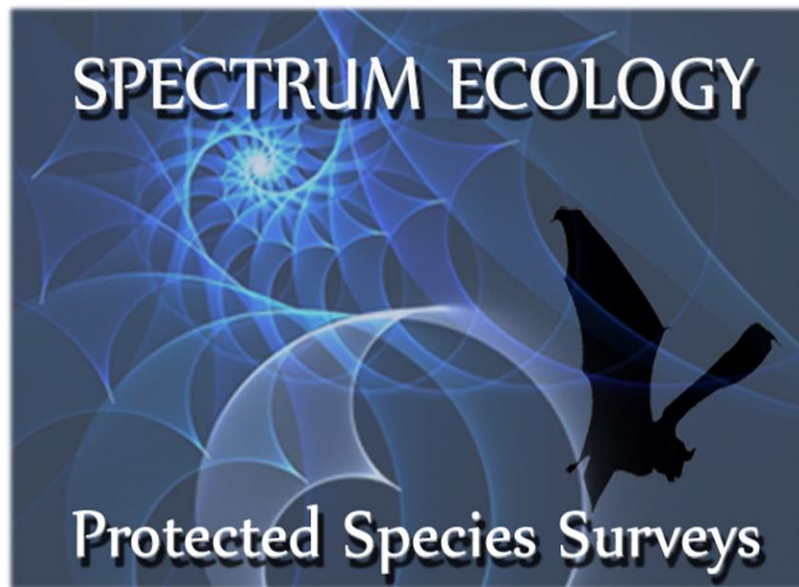




PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR PRESENCE OF BAT ROOSTS:

92 Cimla Crescent, Cimla, Neath SA11 3NP

Date of Survey: 4th June 2025

Report by: Leigh Tuck

Licence Number S095573/1 (valid to May 2027)

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Disclaimer

All reasonable endeavours have been taken to provide an accurate assessment of the situation pertaining to this site at the specific time of the survey. No liability can be assumed for omissions or changes after the survey has taken place.

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SUMMARY

Spectrum Ecology was commissioned to carry out a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) for bats and their roosts at a proposed redevelopment site located at 92 Cimla Crescent, Cimla, Neath SA11 3NP, Grid Ref: SS 76170 96701. The survey is in support of a planning application to ensure that protected species are given due regard as part of the latest proposals.

The preliminary roost assessment for bats at the proposed development site was carried out on 4th June 2025. A detailed internal and external scoping survey inspection was made of the buildings. During the course of these investigations, **no individuals were found, and no field signs were discovered to indicate that the structures are currently being used as a roost for bats.**

A very low number of potential roosting features (PRFs) were noted with the only features relating to gaps in the soffits and between the neighbouring property. In addition there are plastic roof vents on the eastern and western aspect of the roof, however a thorough inspection of all these features **revealed no bats or their field signs that would indicate current or historic occupation of the feature by bats.**

There was 1 bat pass during the dusk emergence survey 10 minutes after dusk and was along the tree line of the site.

It is currently assessed that there is no need for an EPS licence. However, if bats or their field signs are encountered during the works, all works must cease immediately until an appropriately licensed ecologist has inspected the features. If a bat roost is confirmed, NRW must be informed and an EPS disturbance licence secured prior to continuing works.

A number of mitigations and enhancements have been prescribed that will appropriately ensure that there is no net-loss to potential roosting habitat and should be integrated into the final design of the redeveloped structure. This will take the form of a bat box on the south facing gable end.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Site Description

1.0.1. The site comprises a two storey residential dwelling with a concrete panelled sectional garage. The proposed redevelopment is understood to be confined to the curtilage of the current structures on site.



Figure 1: Location and Extent of the Surveyed Site.

1.0.2. The residential structure is a three-bedroomed semi-detached house. The house is brick built and finished to the exterior with painted pebble-dash render. The house has been modified internally and has benefited from a relatively new roof covering. There is a small roof void which is largely full of insulation. The chimney is still in situ and was functional and open.

1.0.3. The garage has a pitched roof consisting of corrugated metal and the structure appeared to be overall weathertight, however there was vegetation growing through the gaps between the wall and roof. The garage has a single skin roof therefore offering no thermal resistance to daily fluctuations and is considered unsuitable for bats.

1.0.4. The main residential dwelling is currently occupied as a family dwelling and the garage is used for storage.

1.0.5. *Wider Environment:* The site is situated on the western edge of a linear woodland block which is part of the Knoll Country Park boundary and provides ecological connectivity to wider habitats and field systems. The surveyed dwelling is set in an urban housing estate and whilst

the site is bordered to the west by urban development, the rest of the site is bounded by woodland, farmland with links to the wider countryside.



Figure 2: The survey site in a Wider Landscape Context.

1.0.6. *Commuting and Foraging Habitat Suitability*: The site and surrounding area should be considered to have **HIGH** suitability as foraging and commuting habitat as described by Table 4.1 (pg. 44) of the BCT Survey Guidelines.

1.0.7. Therefore, should consent be granted a suitably worded planning condition should restrict lighting to the north-east to minimise additional light bleed to these important habitats.

1.2. Proposed Development

1.2.1. It is understood that the proposed development plans include the extension of the existing house and change the garage into living accommodation.

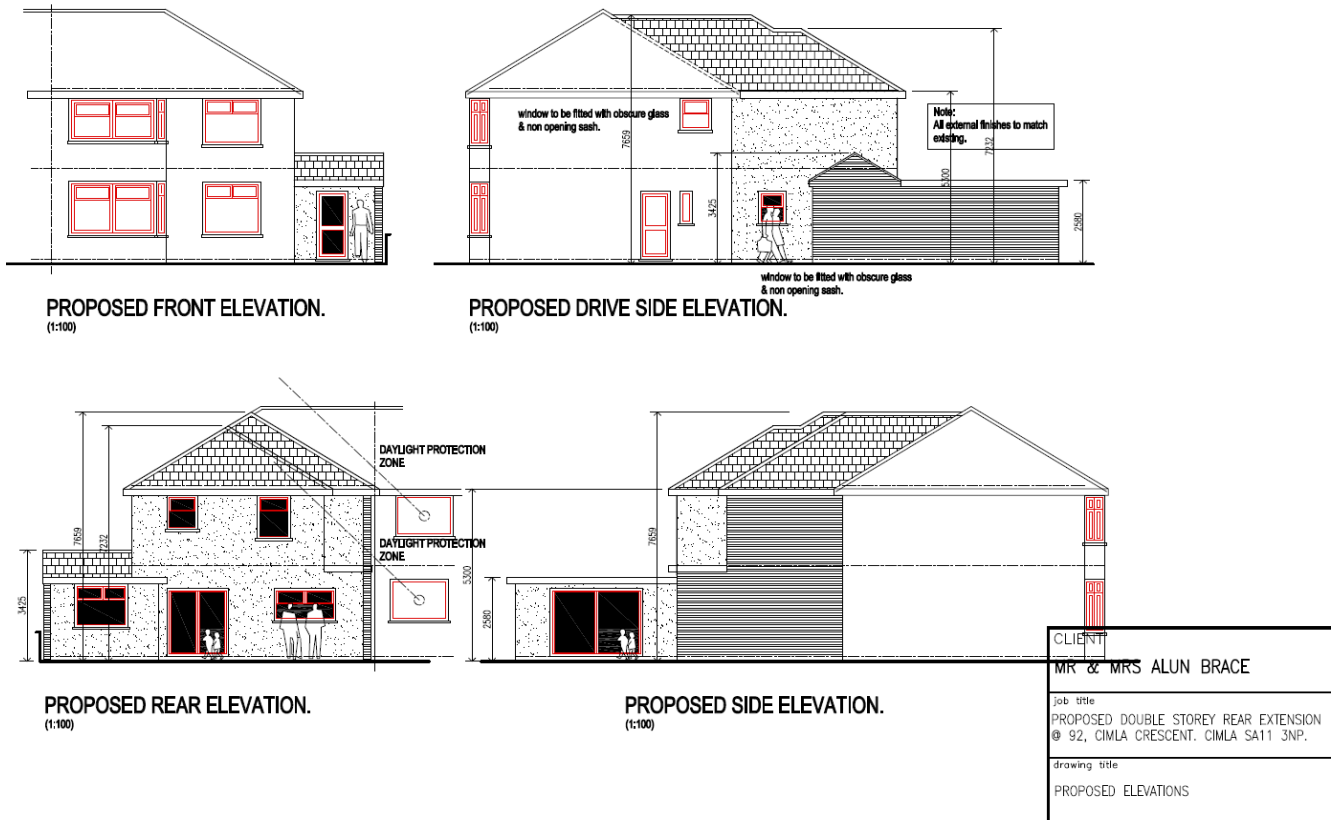


Figure 3: Existing Ground-floor (left) and proposed ground and First-floor plans (right)

1.3. Historic Survey Effort & Data Trawl

1.3.1. There have been six planning applications on Cimla Crescent since 2022 which have affected the roof space and there are no details of bat surveys for those applications on the online planning system.

1.3.2. It is understood that no previous surveys for bats or bat activity have been undertaken at this property.

1.3.3. No Local Ecological Records Check was commissioned for the project, due to the limited potential to host bats and low impact to the wider habitats.

1.4. Ecology of Bats

1.4.1. There are 18 species of bats, of which 17 are known to breed in the United Kingdom. Most of them are regarded as threatened species, due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and disturbance/damage to roosts. Of these species, a number regularly use buildings or trees at certain times of year in order to find safe secure roost sites.

1.4.2. Bats are highly-mobile, flying mammals, which in the United Kingdom feed entirely on insects. Having evolved over seventy million years, they have developed sophisticated mechanisms to allow them effectively to 'see' in the dark by using sound. Called echolocation, this system allows them to hunt down and track small moving insects whilst in flight, rather like radar does in a modern aircraft.

1.4.3. In winter, when their prey is scarce, British bats hibernate in the cool parts of caves, buildings and tree cavities. They might wake occasionally and will feed if evening temperatures are greater than 7°C, when flying insects will be active. Generally, however, activity in winter is very limited, and bats only become fully active in spring.

1.4.4. In late spring, female bats will gather together in maternity roosts in order to give birth and rear their single baby in June. Such maternity roosts are often near to foraging areas in order to minimise energy usage, as flight requires vast energy resources.

1.4.5. Whilst females form maternity colonies, usually in warmer roofs or trees, male bats tend to seek out cooler sites, which may not be so close to the foraging areas. Males are often solitary and do not exhibit the social behaviour that marks out females during the birthing period.

1.4.6. Several British bat species are known to rely heavily on buildings to roost. The Common pipistrelle bat, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, appears to be well represented in NPT county and can often be encountered in built structures, such as the building under survey, as can Soprano pipistrelle bat, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The Brown long-eared bat, *Plecotus auritus*, is another species which commonly roosts in buildings and again is well represented in the county.

1.5. Relevant Legislation

1.5.1. All British bats are protected by the following legislation:

1.5.1.1. **The Conservation of Habitats and Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019** superseded The Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and amended in 2017, as of January 1st 2021 and provides the same level of protections as the previous legislation - Annex IV of the European Communities Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora - which required the United Kingdom government to provide bats with strict protection.

1.5.1.2. **Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended). The marked decline of all British bats has resulted in their being given protection under Section 9 of the Act (through provisions in Schedule 5) making it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any British bat. It also made it an offence to intentionally damage or destroy their place of rest (the roost).

1.5.1.3. **The Environment Act (Wales) 2016, Section 6** - 'Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems' which places a duty on public authorities under subsection (1) to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, public authorities must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. The duty replaces the section 40 duties in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales, and applies to those authorities that fell within the previous duty.

In complying with subsection (1), a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects:

- (a) diversity between and within ecosystems;
- (b) the connections between and within ecosystems;
- (c) the scale of ecosystems;
- (d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
- (e) the adaptability of ecosystems

2. METHODOLOGY

2.0.1. The survey was undertaken during the day on the 4th June 2025.

2.0.2. A thorough investigation of all accessible features within the site was carried out for potential roosting features, both internally and externally, as detailed below.

2.0.3. Internal Inspection – All accessible areas are inspected at close hand from ground level or from a ladder. High-powered focusable lamps were used to illuminate areas and, where close hand inspection is not possible due to access limitations, high powered-focusable lenses are used to inspect the area. There was a hatch into the loft area which allowed a UV light access to search for evidence of staining. In addition to this, all accessible holes, cracks, crevices and cavities are inspected utilising an illuminated dual-camera endoscope with the ability to capture photographic evidence of the inspection.

2.0.4. External Inspection – The external surface of the walls and roof plains are inspected at close hand to a height of 5m from ground level. Areas above 5m are inspected using high-powered focusable lamps and binoculars/lenses. If any potential roosting features are identified, investigation with a dual-camera illuminated endoscope is undertaken, if safe to do so.

2.1. Constraints to Access

2.1.1. The roof surfaces could not be assessed at close hand, due to the unknown condition of the rafters and steep pitch of the roof, raising health and safety concerns. However, a thorough examination was made with the use of the high-powered spot lamp and binoculars and close focussing camera.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Main Dwelling – External Inspection

3.1.1. Roof Coverings

Whilst the roof timbers were of an unknown condition and deemed to be unsafe to inspect to walk on, due to the length of the rear garden, good sight lines were achieved for the inspection using high-powered focusable lenses and a high-powered torch. Overall, the tiled roof coverings on the property appear in good condition, weather tight, with no cracked or

missing tile, due to the roof covering being removed and replaced with breathable membrane used as an underlay.

However, there are roof vents which could potentially provide bat access but on closer inspection was covered in spider's webs indicating no use of the gaps and did not allow access into the wider roof void due to the presence of an internal grill.



Figure 4: Vents with internal grill on the eastern and western aspect of the Roof Covering

In addition to this, there is a gap in the UPVC fascia on the gable end of the frontage (south). The gap could be inspected at close hand with an endoscope and although it was apparent that gap was not deep enough as the UPVC had been installed over the top of the old wooden fascia.

3.1.2. Fascias and Soffits

The fascias were inspected at close hand using a high-powered torch and were all found to be in a good state of repair and tight fitting against the pebble-dash walls. There were two potential access points to the area behind the fascia boards, but did not lead into the roof.

3.1.3. Walls

The external surfaces of the walls appear to be in good repair, with no cracks, gaps or crevices large enough to support individual bat roosts. **No PRFs or access points to the interior of the structure were noted or on the external surfaces of the walls.**

3.2. Main Dwelling - Internal Inspection

3.2.1. Apex Roof Void

There is a triangular roof void above the structure running the length of the dwelling, which was accessed via a loft hatch door in the bedroom. The void was fully accessible and was covered in loft insulation to allow a full inspection and highlight any areas of concentrated droppings or urine staining.

The roof void was found to be fully lined with new breathable membrane, which considering the age of the house shows the recent re-roofing works by previous occupants. The membrane was intact and taught with no bulges or signs of stretching from movement of bats between the roof covering and the membrane. The roof supports were clean and showed no signs or scratching or staining (when exposed to UV light). The insulation within the void showed no signs of recent disturbance, and no scat or urine staining (when exposed to UV light) or foraging remains consistent with use by bats, were noted.

In addition to this, no access point large enough to support the use by bats through the roof covering to the roof void were noted from the inside of the roof void. **No evidence of current or historic inhabitation of the apex roof void by any vertebrate species (i.e. bats, birds, squirrels etc.) was found during the inspection.**

3.3. Main Dwelling Summary

No bats or their field signs being found within the structure, and all Potential Roosting Features were accessible and inspected at close hand. This provides a robust assessment of the buildings ability to support bat roosts. Therefore, the structure must be categorised as holding **low potential** to support bat roosts (BCT guidelines 2024).

3.4. Garage

3.4.1. External Inspection

The roof of the garage is of a flat corrugated metal single skin roof which is relatively tight fitting and offers no PRFs. The walls of the garage had a small number <5 cracks and crevices with none large enough to support individual bat roosts and not deep enough to support a single bat, even as an occasional day roost.

3.4.2. Internal Inspection

The interior of the garage is concrete block. No ceiling or insulation was in place across the underside of the roof covering and was exposed to allow a thorough investigation.

No individuals were found within the garage. Where exposed, there was no sign of scratching, staining or polishing on the roof supports, no accumulations of scat on the stored items and no other evidence that would indicate that the structure had historically supported a bat roost. It is also deemed highly unlikely that the garage would support a bat roost, due to the highly variable thermal properties and damp, draughty nature of the structure.

4. DUSK EMERGENCE SURVEY

4.1. Despite the findings of the thorough preliminary roost assessment of the house and the low to negligible potential roost features, the high quality foraging and commuting habitat to the north east of the property must be considered, when following the precautionary principle.

4.2. Therefore it was considered that a single dusk emergence survey should be undertaken to understand how the local bat population utilised this resource and if the proposed development would impact such use.

4.3. Survey Results:

Date & time	04.06.25 , 20.30 – 22.45
Survey type	Building inspection and Evening emergence survey
Temperature	14 °C dropping to 11oC at the end of the survey,
Weather conditions	Breeze, wind speed 7mph south westerly, 8 oktas -full cloud cover
Sunset time	21.24
Surveyors	Leigh Tuck, Rob Jones, 1 trainee assistant surveyor
Equipment	Batbox Duet, Echometer Touch 2 Pro, Night Fox-Night Vision

4.4. **No bats were noted emerging from any of the structures within the property boundary at any point during the survey.**

4.5. There is a growing understanding that most if not all buildings will hold some potential for hibernating bats. The building contains a very limited number of features that could be utilised as a hibernation roost. However the mitigation strategy will ensure that timing of works will be key, and works affecting the roof can be timed to occur nearer the end of the bat activity season when there is less impact to hibernating bats.

4.6. There is **currently no requirement for an EPS licence** to progress with the redevelopment works on the house or garage, due to a lack of evidence that bats or bat roosts are present within the structures. However, **if any bats or their field signs are discovered during the works, all works must cease immediately** until appropriate investigations have been made by an appropriately licensed ecologist. In the event that bats or a roost are confirmed, NRW must then be notified and an EPS disturbance licence secured before works may continue.

5. MITIGATIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS

5.1.1. Enhancement will focus on maintaining the existing level of roosting opportunities within the site, by including new features for bats within the design of the new development, and enhancing overall opportunities by providing alternatives within the immediate vicinity. Enhancements will be prescribed to ensure the responsibilities laid out by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are met.

5.1.2. The mitigation strategy will follow the mitigation hierarchy, Avoid, Minimise and Compensate to ensure there is no net loss of roosting opportunities within the site and surrounding area and the development will follow the risk avoidance strategies detailed below.

5.2. Risk Avoidance Strategies

5.2.1. All clearance works, with a potential to cause disturbance (including but not limited to removal of the roof tiles on the roof coverings of the main dwelling) will be undertaken using a destructive searching methodology by checking the underneath of roof tiles before discarding. Once the roosting potential of the features have been eliminated on the roof works can continue as long as any wall cavities are covered and made inaccessible to bats for the duration of the active season.

5.3. Risk Minimisation Strategies

5.3.1. An appropriately licenced ecologist will remain on-call for the works to provide assistance in the event bats are encountered during the works.

5.3.2. All contractors carrying out works will be warned in writing of the potential presence of bats and of their protected status. It must be clearly understood that **in the event of any further bats being found during the redevelopment, all works should cease** in the affected area until appropriately licensed ecologist has had sufficient time to make the necessary investigations. If bats or a historic roost is confirmed, NRW must be notified and an EPS disturbance licence secured.

5.3.3. All materials used during redevelopment should be carefully chosen to ensure that they are not toxic or harmful to bats in case of future use by bats. If it is proposed to treat timbers or use any chemical sprays, these should be with `bat friendly` compounds only, in accordance with current NRW guidelines.

5.3.4. The requirement for additional external lighting within the proposed development has not been advised by the client. If additional external lighting (i.e. security lighting etc.) is required, it will be subjected to a lighting design scheme to ensure additional disturbance encountered by bats utilising the area to forage or commute is minimised to an acceptable level.

5.4. Compensation/enhancement Measures

5.4.1. To compensate for the loss of any roosting potential, currently provided by the structure within the site, the following measures have been evaluated to reduce the net-loss of potential roosting habitat to an acceptable level and to provide the required enhancements within the capabilities of the design of the proposed development.

5.4.2. Bat compensation and enhancements measures - A **minimum of one gable end mounted bat box (e.g. 1FQ Schwegler bat box or similar)** should be installed on the south facing gable end at least 4m from the ground **prior to works commencing**, in the unlikely event that any bats found during roof stripping.

5.4.3. Bird enhancement measures –A **minimum of 2 bird boxes with a 32mm entrance hole (e.g. Schwegler 1B 32mm or similar)** should be mounted on posts at the northwestern corner of the garden close to the woodland habitat.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

5.0.1. The site and surrounding land was noted to have **HIGH suitability for foraging and commuting purposes and therefore any compensation should seek to enhance the local roosting provision.**

5.0.2. **No roosts or evidence of current/historic occupation by bats of the structures within the site have been found throughout the site inspection.**

5.0.3. There is **currently no requirement for an EPS licence** to progress with the redevelopment works, due to a lack of evidence that bats or bat roosts are present within the structures. However, **if any bats or their field signs are discovered during the works, all works must cease immediately** until appropriate investigations have been made by an appropriately licensed ecologist. In the event bats or a roost are confirmed, NRW must be notified and an EPS disturbance licence secured before works may continue.

5.1. To ensure there is no net loss of roosting potential, the documented enhancements should be incorporated into the final design of the proposed redevelopment.

5.2. Bats are highly mobile flying animals which may set up new roosts at any time, therefore this report can only be considered **valid for 18 months.**

6. SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE

6.1 The principal surveyor and author of this report is Leigh Tuck (Licence Number S095573/1) a Natural Resources Wales licensed bat worker with over 15 years licensed experience. Leigh has a wide and extensive experience in UK and European conservation legislation and protected species and has worked on many projects related to bat conservation. Leigh has experience undertaking surveys as part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme, as well as undertaking numerous building and tree surveys for bats over many years.

6.2 The Spectrum Ecology surveyors have a team which has held bat licenses for over 15 years and have worked with Natural Resources Wales and many local authorities most recently for Blaenau Gwent CBC on countywide habitats surveys. In addition they have worked

extensively in the film and TV industry protecting bat roosts during 'on-location' filming at sensitive sites for international companies such as Disney, Netflix, Universal, HBO and Lucasfilm.

6.3 This wealth of experience and resultant expertise allows us to produce good quality reports, mitigation documents and habitat management plans to assist clients with any ecology or biodiversity related plans within their projects. As well as producing numerous bat reports annually for private individuals and organisations, we have also been involved in providing training, guidance and advice in such matters to local authorities across South Wales.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Evidence

Images of the Roofs and Walls of the Main Dwelling



Figure 5: Roof Surfaces and Walls - front aspect (West aspect)



Figure 6: Roof Surfaces and Walls - eastern and southern aspects



Figure 7: Checked PRF Gaps in soffits and fascia

Images of the Roof Void



Figure 8: First floor roof void and bedrooms within the historic roof space