Ecological Impact Assessment at

Lower Oak Farm,

Oak Road,

Wrexham Industrial Estate,

LL13 9RG

Grid Ref. SJ 3926 4904

On 22nd January 2025

Report completed 19th March 2025
Ref: LOW0125

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Contents

Section	Title	Page
1	Summary	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Methodology	4
3.1	Scope	4
3.2	Desk Study	5
3.3	Field Survey	5
4	Baseline Ecological Conditions/Results	6
4.1	Habitats	6
4.2	Species and Species Groups	6
5	Description of the Development	7
6	Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures	7
7	Compensation	8
8	Enhancement Recommendations	8
9	Ecological Constraints	8
10	Monitoring	8
11	Conclusions	8
12	Bibliography	9
13	Appendices	10
13.1	Aerial Photograph and Designated Sites	11
13.2	Site Plans	12
13.3	Photographs	15
13.4	Legislation Relating to Great Crested Newts	16

1. Summary

The purpose of the report is to assess the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development at Lower Oak Farm, Wrexham and advise on any mitigation measures to comply with local planning policy and government legislation.

The proposed scheme involves the demolition of the remains of a garage and construction of a replacement building.
The site and adjacent land were examined to establish the presence of or evidence of use by protected species of animals. A visual inspection was carried out to assess the potential or actual use by bats, great crested newts (GCN) and birds. No evidence of use by bats was found. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats. A nearby pond was suitable for use by GCN.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be taken with regard to GCN (page 8)
If any birds should gain access to the new building and begin constructing nests during the development, then the work in that area must stop until the young have left the nests.
If any bats are found during the development work in that area must stop and a licensed bat worker contacted for advice.
Bird and bat boxes and wildflower planting are recommended as enhancement to provide net biodiversity benefit in accordance with legislation.

2. Introduction

Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM is an experienced wildlife surveyor, licensed bat worker and voluntary bat roost visitor. Registration number CLS0895 2015-12555-CLS-CLS (CL15 Bat Roost Visitor Level 1) and registration number CLS 0895 2015-12556-CLS-CLS (CL18 Bat Survey Level 2) (Natural England) and S086005/1 (Natural Resources Wales);
Licensed great crested newt worker, registration number 2016-19947-CLS-CLS (NE) and S086057/1 (NRW)
This report was commissioned by Jack Felgate for the owner at the site address.
The site, at Lower Oak Farm, Wrexham comprises two walls of a former garage surrounded by short vegetation and hard standing.
The proposed scheme involves the demolition of the remains of a garage and construction of a similar building in its place.
The purpose of the report is to identify and address any significant ecological effects which are likely to occur as a result of the proposed development. This is necessary to comply with local planning policy and government legislation and avoid any offence being committed. Also, to describe any compensation, mitigation and enhancement measures which should be taken.

3. Methodology

3.1. Scope of the Assessment

The report incorporates a bat and bird assessment, while also searching for use or potential use by any rare, threatened, endemic and non-native invasive species which might be associated with such a site in accordance with:
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and listed in:
Schedule 2. European protected species of animals
Schedule 5. European protected species of plants
The protection of Badgers Act 1992
The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 22nd January 2025 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM.

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3.2. Desk Study

Wrexham Planning Portal was consulted for a review of previous ecological surveys carried out in the area. Magic Maps was consulted for the presence of designated sites and protected habitats.

3.3. Field Survey

The site was examined to establish the presence of any protected species or habitats, and for evidence of use by protected species of animals.
Photographs were taken of all areas and those of relevance are shown in the appendices.
Nearby waterbodies were assessed for their suitability for use by great crested newts (GCN)
Photographs were taken of all relevant areas.
The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 22nd January 2025 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions/Results

4.1 Habitats

Site: Semi-rural location on the outskirts of an industrial estate.
The former garage had no roof and only two remaining walls, which were of breeze blocks and steel. The building remains had no bat roost potential.

Adjacent land: The river Clywedog is 218 m south west. One pond within 250 m according to maps. The nearest significant area of woodland is 165 m south west. There is a good network of hedgerows surrounding the site.

4.2 Species and Species Groups

Birds
No evidence of use by birds was found.

Bats
No evidence of use by bats was found. There was no potential for use by bats due to lack of roof or significant crevices, and no shelter. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

Reptiles and Amphibians
None seen on site. There is a pond 50 m north east which appears suitable for use by GCN.

Plants
Minimal vegetation dominated by short grass and dandelion.

No evidence of use by badgers, dormice or other protected species was found and the site was not considered suitable for use by them.

5. Description of the Development

The proposed scheme involves the demolition of the remains of a garage and construction of a similar building in its place, with associated access. This will involve the removal of a small amount of vegetation and a significant quantity of logs and rubble.

6. Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures

Habitats:
No priority habitat is affected by the proposal. No significant vegetation is to be lost.

Species:

Great Crested Newts
The nearby pond appears suitable for use by GCN, but it is on the other side of a busy road and the area of land to be disturbed for access is small. Therefore Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be taken with regard to GCN in order to prevent risk of injury to GCN using the accumulated logs near the building remains as shelter, and any foraging or commuting GCN.

Birds
The effect on birds should be small. If any birds should gain access to the new building and begin constructing nests during the development, then work in that area must stop until the young have left the nests.

Bats
There is no evidence of use of the site by bats. If any bat is found in the new building then work in that area should stop and a licensed bat worker should be contacted for advice.

Residual Effects
None anticipated.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures with Regard to Great Crested Newts

It is a criminal offence to harm a great crested newt.
Great crested newts (GCN) spend most of their time on land, returning to still water only to breed once they are mature at about 3-4 years of age.
They may travel more than kilometre from their breeding pond.
They move about mostly at night, and by day creep underground or beneath shelter such as stones or logs.
They hibernate during the winter, which is generally from the beginning of November until late March, depending on the weather. Hibernation is underground in burrows made by other small animals or beneath substantial cover such as large stones or piles of logs.

1. The removal of the logs and other debris on site should be done carefully, by hand.

2. If any trenches cannot be filled the same day they will need a ramp of earth at the ends of the trenches, to the full depth of each trench, so that newts can climb out. It is not sufficient to leave a piece of wood against the sides, which would allow small mammals to escape, but not newts, which are not good climbers. The trenches must be inspected carefully before in filling, and any animals carefully removed and released into the surrounding area (but see below).

3. Building materials should be stored clear of the ground (say, on pallets) so as to avoid crushing any animals which might seek refuge under them, when the materials are lifted. Any such storage should be on the drive or other hard surface, and not on a lawn or other soft surface.

4. Bulk materials should be used on the same day as delivery where possible to reduce the likelihood of GCN taking shelter underneath.

5. Any open pipework should be capped overnight. All open trenches and pipework should be inspected at the start of each working day to ensure no animal is trapped.

6. Any excavated material which is not replaced on the same day must either be removed from the site or stored on a hard surface and covered with an impermeable membrane, such as a plastic sheet or tarpaulin, and the edges of the sheet secured so that no amphibians can gain access.

7. If any great crested newt is discovered in the area of the work, then work in that area must stop and a licensed great crested newt worker contacted immediately for advice.

7. Compensation

N/A

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit (NBB)

Bats:
A woodcrete crevice dwelling bat box to be mounted externally to the new building at the south west gable end, at least 2 m from the ground.

Birds:
One woodcrete nest suitable for small birds such as robin, blackbird, tit species and sparrow to be fitted to the north east gable end:
House Sparrow Terrace - Wooden (or woodcrete) nest box with 3 sub-divisions to support 3 nesting pairs. To be placed under the eaves. Entrance holes: 32mm diameter. Dimensions: H310 x W370 x D185mm. Also suitable for tits, redstarts and spotted flycatchers. Place at least 2 m from the ground.

Habitat:
An approximately 20 m^2 area of native wildflower mix will be planted to the south of the site, on an area of existing long grass.

9. Ecological Constraints

None identified.

10. Monitoring

N/A

11. Conclusions

If the recommended mitigation and NBB measures are taken there should be minimal risk of harm to any animals and a net gain in biodiversity.

12. Bibliography

Bat Conservation Trust available at: http://www.bats.org.uk

BCT and ILP Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting available at: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Collins J. (Ed) (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora available at: jncc.defra.gov.uk

Gent A.H, Gibson S.D (eds) (1998) *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual.* Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Google Maps available at: https://maps.google.com/maps

Langton, T., Beckett, C., Foster, J. (2001) *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook.* Halesworth: Froglife

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines,* Peterborough: English Nature

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLeish, A. P. (2004) *Bat Worker's Manual,* Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

UK BAP Priority Habitats available at: jncc.defra.gov.uk

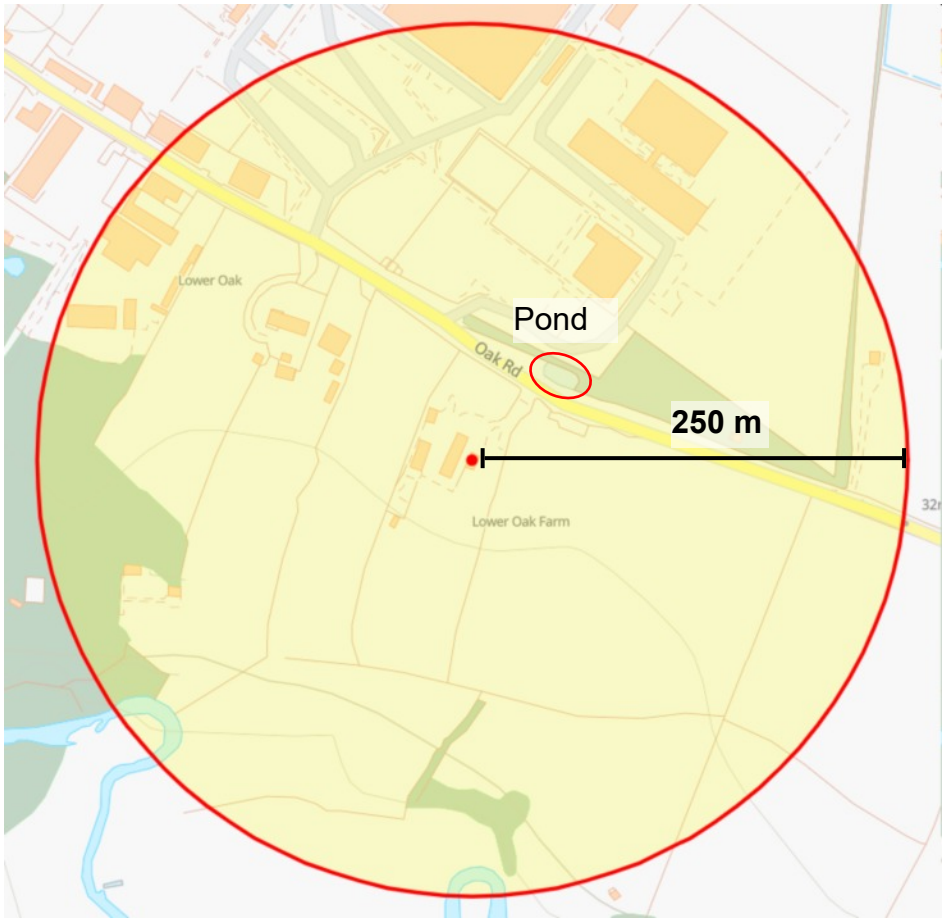
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation available at: https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation

Appendix 13.1: Aerial Photograph



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Appendix 13.1: Designated Sites and Zones of Influence



Appendix 13.2: Plans



Landscaping is indicative only.

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Site Plan Key

Application Site

Land owned by applicant

Lower Oak Farm,
Oak Road,
Wrexham Industrial
Estate, LL13 9RG

Rev	Notes	Date
a	Red line amended	04.2024

Existing | Location Plan
March 2024
A3
L04.1001
2 - 3

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CONFIRMED ON SITE PRIOR TO FABRICATION BY THE CONTRACTOR. DRAWINGS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY REFERENCED DOCUMENTATION. PLANS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE PRIOR CONFIRMATION FROM THE DESIGN TEAM ©



Landscaping is indicative only.

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Site Plan Key

Application Site

Land owned by applicant

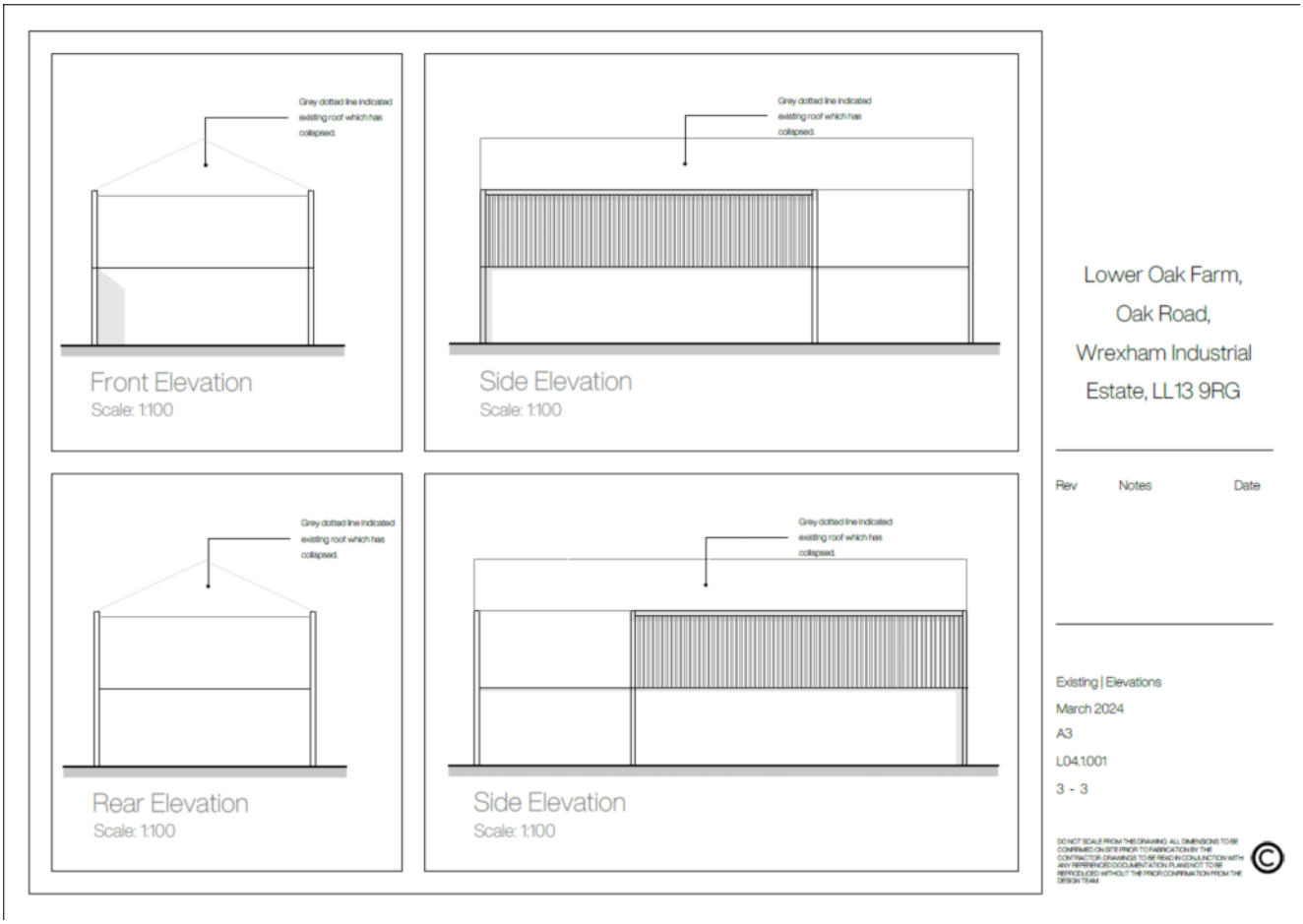
Lower Oak Farm,
Oak Road,
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Rev	Notes	Date
a	Red line amended	04.2024

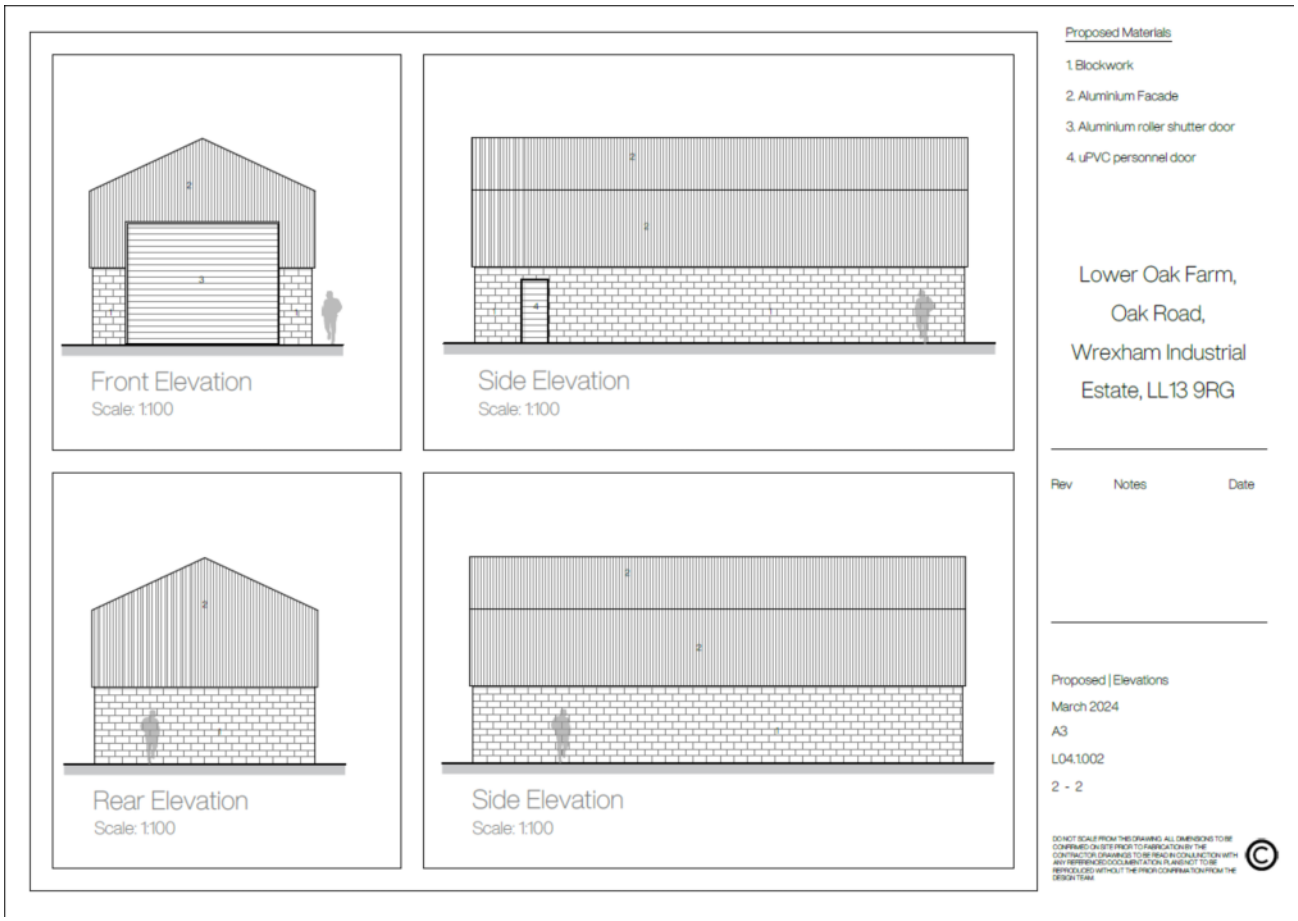
Proposed | Site Plan
March 2024
A3
L04.1003
1 - 2

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Appendix 13.2: Plans



Appendix 13.2: Plans





Appendix 13.3: Photographs













Appendix 13.4: Legislation Relating to Great Crested Newts

Wales is home to six amphibian species. They need fresh water in which to lay their eggs or spawn and enough suitable habitat nearby to spend the rest of their year. They have declined in recent decades as ponds have disappeared or become polluted or acidified. Pond restoration and creation (even in gardens) is a great help to amphibian conservation.

All amphibian species spend a large part of their year foraging on dry land, and they need sheltered places to hibernate. Hedgerows and other areas of semi-natural habitat are vital for their survival.

UK legislation:
The most common species are protected from sale under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are:

Common frog, *Rana temporaria*
Common toad, *Bufo bufo*
Palmate newt, *Triturus helveticus*
Smooth / common newt, *Triturus vulgaris*
The legislation protects them from being sold or offered for sale to protect them from exploitation in the pet trade or laboratory use.

European legislation:
Our rarest amphibians are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as 'the Habitats Regulations'). The Habitats Regulations lists the following amphibian European Protected Species (EPS):

Great crested (or warty) newt, *Triturus cristatus*
Natterjack toad, *Bufo calamita*

Under the Habitats Regulations, it is an offence if you:

deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS,
deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species,
deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or
damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal
Disturbance is defined as that which is likely to impair the ability to survive, breed, reproduce, or nurture young, or to hibernate or migrate.

There are other offences relating to possession, transport and sale. See 'Possession and Sale of Protected Species' for more information.

The great crested newt and natterjack toad also receive protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from the following:

disturbing whilst occupying a place of shelter or protection,
obstructing access to a place of shelter or protection,
sale / offering for sale

Licensing for activities involving European Protected Species:
In certain circumstances Natural Resources Wales may issue licences for activities involving European protected species, that would otherwise be offences.