

DAVID CLEMENTS ECOLOGY LTD

**EDUCATION LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTRE, PORT TALBOT
BAT SURVEY**

October 2025

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SUMMARY

- The site is in a suburban setting directly north of Port Talbot town centre, within Neath Port Talbot County Borough, South Wales. It comprises the disused building and associated grounds of an Education Library and Resource (ELRS) Centre, including areas of hardstanding and trees.
- The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the main ELRS centre building and surrounding hard surfaces. An area of staff carparking will be created in the east of the site, and fencing is to be installed enclosing the site.
- The ELRS building (B1) was initially assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats (see DCE 2025). Features with roosting potential include gaps in the external window frames, multiple slipped, lifted and missing roof tiles, large triangular shaped gaps at the end of multiple roof voids etc.
- A small shed (B2) was initially assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. Features with roosting potential include gaps beneath roof the sheeting and ridge tiles, and missing/open windows which could provide access.
- Further survey for bats comprising two dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the ELRS building (B1), and one dusk emergence survey was conducted on B2. These surveys confirmed use of B1 by roosting bats, with a minimum of six common pipistrelle being recorded emerging from the building during any one survey.
- A licence from NRW will be required in respect of bats, which must be obtained in advance of any development. An appropriate method statement, including suitable mitigation and compensation measures, will need to be included within the licence application and approved by the licensing body.

Evaluation

- The main ELRS building (B1) is now considered to be of High Local value, as it supports roosting bats (see Plan 3).
- The mature common lime trees, and the ephemeral/short perennial vegetation which has suitability for slow-worm, are assessed as being of Local Value.
- The other remaining habitats including hardstanding, fence and wall are assessed as being of Negligible Value for wildlife.

Implications of the Development Proposals

- The main impact of the development proposals would be the disturbance or loss of confirmed bat roosts within the ELRS building, if unmitigated. If any trees are to be removed or significantly impacted, it is also possible roosting bats could be affected, if present. A licence from NRW will be required in respect of bats, which must be obtained in advance of any development.
- Any artificial lighting within the site, which can adversely affect activity by a variety of fauna, particularly foraging bats, nesting birds and invertebrates, should be in accordance with the current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2023b) guidance.
- Appropriate mitigation measures are recommended, along with opportunities for the enhancement of the site for wildlife.
- Provided adequate further surveys are conducted and mitigation measures are implemented as necessary to avoid or minimise impacts to the identified protected species and features of interest,

it is considered on current evidence that the proposed development of this site would not be unacceptably constrained by biodiversity and nature conservation issues.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Report prepared by:

1.1 David Clements Ecology Ltd (DCE), Cardiff

On behalf of:

1.2 Tilbury Douglas

Instructed via:

1.3 -

Site Name

1.4 Education Library and Resource (ELRS) Centre, Port Talbot

OS Grid Reference

1.5 Centre of site: SS 77039 90347

Elevation & Aspect

See Plan 1

1.6 The site lies at approximately 17m ASL.

Location & Extent

1.7 The site is approximately 0.4ha in extent and lies 0.7km north of Port Talbot town centre. Neath Port Talbot.

Brief Description of Site

1.8 The site consists of the disused building and associated grounds of an Education Library and Resource (ELRS) Centre, including an additional storage building, areas of hardstanding and scattered trees.

Site Context

1.9 The site is in a suburban setting directly north of Port Talbot town centre. Velindre Community School is found directly to the east, with areas of residential housing surrounding the site to the north, south and west. Areas of woodland and upland common land are found further east and west, as the site is situated within a valley where the River Afan flows from the north of the site southwards. The M4 is located further south, where it runs parallel to the River Afan.

Site Development Proposals

1.10 The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the main ELRS centre building and surrounding hard surfaces for use by pupils. An area of staff carparking will be created in the east of the site, and fencing is to be installed enclosing the site.

Purpose of Surveys

1.11 A building inspection carried out as part of an Extended Phase 1 survey conducted by DCE in June 2025, identified the buildings on site B1 and B2 to have moderate and low potential to support roosting bats, respectively (see DCE 2025). The surveys have been carried out in

order to establish the present ecological interests of the site, and an assessment of the likely ecological impacts of the proposed site works and building refurbishment. Recommendations are made regarding suitable mitigation and compensation measures, together with any requirements for further, additional survey where necessary.

Survey Methods

- 1.12 Flight surveys for bats were conducted in accordance with current best practice guidance (BCT 2023). Dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the ELRS Centre on the 13th and 19th August, and the 2nd and 8th September 2025. Due to the size and complexity of the building, a total of four surveys were carried out, with each half of the building being surveyed twice. The building B2 was surveyed on 19th August 2025. Five surveyors were utilised to survey the elevations of the buildings, the results of which are included in this report (see Plan 4). During these surveys all surveyors were equipped with Peersonic RPA3 full spectrum detectors. Digital night vision IR Cameras with viewing screen (Nightfox Whisker) were also used. All bat calls recorded were logged and subsequently analysed using Kaleidoscope software to confirm species. The video footage from the IR cameras was subsequently checked to confirm, omit or identify any missed emergences.

Survey Constraints

- 1.13 Visibility of certain areas of B1 was limited during the emergence surveys due to the close proximity of the adjacent treelines as well as the complexity of the building structure, which includes numerous architectural features and therefore potential roost locations. As a result, there is a possibility that a small number of additional emergences occurred during these surveys, but were not able to be observed.

The second of the two emergence surveys on the western section of B1 was undertaken 20 days after the first, rather than the recommended 21-day interval due to weather and site access constraints. This is not considered to be a significant constraint.

2.0 SURVEY RESULTS

Summary of Ecological Assessment for Bats

- 2.1 All species of bat and their roosting sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations' – See Appendix 1). The roosting places used by bats are also protected against unauthorised disturbance or obstruction under the amended Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Several bats are listed as priorities for conservation under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

There records of bats within a 2km radius of the site, including three bat roost records for common pipistrelle, the closest record pertaining to an older record for a pipistrelle roost over 1.4km away. Other species recorded commuting and foraging within 2km include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, a *Myotis* sp. and brown long-eared bat (DCE 2025).

The site offers some limited foraging habitat for bats, with some commuting potential along the site boundaries, however these areas are subject to high light levels from overhead streetlights.

Roosting potential for bats has been identified within the buildings on site, B1 and B2. B1, the main ELRS building, is a two-storey, red-brick structure with a complex tiled roof, identified as having moderate potential to support roosting bats due to multiple potential roosting features (PRFs) present including lifted roof and ridge tiles, degraded bargeboards and fascia, open and missing slats on roof vents etc. B2 is a single-storey brick-built outbuilding with a corrugated asbestos roof, identified as having low potential to support roosting bats due to the PRFs present including gaps beneath lifted roof sheeting, and interior access via missing windowpanes (see DCE 2025 for more detailed building descriptions).

Flight Surveys

See Plan 4

Dusk Emergence Survey: 13th August 2025

- 2.2 The weather conditions were dry, calm with moderate to high cloud cover. The survey temperature started at 18°C and remained consistent for duration of the survey. Sunset was at 20:43, thus the survey occurred from 20:28 to 22:13.

Very high activity levels of common pipistrelle were recorded foraging and commuting on the eastern and western elevations of B1, in addition to low activity levels of commuting and occasionally foraging soprano pipistrelle. Low activity levels of commuting noctule was also recorded, with some foraging, to the west of B1.

At least two common pipistrelles were recorded emerging from the second floor on the western elevation of building, including from beneath/towards the left-hand side of a window frame in the north-west at 21:00, and another from the lower left-hand side of a window frame further north at 21:08. A common pipistrelle was also recorded entering a small gap below the much larger triangular shaped gap on the southern end of the roof apex on the western elevation at 21:28. A bat was then recorded emerging 30 seconds later from the same location.

It is also considered likely that at least one common pipistrelle emerged from missing roof tiles and quickly re-entered on the north-west corner of B1 at both 21:19 and 21:25.

Dusk Emergence Survey: 19th August 2025

- 2.3 The weather conditions were dry, light wind with moderate to high cloud cover. The survey temperature started at 19°C and dropped to 17°C by the end of the survey. Sunset was at 20:31, thus the survey occurred from 20:16 to 22:01.

High activity levels of at least three common pipistrelle, and low activity levels of soprano pipistrelle, were recorded foraging and commuting on the eastern elevation and within the central courtyard of B1. Low activity levels of commuting noctule were also recorded, with some foraging, to the west of B1.

A common pipistrelle emergence was recorded at 21:26 from beneath the left-hand side of a window frame on the second floor of the middle section of the eastern elevation on B1. A possible common pipistrelle emergence was also recorded at 20:52 from a gap the apex of the roof on the western elevation of B1.

No bat emergences were recorded from B2 during the survey.

Dusk Emergence Survey: 2nd September 2025

- 2.4 The weather conditions were dry, calm with moderate to high cloud cover. The survey temperature started at 17°C and dropped to 16°C by the end of the survey. Sunset was at 20:00, thus the survey occurred from 19:45 to 21:30.

Generally, very high activity levels of common pipistrelle were recorded commuting and foraging, with low activity levels of soprano pipistrelle on the western elevations of B1. A commuting noctule was also recorded commuting over the western part of the site.

Four common pipistrelles were recorded emerging from features mainly associated with the edges of window frames on the western elevation of B1, occurring between 20:23 and 20:28. These bats were recorded emerging from both the upper and middle sections of a group of multi-paned windows, and all were seen flying northwards along the building. A further three potential common pipistrelle emergences were recorded from similar features, but it is not clear from the IR footage so these cannot be confirmed.

An additional two common pipistrelle emergences were recorded at 20:23 and 20:28 from a small hole in the pebbledash render between the ground and first floor windows on the western elevation towards the north.

Dusk Emergence Survey: 8th September 2025

- 2.5 The weather conditions were wet with moderate to high cloud cover, with a brief heavy downpour preceding the survey, followed by occasional light drizzle throughout the rest of the survey. The survey temperature started 16°C and remained consistent for duration of the survey. Sunset was at 20:31, thus the survey occurred from 20:16 to 22:01.

Moderate levels of common pipistrelle activity were recorded commuting and foraging, with some social calling, particularly within the central courtyard and along the eastern and southern sections of B1. Low activity levels of noctule were recorded commuting with some foraging, and very low activity levels of soprano pipistrelle were also recorded commuting.

One common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from below the windowsill on the bay window furthest towards the north on the east elevation of B1 at 21:08.

3.0 IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Development Proposals

- 3.1 The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the main ELRS centre building and surrounding hard surfaces for use by pupils. An area of staff carparking will be created in the east of the site, and fencing is to be installed enclosing the site.

Potential Impacts of Development

- 3.2 The main impact of the development would comprise the potential loss/disturbance of the roosting bats that are present within building B1 on site.

The ELRS building was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, and further dusk emergence surveys confirmed that it is currently being utilised as a roost for small numbers of common pipistrelle bats. There are a number of features on the building with bat roosting potential, with bats mainly recorded emerging from gaps associated with the window frames, as well as from gaps within the roof tiles and external pebbledash rendering.

Significance of Development Impacts to Bats

- 3.3 Roosting bats have been confirmed to be utilising the ELRS building, thus a licence from NRW will be required prior to any works along with a detailed method statement with appropriate mitigation provisions specified.

The other habitats on site which are likely to be affected by the proposed development are considered to be of no greater than local value. As such, any impacts on these areas are unlikely to be significant beyond the local context and are assessed as being of low ecological significance.

Potential bat roosting features were also identified in some of the trees on site; if any such trees are to be affected by the development further survey will be required.

Any clearance works affecting the trees and buildings on site could adversely affect nesting birds, if unmitigated.

Mitigation & Compensation Measures

- 3.4 As roosting bats have been confirmed within building B1, an appropriate method statement, including suitable mitigation and compensation measures, will be required, which must be agreed with NRW within a licence application.

No mitigation or compensation measures are currently considered necessary in respect of the other habitat loss, given the low ecological value of the affected habitats, however, should any of the mature trees be removed, these should be replaced on a minimum 3-to-1 basis.

Potential risks to protected species such as nesting birds, roosting bats or common reptiles should be adequately mitigated for through a combination of appropriate programming and/or adequate pre-inspection at the time of the works.

Additionally, bat and bird-boxes could be installed suitable trees, to increase bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities as part of the development.

Any use of temporary or permanent artificial lighting should be designed in accordance with the guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹ (BCT 2023b).

Appropriate ecological enhancements must be included as part of the development to incorporate green infrastructure which seeks to deliver a net benefit for biodiversity. In addition, the site design must address ecosystem resilience by maintaining or improving habitat connectivity of the site with the wider environs.

Summary: Acceptability of Development Proposals

- 3.5 Provided adequate further surveys are conducted if required and necessary mitigation measures are implemented to avoid or minimise impacts to the identified protected species and features of interest, it is considered on current evidence that the proposed development of this site would not be unacceptably constrained by biodiversity and nature conservation issues.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Statutory Obligations

- 4.1 As bats have been found to be roosting within the main ELRS building (B1), likely a small number of common pipistrelles, it will be necessary to obtain a licence from NRW to carry out the works. The obtaining of this licence will require the formulation of a detailed method statement and appropriate mitigation provisions. The derogation licence will require the submission of a detailed method statement based on the details of the required refurbishment works.

Suitable mitigation in this case is likely to comprise the timing of any structural works to building B1 to be scheduled from April to October (inclusive) to avoid the sensitive winter period when there is a risk of encountering torpid bats. Bat boxes to act as temporary compensatory roosts would be installed prior to the commencement of works on suitable trees on site. Confirmed roost locations on B1 include multiple gaps beneath and in association with several window frames and windowsills, gaps within the roof tiles and other features, and a gap in the pebbledash rendering. These, along with any other bat sensitive features such as soffits, barge-boards, ridge tiles and render etc., should be soft-stripped by hand in advance of the main works under the supervision of a bat licensed ecologist. Any bats found would be immediately taken by gloved hand by the licensed ecologist and transferred to one of the bat boxes installed as a compensatory roost. The completed development would also need to incorporate features which would allow the continued use of the building by roosting bats, such as the provision of integrated bat boxes and bat accessible roof tiles. At least six of the latter should ideally be incorporated into the fabric of the walls and roof of the refurbished building. Examples of suitable boxes are indicated at Appendix 2. Any new roof lining to be installed, must be of a hessian matrix bituminous Type 1F roofing felt only. No breathable roofing membranes are to be used anywhere else within the building.

Multiple trees within the site have been assessed as having low bat roosting potential, based on the presence of features such as cavities, branch tear-outs and dense vegetation cover

¹ See <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting>

(see Table 1, DCE 2025). If works or removal of trees is required as part of the development, further surveys for bats would be necessary. In the event that bats are found to be roosting within any affected trees, it will be necessary to obtain a licence from NRW to allow tree works to proceed.

Other Recommendations

- 4.2 Contractors should be provided with a ‘toolbox talk’ at the outset of site clearance and construction works setting out the known and possible habitat and species constraints, and the mitigation measures which are required. The toolbox talk should also set out procedures to be followed in the event that there are unexpected encounters with protected species etc. All contractors carrying out dense bramble scrub or tree clearance works (if appropriate), should be warned of the possible presence of nesting birds, roosting bats, common reptiles and of their protected status. It should be clearly understood that in the event of any being found during works, all works should cease in the affected area until appropriate expert advice has been sought.

Careful consideration will be given to the use of artificial lighting within the developed site, as this can adversely affect activity by a variety of fauna, particularly foraging bats, nesting birds and invertebrates. Where some external lighting is required for health & safety purposes, downward directed LED lighting will be used, following current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2023) guidance.

Enhancement Measures

- 4.3 As bats have been confirmed to be roosting in the building, any new roof lining to be installed must be of a hessian matrix bituminous Type 1F roofing felt only. No breathable roofing membranes are to be used anywhere within the renovated buildings. To provide mitigation for the loss of bat roosts, four suitable bat boxes will be installed on mature trees prior to the commencement of works to B1, under the supervision of the site ecologist. New bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities will also be incorporated within the renovated building. NRW will confirm the suitability of this mitigation with regards to bats for this development at the licencing stage. Suitable examples of boxes are shown at Appendix 6.

Such boxes should be integrated within the buildings and sited in such a manner that unauthorised persons and predators such as cats cannot access them. Bat-boxes should be at least 4m (preferably 4-5m) and bird-boxes at least 2m (preferably 2-3) above ground-level. Bat-boxes should be placed on south-facing elevations whilst bird-boxes should be placed on north-facing elevations. The entrances to bat-boxes should not be illuminated at night, nor obscured by overhanging boughs or canopy vegetation etc. Bat and bird boxes should preferably be of ‘woodcrete’ or similar long-lasting construction rather than timber, since these are much more robust and longer-lived than traditional wooden boxes and require less after-maintenance. Suitable examples are shown at Appendix 2.

General Provisions

- 4.4 The services of an appropriately qualified and licensed ecologist should be available on an ‘on-call’ basis throughout the entire development period in order to deal promptly with any protected species or other ecological matters which may arise during the clearance and construction works.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.5 In accordance with current planning policies in Wales, all developments must provide a Green Infrastructure Statement, in order to demonstrate that the development avoids and then minimises impact on relevant biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as provide opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement, thus providing a net benefit for biodiversity. These measures also consider the maintenance of habitat connectivity of the site with the wider environs to contribute towards improving ecosystem resilience.

If the proposed development includes the recommended ecological enhancements comprising the installation of bat and bird boxes, a sensitive lighting scheme and the removal of invasive buddleia, along with compensatory tree planting for any trees removed, it should provide a net benefit for biodiversity.

5.0 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2023a) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2023b) *Guidance Note GN08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*. Institution of Lighting Professionals. <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

British Standard BS5837 (2012) *Guidance for the Treatment of Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations*. BSI Standards Publication.

David Clements Ecology (DCE 2025) *Education Library & Resource Centre, Port Talbot: Ecological Assessment*. July 2025 VI Unpublished report.

Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP 2016) *Section 7: List of the Living Organisms of Principal Importance for the Purpose of Maintaining and Enhancing Biodiversity in Wales (Interim)*. Wales Biodiversity Partnership/ Welsh Government.

APPENDIX 1: STATUTORY & POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR BIODIVERSITY

The following sets out a brief review of the key legal and key policy elements affecting wildlife species in Wales. It is not intended to be comprehensive and only the most recent and relevant articles are mentioned.

The review sets out our interpretation and understanding of key elements of the legislation and policy insofar as they apply to typical planning and development operations, based on our experience. The interpretations given below are for guidance only, however, and do not constitute legal advice. In all cases the reader is advised to consult the original legal and policy documents for the definitive wordings, and where necessary to obtain qualified legal advice.

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitats Regulations')

The Habitats Regulations were originally enacted to implement the obligations of *EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora & Fauna* (the 'EU Habitats Directive') into British law, and in so doing created the highest tier of legal protection for wildlife species in UK, the so-called 'European Protected Species' (EPS). These species include, *inter alia*:

- All species of bats
- Hazel dormouse ('dormouse')
- Eurasian Otter ('otter')
- Great crested newt
- Natterjack toad
- Sand lizard
- Smooth snake

The Regulations also cover a small number of very rare plant species such as lady's-slipper orchid.

The requirements of the Habitats Regulations were given continuance following the UK's withdrawal from the EU ('Brexit') in 2019 by the *Conservation of Habitats & Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, and therefore continue to apply unchanged at the time of writing. EPSs are hereafter referred to as 'Habitats Regulations Species' (HRS) to reflect this change in the legislative framework.

In summary, and *inter alia*, all HRS animal species are protected as individuals against deliberate killing, injury, capture or disturbance, at all stages of their lives, and in addition, the places used for breeding or resting by these species may not be damaged or destroyed. Breeding and resting places are also afforded protection against deliberate disturbance, or the blocking of access, under the amended *Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981* (see below). HRS plant species may not be picked (in any part), collected, uprooted or destroyed at any point in their life cycle.

The main exceptions to these provisions are either that the activities were authorised by the relevant statutory body (in this case, Natural Resources Wales – NRW) and, where required, were carried out under a licence ('derogation') obtained in advance. Offences which occur as an incidental result of some other otherwise lawful activity (ie 'accidental' or 'unintentional' offences) are not exempt under the Regulations but may be viewed more leniently where (a) they could not reasonably have been foreseen, (b) the activity causing the offence ceased as soon as the presence of HRS, or their habitats, became apparent, and (c) NRW were informed immediately and appropriate expert advice sought to evaluate and remediate the situation.

Bats

The legal protection covers any place or feature which is used for resting during the day ('day roosts') and also any places which are used for hibernation in winter. Places which are used for short periods of resting at night ('night roosts'), or as customary stations for the handling and processing of food ('feeding perches'), are not usually accorded the same level of importance as day roosts and hibernation sites, although they are in fact still subject to the Regulations and in some cases may be deemed important enough to be accorded full protection.

Dormouse

Protection is usually considered to extend to any habitat, such as woodland, scrub, hedgerows and bramble stands etc, where dormouse occurs and where nests may therefore be present. The continuity of the habitats occupied by dormouse with other areas of similar connecting habitat may also be a matter for statutory consideration under the Regulations.

Otter

Protection is usually considered to extend to any watercourse or waterbody which is used by otter, and which may therefore contain nests or resting places ('holts'). It also extends to any areas of terrestrial habitat away from watercourses and waterbodies where these also contain holts, and the connectivity of such places with the occupied aquatic habitats may also be a matter for statutory consideration under the Regulations.

Great crested newt

Protection is usually considered to extend to any watercourse or waterbody which is occupied by great crested newt (GCN), and which may therefore be used for breeding. It also extends to any terrestrial habitats used by GCN during its non-aquatic phases, especially those places which are used for hibernation in winter or sheltering during adverse weather conditions. Typically, the latter will be physically connected to a breeding pond (or ponds) but may lie anything up to

2km away. At minimum, a terrestrial hinterland of 10m width around the edges of a breeding pond will be considered to be protected where this contains habitats which are suitable for terrestrial use by GCN.

Protected Sites

The Habitats Regulations also set out to protect certain rare and valuable habitat types, such as ancient semi-natural woodland, heathland, bogs and species-rich grasslands etc. This is done through the identification and designation of specifically protected sites known as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). SACs are subject to the highest level of legal protection against damage, destruction, degradation or harmful uses or activities which is available in the UK. All such sites are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (see below).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA)

This much amended and complex piece of legislation is the means by which protection is afforded at the next tier of species below the HRSs and is the primary source of protection in respect of birds. Species afforded protection under the WCA include, *inter alia*:

- All species of birds
- Water vole
- Red squirrel
- Common reptiles (ie slow-worm, common lizard, grass snake, adder)
- Marsh fritillary butterfly
- Pearl mussel
- Various plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, lichens & fungi

Birds

In summary, all wild birds are protected against deliberate killing, injury or capture, and this protection extends to their eggs and young. It is also illegal to destroy, damage or remove the nest of any bird either while it is in use or being built. For certain rare species which are listed on Schedule 1 of the Act the protections go even further: it is illegal to disturb any Schedule 1 bird species, either deliberately or unintentionally ('recklessly'), while it is building a nest or actually nesting, or to disturb the dependant young of any such bird. Exceptions to these general principles affect some specific game, food or pest species, but only under certain specified and defined conditions and usually in accordance with a licence issued in advance by NRW.

Actions which cause an adverse impact to birds or their nests which arise as an incidental result of some otherwise lawful activity, such as the trimming or removal of hedges, trees or scrub for example, would not constitute an offence provided that the activity could not have reasonably been avoided. As a general result of the provisions of the WCA therefore, the deliberate destruction, removal or clearance of habitats containing nesting birds would almost invariably constitute an offence because the impacts to birds could reasonably have been foreseen and avoided, for example by carrying out the clearance activities at a time when birds are not nesting.

Except under certain specified conditions, the clearance or removal of nests or nesting habitats is generally not illegal if it is carried out at a time of year when no birds are nesting or if it can otherwise be shown that no nesting birds are present at the time (eg by means of advance survey).

Activities which might adversely affect Schedule 1 birds such as barn owl, kingfisher or birds of prey can be undertaken provided a licence has been obtained in advance from NRW and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

Animals Other than Birds

Animals other than birds, such as water vole, red squirrel, marsh fritillary and pearl mussel for example, are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act, and are afforded protection which is generally similar to that of HRSs. The individual animals may not be deliberately killed, injured or captured, in any of their life stages, and it is also illegal to destroy or damage any places which these animals use for shelter or protection, or to disturb an animal using such a place or obstruct access to it, whether deliberately or unintentionally.

As with birds, impacts to Schedule 5 animals which arise as an incidental result of an otherwise lawful activity do not constitute an offence provided those impacts could not have reasonably been foreseen and avoided.

Water Vole & Red Squirrel

In the case of nest-making animals such as water vole and red squirrel, protection will normally be taken to extend to the entirety of any suitable, or potentially suitable, nesting or sheltering habitats which are occupied by a residential population of the species concerned. The connectivity of these habitats with other similar habitats in the wider vicinity may also be a matter for statutory consideration.

Marsh Fritillary Butterfly & Pearl Mussel

For species which do not make nests, protection will normally be taken to extend to the entirety of any habitats which are suitable, or potentially suitable, for breeding or sheltering and which are occupied by a residential population of the species concerned. The connectivity of these habitats with other similar habitats in the wider vicinity may also be a matter for statutory consideration.

Common Reptiles

Slow-worm, common lizard, grass snake and adder are afforded so-called ‘partial protection’ under the WCA. The animals themselves may not be deliberately killed or injured, but they may be captured and the habitats which support them are not afforded any direct protection in themselves.

As with other Schedule 5 animals, adverse impacts which arise as an incidental result of an otherwise lawful activity do not necessarily constitute an offence provided those impacts could not reasonably have been foreseen and avoided. Under current interpretation this is taken to mean that the destruction or clearance of habitats which are known to support common reptiles, or where such reptiles could reasonably be expected to occur, without the implementation of measures to minimise or avoid causing incidental death or injury to reptiles, would be likely to constitute an offence.

Protected Plants

About 180 species of plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi are afforded protection under Schedule 8 the WCA. These may not be intentionally picked (in any part), uprooted or destroyed, unless authorised under licence. As with Schedule 5 animals, adverse impacts which arise as an incidental result of an otherwise lawful activity do not necessarily constitute an offence provided those impacts could not reasonably have been foreseen and avoided.

Protected Sites

The WCA also sets out mechanisms for the protection and conservation of habitats and features of high biodiversity value through the identification and designation of specifically protected sites. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National and Local Nature Reserves (NNRs/LNRs) and National Parks etc. Such sites are subject to wide-ranging legal protection against damage, destruction, degradation, exploitation or other harmful activities or uses.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (PBA)

Badger is protected primarily in relation to animal welfare and cruelty, as a result of illegal persecution. Badgers are protected against intentional killing, injury, ‘cruel ill-treatment’ or capture in all of their life stages. Their nesting burrows (‘setts’) may not be destroyed, damaged, dug into or obstructed and it is illegal to disturb a badger while occupying a sett, either deliberately or ‘recklessly’ (ie unintentionally as a result of failure to take due care). The PBA is also taken to confer a degree of protection to foraging areas which are critical to the support of a badger family-group (‘clan’) where the loss of this would otherwise result in their starvation. As with other protected species, adverse actions which arise as a result of an otherwise lawful activity do not constitute an offence provided those impacts could not reasonably have been foreseen and avoided. A number of specified exemptions are provided in connection with certain legal farming and fox-hunting activities which may impact badgers.

The protection of setts only applies to those which are in ‘current use’ and not to those which are abandoned. However, many badger setts are occupied only intermittently throughout the year and therefore ‘current use’ should not be taken to imply *continuous* use.

Actions to remove badger setts on development sites may be undertaken under a licence issued by NRW and in accordance with agreed mitigation measures, and licences may also be issued to allow the removal or exclusion of badgers from sites. Such operations may not occur during the breeding (‘close’) season, however, which is usually taken to be between December to June inclusive, due to the risk of trapping lactating females and young below ground.

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA)

Section 7 of the EWA contains the most recent lists of species and habitats which are considered to be of ‘principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in Wales’. These lists replaced those which were previously given under s.42 of the *Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006*, which in turn replaced the ‘Priority Species’ listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan of 1995 and its Welsh equivalent. Species listed under s.7 of the EWA include many of those afforded protection under the articles described above, including otter, dormouse, water vole, nesting birds, common reptiles and great crested newt, for example, as well as additional species such as:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| • W. European hedgehog (‘hedgehog’) | • Atlantic salmon (‘salmon’) | • Hornet robberfly |
| • Brown hare | • Brown & sea trout | • Shrill carder bee |
| • Harvest mouse | • Garden tiger moth | • Flat sedge |
| • Polecat | • Cinnabar moth | • Wild chamomile |
| • European eel (‘eel’) | • Small heath butterfly | • Common toad |

and many other plant and animal species which are not otherwise specifically afforded statutory protection for wildlife conservation reasons (although they may in some cases be afforded some element of protection for other reasons, such as animal welfare or cruelty).

Section 7 of the EWA also identifies a number of habitat-types which are of ‘principal value for conservation in Wales’. These include:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Hedgerows
- Lowland meadows
- Upland flushes, fens & swamps

- Purple moor-grass & rush-pastures (in Wales, often referred to as ‘rhos pastures’)
- Reedbeds
- Blanket bog
- Sand dunes
- Rivers & ponds

Although not protected as such, the EWA requires statutory authorities to take such ‘Section 7’ species and habitats into account when considering the management and development of sites in Wales, and to take “*all reasonable steps*” to maintain and enhance their populations. The presence of such species and habitats is a ‘material consideration’ on sites where planning permission is sought for development. **Planning Policy Wales (2021)** (PPW, 11th Edition) requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to have regard to the presence of ‘Section 7’ species and habitats and to avoid adverse impacts as a result of development wherever possible. Developments which are considered essential in the public interest must seek to minimise adverse impacts and incorporate appropriate mitigation/compensation measures where adverse impacts cannot be avoided.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

SINCs comprise so-called ‘third-tier’ sites which have been identified as having biodiversity conservation value at the sub-national (ie regional, county, county-borough or local) level. They are usually identified by the LPA, often in collaboration with other local conservation bodies such as the county Wildlife Trust and may appear under range of different names (eg ‘Wildlife Site’, ‘County Wildlife Site’ etc). Such sites are not specifically protected in law (ie they are ‘non-statutory’) but they are recognised as a ‘material consideration’ on sites where planning permission is sought for development. As with ‘Section 7’ habitats, PPW (2021) requires LPAs to avoid adverse impacts as a result of development wherever possible, and developments which are considered essential in the public interest must incorporate appropriate mitigation/compensation measures where adverse impacts cannot be avoided.

Invasive Non-native Species

Schedule 9 of the **Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)** sets out lists of plant and fauna species which are subject to statutory regulation in Britain. These currently include plants such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), and animals such as signal crayfish, aquarium terrapin, Asian hornet and copyu. The lists are updated regularly.

The import, sale, transport, cultivation and keeping of these species is generally forbidden except under a specially issued licence, and it is illegal to allow these species to escape or spread into the wild, either deliberately or by accident. This includes any part and all life-stages of the species concerned. Earthworks which might accidentally result in the transfer of Schedule 9 plant material to another location or which encourages it to spread either within or off the site, for example, is forbidden. Any works on a site which might involve contamination by, and potential spread of, any of the listed species must be carried out under an approved method statement designed to prevent them being accidentally dispersed off of or within the site, and which preferably results in their complete elimination wherever this is possible.

APPENDIX 2:
EXAMPLES OF BOXES FOR SYNANTHROPIC BIRD SPECIES



Schwegler 1SP House Sparrow Terrace



Schwegler 1BFN Integrated Starling Box



Vivara Woodstone House Martin Cups



Vivara Woodstone Swallow Cup



Schwegler 11 House Martin Cups



Ibstock 2 Integrated Swift Box



Ecosurv Integrated Swift Box



Vivara Woodstone Integrated
House Sparrow Box



Vivara Woodstone Integrated
Swift Box



Vivara Woodstone
Under-Eave Swift Box

EXAMPLES OF NON-INTEGRATED BIRD BOXES FOR TREES AND BUILDINGS

Suspended Designs



Schwegler 1B
General box



Schwegler 2H open-front
'robin' box



Schwegler 5
'large owl' box



Schwegler 1CGA
'small owl' box



Schwegler 20
'starling' box



Schwegler 28 'kestrel' box



Schwegler 5KL 'nuthatch' box

Surface-mounted Designs



Schwegler 1MR general box



Vivara Pro open-front
'robin' box



Vivara Pro ova open-front
'robin' box



Vivara Pro 'starling' box



Vivara Pro 28/32mm
general box



Vivara Pro 28/32mm
oval general box

EXAMPLES OF SURFACE-MOUNTED BAT BOXES

Tree-mounted boxes



Schwegler 2F General Box



Schwegler 1FD Nursery Box



Schwegler 1FS Nursery Box (Large)



Schwegler 1FW Winter Box
(Very large box)



Schwegler 2FN
Noctule Box



Schwegler 2F DFP
Daubenton's Bat Box



Miramar General Box

Tree or building-mounted boxes



Schwegler 1FF General Box



Schwegler 1FQ Decorative Box



Schwegler 1FFH General Box



Schwegler 1FE



Vivara Woodstone Low Profile Box



NHBS Cavity Box
(Brown Long-Eared Bat Box)



NHBS Crevice Box



Beaumaris wall box

Photographs of the Site, June 2025



B1 exterior and entrance, eastern elevation



Exterior of subterranean boiler room



Service outbuilding with gap underneath door (arrow) and vent (circled)



B1 exterior, western elevation



Example of missing fascia and roof vent with open slats on B1



Example of missing and raised roof and ridge tiles on B1



Missing slats and fascia on eastern elevation of B1



B1 courtyard with dense ivy growth



B1 interior, ground floor, large gap in ceiling



View into B1 loft void from gap



Floor beneath gap with bird feathers and droppings



B2, found in the south-western corner of the site



Open and missing windows, and missing guttering on B2



B2 southern elevation with dense ivy growth



Missing fascia and gaps underneath roof sheeting on B2



Interior of B2

ELRS Centre, Port Talbot
Ecological Assessment

Plan 1 - Site Location & Context

DCE 1300 NTS June 2025



Key:

 Site Boundary

ELRS Centre, Port Talbot, Ecological Assessment

Plan 2 - Habitats & Vegetation

DCE 1300 NTS Jul 2025



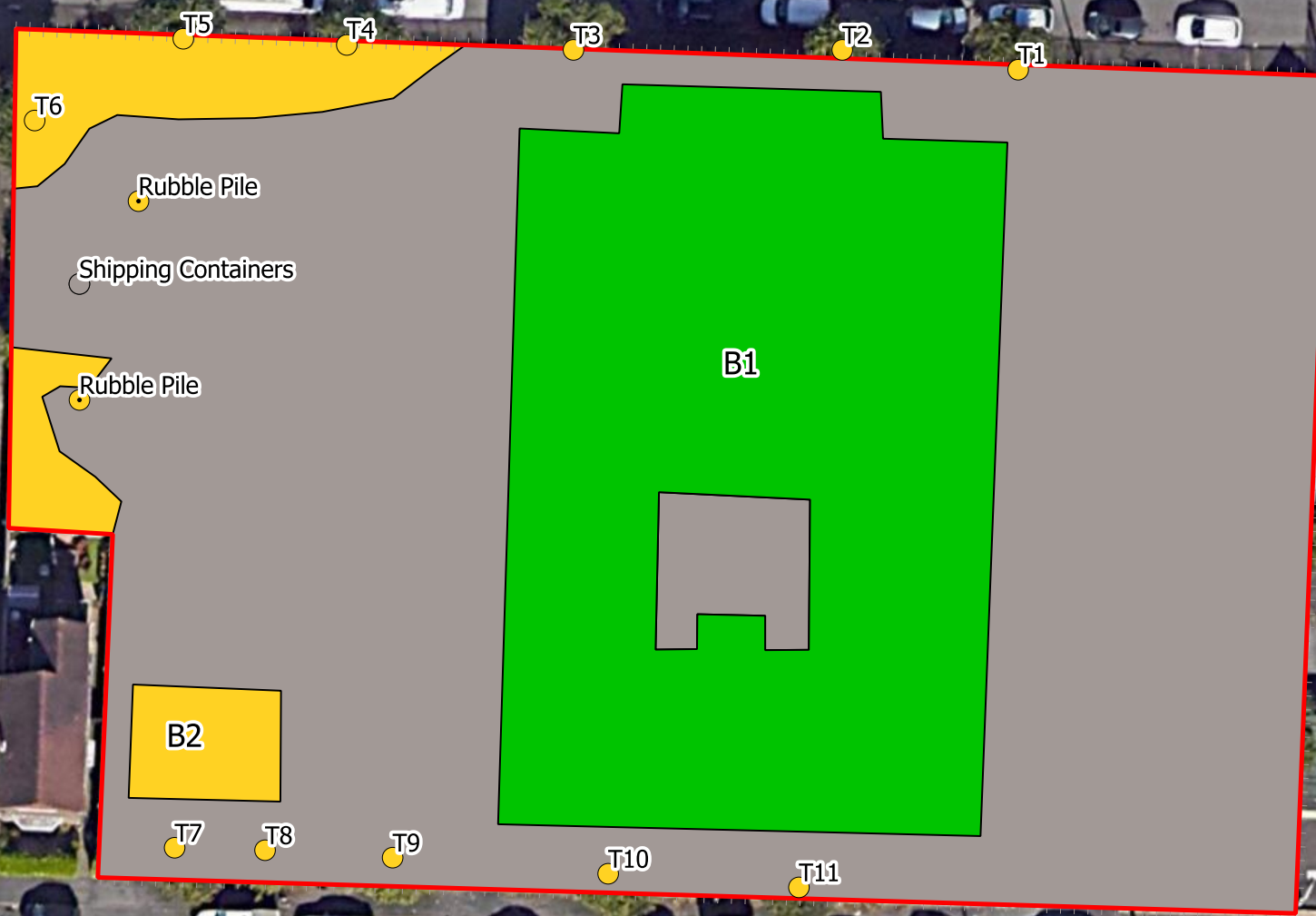
Key:

-  Site Boundary
-  J1.3 - Disturbed land - ephemeral/short perennial
-  J3.6 - Buildings
-  J5 - Hard standing
-  J2.4 - Fence
-  J2.5 - Wall
-  A3.1 Broadleaved trees
-  Target Note

ELRS Centre, Port Talbot
Ecological Assessment

Plan 3 - Ecological Evaluation

DCE 1300 NTS Sept 2025



Key:

-  Site Boundary
-  Local Value
-  High Local Value
-  Negligible Value

Education Library & Resource Centre,
Port Talbot: Ecological Assessment

Plan 4 - Dusk Emergence Survey Results

DCE 1300 NTS October 2025

Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Main Building - B1
-  External Shed - B2
-  Surveyor Locations (across all surveys)
-  C. pipistrelle emergences 13/08
-  C. pipistrelle emergences 19/08
-  C. pipistrelle emergences 02/09
-  C. pipistrelle emergences 08/09
-  Probable/Possible emergence

