



Bat Survey: Plough House, Druidstone Road, Old St Mellons, CF3 6XD



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Warning! The building is now a confirmed bat roost.

No works can be undertaken that may impact or disturb the roost without the legal owner being in possession of a European Protected Species License. Please refer to section 4 and section 9 of the report for further details.

If there is any doubt of what is permissible please contact the author on: Tel:07866461726 or Email rich@ecologicalservices.wales prior to any works commencing.

Disturbance or destruction of a bat roost is a criminal offence that may result in any granted planning permission being revoked, the legal owner receiving a fine and or a prison sentence.

1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 Plough House is a detached property situated in a rural environment along Druidstone Road to the north of the suburb of St Mellons. The property is currently in use as a residential dwelling and planning permission is sought to demolish the existing house and outbuildings and create a new residential dwelling within the site boundary. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 To support the listed building application a bat report has been commissioned to investigate if bats use the current property in any capacity during the maternity season, and for any evidence suggesting that bats use the property at other times of the year.

1.3 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 15 years experience, license number S0931358-1.

1.4 A data search was undertaken with SEWBRc (0256-510) to provide information on local bat species in the area. The data search did not identify any historic records of bats being present within the building. The nearest recorded roosts are approximately 690m from the property which is a record for a Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) day roost from 2010 and 865m from the property which is a record for a Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) day roost from 2013.

1.5 There are various non roosting records for bats, the nearest being approximately 690m from the property which is a record for a foraging Common Pipistrelle; Nathusius's Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and 800m from the property which is an unclassified record for a Pipistrelle Species (*Pipistrellus sp.*).

1.6 The property is not within 1km of a designated SAC or SSSI for bats.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 Plough House is a detached, rendered property which is two storeys in height with a pitched tiled roof. There are uPVC fasciae and soffits present. There is tile cladding to the south western gable end of the building and the eastern and western elevations of the building. There is likely to be a cavity wall in the building. There is a single storey, roughcast rendered garage present with a pitched tiled roof and uPVC fasciae and soffits. The garage is attached to the north eastern elevation of the main house via a single storey, flat roofed extension.

2.2 The property dates back to in excess of 60 years and is situated within a rural environment. There is unlikely to be any ambient lighting within the vicinity of the property.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourse is Rhymney River, approximately 1.2km to the west of the property at its nearest point.

2.4 Plough House is a detached property situated in a rural environment along Druidstone Road to the north of the suburb of St Mellons. The property is immediately surrounded by substantial amounts of open agricultural fields and there is a riparian corridor along Rhymney River. There is optimal ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is approximately: **ST 2377 8325**

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year; migration patterns and behaviour. The survey methods employed can provide evidence for the potential presence of bats at the times when the site was visited. Although the methods follow best practice guidance and were carried out in such a way as to maximise the chances of detection, failure to detect the target species cannot be considered as definitive proof of their absence.

3.2 The report is solely concerned with bats in relation to this building. Trees and other buildings not mentioned directly have not been included in this report.

3.3 Even though bats are habitual creatures they can still move to new roosts if more suitable. Therefore this report cannot predict the status of the structure in regard to bat occupancy in the future. This report should be acted upon as soon as practical. Natural Resources Wales will only accept survey data up to two years old from date of issue for licence applications, although some Local Planning Authorities will only accept survey data up to eighteen months old. If planning or building works are delayed, it is the responsibility of the client to discuss and gain approval from the *author* before work commences.

4.0 Legal Constraints

4.1 Bats, and any place a bat uses for breeding or shelter, either currently occupied or unoccupied are protected by European and British law, predominantly by **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**, which are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed from European directive into law in England and Wales.

4.2 In summary this law states that it is an offence to:

- **Deliberately capture or kill a bat**
- **Deliberately disturb a bat**
- **Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat**
- **Keep; transport; sell; exchange or offer for sale or exchange a living or dead bat or any part of a bat**

4.3 ‘Deliberately’ may also be interpreted, as not intending to injure or kill a bat but having done so due to being insufficiently informed and unaware of the consequences of the action.

4.4 For a more comprehensive description and exact wording of the legislation please refer to:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>

4.5 Where there is a risk that a bat roost may be present, it is incumbent upon the owner to commission a specialist bat survey to identify bat roosts before any work commences. Maximum penalties for offences relating to disturbance to bats or their roosts can amount to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or fines of up to Level 5 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982/1991 (i.e. £5000 in April 2001) per roost or bat disturbed or killed, or to both.

4.6 If a bat roost is discovered, no work that could affect the roost can be undertaken until Natural Resources Wales grants a licence endorsing the work. A thorough method statement and adequate mitigation proposal will need to be submitted to support any licence application.

4.7 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts an onus onto responsible bodies such as Local Planning Authorities to not only preserve, but also to enhance biodiversity meaning that planning applications must offer an element of ecological gain as well as preserving any aspects of ecological importance.

5.0 General Information

5.1 Bats are unable to build roosts themselves but instead rely on both man made and naturally occurring features to provide suitable accommodation. Bats generally prefer older buildings built with traditional materials, as traditional building methods provide more opportunities for gaps and entrances to buildings. Traditional cut roofs are preferred to a roof with trusses. Bats also prefer to roost where the external roost area has access to sunlight during the day such as south facing roof elevations.

5.2 Bats can utilise the following features on a building; end tiles, barge boards, soffit, gable ends, porches, lead flashing, hanging tiles, ridge tiles, broken tiles, eaves, sash window frames, wood cladding, fascia boards, window sills and internal roof spaces and timbers. Although this list demonstrates the most popular roosting sites it is by no means definitive. Bats can use apertures as small as 10mm in diameter to gain access.

5.3 The U.K bat population is divided into two distinct families, Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae. In general, Rhinolophidae (Horseshoe) bats differ in their roosting requirements to Vespertilionidae (the remainder of UK bat species). Horseshoe bats prefer to roost in large areas such as internal attic spaces and hang in the open from the roof of the roost. They tend to roost in visible clusters to maintain the high temperatures that a maternity colony needs. Horseshoe bats also prefer free flight access and egress into the roosting area. Horseshoe bats tend to be more light averting to other UK bat species, and routinely fly around the internal roosting area to warm up before exiting. It is noted that Plecotus (Long Eared) bats share some of these preferences. Vesper bats are, on the whole, crevice dwelling bats who squeeze into small apertures to access the roost. These, like Horseshoe bats, will cluster in maternity colonies, but are normally hidden from view. Vesper bats, with the exception of Long Eared bats, do not require a large internal roost to fly around before exit. Long Eared bats, although part of the vesper family, are very light averting and will, on occasions share the roosting patterns of both Horseshoe and crevice dwelling species.

6.0 External Scoping Survey

6.1 The external scoping survey was undertaken on the **9th August 2025** in conditions of good natural light. All external aspects of the building were comprehensively evaluated for roost potential. Evidence was also sought for any staining or droppings which could suggest bat occupation.

6.2 The building was inspected for overt evidence of bat presence and occupation such as:

- Staining around the entry of roosting point caused by oils secreted by the bat into its fur
- Scratching on surfaces caused by the bat in the acts of take off and landing
- Bat droppings on walls; floors; roof voids; window sills or panes and barge boards
- Urine stains below a possible entrance site, within the entrance to a cavity or on timbers used for roosting

- Bats can produce chatter on warm evenings prior to leaving the roost. A heterodyne bat detector is used to help determine this
- Flies around the entrance or on the floor of possible roosts, which may be attracted to bat guano

6.3 Due to the age and condition of the building, there were a small number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and those that were available were deemed as having moderate potential for roosting bats. There were

6.4 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any external features.

6.5 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the scoping survey.

6.6 Examples of apertures allowing access to cavities in the building:







7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 The internal scoping survey was undertaken on the **30th September 2025** by Hannah Evans (accredited agent S095550/1), an experienced bat ecologist with 5 years experience.

7.2 There was an attic space within the property. The space was partially boarded out; lined with plyboard and of a trussed design.

7.3 There were a mixture of mouse droppings and bat droppings indicative of a Pipistrelle Species (*Pipistrellus sp.*) of bat within the attic space.





8.0 Emergence Surveys

8.1 The emergence surveys were carried out during the maternity season and adhered to current best practice guidelines. These surveys were conducted from half an hour before sunset until two hours post sunset. The surveyors used are all experienced bat counters who have undergone sufficient training in basic bat ecology and bat activity. All sound analysis was undertaken by Richard Watkins.

8.2 The emergence surveys gave extra consideration to the features identified during the external scoping survey which could be utilised by bats.

8.3 First Emergence Survey on 9th August 2025

- Sunset: 20:46
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 30% cloud cover
- Temperature: 15 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Caitlin Smith; Mason Smith and Richard Watkins

1 Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed emerging from an aperture to the western elevation of the building.



3 Common Pipistrelles were observed emerging from underneath the tile cladding to the eastern elevation of the building.



8.4 Second Emergence Survey on 31st August 2025

- Sunset: 20:01
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 80% cloud cover
- Temperature: 15 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Jonathan Daniels; Debbie Parry and Ellie Rooza

2 Soprano Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) were observed emerging from an aperture in the tile cladding to the western elevation of the building.



2 Brown Long Eared Bats (*Plecotus auritus*) were observed emerging from an aperture to the western elevation of the building.



8.5 The weather conditions were dry and calm with little wind and no rain and therefore conducive for bat activity. The temperature was above 10 degrees celsius during the emergence surveys.

8.6 The best viewing conditions were obtained.

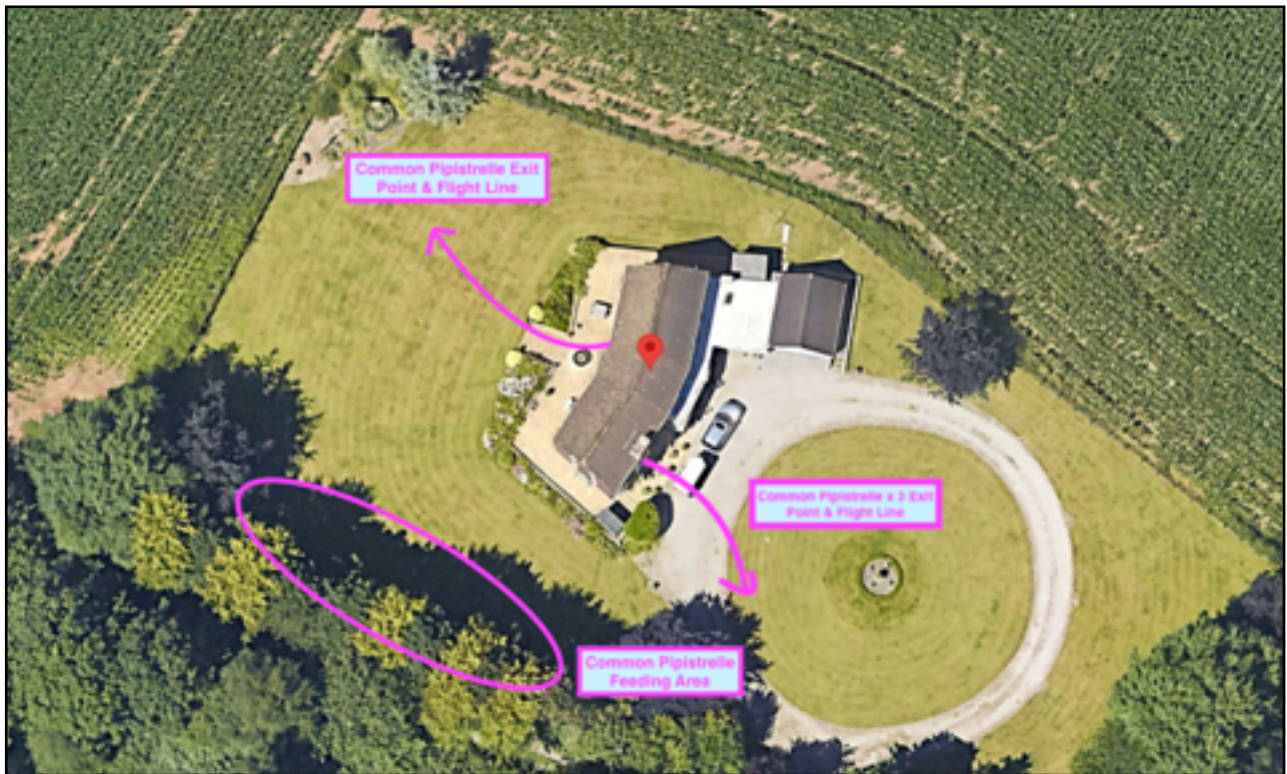
8.7 Echo-meter Touch 2 Pro bat detectors were present to acoustically record any bat calls. Nightfox Night Vision Goggles with record features were also used alongside additional infrared spotlights. These were positioned with the surveyors.

8.8 Analysis of sound recording on bat detectors:

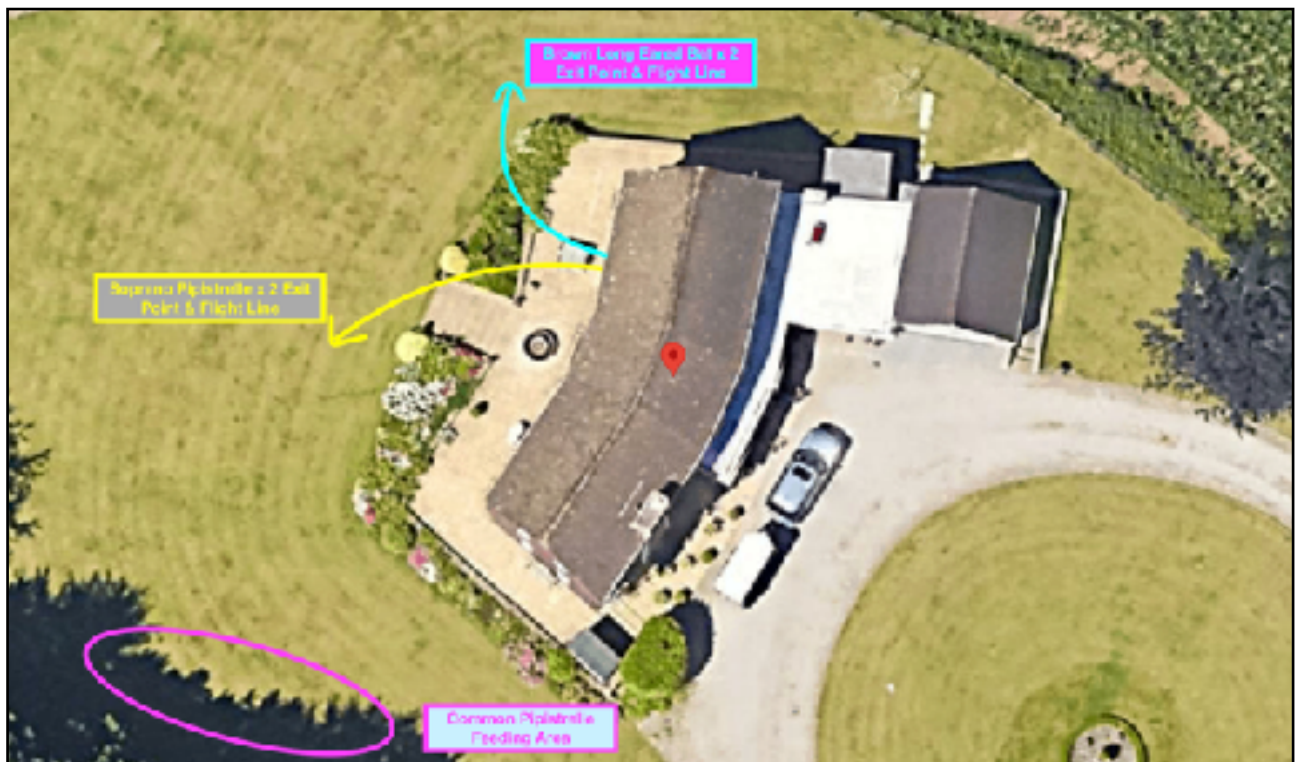
Species of Bats Recorded Emerging from the Building:	
Brown Long Eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>

Species of Bats Recorded in the Area:	
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>

8.9 During the first emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. 4 bats were observed emerging from the building and a Common Pipistrelle was observed foraging to the south west of the property.



8.10 During the second emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. 4 bats were observed emerging from the building and a Common Pipistrelle was observed foraging to the south west of the property.



8.11 Examples of NVA Still Shots:





9.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

9.1 During the emergence surveys, bats were observed using the building as a day roost.

9.2 Common Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) were observed emerging from the building during the first emergence survey. Common Pipistrelles are a common species of bat and are often found roosting in buildings. These types of bats are more tolerant to light disturbance than other species of bats.

9.3 Soprano Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) were observed emerging from the building during the second emergence survey. Soprano Pipistrelles are a common species of bat and are often found roosting in buildings. These types of bats are more tolerant to light disturbance than other species of bats.

9.4 Brown Long Eared Bats (*Plecotus auritus*) were observed emerging from the building during the second emergence survey. Brown Long Eared Bats are a relatively common species of U.K. bat.

9.5 Throughout the surveys, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. A maximum of 4 bats were observed using the building as a day roost during any emergence survey.

9.6 The emergence surveys did not identify a significant maternity roost. The bats using the building as a day roost are probably male or non breeding females.

9.7 The building does not offer significant hibernation potential for bats.

9.8 No evidence of nesting bird use of the building was observed during the surveys.

9.9 Due to the age and condition of the building, there were a small number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the building and those that were available were classed as having moderate potential for roosting bats.

9.10 The property is located in an area with optimal ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

9.11 There was no ambient lighting within the vicinity of the property.

9.12 The building is now a confirmed bat roost. No work that could affect the bat roosts is permitted by law, without the permission from Natural Resources Wales, including any works to the roof. Direct illumination of the building is also not permitted, as this could constitute disturbance. (Please see Section 5 of this report for further information).

9.13 If planning is approved, the legal owner must apply and be in possession of a European Protected Species Licence to destroy the roost, this is issued by Natural Resources Wales. This will take approximately 40 working days to be issued. This licence would have to offer a methodology to ensure that any loss of roosting sites be replaced and preferably enhanced in the new build and the project be undertaken in a way which minimises any risk to bats. An ecological clerk of works will be appointed and retained for the duration of the project.

9.14 A bat box will be erected prior to works in a suitable location by a suitably qualified ecologist. This will be used to relocate any bats found during an ecological soft strip of the building under European Protected Species Licence.

9.15 A detailed external lighting plan will be required to minimise any external light disturbance to the bats using the building and surrounding area. Any new external lighting must not directly illuminate any roosting location. Any external lighting must be downward angled and activated by passive infrared. The lights will be baffled to avoid any unnecessary lateral or vertical light spill. The lux levels of any external lights will be as low as required for health and safety purposes.

9.16 Proposed detailed architectural drawings are not currently available. Once available, further advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist in regard to the size, type and location of any proposed new roosting mitigation.

9.17 Once the new mitigation has been agreed between relevant parties, this must be added to the architectural drawings prior to submission of the Planning Application or Listed Building Consent.

9.18 Any new mitigation must not be directly illuminated and a dark corridor must be established allowing undisturbed access for any bat away from the site.

Signed: Richard Watkins Date: November 2025

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10.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Surveyor & NVA Positions

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs

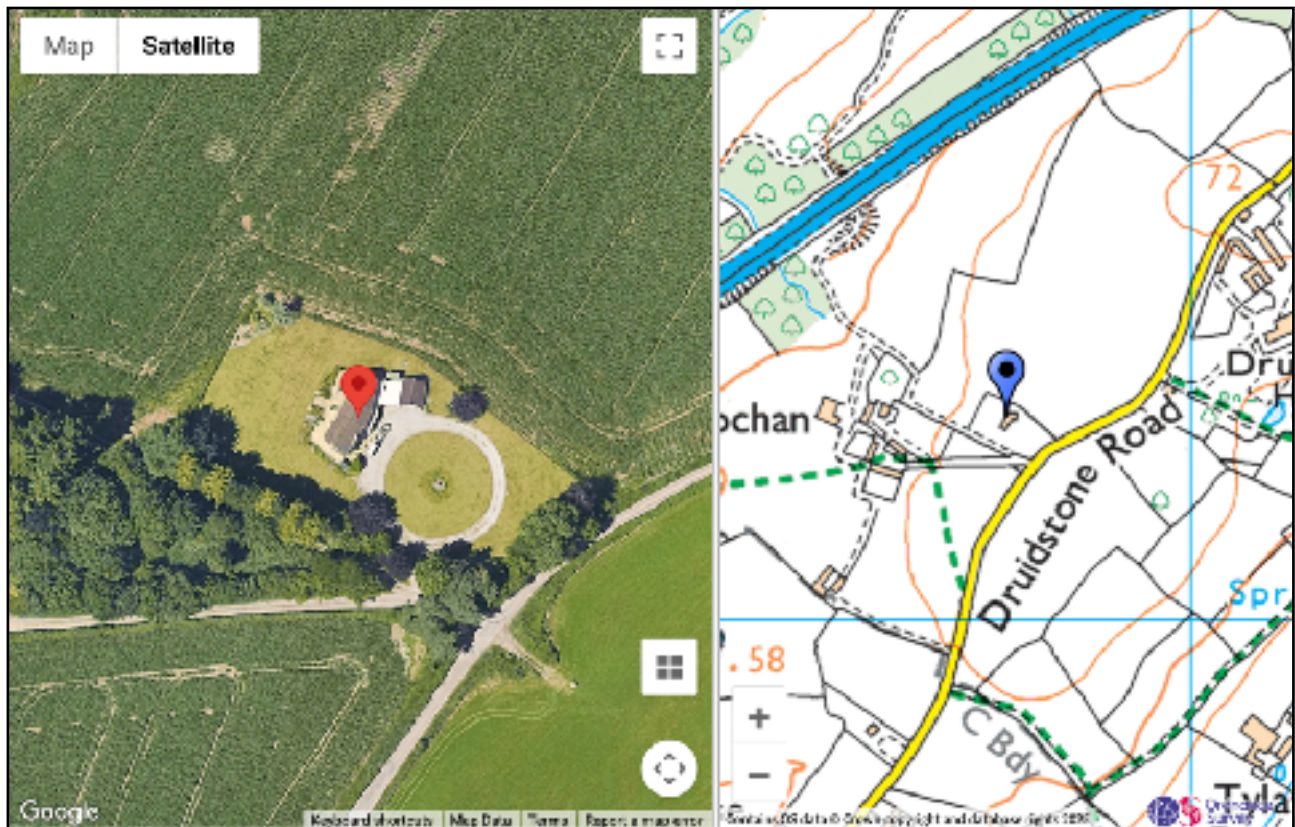


The site in its immediate environment.



The site in its wider environment offering optimal ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference ST 2377 8325



Appendix 3 Surveyor & NVA Positions

