

83 COMMERCIAL STREET, NEWPORT– MAINTY
GROUP
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS



Prepared for: **Damien Barnard**

By: **Dr. Megan Jones**

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PREPARED BY:

M Jones:



APPROVED BY:

S Owen:



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83 COMMERCIAL STREET, NEWPORT, NP20 1LR

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a brief summary of findings and recommendations of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats undertaken on behalf of Mainty Group (hereafter referred to as the client) at 83 Commercial Street, Newport, NP20 1LR. The report should be read in its entirety for full details of the survey.

- The survey comprised of an internal and external inspection of the building to assess its potential to support roosting bats, and identify whether any evidence of bats within the survey building was present;
- The proposed development consists of the change of use and renovation of buildings to enable a new residential development at the site;
- These proposals will result in the potential disturbance and/or destruction of bat roosts if these are present within the survey building. Furthermore, noise and vibration from the works may cause disturbance if bats are roosting within different parts of the building or within wider areas of the site;
- Local Record Searches were undertaken using Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 'MAGIC' geographic mapping software and the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales 'DataMapWales' in order to determine the importance of the site from a biodiversity perspective in the context of its surroundings, and to determine the site's proximity to statutory designated sites (if present) within a 1km radius of the survey area;
- The data search returned 2 records of statutory sites within 1km of the survey site. Both records relate to the River Usk, which is located approximately 574m to the north-east of the site, and which is classified as both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- A total of 18 non-statutory sites (consisting of Conservation Areas & Environmental Spaces) were identified within the 1km buffer of the survey site;
- Connectivity between the site and better foraging habitat within the aforementioned designated sites is poor, with limited hedgerows, tree lines, continuous green corridors etc. (which offer commuting habitat) being located within the immediate vicinity of the survey building;
- The PRA was undertaken on Friday 7th February 2025;
- The survey consisted of the inspection of a former commercial building spanning two floors, with an outdoor area to the second level;
- The main building is standard in shape, with a rectangular footprint to the ground and first floor. The ground level was previously used for retail, whereas the 1st floor is assumed to have historically consisted either of retail storerooms or a residential flat. The 1st floor is/has been subject to a large amount of vandalism as a result of unauthorised human access, which has potentially exposed the interior of the building to ingress from animals (including bats);
- A significant amount of water ingress was recorded within the building interior, particularly toward the eastern side of the building owing to a failure of the integrity of the flat roof lining. No direct holes or gaps were however recorded within the roof itself;
- Numerous potential access / egress points for bats to the building interior were recorded during the survey. These include; an open / damaged pedestrian doorway which opens out onto the flat roof of the building, damaged glass windows associated both with the same pedestrian opening and located on the eastern side of the building, a missing brick in the south-eastern corner of the building, and damaged timber fascia boards at the apex of the easternmost wall of the survey building;
- Interior Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) suitable for bats are however limited. The building does not possess a loft, and the underside of the flat roof and associated timber framework is not visible from the building interior for the most part (with the exception of the roof above the stairwell to the east of the building). Boarded up skylights are present at 1st floor level, which were deemed to offer limited suitable roosting opportunity for free-hanging bats, whilst cracks in masonry to the rear exterior of the building and

the presence of double-skinned interior wall cladding at ground floor level were deemed to be potentially suitable for opportunistic crevice-dwelling bats;

- Although some limited PRFs are present within the building interior (in which crevice or void-dwelling bats are potentially able to roost), these are likely to only be used opportunistically by small numbers of bats due to their low quality. Furthermore, there are no spaces present within the survey building which are of sufficient shelter, protection or possess the suitable conditions to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats;
- No evidence of bats was identified throughout any of the building interiors or within external areas after an extensive search during the PRA;
- As a result, due to the above factors along with a lack of significant PRFs, low internal temperature and high levels of light and disturbance in and around the buildings, and no evidence of bats identified during the survey, the building was assessed to possess **low** potential to support roosting bats;
- Due to the building being classified as having low potential/suitability for bats, **no further survey effort is recommended with respect to bats**, and in the absence of mitigation the impact of the proposals on bats is thought to be negligible;
- Recommendations and best practice techniques are outlined in Section 5.2 of this report.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Brief

ExCAL Limited was commissioned by Mainty Group (hereafter referred to as the client) to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats within outbuildings at 83 Commercial Street, Newport, NP20 1LR.

The survey buildings are scheduled for a change of use and associated renovation, to facilitate a future new residential development at the site.

2.2 Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to assess the building's potential to support roosting bats, and to identify any Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) on or within the building which may be utilised by bats.

Furthermore, the buildings were also subjected to a thorough internal and external inspection to determine whether the building has historically been / is actively being used by bats.

2.3 Site Context

The survey building is situated on a main road (Commercial Street), situated within the city of Newport.

The OS grid reference for the approximate centre of the survey building is ST 31315 87658. The main building footprint totals an approximate 300 m² (0.03 ha) area, of which all areas were surveyed.

The building was previously used as a charity shop (Sue Ryder Charity Shop), however, since their vacancy; the building has been subject to extensive vandalism and ingress by unauthorised human activity.

The building is located within a commercial shopping area of Newport, which has high footfall, high levels of artificial light and high noise levels from both vehicles and human activity. The area from the North to the South-East consists predominantly of retail buildings, roads and hardstanding. Similarly, the area to the West of the site also consists predominantly of hardstanding and a mixture of residential and commercial buildings.

A church and associated grounds is located approximately 40m to the South-West of the building.

2.4 Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of the change of use and associated renovation / redevelopment of the site from its current redundant commercial use to a residential end-use. A total of 10 units of residential flats will be developed above the ground floor rental unit by constructing a two floor extension on the front half of the building, as well as a three floor partial extension towards the rear of the building.

Noise and vibration from the works may cause disturbance if bats are roosting within different parts of the building or within wider areas of the site. Furthermore, the wholesale interior renovation of the building has the potential to destroy potential roosting features (PRFs) for bats, or bat roosts themselves if these are present within the building interior.

2.5 Legislation

All UK bat species and their roosts are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations), which defines "European protected species of animals".

The combined legislation makes it illegal to: -

- Intentionally kill, injure or capture bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts;
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally; and
- Sell, barter or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement of Bats in Europe) the UK is also required to protect their habitats, requiring the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas.

2.6 Limitations

This report has been prepared for the benefit of the client and its contents should not be relied upon by others without the written authority of ExCAL Ltd. Unauthorised third party use of this report is done so at the parties' own risk and ExCAL Ltd owe these parties no duty of care or skill.

3.0 SITE LOCATION

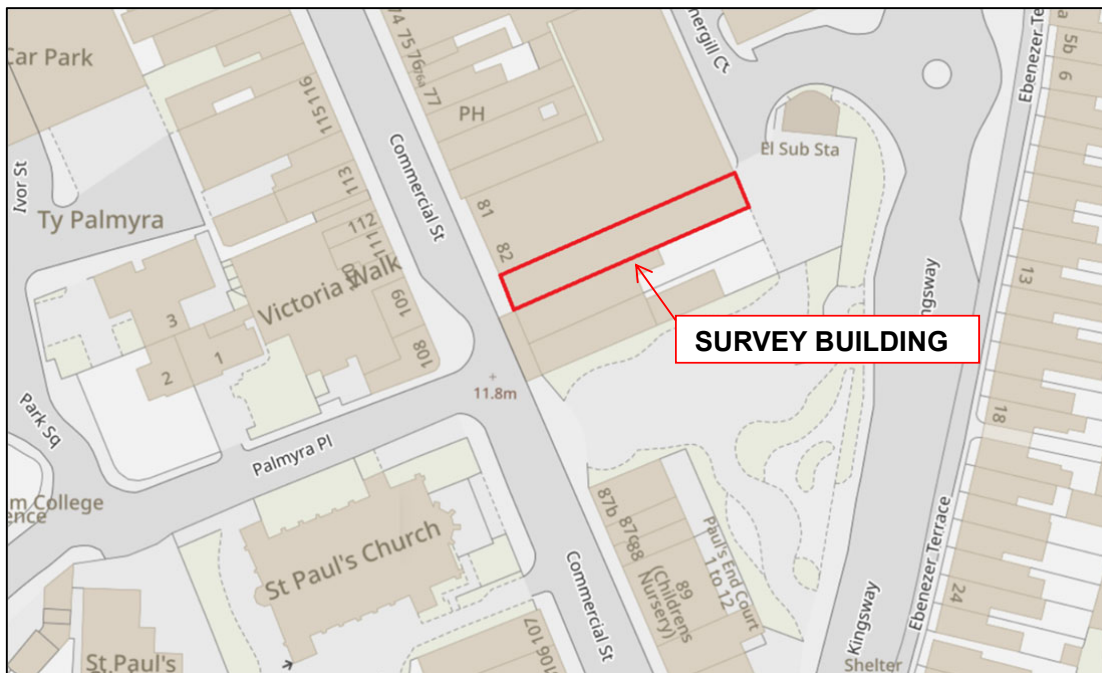
3.1 Site Details

The approximate centre of the survey building is located at Grid Reference ST 31315 87658 and the site address is listed below: -

83 Commercial Street
Newport
NP20 1LR

The location of the survey building is visible in Figure 1 below: -

Figure 1 – Survey Buildings



4.0 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

This report has been designed to comply with the British Standard Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development – BS 42020:2013 (BSI, 2013); the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Survey Guidelines 4th Edition (Collins, J. 2023).

The building was subjected to an internal and external inspection to assess its potential to support roosting bats.

4.1 Desk Study

Local Record Searches were undertaken using Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 'MAGIC' geographic mapping software and the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales 'DataMapWales' resource in order to determine the importance of the site from a biodiversity perspective in the context of its surroundings, and to determine the site's proximity to statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the survey area (if present).

4.2 Field Survey

The buildings were surveyed both externally and internally for evidence of (and potential for) bats. The survey was undertaken by Steve Owen, a licenced surveyor (NRW Licence no: **S090423/1**) and Dr. Megan Jones on 7th February 2025.

The external inspections were undertaken during daylight hours from ground level. The interior of the building was also surveyed extensively for evidence of bats and for potential access/egress points for bats. All interior areas of the buildings were accessible during the survey, and the buildings possess no loft spaces.

4.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment for Bats

During the preliminary roost assessment, the following evidence was sought: -

- The presence of potential access and egress routes for bats into and out of likely roosting sites and evidence of the use of such potential access points by bats such as scattered droppings, urine staining or scratching around entrances;
- Corpses or skeletons;
- Feeding remains;
- Bat droppings;
- Likely commuting routes and nearby habitat assessment for potential use by bats;
- Any other signs of use by bats including the presence of bats themselves.

In addition the overall site and its associated wider surroundings were also evaluated for the potential to support commuting and/or foraging bat species.

The internal inspections were undertaken during daylight hours and were aided by the use of a high-powered torch. All areas accessible to bats were searched for evidence of bats, including droppings and feeding remains.

Internal signs of roost access and egress points were also sought out during the survey, examples of these could include; light shining into internal building spaces from the exterior of the building or damage to any internal roof linings.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within buildings which were searched as a priority for any bat fields signs. Examples of these are outlined below: -

- Dividing walls;
- Underneath ridge beams;
- Beneath hip joints and junctions;
- Timber/wall joints;
- Voids between blockwork;

- Staining above/around gaps;
- Droppings around gaps.

Roosting bats and signs of their presence are not always visible, so any potential bat roosting locations were also noted during the survey.

4.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey Limitations

External and internal inspections for bats can be undertaken at any time of year. The survey was conducted using the recommended equipment and was led by a licenced bat worker.

No significant survey limitations were noted during the survey and as such, no limitations were recorded which may have impacted the robustness of the results of the PRA for bats.

4.4 Desktop Study

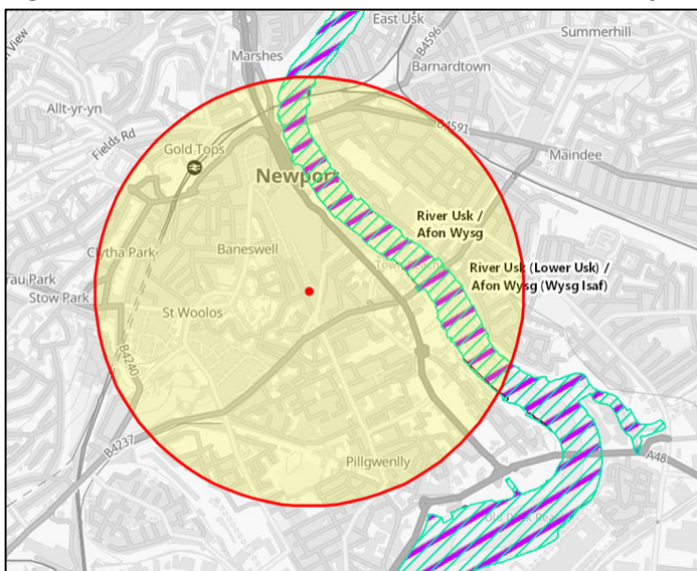
4.4.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The desk study sought to identify records of statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the survey area.

In total, 2 records of statutory designated sites were returned within 1km of the proposed development site, with both of these relating to the River Usk (located approximately 574m north-east of the survey area).

The 1km buffer area along with the site location is visible in Figure 2 below: -

Figure 2 – 1km Buffer Area Search Record for Statutory Designated Sites



River Usk (SAC & SSSI) – Citation

The River Usk comprises a large, linear ecosystem which acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species.

The Usk is of special interest as a fine example of a river running over sandstones and for its associated plant and animal communities. Its character spans a wide range of types from an upland, base-poor stream to a large lowland river with extensive tidal reaches. Its overall diversity is a product of its underlying geology, soil type, adjacent land-use and fluvio-geomorphological regime.

With respect to bats, the frequent tree cover located along the length of the of the lower River Usk provides valuable feeding and roosting habitats for several bat species including Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*).

Full citations are available for review in Appendix A – Citations of Designated Sites.

4.4.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

The Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) mapping resource was utilised in order to determine whether any non-statutory designated sites are located within 1km of the survey building.

The desk study subsequently returned 18 records of a non-statutory ecologically designated site within 1km of the survey area, with these consisting of Conservation Areas and Environmental Spaces.

Conservation Areas: -

- CE7 – Town Centre (9.57 ha);
- CE7 – Lower Dock Street (10.66 ha);
- CE7 – The Shrubbery (0 ha);
- CE7 – Stow Park (0 ha);
- CE7 – Clytha (0 ha);
- CE7 – St Woolos (9.02 ha).

Environmental Spaces: -

- SP8(iv) – River Usk (SLA) (659 ha);
- Talbot Lane – Grassed Area (0.28 ha);
- Park Square – Grassed Gardens (0.28 ha);
- St Woolos Grounds – Conservation Area Amenity Space (0.82 ha);
- Clifton Place – Gardens & Equipped Area (0.65 ha);
- Land Off Rugby Road – Equipped Play & Grassed Area (0.20 ha);
- Land Off Willenhall Street – Amenity Space (0.10 ha);
- Belle Vue Park – Formal Gardens (10.10 ha);
- Capel Crescent – Grassed Area (0.40 ha);
- Pill Playing Fields – Formal Play Provision (6.16 ha);
- Courtybella Terrace – Grassed Area (0.59 ha);
- Land North of Caer Perllan Allotment – Tree Area (1.45 ha).

Although there are no protections afforded to non-statutory sites as a result of their designation, they often contain nationally rare, threatened or priority species and habitats, therefore playing a critical role in conservation of the UK's natural heritage.

The non-statutory designated sites located within 1km of the proposed development site suggest that the habitats surrounding the site may be ecologically rich in nature and in turn likely support protected or priority species.

4.4.3 Ancient Woodland

There are no ancient woodlands within 1km of the survey site.

4.5 Preliminary Roost Assessment for Bats

4.5.1 Building Exteriors

The survey consisted of the inspection of the building at 83 Commercial Street, Newport, NP20 1LR.

The survey building is standard in shape, with a rectangular footprint and flat roof, and is approximately 6.5m in width and 45m in length.

The northern wall of the survey building is bound by an adjacent derelict commercial structure along its entirety.

The southern wall of the building meanwhile is partially bound by an adjacent restaurant (Le Raj) toward the western end of the building, whilst a car park and loading bay is located adjacent to the southern wall toward the east of the building.

The exterior walls of the majority of the survey building consist of engineered brick, which has been clad with concrete render in some sections.

The majority of the masonry and render across the building is in generally good condition, however, areas of damage were recorded in some locations, particularly toward the eastern and south-eastern section (rear) of the exterior of the survey building.

Damage was particularly recorded to the exterior brickwork adjacent to the loading bay toward the south-eastern corner of the building, due to the establishment of buddleia and abandonment of the building.

Similarly, the flat roof of the building has also been subjected to some damage, resulting in significant water ingress toward the eastern section of the building interior (particularly at 1st floor level). The ingress of water has caused widespread damage to the building interior, with a large amount of rotten timber being observed in the vicinity of the stairwell toward the eastern side of the building.

The exterior of the survey buildings can be viewed in Figures 3 – 10 below and overleaf: -

Figure 3 – (SE) Corner of Survey Building, Looking (NW)



Figure 4 – Closer view of Damaged Brickwork. Hole in Brickwork Enables Access to the Building Interior (Circled)



Figure 5 – Hole visible in Figure 4 from Interior of Building. Presence of Cobwebs across Span of Gap Suggests the Potential Access Point is not being Utilised by Bats



Figure 6 – (E) Wall of Survey Building Looking (W). Damaged Windows and Fascia / Cladding Boards visible, Enable the Potential Access/Egress for Bats to the Building Interior



Figure 7 – Flat Roof of Building, Looking (W). Western End of Building is Clad with Corrugated Asbestos Sheetting



Figure 8 – Single-skinned Asbestos Cladding at Farthest End of (W) Side of Flat Roof. Cladding is in Good Condition with Limited Damage



Figure 9 – Damaged Frontage of 1st Floor, as visible from Roof of Building, Looking (E). Broken Windows and Doorways enable the Free Access/Egress for Bats to Building Interior



Figure 10 – Damaged Masonry / Render Covering Brickwork on (S) Wall of Flat Roof of Building, Offering Potential Limited Roosting Opportunity for Crevice-Dwelling Bats



As discussed, some small areas of damage were recorded (example of which are visible in Figures 4 & 10) which offers limited potential for crevice-dwelling bats.

Numerous potential access/egress points to the building interior were recorded during the survey. These include; broken windows and doors as a result of extensive vandalism / dilapidated building structure due to a lack of maintenance, and damaged brickwork, all of which enable the potential free access/egress of bats to the respective building interiors via these locations.

In addition, the aforementioned broken windows and exterior doors afford a high level of natural light across the majority of the building interiors, reducing the building's potential to be utilised as a day roost. These open areas also result in the interior of the building being similar to outside ambient temperature, further reducing the potential for the building to be used as a day roost, due to bats typically preferring warmer temperatures to roost in.

As previously stated, the building possesses some timber fascia boards, particularly at the apex of the eastern wall of the building. These were observed to be in a generally poor state of disrepair enabling the potential access/egress of crevice-dwelling bats to the building interior. The fascia boards were however assessed to be in too poor a condition to support roosting bats, with the eastern wall and areas behind the fascia boards being too exposed to external elements to be suitable for roosting.

4.5.2 Building Interiors

The interior space of the survey building is completely open in nature with broken windows, damaged brickwork and broken doors potentially enabling the free traversal for bats around the entirety of both floors of the building interior.

The interior of the survey buildings can be viewed in Figures 11 – 16 below: -

Figure 11 – (W) Ground Floor Interior of Survey Building, Looking (E)



Figure 12 – (E) Ground Floor Interior of Survey Building, Looking (W)



Figure 13 – (E) Ground Floor Interior of Survey Building, Looking (E)



Figure 14 – Damage to Underside of Flat Roof as a result of Water Ingress above Stairwell at Far (E) Section of Building Interior.



Figure 15 – 1st Floor Interior of Survey Building, Looking (W)



Figure 16 – 1st Floor Interior of Survey Building, Looking (W) onto Flat Roof of Building



The 1st floor of the building has evidently been subjected to extensive vandalism, with signs of unauthorised access by humans being present as evidenced by the presence of illicit drug paraphernalia, litter, broken windows and graffiti.

The main building and indeed most of the survey buildings possess flat roofs and ceilings of single storey height, apart from the main stairwell which is double-height. Subsequently the building does not possess any loft spaces.

The roof consists of a timber flat roof finished with roofing felt, interlaced with numerous well-sealed, boarded up skylights. Both the roof structures and boarded up skylights were all found to be damaged allowing ingress of water, although no holes of suitable size were identified through which bats could enter.

The underside of the boarded up skylights present within the building interior were assessed to potentially offer limited roosting potential for free-hanging bats. The ground floor walls were double-skinned with interior cladding, and these gaps behind the cladding were assessed to offer potential roosting opportunity for crevice-dwelling bats. Furthermore, the open nature of the building interior was assessed to enable the free-flight across all spaces / rooms of the building should any bats make their way into the building via any of the numerous potential access/egress points.

The building was subsequently assessed to possess potential roosting features which could opportunistically be utilised by individual bats. The building however does not provide enough shelter, protection, appropriate conditions or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis, or by larger numbers of bats.

It should also be noted that the interior of the buildings are not thought to be suitable for hibernation roosts, due to the variable interior temperatures, resulting from numerous open doorways and areas of damage around the buildings.

The ground level interior is dark enough to support bats; however, due to the open windows and doors at the first floor, the interior temperature of the building is inconsistent, and unsuitable to support a larger number of bats.

The building interiors are currently unoccupied. Traffic movements and human activity around the survey building is frequent however, with a number of commercial properties being active in the nearby vicinity of the survey building, owing to the survey building being located in a busy city centre. Subsequently, the levels of noise and disturbance within and around the building have historically been, and continue to be high.

Although interior PRFs are present within the building, these are of limited number, and if being utilised at all, would be used opportunistically by individual bats.

All interior areas of the survey building were surveyed extensively for evidence of bats including, but not limited to the presence of faeces, feeding remains, smudging, staining, live/dead bats etc. **No evidence of bats was identified within the building interior during the PRA.**

4.5.3 Signs of Bats

No evidence of bats in the form of feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining or other signs of bat use were observed throughout the entirety of the survey building during the PRA.

4.5.4 Potential Access for Bats

Numerous potential access/egress points for bats to the building interiors were recorded during the PRA.

Potential access areas and locations in which they can be found within the survey building are outlined in further detail below:-

- **Open Pedestrian Doorway** – A single open pedestrian doorway is present at 1st floor level (as visible in Figure 9), owing to unauthorised human access and activity in the building. The open doorway enables free access/egress for bats to the 1st floor interior, following which bats are potentially able to fly freely throughout all interior areas of the building (and to subsequent PRFs), owing to its open-plan nature;

- **Damaged Glass Windows** – Numerous areas of damage were recorded to the glass windows in some areas of the building, with the damage primarily being concentrated on the windows located on the eastern wall of the building (as visible in Figure 6) and at the 1st floor access from the flat roof of the building (Figures 6 & 9). The gaps were deemed to be of sufficient size to enable both void-dwelling and crevice-dwelling bats to access the building interiors via these areas;
- **Missing Brick in South-Eastern Corner of Survey Building** – Although in a generally good state of repair, small gaps and breaks were recorded in some of the brickwork / masonry, with this primarily being focused in the south-eastern corner of the building. A missing brick was recorded in this location (Figures 4 & 5) which was of sufficient size to enable both crevice-dwelling and void-dwelling bats to enter the building interior via this avenue;
- **Damaged Timber Fascia Boards** – A small number of timber fascia boards are present at the apex of the eastern wall of the survey building. Some damage was recorded to these boards (Figure 6) which enable the potential access/egress for crevice-dwelling bats to the building interior in this location;
- **Open Plan Nature of Building Interior** – Due to the open plan nature of the interior of the survey buildings, any bats which are able to access the building interior via any of the above avenues are subsequently able to fly freely throughout the entirety of the building interior, across both floors.

4.5.5 Potential Roosting Features for Bats

The interior of the buildings were inspected thoroughly for suitable features for bats and any evidence of bat use.

Roosting opportunities for bats within the building interior are generally limited, and the building possesses no loft spaces.

The building is constructed from brick with some sections having been finished with render. Although observed to be in generally good condition, some damage to the brickwork was recorded (particularly toward the south-eastern corner of the building), whilst the render was also observed to have cracked, exposing the brickwork in other locations (particularly with respect to the wall on top of the flat roof of the building, as visible in Figure 10). These areas of damage were subsequently assessed to potentially provide roosting opportunity for crevice-dwelling bats.

Some brickwork is present at 1st floor level (which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats), whilst the metal framework of the suspended ceiling at ground floor level, a section of exposed timber framework of the underside of the roof toward the east of the building (resulting from water damage), and underside of boarded up skylights were also assessed to provide some limited opportunity for free-hanging bats.

The building interior is of sufficient size and space to enable void-dwelling bats to fly freely throughout all internal areas of the building, however, the exposed nature and inconsistent atmosphere of the building interior (owing to damaged windows and doors, water ingress etc.) significantly lower the building's potential to be utilised consistently and by a larger number of roosting bats.

The building interior is generally well-lit by natural light during daytime hours, owing to light ingress via the windows present on the eastern and western walls of the ground floor, and at 1st floor level in general. The light interior of the building subsequently significantly reduces the building's potential to be utilised as a day roost.

Timber fascia boards at the apex of the easternmost wall of the exterior of the building were observed to be in a poor state of disrepair and holes of sufficient size were recorded which may enable both crevice and void-dwelling bats to enter PRFs within the building interior via this avenue. The interior of the damaged soffits and fascias were however assessed to be unsuitable for roosting directly, owing to the exposed nature of the interior features to external elements as a result of the heavy damage.

It should be noted that all damaged areas and PRFs for bats were accessible during the survey, and no evidence of bats was identified within any of these features during the survey.

The PRA subsequently concluded that the survey buildings possess **low potential** to support roosting bats.

4.5.6 Surrounding Habitat

The building is situated on a main road within Newport city centre, and subsequently, the majority of the surroundings consist of retail buildings, roads and residential houses.

A small patch of bare ground with immature trees adjacent to a car park is located to the rear (east) of the building, whilst a church and associated grounds is located approximately 40m to the south-west.

The surrounding habitats were assessed to provide low suitability for bats, although there is likely some very limited foraging opportunity afforded to bats due to the trees behind the building. It should be noted however, that roosting opportunities for bats within the habitat is limited, with this potential being most likely at the nearby church. Furthermore, there are no mature trees within the immediate vicinity of the surveyed building.

Although the River Usk (SAC & SSSI) is located 574m to the south-east of the survey building, connectivity between the survey site to better foraging habitat elsewhere (such as within the SAC & SSSI) are poor, with limited green linkages such as hedgerows, tree lines, continuous green corridors etc. being recorded in the vicinity of the survey building.

As such, the surrounding habitat on the whole has been assessed to provide low suitability for bats, due to its isolated nature and poor connectivity.

The wider landscape of the area consists of a combination of retail and residential buildings, with Newport Wetlands being located approximately 3.4km to the south of the site and St Brides (Gwent Levels) SSSI being located approximately 2.9km to the south of the site.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment Summary

The building at 83 Commercial Street, Newport was surveyed in detail on 7th February 2025 to assess its potential to support roosting bats.

Although some minor PRFs for bats are present within the buildings, no evidence of bats (in the form of droppings, feeding remains, smudging, staining etc.) was recorded throughout the entirety of the building during the PRA.

The building does possess some limited potential for bats to utilise the structure opportunistically as a night-roost, particularly due to the numerous access/egress points identified around the buildings during the survey.

However, the lack of evidence of bats identified during the PRA along with the poor quality of PRFs reduces the likelihood that the building is being utilised on a regular basis, or by a larger number of bats.

It should also be noted that a number of features were identified which significantly reduce the likelihood of bats utilising the buildings; particularly with respect to the interior of the building.

The potential for daytime roosts within the buildings was assessed to be negligible due to the high levels of natural and artificial light throughout the building, along with high levels of disturbance in the form of noise and human habitation in the vicinity, which the buildings are subjected to on a day-to-day basis.

Furthermore, the interior atmospheric conditions within the upstairs of the building is not thought to be consistent enough to support hibernating bats, which require constant, cool conditions in which to hibernate.

5.1.2 BCT Good Practice Guidelines

Table 4.1 within the BCT Good Practice Guidelines state the following guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement: -

- **Negligible:** - Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats;
- **Low:** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats; (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation);
- **Moderate:** - A structure or 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 (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed);
- **High:** - A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

Furthermore, BCT Good Practice Guidelines state that further surveys (particularly presence/absence surveys) are required if: -

- The preliminary roost assessment has not ruled out the reasonable likelihood of a roost being present (because there are locations with potential for bats to roost undetected in concealed cracks, crevices or voids), but no definitive evidence of the presence of bat roosts has been recorded;
- Potential roost features inspection survey has identified moderate and high suitability potential roost features, but no definitive evidence of the presence of bats has been established;

- A comprehensive inspection survey is not possible due to restricted access, but features are present with a reasonable likelihood of supporting bats;
- There is a risk that evidence of bat use may have been removed by weather or human activities.

The aims of these surveys would be to determine the presence or absence of bats at the time of the survey and the need for further surveys and/or mitigation.

If sufficient areas of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found, then further surveys may not be appropriate.

However, if there is a reasonable likelihood that bat roosts could be present and particularly if there are areas inaccessible for survey, then further surveys may be required proportionate to the circumstances encountered.

5.1.3 Evaluation of Bat Roost Potential within Survey Buildings at 83 Commercial Street, Newport, NP20 1LR

The building at 83 Commercial Street, Newport was surveyed in detail to assess its potential to support roosting bats.

All areas within the buildings were accessible during the survey, and were thoroughly searched for evidence of bats, including feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining amongst other field signs, with none found.

Although some minor roosting features were present within the buildings, the absence of evidence of bats within the buildings reduces the likelihood that bats are utilising the buildings for roosting purposes.

The PRA subsequently concluded that the survey buildings possess **low potential to support roosting bats** due to: -

- No evidence of bats (current or otherwise) identified during an extensive internal and external survey of the building;
- Although numerous access points to the building interior were recorded during the survey, PRF's within the building interior are limited, with only the boarded up skylights at 1st floor level, cracks in masonry to the rear exterior of the building and double-skinned interior wall cladding at ground floor level being deemed suitable for roosting / opportunistic use by individual bats;
- The building possesses no loft spaces, and the roof and walls of the buildings are constructed with a combination of brick and cladding in generally good condition;
- High levels of natural interior light are present due to the broken windows and doors upstairs as a result of extensive vandalism;
- The surrounding area has high levels of human disturbance with resultant high noise levels.

All of the above factors were concluded to reduce the survey building's potential to be utilised by bats.

Recommendations made within Section 5.2.44 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition* (2023) state that if a structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats, an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all the evidence available.

The recommendations further go on to state that if sufficient areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden) then further surveys may not be appropriate.

All areas within the building were thoroughly searched for evidence of bats, including feeding remains, droppings, smudging, staining amongst other field signs, with none found.

5.2 Recommendations

The building at 83 Commercial Street, Newport was classified as possessing **low** potential/suitability for bats and as such, **no further survey effort with respect to bats is recommended.**

It is concluded therefore that in the absence of mitigation, the proposed change of use and associated renovation works will not have a significant detrimental effect on bats or associated roosts within the survey building.

In order to ensure that general disturbance is kept to a minimum and contractors are aware of the procedure to follow in the event a bat is unexpectedly found during the works, the following measures are recommended: -

- If any renovation / demolition work which may impact the roof or walls of the building are scheduled to be undertaken between March and August inclusive, they must be preceded by a nesting bird survey to rule out the presence of nesting birds which may be utilising the building. If no nesting birds are present works can begin. If nesting birds are identified however, works will be delayed to allow the birds to complete their nesting cycle undisturbed or a license obtained from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to allow the works to continue;
- A toolbox talk must be provided to contractors prior to the works to explain that, although it is not anticipated that any bats will be encountered during the works due to the absence of evidence of roosting bats, if bats are encountered during the renovation, then works will cease and a suitably qualified ecologist / Natural Resources Wales will be contacted for further advice;
- The proposed future development should aim to achieve a biodiversity net gain at the site. This could be achieved by the installation of bird and bat boxes to be retained and included in the construction of any new builds. This will encourage nesting birds to utilise these and mitigate for potential nesting habitat that will be lost during demolition / clearance. For buildings, dependant on the build specification, integrated systems such as the Schwegler 2FR integrated bat tubes and Schwegler Brick Nest Boxes Types 25A or 26 can be used. It is recommended that a minimum of 3 bat boxes are installed to improve the site's potential to support roosting bats post-development;
- Due to the highly mobile nature of bats, it is recommended that if the proposed works are not undertaken within 1 year of this assessment, the building is assessed again to ensure that the character, potential and suitability of the building for bats has not changed within this time.

6.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

DEFRA Magic Mapping Resource (2025) Biodiversity Information. *magic.defra.gov.uk*. Available: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

HM Government (2010) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. HM Government.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004), 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual, JNCC.

Welsh Government & Natural Resources Wales, DataMapWales (2024) Biodiversity Information. *datamapwales.gov.wales*. Available: <https://datamap.gov.wales/>

APPENDIX A

Citations of Designated Sites

STANDARD DATA FORM for sites within the 'UK national site network of European sites'

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are classified and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated under:

- the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea) and to a limited extent in Scotland (reserved matters) and Northern Ireland (excepted matters);
- the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) in Scotland;
- the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) in Northern Ireland; and
- the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in the UK offshore area.

Each SAC or SPA (forming part of the UK national site network of European sites) has its own Standard Data Form containing site-specific information. The information provided here generally follows the same documenting format for SACs and SPAs, as set out in the [Official Journal of the European Union recording the Commission Implementing Decision of 11 July 2011 \(2011/484/EU\)](#).

Please note that these forms contain a number of codes, all of which are explained either within the data forms themselves or in the end notes.

More general information on SPAs and SACs in the UK is available from the [SPA homepage](#) and [SAC homepage](#) on the JNCC website. These webpages also provide links to Standard Data Forms for all SAC and SPA sites in the UK.

<https://jncc.gov.uk/>



NATURA 2000 - STANDARD DATA FORM

For Special Protection Areas (SPA),
Proposed Sites for Community Importance (pSCI),
Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and
for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SITE UK0013007
SITENAME River Usk/ Afon Wysg

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- [1. SITE IDENTIFICATION](#)
- [2. SITE LOCATION](#)
- [3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION](#)
- [4. SITE DESCRIPTION](#)
- [5. SITE PROTECTION STATUS AND RELATION WITH CORINE BIOTOPES](#)
- [6. SITE MANAGEMENT](#)

1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Type B	1.2 Site code UK0013007	Back to top
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1.3 Site name

River Usk/ Afon Wysg

1.4 First Compilation date 1998-03	1.5 Update date 2015-12
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1.6 Respondent:

Name/Organisation: Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Address: Joint Nature Conservation Committee Monkstone House City Road Peterborough PE1 1JY
Email:

Date site proposed as SCI:	1998-03
Date site confirmed as SCI:	2004-12
Date site designated as SAC:	2004-12
National legal reference of SAC designation:	Regulations 11 and 13-15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made).

2. SITE LOCATION

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2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

-3.013888889

51.79583333

967.97

0.0

0.0

2.5 Administrative region code and name

Region Name

UKL2	East Wales
UKL1	West Wales and The Valleys

2.6 Biogeographical Region(s)

Atlantic (100.0%)

3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

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3.1 Habitat types present on the site and assessment for them

Annex I Habitat types						Site assessment			
Code	PF	NP	Cover [ha]	Cave [number]	Data quality	A B C D	A B C		
						Representativity	Relative Surface	Conservation	Global
1130 FI			134.55	0	G	D			
1140 FI			123.9	0	G	D			
1330 FI			29.04	0	M	D			
3260 FI			29.04	0	M	B	C	B	C
9130 FI			4.84	0	G	D			
9180 FI	X		21.3	0	G	D			
91A0 FI			12.58	0	G	D			
91D0 FI	X		2.9	0	G	D			

91E0	X		43.56	0	G	D			
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- **PF:** for the habitat types that can have a non-priority as well as a priority form (6210, 7130, 9430) enter "X" in the column PF to indicate the priority form.
- **NP:** in case that a habitat type no longer exists in the site enter: x (optional)
- **Cover:** decimal values can be entered
- **Caves:** for habitat types 8310, 8330 (caves) enter the number of caves if estimated surface is not available.
- **Data quality:** G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation)

3.2 Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC and site evaluation for them

Species					Population in the site						Site assessment			
G	Code	Scientific Name	S	NP	T	Size		Unit	Cat.	D.qual.	A B C D	A B C		
						Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Gl
F	1102	Alosa alosa			p				P	DD	C	C	C	C
F	1103	Alosa fallax			p				P	DD	A	B	C	A
I	1092	Austropotamobius pallipes			p				P	DD	D			
F	1163	Cottus gobio			p				P	DD	B	B	C	B
F	1099	Lampetra fluviatilis			p				P	DD	B	A	C	A
F	1096	Lampetra planeri			p				P	DD	B	B	C	A
M	1355	Lutra lutra			p	11	50	i		M	C	B	C	B
I	1029	Margaritifera margaritifera			p				P	DD	D			
F	1095	Petromyzon marinus			p				P	DD	B	B	C	B
M	1303	Rhinolophus hipposideros			p				P	DD	D			
F	1106	Salmo salar			p				P	DD	A	C	C	A

- **Group:** A = Amphibians, B = Birds, F = Fish, I = Invertebrates, M = Mammals, P = Plants, R = Reptiles
- **S:** in case that the data on species are sensitive and therefore have to be blocked for any public access enter: yes
- **NP:** in case that a species is no longer present in the site enter: x (optional)
- **Type:** p = permanent, r = reproducing, c = concentration, w = wintering (for plant and non-migratory species use permanent)
- **Unit:** i = individuals, p = pairs or other units according to the Standard list of population units and codes in accordance with Article 12 and 17 reporting (see [reference portal](#))
- **Abundance categories (Cat.):** C = common, R = rare, V = very rare, P = present - to fill if data are deficient (DD) or in addition to population size information
- **Data quality:** G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation); VP = 'Very poor' (use this category only, if not even a rough estimation of the population size can be made, in this case the fields for population size can remain empty, but the field "Abundance categories" has to be filled in)

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 General site character

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Habitat class	% Cover
N03	4.5
N07	3.8
N14	2.0
N16	10.1
N02	26.8
N08	3.4
N23	2.1
N06	37.9
N09	8.0
N10	1.4
Total Habitat Cover	99.99999999999999

Other Site Characteristics

1 Terrestrial: Soil & Geology: alluvium, mud, nutrient-rich, limestone, basic, neutral, shingle, sandstone, acidic, peat, clay, nutrient-poor, sediment
 Terrestrial: Geomorphology and landscape: valley, floodplain, coastal, lowland, upland, island 3 Marine: Geology: mud 4 Marine: Geomorphology: estuary

4.2 Quality and importance

Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. Petromyzon marinus for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Lampetra fluviatilis for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Lampetra planeri for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Alosa alosa for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. Alosa fallax for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Salmo salar for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Cottus gobio for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Lutra lutra for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

4.3 Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site

The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and pressures [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
M	I01		B
H	A04		I
L	B07		B
H	H01		B
L	H05		O
H	J02		I
M	B02		B
M	J03		I

Positive Impacts			
Rank	Activities, management [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
M	J03		I

Rank: H = high, M = medium, L = low

Pollution: N = Nitrogen input, P = Phosphor/Phosphate input, A = Acid input/acidification, T = toxic inorganic chemicals, O = toxic organic chemicals, X = Mixed pollutions
 i = inside, o = outside, b = both

4.5 Documentation

The Natural Resources Wales weblink below provides access to information on its designated sites. Detailed information about this Natura 2000 site can be accessed via the Management Plan link provided in Section 6.2. See also the 'UK Approach' document for more information (link via the JNCC website).

Link(s): <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/wildlife-and-biodiversity/protected-areas-of-land>
http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/Natura2000_StandardDataForm_UKApproach_Dec2015.pdf

5. SITE PROTECTION STATUS (optional)

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5.1 Designation types at national and regional level:

Code	Cover [%]	Code	Cover [%]	Code	Cover [%]
UK04	100.0				

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

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6.1 Body(ies) responsible for the site management:

Organisation:	Natural Resources Wales
Address:	
Email:	

6.2 Management Plan(s):

An actual management plan does exist:

☒ Yes	Name: RIVER USK / AFON WYSG Link: https://www.naturalresources.wales/media/673384/River_Usk%20SAC%20core%20plan.pdf
☐ No, but in preparation	
☐ No	

EXPLANATION OF CODES USED IN THE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC) AND SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) STANDARD DATA FORMS

The codes in the table below generally follow those explained in the [official European Union guidelines for the Standard Data Form](#) (also referencing the relevant page number).

1.1 Site type

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	SPA (classified Special Protection Area)	53
B	cSAC, SCI or SAC (candidate Special Area of Conservation, Site of Community Importance, designated Special Area of Conservation)	53
C	SPA area/boundary is the same as the cSAC/SCI/SAC i.e. a co-classified/designated site (Note: this situation only occurs in Gibraltar)	53

3.1 Habitat code

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
1110	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	57
1130	Estuaries	57
1140	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	57
1150	Coastal lagoons	57
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays	57
1170	Reefs	57
1180	Submarine structures made by leaking gases	57
1210	Annual vegetation of drift lines	57
1220	Perennial vegetation of stony banks	57
1230	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts	57
1310	Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand	57
1320	Spartina swards (Spartinion maritimae)	57
1330	Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucio-Puccinellietalia maritimae)	57
1340	Inland salt meadows	57
1420	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticosi)	57
2110	Embryonic shifting dunes	57
2120	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria ("white dunes")	57
2130	Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")	57
2140	Decalcified fixed dunes with Empetrum nigrum	57
2150	Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)	57
2160	Dunes with Hippophya• rhamnoides	57
2170	Dunes with Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salicion arenariae)	57
2190	Humid dune slacks	57
21A0	Machairs (* in Ireland)	57
2250	Coastal dunes with Juniperus spp.	57
2330	Inland dunes with open Corynephorus and Agrostis grasslands	57
3110	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)	57
3130	Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoëto-Nanojuncetea	57
3140	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.	57
3150	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation	57

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
3160	Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	57
3170	Mediterranean temporary ponds	57
3180	Turloughs	57
3260	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation	57
4010	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix	57
4020	Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with Erica ciliaris and Erica tetralix	57
4030	European dry heaths	57
4040	Dry Atlantic coastal heaths with Erica vagans	57
4060	Alpine and Boreal heaths	57
4080	Sub-Arctic Salix spp. scrub	57
5110	Stable xerothermophilous formations with Buxus sempervirens on rock slopes (Berberidion p.p.)	57
5130	Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	57
6130	Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae	57
6150	Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands	57
6170	Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands	57
6210	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)	57
6230	Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe)	57
6410	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)	57
6430	Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	57
6510	Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)	57
6520	Mountain hay meadows	57
7110	Active raised bogs	57
7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	57
7130	Blanket bogs (* if active bog)	57
7140	Transition mires and quaking bogs	57
7150	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	57
7210	Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae	57
7220	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)	57
7230	Alkaline fens	57
7240	Alpine pioneer formations of the Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae	57
8110	Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)	57
8120	Calcareous and calcshist scree of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietalia rotundifoliae)	57
8210	Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	57
8220	Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	57
8240	Limestone pavements	57
8310	Caves not open to the public	57
8330	Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	57
9120	Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrublayer (Quercion robur-petraeae or Ilici-Fagenion)	57
9130	Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests	57
9160	Sub-Atlantic and medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests of the Carpinion betuli	57
9180	Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, scree and ravines	57
9190	Old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains	57
91A0	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	57
91C0	Caledonian forest	57
91D0	Bog woodland	57
91E0	Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	57
91J0	Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles	57

3.1 Habitat representativity (abbreviated to 'Representativity' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Excellent representativity	57
B	Good representativity	57
C	Significant representativity	57
D	Non-significant presence representativity	57

3.1 Relative surface

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	> 15%-100%	58
B	> 2%-15%	58
C	≤ 2%	58

3.1 Degree of conservation (abbreviated to 'Conservation' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Excellent conservation	59
B	Good conservation	59
C	Average or reduced conservation	59

3.1 Global assessment (abbreviated to 'Global' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Excellent value	59
B	Good value	59
C	Significant value	59

3.2 Population (abbreviated to 'Pop.' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	> 15%-100%	62
B	> 2%-15%	62
C	≤ 2%	62
D	Non-significant population	62

3.2 Degree of conservation (abbreviated to 'Con.' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Excellent conservation	63
B	Good conservation	63
C	Average or reduced conservation	63

3.2 Isolation (abbreviated to 'Iso.' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Population (almost) Isolated	63
B	Population not-isolated, but on margins of area of distribution	63
C	Population not-isolated within extended distribution range	63

3.2 Global Grade (abbreviated to 'Glo.' or 'G.' in data form)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A	Excellent value	63
B	Good value	63
C	Significant value	63

3.3 Other species – essentially covers bird assemblage types

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
WATR	Non-breeding waterbird assemblage	UK specific code
SBA	Breeding seabird assemblage	UK specific code

BBA	Breeding bird assemblage (applies only to sites classified pre 2000)	UK specific code
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4.1 Habitat class code

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
N01	Marine areas, Sea inlets	65
N02	Tidal rivers, Estuaries, Mud flats, Sand flats, Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	65
N03	Salt marshes, Salt pastures, Salt steppes	65
N04	Coastal sand dunes, Sand beaches, Machair	65
N05	Shingle, Sea cliffs, Islets	65
N06	Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water)	65
N07	Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens	65
N08	Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana	65
N09	Dry grassland, Steppes	65
N10	Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland	65
N11	Alpine and sub-Alpine grassland	65
N14	Improved grassland	65
N15	Other arable land	65
N16	Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	65
N17	Coniferous woodland	65
N19	Mixed woodland	65
N21	Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including Orchards, groves, Vineyards, Dehesas)	65
N22	Inland rocks, Screes, Sands, Permanent Snow and ice	65
N23	Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites)	65
N25	Grassland and scrub habitats (general)	65
N26	Woodland habitats (general)	65

4.3 Threats code

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
A01	Cultivation	65
A02	Modification of cultivation practices	65
A03	Mowing / cutting of grassland	65
A04	Grazing	65
A05	Livestock farming and animal breeding (without grazing)	65
A06	Annual and perennial non-timber crops	65
A07	Use of biocides, hormones and chemicals	65
A08	Fertilisation	65
A10	Restructuring agricultural land holding	65
A11	Agriculture activities not referred to above	65
B01	Forest planting on open ground	65
B02	Forest and Plantation management & use	65
B03	Forest exploitation without replanting or natural regrowth	65
B04	Use of biocides, hormones and chemicals (forestry)	65
B06	Grazing in forests/ woodland	65
B07	Forestry activities not referred to above	65
C01	Mining and quarrying	65
C02	Exploration and extraction of oil or gas	65
C03	Renewable abiotic energy use	65
D01	Roads, paths and railroads	65
D02	Utility and service lines	65
D03	Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions	65
D04	Airports, flightpaths	65
D05	Improved access to site	65
E01	Urbanised areas, human habitation	65
E02	Industrial or commercial areas	65

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
E03	Discharges	65
E04	Structures, buildings in the landscape	65
E06	Other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities	65
F01	Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture	65
F02	Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	65
F03	Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), including damage caused by game (excessive density), and taking/removal of terrestrial animals (including collection of insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds of prey, etc., trapping, poisoning, poaching, predator control, accidental capture (e.g. due to fishing gear), etc.)	65
F04	Taking / Removal of terrestrial plants, general	65
F05	Illegal taking/ removal of marine fauna	65
F06	Hunting, fishing or collecting activities not referred to above	65
G01	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities	65
G02	Sport and leisure structures	65
G03	Interpretative centres	65
G04	Military use and civil unrest	65
G05	Other human intrusions and disturbances	65
H01	Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish)	65
H02	Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources)	65
H03	Marine water pollution	65
H04	Air pollution, air-borne pollutants	65
H05	Soil pollution and solid waste (excluding discharges)	65
H06	Excess energy	65
H07	Other forms of pollution	65
I01	Invasive non-native species	65
I02	Problematic native species	65
I03	Introduced genetic material, GMO	65
J01	Fire and fire suppression	65
J02	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	65
J03	Other ecosystem modifications	65
K01	Abiotic (slow) natural processes	65
K02	Biocenotic evolution, succession	65
K03	Interspecific faunal relations	65
K04	Interspecific floral relations	65
K05	Reduced fecundity/ genetic depression	65
L05	Collapse of terrain, landslide	65
L07	Storm, cyclone	65
L08	Inundation (natural processes)	65
L10	Other natural catastrophes	65
M01	Changes in abiotic conditions	65
M02	Changes in biotic conditions	65
U	Unknown threat or pressure	65
XO	Threats and pressures from outside the Member State	65

5.1 Designation type codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO
UK00	No Protection Status	67
UK01	National Nature Reserve	67
UK04	Site of Special Scientific Interest (GB)	67
UK05	Marine Conservation Zone	67
UK06	Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area	67
UK86	Special Area (Channel Islands)	67
UK98	Area of Special Scientific Interest (NI)	67
IN00	Ramsar Convention site	67
IN08	Special Protection Area	67
IN09	Special Area of Conservation	67

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION

MONMOUTHSHIRE/NEWPORT

**RIVER USK (LOWER USK)/
AFON WYSG (WYSG ISAF)**

Date of Notification: 1996

National Grid References: SN 239239- ST317837

O.S. Maps:

1:50000 Sheet Numbers:	160, 161, 171
1:10000 Sheet Numbers:	ST 38 SW, ST 30 SW ST 38 NW, ST 30 SE ST 39 SW, ST 30 NE ST 39 SE, ST 30 NW ST 39 NE, SO 31 SW SO 21 SE

Site Area: 543.9 ha

Description:

River Usk

The River Usk comprises a large, linear ecosystem which acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species. The Usk is of special interest as a fine example of a river running over sandstones and for its associated plant and animal communities. Its character spans a wide range of types from an upland, base-poor stream to a large lowland river with extensive tidal reaches. Its overall diversity is a product of its underlying geology, soil type, adjacent land-use and fluvio-geomorphological regime.

The River Usk is one of the largest rivers in Wales. From its source to its confluence, the main channel is over 120 kilometres long, and drains a catchment of 1358 km². Rising at an altitude of 500 metres on Mynydd Ddu on the Carmarthenshire/Powys border, the Usk flows eastwards along the northern scarp of the Brecon Beacons, turning south below Abergavenny and meandering down through Monmouthshire to its confluence with the Severn Estuary below Newport.

River Usk (Lower Usk) (Abergavenny - Newport)

The River Usk (Lower Usk) is a rare example of a large mesotrophic lowland river which has not been subject to significant modification by man. Of particular significance to the river's morphology and biology are the extensive deposits of fluvio-glacial and alluvial material in the Usk valley between Abergavenny and Newport. The Lower Usk has developed a wide floodplain with a complex and active system of meanders, cut-off and back channels which

contribute to the biological interest and diversity of the site.

The main plant communities present are those that are characteristic of rivers running over hard and soft sandstones with changing base status merging into brackish waters in its lowest reaches.

The river shows a clear downstream succession in plant communities due in part to the rapid transition from mesotrophic to nutrient rich in its lower reaches and increasing salinity as it nears its confluence with the Severn Estuary.

The invertebrate fauna is characteristic of a large lowland river. Of special interest are the crane flies associated with silty river margins in the vicinity of Newbridge on Usk. The fish fauna is of international significance including several rare and scarce species and there is an expanding population of otters *Lutra lutra*. Several scarce higher plant species occurring along the river's tidal reaches are also of special interest.

Whilst not a special feature of the site, there is a good range of breeding birds associated with riverine habitats.

The SSSI incorporates adjacent areas of riparian habitat which directly support the special interest of the river. These include woodlands dominated by alder *Alnus glutinosa* and willows *Salix spp.*, marshy grassland, stands of tall herb, swamp and fen vegetation, salt-marsh and coastal grassland.

Geology and Topography

The catchment of the Lower Usk is predominantly low lying, the eastern part of the Brecon Beacons and South Wales Coalfield Massif being the most significant upland areas within it. The River Usk (Lower Usk) is thus lowland in character, meandering across a floodplain up to 3 km across and falling from 100m AOD at Abergavenny to sea level over a distance of 68 km.

Between Abergavenny and Llanfair Kilgeddin, the river flows over the marls, mudstones and sandstones of the Raglan and St Maughan's beds of the Lower Old Red Sandstone Series. The river bed of the Lower Usk is however, also strongly influenced by the extensive fluvio-glacial and alluvial deposits between Abergavenny and Usk. At Llanfair Kilgeddin the river initially follows the line of the Pontypool Road Fault separating the Lower Old Red Sandstone rocks in the north-west from the older limestones and mudstones of the Ludlow (Silurian) series in the south. As the river crosses onto the more resistant Silurian Ludlow Series it has cut down to the bedrock in a number of places creating a rock based channel that is in marked contrast to the silt and gravel based channel upstream.

Above Usk, the valley narrows cutting through the resistant limestones and marls of the Ludlow Series to form the Llanbadoc Gap. Below this point the river again flows over the marls, mudstones and sandstones of the Raglan and St Maughan's beds until it crosses onto the Triassic Keuper Marls at Newport Docks. The great depth of alluvial and glacial deposits within the valley from Llanbadoc Gap to the River's confluence with the Severn Estuary means that the underlying geology has little direct influence on the river.

The Lower Usk has a relatively natural fluvio-geomorphic regime and has remained relatively free from straightening, widening or deepening schemes. The section of the river between Caerleon and Usk is particularly active with migrating meanders depositing shingle point bars and islands and cutting vertical earth cliffs. The pattern of meander loops along the entire length of the river from Abergavenny to Newport is complex, steep outer slopes contrasting with shallow slip-off slopes. Large abandoned meander loops such as the one at Llanfihangel Gobion indicate the former course of the River Usk as it flowed across and created its floodplain. Oxbow lakes and active back channels remain adjacent to the river in places.

Flora

In its middle and upper reaches the river channel is characterized by the frequent occurrence of floating and submerged plants including water crowfoot and water milfoils *Myriophyllum spp.* Aquatic macrophytes disappear below the tidal limit at Newbridge on Usk although emergent species are able to tolerate the transition zone between brackish and freshwater conditions.

Riverside rocks and boulders are characterised by a flora of mosses, such as *Amblystegium fluviatile*, *Cinclidotus fontinalioides*, *Fontinalis antipyretica*, *Rhynchostegium riparioides* and *Thamnobryum alopecurum*, liverworts, such as *Chiloscyphus polyanthus*, *Conocephalum conicum*, and *Marchantia polymorpha*, the filamentous alga *Lemanea fluviatilis* and lichens of the genera *Verrucaria*.

Marginal vegetation is dominated variously by reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, branched bur reed *Sparganium erectum*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris* and lesser pond-sedge *Carex acutiformis* with a variety of other species including brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and yellow cress *Rorippa spp.* Below Newbridge the upper mud banks of the river are colonized by saltmarsh species such as sea aster *Aster tripolium*, saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia spp.* and scurvygrass *Cochlearia spp.*

Characteristic riverbank plants include stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* and Indian balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*. Locally the river bank vegetation can be more diverse and supports species such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and comfrey *Symphytum spp.*. Occasionally inundated grassland along the tidal reaches is dominated by couch grass *Elytrigia repens* and supports regionally rare species including bulbous foxtail *Alopecurus bulbosus*, marsh-mallow *Althaea officinalis* and marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*.

The river banks are frequently lined with willows and alder. In addition, there are larger areas of woodland adjacent to the river dominated by these species or by sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*.

The River Usk (Lower Usk) floodplain retains a number of important geomorphological features and associated wetland habitats. In particular at Llanvianangel Gobion, south of Abergavenny, a large cut off meander has areas of standing water, emergent and marshy vegetation and shingle. The areas of standing water support diverse still water plant communities dominated by Canadian waterweed *Elodea canadensis* with frequent broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, sweet-grasses *Glyceria spp.*, fool's water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*, pink water-speedwell

Veronica catenata and common water-plantain *Alisma plantago aquatica*, together with by stands of common spike-rush, rushes *Juncus spp.* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*.

Mammals

The common otter *Lutra lutra* is widespread along the length of the river where appropriate bankside cover exists. The frequent tree cover provides valuable feeding and roosting habitats for several bat species including Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*.

Birds

The River Usk (Lower Usk) supports a wide range of riverside breeding birds such as sand martin *Riparia riparia* and kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* nesting in eroding earth cliffs. Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*, grey wagtail *M. cinerea* and dipper *Cinclus cinclus* occur with increasing frequency above the tidal limit at Newbridge. In addition marsh warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* breeds in riparian habitat along the river banks. The cut-off meander at Llanfihangel Gobion is an important area for wintering and passage migrants including teal *Anas crecca*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia* and green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*.

Fish

The river has a wide range of migratory and non-migratory fish species. The most abundant coarse fish include chub *Leuciscus cephalus*, roach *Rutilus rutilus* and dace *Leuciscus leuciscus* which, together with the bullhead, are the most widely distributed fish along the river.

The rare river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* and twaite shad *Alosa fallax* and the very rare allis shad *Alosa alosa* all migrate from the Severn Estuary and spawn at various localities in the river. Large numbers of elvers *Anguilla anguilla* migrate up the river with spring tides.

The Usk is a notable game fish river with species including brown trout *Salmo trutta fario*, sea trout *Salmo trutta trutta* and Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, the latter migrating up along the lower river, in order to reach spawning grounds in the headwaters and tributaries of the River Usk (Upper Usk). The river also supports an important population of the non-migratory brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*.

Invertebrates

The lower Usk has important assemblages of craneflies including rare and scarce species such as *Limonia omissinervis*, *Erioptera limbata* and *Rhabdomastix hilaris*, *Gonomyia abbreviata* and *Cheilotrichia imbuta*. The rare mayfly *Potamanthus luteus* can be found in the river and there are also localised populations of the Atlantic stream crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, an endangered species in Europe.

Remarks:

The site supports the following habitats and species covered by the EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna:

Common otter *Lutra lutra* - Annex II and IV
Allis shad *Alosa alosa* - Annex II and V
Twaite shad *Alosa fallax* - Annex II and V
Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri* - Annex II
River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* - Annex II and V
Bullhead *Cottus gobio* - Annex II
Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* - Annex II and V
Atlantic stream crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* - Annex II and V

Otter and Atlantic stream crayfish are also listed in schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

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