

TAI TARIAN LTD

CWMCLAIS ROAD, CWMAFAN

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL & BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY

02 July 2026



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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL REPORT & BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY

Document Ref: Doc 01 – 02/07/2026

Issue	Revision	Stage	Date	Prepared by
1		DRAFT FOR REVIEW	22/01/2025	David Rees
2	Bat Activity Survey Results	FINAL	02/07/2026	David Rees

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SUMMARY

Bay Ecology was commissioned Tai Tarian Ltd to undertake an updated ecological appraisal of a parcel of land containing a row of nine single garages on the corner of Cwmclais Road and Cefncoed Road in Cwmafan. The project will involve the demolition of the garages and the clearance of the grassland so that the plot can be developed as residential properties.

The data search identified that the site footprint was not part of any statutory or non-statutory conservation designations, and possessed no protected species records. The field survey identified the site footprint as being comprised of a limited range of habitats dominated by amenity grassland and a small area of cleared Bramble scrub, hard standings, amenity grassland and a row of single garages. The managed amenity grassland and cleared scrub were of very limited botanical. However, the grassland/Bramble could potentially support individual common reptile species; whilst the garages possessed features that could be utilised by roosting bats and nesting birds. The habitats onsite were generally considered to be of ecological importance on a site context. The proposed development will result in the loss of all habitats and features onsite and the loss of the amenity grassland should be offset by soft landscaping of benefit to wildlife.

The garages were considered to be of low suitability for roosting bats due to the potential access points to the interior and absence of thorough internal inspection; and as such a further endoscope inspection of the interior and exterior, as well as a dusk emergence survey was conducted in June 2026.

The garages possessed potential bird nesting features that could be utilised by nesting House Sparrow, and as such any demolition works should be undertaken outside the bird-breeding season (i.e. clearance between September and March inclusive) or preceded by a visual check for nesting birds. The margins of the amenity grassland and cleared Bramble were potentially suitable to support individual reptile species, and as such the site should be managed to keep the sward and vegetation length very low to make it unsuitable for common reptile species.

To enhance the biodiversity onsite any new structures should integrate bird and bat boxes, whilst the soft landscaping should incorporate species of known wildlife benefit.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bay Ecology was commissioned Tai Tarian Ltd to undertake an updated ecological appraisal of a parcel of land containing a row of nine single garages on the corner of Cwmclais Road and Cefncoed Road in Cwmafan (Grid Ref: SS 77238 92240) (Appendix I). The project will involve the demolition of the garages and the clearance of the grassland to be developed as residential properties.
- 1.2 The site is generally a corner plot where Cwmclais Road and Cefncoed Road meet. The footprint is dominated by amenity grassland and hard standing with a terrace of nine single garages with flat corrugated roofs. The parcel of land is immediately surrounded by residential properties and their curtilages; whilst a large area of scrub and broadleaf woodland was also located approximately 50m west of site. Generally, the site was considered to be an isolated feature with limited connectivity. However, the scrub and broadleaf woodland was considered to be a foraging and commuting resource for more mobile species.
- 1.3 The garages were considered to be of low suitability for roosting bats due to their limited potential bat roosting features; and as such an endoscope survey of the interior and exterior, as well as a dusk emergence survey, was conducted on the 4th June 2026.
- 1.4 This report provides a summary of the updated preliminary ecological appraisal conducted in January 2025 and the further bat activity survey conducted in June 2026, and includes recommendations on any ecological constraints/ opportunities associated with the proposed development project.

2.1 METHODOLOGY

- 2.2 In order to establish the baseline ecological conditions on site and in the adjoining habitats, a combination of desk-based consultation and walkover survey were undertaken in January 2025, as well as the further bat activity survey conducted in June 2026.

Desk study

- 2.3 This element of the work included an internet data search to identify any records of rare, protected or notable flora and fauna within the proposed development site boundary and surrounding 1 km area.

Extended Phase I Habitat Survey

- 2.4 Fieldwork was undertaken on the 15th January 2025 by a suitably qualified ecologist and followed standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey protocol (JNCC 1990) as amended by the Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995). All habitats within the proposed development site were classified. All habitats considered having potential to support rare, protected or otherwise notable species of flora and fauna were noted, as were any direct signs of these species (e.g. Badger setts and dung-pits). The survey also incorporated a subjective, ground-based assessment of the potential of mature trees or structures on site to support roosting bats.
- 2.5 During the field survey, any trees immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and were categorised in relation to the bat roosting features (BCT, 2023). The categories are as follows:
- Known or confirmed roost
 - High Roost Suitability – A tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats (PRF-M) on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
 - Moderate Roost Suitability – A tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
 - Low Roost Suitability – A tree of sufficient size and age to contain Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. The tree only contains PRFs that are suitable for individual or small numbers of bats (PRF-I).

- 2.6 Additionally any species listed as a pernicious weed under Schedule 9, Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also noted during the field survey. Examples of such species include Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.

Daytime Inspection

- 2.7 The preliminary roost assessment comprised of an external inspection of the structures. In order to establish the potential presence of roosting bats (or nesting birds) at the building, the survey aimed to identify:
- if bats are, or have been, present within the building and, if so, which species are present;
 - the type of roost (e.g. day roost, feeding perch, night roost, hibernaculum);
 - how bats use the buildings (e.g. location of, exit and entrance points to potential roosts);
- 2.8 External surveys at the site involved the use of binoculars and ladder to identify possible access/entry points into the buildings and aimed to identify any evidence of use by bats such as droppings, staining, prey remains etc. The survey was undertaken from ground-level around the exterior of the buildings; and was assisted by the use of close-focus binoculars and a high powered torch (1 million candlepower). No internal inspection of the structures was conducted.
- 2.9 The surveyor searched for roost evidence (droppings, staining, scratch marks, etc.) as described above and an assessment of the buildings potential to support nesting birds was also undertaken. The scope of the bat inspection survey was based on guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)(2023).
- 2.10 A further internal inspection of the garages and endoscope survey of PRFs was conducted on the 20th May 2026, once ownership of the structures had been passed to Tai Taran.

Bat Activity Surveys

- 2.11 The daytime inspection conducted at structure identified the structures as being of 'low' suitability for roosting bats (as described in the Bat Conservation Trust 2023 guidelines) due unto the limited potential bat roosting features. As described within the guidelines, buildings with low suitability require a single dusk emergence surveys conducted in the main bat activity season (May-August). In order to achieve

visual coverage of the potential access/entry points associated with the structure two surveyors were present during the survey.

- 2.12 The dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 4th June 2026 by two experienced surveyors. The dusk emergence survey commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and extended for approximately 90 minutes after sunset (BCT, 2023). Weather conditions were of no constraint to the survey with no precipitation experienced during the survey and a light wind (Beaufort 2-3). A temperature of 15°C was recorded during the survey. The survey was led by David Rees whom is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management with 15+ years experience in bat survey work (BCT Level 3-4) & NRW bat licence holder S093085/1. The second surveyor was Professor Paul Rees who has +5+ years experience in bat survey work under the tutelage of David Rees (BCT Level 1-2).
- 2.6 The surveyors were positioned to ensure maximum coverage of the building's potential bat roosting features, with the surveyors located north west and south east of the structure providing maximum coverage of the identified features (Appendix II). During the surveys an InfraRed and Thermal cameras were placed north west and south west of the structure to provide additional coverage (Pixfra A613 and NightFox Nova camera) of the identified access points. During the survey full spectrum detectors (Peersonic) were used to allow both in field and office based sonogram analysis of bat calls. All calls were recorded and identified on computer-based sonogram analysis software (Wavesurfer) and BatClassify.

3.0 RESULTS

Desk study

3.1 The internet data search confirmed that the site did not contain any statutory or non-statutory conservation designations; as well as no protected species records of bat species. However, multiple records of protected species were identified within a 2km radius of site that included Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* records, which is consistent with the built-up environment with residential gardens. Records of Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and Adder *Vipera berus* were also identified. However, there was no habitat connectivity between the records and site. No bat records were identified within a 2km radius. However, numerous records exist within a 5km radius that were dominated by Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. The records of crevice dwelling species were of limited relevance to the structures onsite.

Field Survey

Overview

3.2 The site footprint was dominated by managed amenity grassland, hard standing and a row of garages. The results of the day-time inspection are summarised in the following sections:

Amenity Grassland

3.3 The corner plot was dominated by managed amenity grassland (Photo 1) and was generally of limited botanical interest and was comprised of such species as Annual Meadow Grass *Poa annua*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Common Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Common Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* and Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* with some Sphagnum also evident.

Cleared Scrub

3.4 A small area of cleared Bramble was evident at the rear of the garages towards the north eastern extent of site (Photo 2).

Photo 1: Managed amenity grassland ascending to northern extent of site (view looking north east).



Photo 2: Cleared Bramble located at the rear of garages at north eastern extent of site.



Fauna

3.5 In the course of the survey, a search for field signs of protected or notable species was undertaken and the potential of the habitats to support these species considered. In the context of this report notable species were those considered to meet any of the following criteria:

- Species protected by British or International law;
- Environment (Wales) Act Section 7 Priority Species or local BAP species;
- Nationally rare or nationally scarce species;
- Species of Conservation Concern (e.g. JNCC Red List, RSPB/BTO Red or Amber Lists)

Bats: Garages

3.6 A row of nine single garages were identified onsite (Photos 3-5). The garages were generally constructed from concrete shuttering, rendered brick and metal garage doors; with flat corrugated roofs that were made from asbestos and metal sheeting (Photo 6). The exception was the easternmost detached garage that was constructed from breeze block with a pebble dashed southern elevation and a corrugated metal roof with wooden fascias (Photo 7).

3.7 No evidence of roosting bats was identified externally. However, potential access to the internal of the garages was identified beneath the corrugated roofs (Photo 8) and around fascias (Photo 9). No internal access was available at the time of the survey.

3.8 In the absence of a thorough internal inspection and the identification of external potential access points to the interior, the garages were considered to be low suitability for roosting bats.

Photo 3: Garages 1 & 2 (west to east) (view looking north).



Photo 4: Third garage (west to east) (View looking north west).



Photo 5: Garages 4 – 9 (west to east)(view looking east).



Photo 6: Corrugated asbestos and metal flat roof on garages (view looking west).



Photo 7: Detached garage 9 (View looking north east).



Photo 8: Gaps beneath corrugated roof providing access to interior.



Photo 9: Gaps beneath fascia on detached easternmost garage.



3.9 A further internal inspection of the garages and endoscope survey of the identified PRFs was conducted on the 20th May 2026, which identified exposed asbestos roofs (Photos 10 & 11) and no evidence of roosting bats.

Photos 10: Interior of garage with exposed asbestos roof.



Photo 11: Interior of garage with exposed asbestos roof.



Bat Emergence Survey Results

Dusk Emergence Survey 4th June 2026

3.10 No bats were recorded emerging from the structure. In general, very low levels of bat activity were recorded during the survey with only a single bat recorded commuting across site from south to north at 22.03h, approximately 36mins post sunset (21.27h). From in-field and sonogram analysis it was determined that the call was attributed to a single foraging and commuting Common Pipistrelle bat. Figures 1 & 2 shows the typical views from the static infrared and thermal camera located to the north west and south west of the structures (Appendix II).

Figure 1: IR camera view located north west of site (view looking south east).



Figure 2: Thermal camera view located south west of site (view looking north east).



Birds

- 3.11 The garages were considered to possess suitable nesting features that could be utilised by bird species such as House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, which are listed as Red and Amber on the Birds of Conservation Concern Wales 4 (Johnstone et al., 2022). However, no external evidence was identified and no internal access was possible at the time of the survey.

Reptiles

- 3.12 The site was considered to be an isolated feature with no connectivity to suitable common reptile habitat; and the amenity grassland onsite was regularly managed. However, the presence of individual reptile species such as Slow-worm could not be ruled out around the margins and within the cleared Bramble area.

4.0 LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PLANS

- 4.1 The following international, national and local legislation and planning policies relating to nature conservation and biodiversity are considered of relevance to the current proposals.

Environment (Wales) Act, 2016

- 4.4 Part 1 of the Environment Act Wales' came into force in May 2016 and sets out the approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national and local level with a general purpose linked to statutory 'principles of sustainable management of natural resources' defined within the Act.

Section 6 - Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty

- 4.5 Section 6 of the Act places a duty on public authorities 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'.

Section 7 - Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity

- 4.6 This section lists living organisms and types of habitat in Wales which are considered of key significance to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. The Welsh Ministers are required to take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section, and encourage others to take such steps.

Planning Policy Wales (2021)

- 4.7 This document set out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government with Chapter 6 relating to Distinctive and Natural Places and in particular Section 6.4 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks, which states how the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to conserve biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems.
- 4.8 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (Section 6 Duty). This duty applies to public authorities in the exercise of their functions in relation to Wales and will help maximise contributions to achieving the well-being goals.

- 4.9 The planning system must help to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to conserve biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems.
- 4.10 In fulfilling this duty, planning authorities must have regard to the list of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales, published under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 201.
- 4.11 The broad framework for implementing the Section 6 Duty and building resilience through the planning system includes addressing:
- Diversity;
 - Extent;
 - Condition;
 - Connectivity;
 - Adaptability to change.

Future Wales the National Plan 2040

- 4.12 Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 is our national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

- identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and
 - identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.
- 4.13 Planning authorities should include these areas and/or opportunities in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide. In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development

proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment

Local Planning Policy

- 4.14 The LDP for Neath Port Talbot was adopted in 2016 superseding the Unitary Development Plan, and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning in the County Borough up to 2026. Policies of relevance to the development include:

Policy SP 15

Biodiversity and Geodiversity. Important habitats, species and sites of geological interest will be protected, conserved, enhanced and managed through the following measures:

1. *The identification of the following Internationally and Nationally designated sites within the County Borough to enable their protection:*
 - (a) *Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites;*
 - (b) *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);*
 - (c) *National Nature Reserves (NNRs).*
2. *The identification and protection of sites of regional and local importance;*
3. *The protection of important natural heritage features.*

Policy EN 6

Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites Development proposals that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or S42 habitats or species will only be permitted where:

1. *They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site; or*
2. *The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere, and the benefits of the development outweigh the natural heritage importance of the site. Mitigation and/or compensation measures will need to be agreed where adverse effects are unavoidable.*

Policy EN 7

Important Natural Features Development proposals that would adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows / field boundaries, watercourses or ponds will only be permitted where:

1. *Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or*
2. *The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed.*

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The data search identified that the site footprint was not part of any statutory or non-statutory conservation designations, and possessed no protected species records. The field survey identified the site footprint as being comprised of a limited range of habitats dominated by amenity grassland and a small area of cleared Bramble scrub, hard standings, amenity grassland and a row of single garages. The managed amenity grassland and cleared scrub were of very limited botanical. However, the grassland/Bramble could potentially support individual common reptile species; whilst the garages possessed features that could be utilised by roosting bats and nesting birds. The habitats onsite were generally considered to be of ecological importance on a site context. The proposed development will result in the loss of all habitats and features onsite and the loss of the amenity grassland should be offset by soft landscaping of benefit to wildlife.

Bats

- 5.2 The row of single garages possessed potential bat access points to the interiors beneath corrugated metal and asbestos roofs and around fascias. However, no evidence of roosting bats was identified externally. A thorough internal inspection of the garages, including an endoscope survey of accessible PRFs conducted in May 2026 identified no evidence of roosting bats; whilst the dusk emergence survey conducted June 2026 identified no roosting bats and low levels of bat activity.
- 5.3 On this basis, it is considered that the proposed works will not require further surveys or a European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licence. However, it is recommended that a precautionary approach to the demolition works be adopted given the itinerant nature of roosting Pipistrelle sp. that were identified foraging/commuting across site in the activity survey. The possibility that the structures could potentially be utilised by individual bats on an irregular or occasional basis during future bat activity seasons could not be ruled out and a precautionary approach as follows would be appropriate:
- Builders advised prior to the start of works of the low risk that bats could be present and the action to take should a bat be discovered (see below);
 - Removal of roof features to be undertaken by hand or using hand-tools (e.g. crowbars etc.);
 - In the unlikely event that a bat were discovered, all works would cease immediately

Reptiles

- 5.4 The site was still an isolated feature with no connectivity to suitable reptile habitat that was dominated by managed amenity grassland, hard standing and garages. However, the margins of the grassland and small area of cleared Bramble could be utilised by individual common reptiles and as such it is recommended

that the site is managed to regularly to maintain a short sward and vegetation length allowing any potential reptiles to disperse naturally offsite.

Birds

- 5.5 The garages possessed features that could potentially be utilised by nesting birds such as House Sparrow. The demolition of the garages should be undertaken outside the bird-breeding season (i.e. clearance between September and March inclusive) or preceded by a visual check for nesting birds. All wild birds are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and their nests against damage or destruction whilst in use or being built.

Other Considerations

- 5.6 To enhance the biodiversity onsite any new structures should incorporate bird and bat boxes to enhance the biodiversity onsite for those species. Any soft landscaping should incorporate species of local provenance and benefit to wildlife.

REFERENCES

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Fourth Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Johnstone et al. (2023). *Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales 4: The population status of birds in Wales*. RSPB.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). 1990. *Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey. A technique for environmental audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.

APPENDIX I SITE LOCATION PLAN

APPENDIX II SURVEYOR & CAMERA LOCATION

