Llantrisant Health Park

Ely Meadow, Talbot Green

Technical Summary

Ecological Assessments and Recommendations

February 2025

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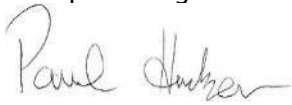
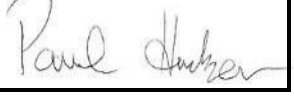
Document Verification Table

Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green Technical Summary				
Revision	Date	Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by
1.0	26 February 2025	Charlotte Ingram Assistant Ecologist 	Paul Hudson MCIEEM Principal Ecologist 	Paul Hudson MCIEEM Principal Ecologist 

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief and Site Location

This technical note provides a summary of the ecological assessments undertaken for the proposed demolition at Llantrisant Health Park (former British Airways Avionics, Engineering site), Ely Meadow, Talbot Green, Llantrisant, CF72 8XL, within the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference centred at: ST 0362 8387)[1].

It outlines key findings and mitigation measures, with particular reference to nesting swallows, reptiles, bats and small mammals.

1.2. Relevant Historical Reports

This technical summary provides an overview of the survey work undertaken to date, along with the key findings and recommendations. For more detailed information, please refer to the following reports:

- Acer Ecology (2024) – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) – Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green;
- Acer Ecology (2025) – Final Bat and Nesting Bird Report – Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green;
- Acer Ecology (2025) – Reptile Survey Report – Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green;
- Acer Ecology (2025) – Dormouse Survey Report – Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green; and
- Acer Ecology (2025) – Bat Activity Survey Report – Llantrisant Health Park, Ely Meadow, Talbot Green.

This summary highlights the main findings from these reports and outlines the recommended mitigation and management measures. Further details can be found in the specific documents listed above.

[1] Latitude and Longitude: 51.545465, -3.3912730 / what3words: committee.clasping.counts

2. Summary of Ecological Surveys

The following ecological assessments have been undertaken to inform the planning and demolition process:

2.1. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken on the 15th of April 2024. The PEA was conducted to assess the site's habitats, ecological constraints, and potential for protected species.

The survey identified suitable habitats for reptiles, dormice, bats, and nesting birds, leading to recommendations for further targeted surveys.

2.2. Update Building Inspection

An additional survey of the internal areas and external roof spaces that were inaccessible during the initial survey was conducted on the 18th of August 2024.

A significant number of defunct barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests were found in the roof spaces above all 12 external stairwells. In total, 22 nests were identified, most of which were defunct, while two contained eggs.

2.3. Dusk Emergence Surveys

Dusk emergence surveys for B1 were conducted on the 17th–18th of June (first), 29th–30th of July (second), and 13th of September 2024 (third). Surveys for B2 took place on the 16th–17th of July (first) and 10th of September 2024 (second), while B3 was surveyed on the 6th of August (first) and 9th of September 2024 (second).

The dusk emergence surveys found no evidence of bats roosting within or on the buildings. Barn swallows were recorded nesting within the buildings above the stairwells during the dusk emergence surveys, with several barn swallows seen leaving and returning to their nests.

2.4. Bat Activity Surveys: Static Detector and Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys

Three night-time bat walkover (NBW) surveys were conducted on the 24th of May, 27th of June, and 30th of October 2024. Additionally, an Anabat Express static detector was deployed in the south-east of the site for seven days each season (spring, summer, and autumn).

The greatest activity was recorded along the boundary vegetation in the south, south-west and north-west of the site throughout the NBW surveys. Bat activity was high during the first NBW survey, but there was found to be low-level activity throughout the last two NBW surveys. The most common species of bat recorded during the NBW surveys were common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus)* and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

The static detector surveys showed high levels of bat activity throughout the monitoring period in May 2024, activity then decreased during the following two static monitoring periods during June and October. The most frequently recorded species were common and soprano pipistrelle. No other clear patterns of use over time were noted.

2.5. Dormouse Surveys

One hundred nest tubes were deployed on the 30th of May 2024 in suitable areas within the site. A full survey of all the nest tubes on site was undertaken on the 8th of July, 22nd of August, 24th of September, 23rd of October and a final search was undertaken on the 29th of November 2024.

The results of the nest tube survey indicate that dormice are likely to be absent from the site. Three suspected wood mouse (*Opodemus sylvaticus*) nests were found during the nest tube survey.

2.6. Reptile Surveys

Forty-four artificial cover objects (ACOs) were placed across the site on the 30th of May 2024, in areas considered to have habitat suitable for supporting reptiles. Seven return visits were undertaken in suitable weather conditions on non-consecutive days during September 2024. An additional two checks were conducted prior to these seven checks, one in July and another in August 2024.

The results of the surveys indicate that the site supports a small/low population of slow-worm and medium/good population of common lizard. Slow-worms and common lizards were found in the southern section of the site in the grassland area. The refugia found to be utilised by reptiles were primarily located on the steep banks within the grassland area, the interfaces between dense scrub and grassland areas, and in areas of the grassland with varied sward height.

3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the surveys detailed in Section 2, the following precautionary and mitigation measures have been recommended:

3.1. Swallows

3.1.1. Precautionary Measures

Prevention of Nesting Prior to Demolition

To prevent swallows from re-nesting upon their return in 2025, roofing areas will be blocked off with timber outside of the breeding season (October to February inclusive). This will securely exclude access to nesting sites and prevent reoccupation. Implementing these measures at the appropriate time will minimise disturbance while ensuring the site is prepared for the anticipated demolition during the nesting season.

Pre-demolition Nesting Bird Check

A check for nesting birds must be carried out immediately prior to demolition if works are scheduled during the breeding season (March to September inclusive). The survey should be conducted by a qualified ecologist, who will inspect the building for active nests.

If no nests are found, demolition can proceed. If active nests are present, works must be delayed until the young have fledged.

3.1.2. Mitigation Measures

Compensatory Nesting Provision

To compensate for the loss of 22 swallow nesting sites, dedicated swallow shelters will be installed within the development site in suitable locations. Designed to replicate natural nesting conditions, it is recommended that these shelters will be placed in undisturbed areas with open foraging access to encourage use. This measure aims to support local swallow populations and mitigate the impact of the loss of nesting sites due to the planned demolition.

3.2. Reptiles

3.2.1. Precautionary Measures

Toolbox Talk

A toolbox talk will be given to site personnel to ensure awareness of reptile presence.

Timing of Works

No ground disturbance will occur during the reptile hibernation period (October to February inclusive) when reptiles are inactive due to low temperatures. Works will only proceed when temperatures are consistently above 10°C, and during mild, dry weather conditions to avoid harming active reptiles.

Two-stage Clearance

Any vegetation clearance will be phased, with initial strimming to 15cm followed by a second cut to ground level to encourage reptiles to move away. An ecologist will be present during clearance works in reptile-sensitive areas.

3.2.2. Mitigation Measures

Exclusion Fencing and Translocation

In reptile-sensitive areas, such as the lower plateau where ground investigations are proposed, mitigation measures will be implemented to protect reptile populations. Exclusion fencing will be used to prevent reptiles from entering the disturbance zones. A translocation exercise will be carried out prior to the works to move reptiles safely outside of the works area into areas of retained habitat within the site. This approach, combining exclusion and translocation, will minimise the risk of harm to reptiles.

3.3. Bats

3.3.1. Precautionary Measures

Toolbox Talk

A toolbox talk will be given to site personnel to ensure awareness of bat activity. If bats are unexpectedly encountered during works, all activity must stop, and an ecologist will be consulted.

3.3.2. Mitigation Measures

Dark Corridor

A dark corridor will be maintained along woodland and scrub habitats at the site boundary.

Sensitive Lighting Strategy

Lighting will be minimised, directed downward, and designed to avoid illuminating key commuting and foraging areas. Low-intensity, warm-spectrum LED lighting (<3000K) with motion sensors will be used.

Bat Boxes

Ten Schwegler 2F bat boxes (or suitable alternatives) will be installed on suitable retained trees within the site.

Hedgerow Enhancement

Non-native species within car park hedgerows will be replaced with native species to improve foraging opportunities.

3.4. Small Mammals

3.4.1. Precautionary Measures

Toolbox Talk

A toolbox talk will be provided to construction workers to raise awareness of the potential presence of small mammals.

Scrub/Hedgerow Clearance

Any clearance of dense scrub or hedgerows will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure small mammals are safely moved if necessary.

3.4.2. Mitigation Measures

Vegetation Clearance Methodology

Clearance will be carried out in two stages: an initial cut to 15cm followed by a second cut to ground level after 48 hours to allow small mammals to relocate safely.

Retained Habitat

Boundary vegetation and habitat features will be preserved to maintain connectivity and provide refuges for small mammals.

Sensitive Lighting Strategy

Light spill onto small mammal habitats will be minimised through directional, low-level lighting to prevent disturbance.

4. Conclusions

The ecological assessments conducted at Llantrisant Health Park have identified key ecological features and potential impacts, with particular focus on nesting birds, reptiles, bats and small mammal habitats. The findings have been used to inform mitigation measures designed to minimise disturbance to wildlife during the proposed works.

Adherence to these measures, including vegetation management and habitat retention, will be essential to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and the protection of local biodiversity. Further details can be found in the full reports referenced in Section 1.2 above.