotis* bats frequently recorded particularly alongside the boundary with the LNR and the retained woodland area on Site.

- 5.2 On analysis, the *Myotis* calls across the Site were considered to be most characteristic of whiskered bat which would be supported by the main habitat types across and near the Site. Some call characteristics appeared to have similarities to Brandt's bat and the presence of this species cannot be ruled out, however, given the similarities between the habits of the two species this is not considered a concern in any considerations for them.
- 5.3 Recordings of noctules on transect surveys found them to be flying fairly high over the Site suggesting a roost elsewhere, the infrequency of recording of noctule on the passive detectors also would suggest this.
- 5.4 Currently, there is some bat survey work related to tree climbing ongoing and this will be reported in an addendum to this report when completed. To this point, the tree climbing and tree observation survey have proved negative with two climbing surveys undertaken and one observation.
- 5.5 It is clear that, particularly with the presence of whiskered bats on Site, control of artificial lighting will be necessary, and retention of commuting flight lines during and post development will be essential for all species of bat. To this end, where trees are being removed to accommodate the construction phase, they should be replaced at the earliest opportunity and trees of some size rather than whips should be used.
- 5.6 In relation to the other bat species present, common and soprano pipistrelle are amongst our most common species and are least likely to be affected by the development given proper mitigation. Noctules are generally tree dwelling bats, and although no roosting has been evidenced to date, the retention of the woodland and mature trees across the Site is of some potential importance for this species of bat.
- 5.7 Where the new entrance to the Site is being formed, a dark route should be made allowing continued bat commuting along the northern boundary from Eaglesbush House to the retained woodland. This can be achieved by spacing of streetlights or use of baffles on them. The use of directional 'bat friendly' lighting should be considered. This would be using LED lighting operating in the range 600nm plus, an amber light.

Characterisation of Impacts for bats

- 5.8 The potential impacts of the development will be the and interruption of commuting routes, the potential disturbance of retained habitats and artificial light spill. As the Site is currently relatively undisturbed and unlit, measure will need to be taken to mitigate for these issues.
- 5.9 Without mitigation, the scheme has the potential to disrupt commuting routes from Eaglesbush House and known roosts by removing trees and breaking linear features linking the House to the woodlands and Eaglesbush LNR. The unmitigated impact of the scheme would be considered to be a **major negative impact** on a local scale and **minor negative** impacts on a wider County scale.
- 5.10 With mitigation to ensure ongoing connectivity and control of lighting, the scheme will be potential **neutral** in relation to bats. The provision of gardens and a more varied

structure to the Site may even offer some benefits for bats in terms of foraging and roosting opportunities.

- 5.11 The predicted impacts assessment will need to be reviewed on receipt of the final survey data currently outstanding.

Water vole

- 5.12 A water vole survey was undertaken at the request of Natural Resources Wales in their response to the application. This was because a record of water vole dating from 2016 from a grid reference relating to the centre of the Site was reported by SEWBReC.
- 5.13 The record was from the centre of the Site; however, a drain that ran through the field had been culverted many years earlier and it was considered in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) that the record was incorrect, either wrong identification, maybe a bank or field vole, or the grid reference was incorrect. NRW felt that with a pond adjacent to the Site and associated watercourses, the potential for the presence of water vole should be investigated in any event.
- 5.14 As such a survey was undertaken and as reported above, it was concluded that there is no suitable habitat for this species locally and they will not be impacted by this scheme. It remains likely that the record cited in the PEA desktop study is an error.

6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Bats

- 6.1 All UK bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Schedule 5 of this act makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take bats. It is also an offence to intentionally damage or destroy their place of rest. In 2007 the offences of killing, injuring or taking species under Section 9(1), 9(2) and 9(4)a of European Protected Species listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were removed to avoid duplication with their protection under Annex IV of the European Communities Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitats Directive) as amended. The regulations remove the defence of inadvertent or accidental damage to roosts and make the offence ‘absolute’.
- 6.2 They are also protected under Annex IV of the European Communities Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitats Directive) as amended which requires the United Kingdom government to provide European Protected Species with strict protection. Currently, the UK government still applies this legislation.
- 6.3 The Habitats Directive is transcribed into England and Wales Law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, this legislation consolidates amendments made to the earlier 2010 act. This legislation states in Part 3, Protection of Species, paragraph 43(1) that a person who:
- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
 - (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,

- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, is committing an offence.

- 6.4 Further, with regard to disturbance of EPS, Paragraph 43(2) that disturbance is an act which is likely to:
- (a) to impair their ability—
 - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate;or
 - (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- 6.5 In the case of a development involving the loss or modification of a building which may affect bats the above legislation must be considered and it may be necessary to apply to Natural Resources Wales for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL).
- 6.6 The introduction of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 has removed the defence of killing or injuring a protected species during a lawful operation, thus even in an instance where planning permission is granted, the presence of bats must be considered and mitigated for prior to commencement of works. Under the above regulations, a WAG licence can only be given if three tests are satisfied:
- The action proposed is in the interest of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment;
 - That there is not a satisfactory alternative;
 - That the action proposed will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- 6.7 Failure to satisfy the regulations and obtain an EPSL where required is likely to result in prosecution and can lead to severe fines of up to £5000 per bat and possible imprisonment.
- 6.8 Eight species of bat are listed under section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2106). Section 7 of the Act provides a list of living organisms of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This is a list of species considered at threat within Wales and in need of conservation management to maintain and enhance population numbers.
- 6.9 A duty is placed on the Local Authority by the Welsh Assembly Government to maintain and enhance populations of species listed in Section 7.
- Water vole*
- 6.10 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. This means they are protected from killing, injury, collection and sale.

- 6.11 Water vole are a Section 7 species in the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. Section 7 is a list of the living organisms of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales

Securing Biodiversity Enhancements

- 6.12 Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5, Nature Conservation and Planning, provides advice on how the planning system should contribute to biodiversity protection and enhancement. TAN 5 recognises the importance of biodiversity and the enjoyment of it. TAN 5 requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to protect and enhance biodiversity during the planning process and to encourage sustainable developments. It also requires LPA's to ensure that protected Sites are properly accounted for within the planning system.
- 6.13 The Chief Planning Officer sent a letter to LPAs (dated 23rd October 2019) following the refusal of a planning application. This letter has provided clarification on the Welsh Governments approach to Paragraph 6.4.5 of Planning Policy Wales 10 which sets out that *“planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity”*.
- 6.14 The purpose of this letter was to clarify that in light of the legislation and Welsh Government policy outlined above, where biodiversity enhancement 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. Biodiversity enhancement therefore will need to be included in any future planning application.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats

- 7.1 All recommendations here are in addition to or confirming those made in earlier reporting from this Site.
- 7.2 Bats can be affected by artificial light spill. Consideration will therefore be given to the level of external lighting around the Site and a detailed lighting scheme should be produced and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Artificial lighting will take into consideration the details provided by the guidance note 08/18 produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals.
- 7.3 A dark route will be employed along the northern boundary allowing continued commuting from Eaglesbush House to the woodland and Eaglesbush LNR beyond. This will be achieved by the use of baffles on lights if necessary. A lux of around 1 should be aimed for in these areas.
- 7.4 Lighting will be located with consideration for all nocturnal species and will avoid adjacent areas including the building complex to the west where there are known bat

roosts and the woodland SINC, Eaglesbush Valley LNR and the mature trees on the Site boundaries and lane to the south and east of the development.

- 7.5 The use of personal security lighting on any housing should be discouraged, possibly by the provision of low level lighting being provided on the new properties should they back onto the retained hedgerows and adjacent woodlands. If it cannot be avoided, any domestic lighting will be placed at a level lower than three metres, be cast to the ground with no up-lighting and will ideally be on a time switch to ensure any resultant light scatter is limited in duration; it should only be used in areas where safety is a consideration.
- 7.6 Replacement trees will be planted where horse chestnuts are removed near the Eaglesbush House boundary. Replacement trees should be standards to allow a continued suitable commuting feature for bats.
- 7.7 Integral bat boxes will be used in the new construction. Bat tubes will be located on buildings near the Site boundaries, particularly adjacent to woodland and LNR, The locations of bat mitigation will be such that they are not vulnerable to attack from cats and are free from human interference.
- 7.8 Any landscaping plan should introduce native species reflecting those present in the local area (all native species should be of local provenance) or species with known value to British wildlife. Plantings should include species known to be valuable to foraging birds and bats such as those producing berries and attractive to insects, i.e. heather, hawthorn, pyracantha and hazel.

General

- 7.9 Recommendations are also made in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, '*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Land at Meadow Road, Neath. Hawkeswood Ecology – April 2021*' and '*Tree Climbing Bat Roost Assessment, Hawkeswood Ecology, April 2021*'. The recommendations made in those reports remain relevant and should be considered in conjunction with any further made in this document.
- 7.10 Further recommendations or amendments may be made following the conclusion of the on-going tree bat roost surveys at the Site.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The surveys have shown a minimum of four species of bats using the Site, possibly 5, with soprano and common pipistrelle the most frequently recorded and whiskered frequent in some areas.
- 8.2 Survey for water vole found no evidence of them or any suitable habitat that would be favourable for them. It is concluded that water voles are unlikely to be present in the locality.

- 8.3 Final reporting off tree surveys for roosting bats are still awaited. Currently these have no positive findings. The report impact assessment and recommendations may need to be updated on conclusion of these. An addendum to this report will be made following completion.

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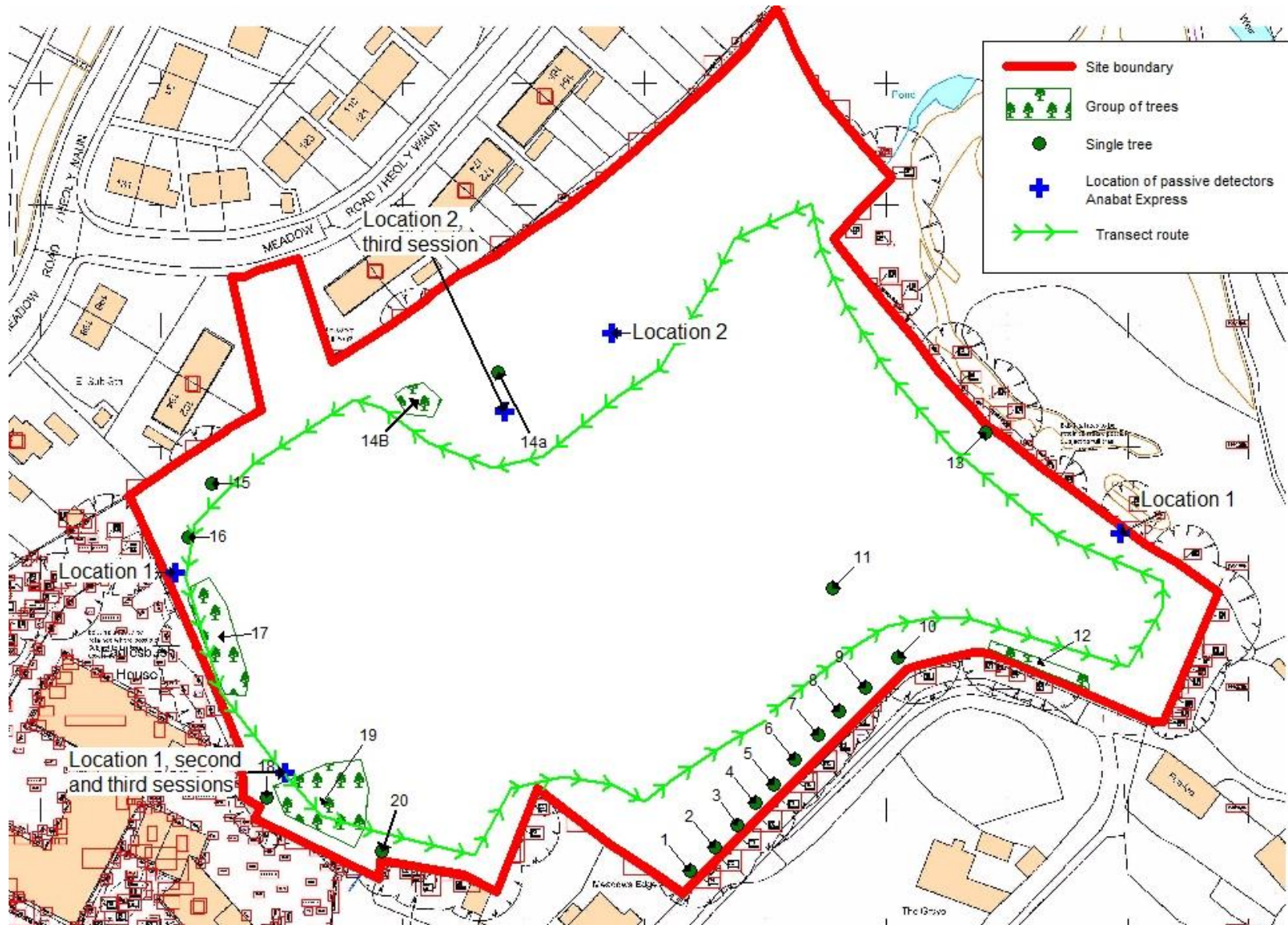
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FIGURE 1
BAT ACTIVITY TRANSECT ROUTES AND LOCATIONS OF PASSIVE DETECTORS

Protected Species Surveys, Land at Meadow Road, Neath.
Hawkeswood Ecology – July 2021



APPENDIX 1
PHOTOGRAPHS

Protected Species Surveys, Land at Meadow Road, Neath.
Hawkeswood Ecology – July 2021



The pond and surroundings

Protected Species Surveys, Land at Meadow Road, Neath.
Hawkeswood Ecology – July 2021



The pond and surroundings

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Photographs showing the outflow form the pond to the Cryddan Brook, concreted with laid stone sides

Protected Species Surveys, Land at Meadow Road, Neath.
Hawkeswood Ecology – July 2021



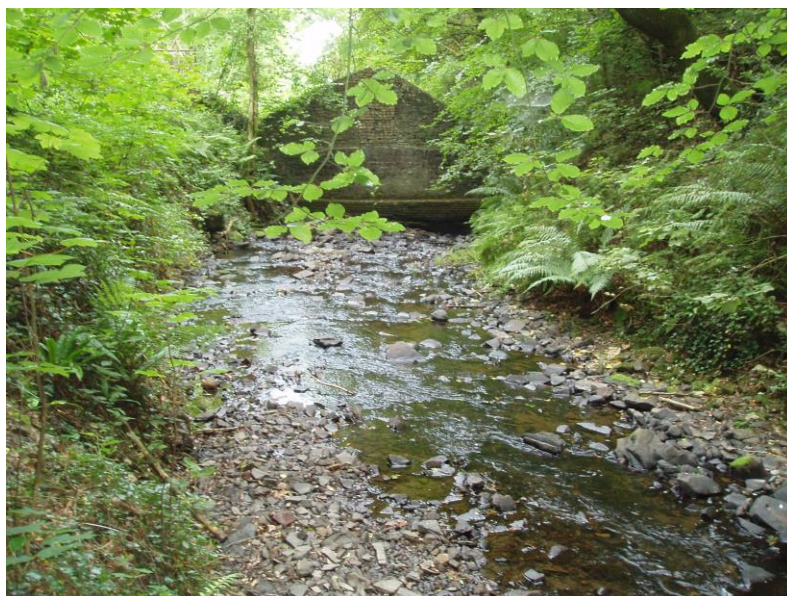
Made ground on the western bank



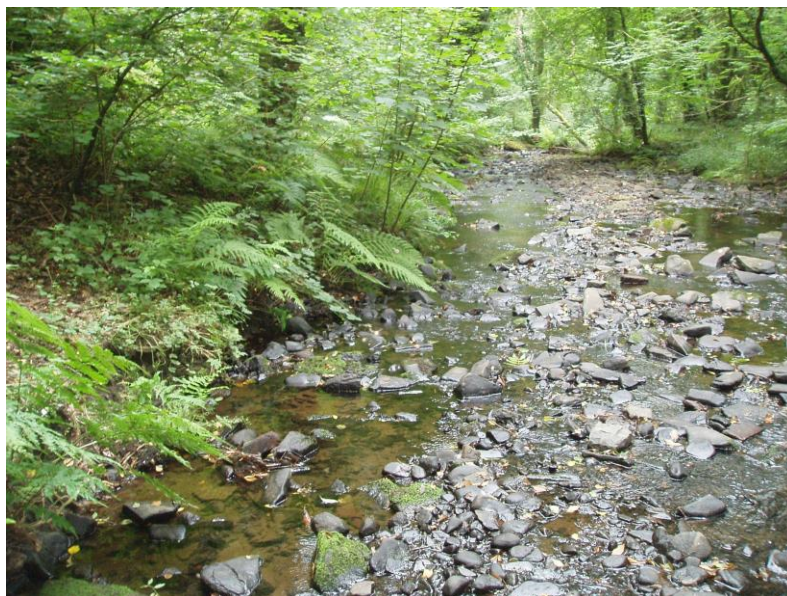
The steep sided stream bed near the housing on Old Neath Rd



Lack of vegetation on the banks is a feature throughout



The rocky nature of the Cryddan bed and banks



Typical section of the Nant Cryddan with a rocky shallow bed and limited ground vegetation



Even where there is soil, there are rocky outcrops or rock revetments

HAWKESWOOD ECOLOGY

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