

Ecological Impact Assessment at
Land Adjacent to Serena,
Chapel Street, Acrefair,
Wrexham, LL14 3TB
Grid Ref. SJ 2787 4316
On 10th June 2024

Report completed 8th April 2024
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Survey by:
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1. Summary

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

The proposed scheme involves the construction of a dwelling and garage with associated parking and access.

The site and adjacent land were examined to establish the presence of or evidence of use by protected species of animals. None was found, however the adjacent trees provided potential for nesting birds and possibly roosting bats. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

Bat and bird boxes as well as an additional hedgerow and tree are required to ensure Net Biodiversity Benefit in accordance with legislation. (page 8)

Trees should not be pruned or trimmed between May and September to avoid disturbance to any nesting birds.

If the recommended mitigation measures are taken there should be no net loss of nesting sites, nor any danger of harm to any species.

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 the owner, Karen Williams.

The site, at land adjacent to Serena, Acrefair comprises a small area of scrub.

The proposed scheme involves construction of a dwelling with associated parking and access.

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 an extended phase 1 habitat survey, 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

Protected species which might be associated with such a site include bats, owls and other breeding birds. The area around the site might be used by badgers, dormice, amphibians and reptiles, and might contain protected plant species.

The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 24th March 2024 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM.

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. Maps of the site and surrounding environment were examined to identify any nearby waterbodies suitable for use by great crested newts within an influencing distance of the site.

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. Trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and birds. The site and surrounding habitat was examined for signs of use by badgers and dormice. The variety of plant species was mapped according to the convention of Phase 1 habitat surveys as described by the JNCC (2010). Photographs were taken of all relevant areas. The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 24th March 2024 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM. Photographs were taken of all areas and those of relevance are shown in the appendices.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions/Results

4.1 Designated Sites

The nearest designated site is River Dee and Bala Lake (SSSI and SAC) 1.3 km south west.

4.2 Habitats

Site: The area of the site to be affected is approximately 0.1 ha. It is in a village location. The land is not currently in use. It is the site of a former house and garden (Bryn Gwyn). The north west boundary was a laurel hedge, the north east and south east boundaries were separated from the neighbouring woodland by rope. The south west boundary is a former hawthorn and hazel hedge which has matured.

Adjacent land: There are several small areas of woodland within 500 m, including a significant area adjacent. There are no rivers within 500 m. and few hedgerows. There are no ponds shown on maps within 250 m.

4.3 Species and Species Groups

Invertebrates

The site has potential for use by invertebrates but none were seen at the time of the survey.

Amphibians and Reptiles

None seen. There are no ponds within 250 m.

Birds

The adjacent and boundary trees could provide food and shelter for birds and also nesting potential. No birds or nests were seen at the time of the survey and there was no potential for nesting on site other than the south west boundary trees/shrubs.

Bats

The site is suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats. There were no potential roost features on site. The adjacent woodland may support roosting bats.

Badgers

There were no badger setts, tracks or latrines found on the site or within 30 m of the site.

Plants

Dominated by bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and including bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), grasses, cotoneaster, guelder rose, buddleia, rhododendron, gorse (*Ulex* sp.), common ivy (*Hedera helix*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), silver birch, (*Betula pendulata*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), rose (*Rosa* sp.)

No species of conservation value or Schedule 9 species were seen on site. No rare or threatened species of plants were found on site or near the site.

Plants

Dominated by bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and including bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cotoneaster, guelder rose, buddleia, rhododendron, gorse (*Ulex* sp.), common ivy (*Hedera helix*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), silver birch, (*Betula pendulata*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), rose (*Rosa* sp.), Creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and former garden plants (non native).

No species of conservation value or Schedule 9 species were seen on site. No rare or threatened species of plants were found on site or near the site.

5. Description of the Development

The proposed scheme involves the construction of a new dwelling with associated access and garage. This will involve the removal of some ruderal vegetation. No mature trees or hedgerow will be removed

6. Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures

Designated Sites:

It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant impact on any designated sites due to the low impact of the project and distance from the sites.

Habitats:

No priority habitat is affected by the proposal. Some vegetation will be removed.

Species:

Birds

Trees should not be pruned or trimmed between March and September, to avoid harm to any nesting birds.

Bats

There is not considered to be any threat to the conservation status of bats or danger of harm to individuals. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

Reptiles and Amphibians

There should not be any significant impact on reptiles or amphibians

Residual Effects

No significant residual effects anticipated.

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit

A woodcrete crevice dwelling bat box and woodcrete bird box will be fixed to the new dwelling, on the south east and north west gable ends respectively. These should be at least 2 m from the ground. Further information is given in the bat box information pack available at <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes>.

Bat and bird boxes are available from NHBS <https://www.nhbs.com/> and Wildcare <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/> as well as other suppliers.

Approximately 30 m new hedge will be planted along the south east boundary. This will comprise at least four native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, elder, field maple, oak and holly. This will be done prior to the first occupation of the dwelling and it will be maintained by the owners. A native tree will be planted in the garden, such as rowan, wild cherry or crab apple. This would be attractive and provide foraging potential for birds and insects.

9. Ecological Constraints

None identified

10. Monitoring

Not considered necessary.

11. Conclusions

If the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures are taken there will be a net gain in biodiversity and no net loss of roosting or nesting sites, nor any danger of harm to any species.

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

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

Magic Maps available at: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

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

Natural Resources Wales available at: <https://naturalresources.wales/?lang=en>

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

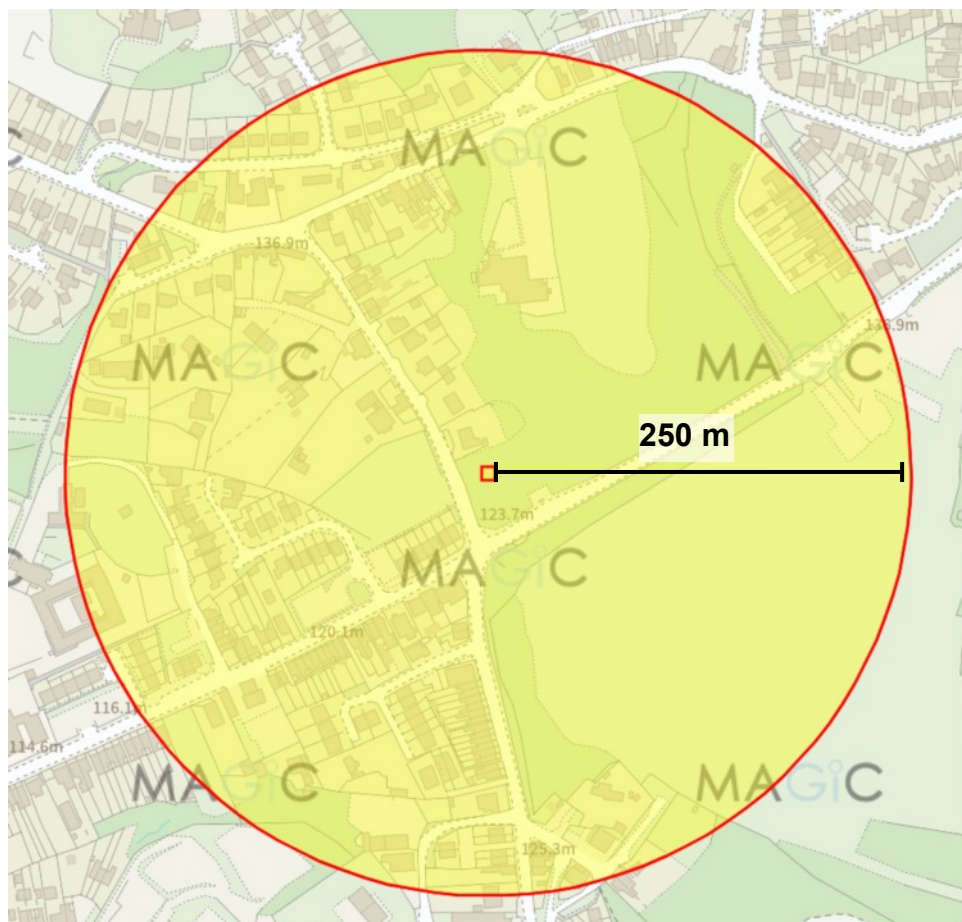
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation available at: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation>

Wrexham Council Planning Portal available at:
<http://planning.wrexham.gov.uk/Planning/lg/GFPlanningSearch.page>

Appendix 13.1: Aerial Photograph



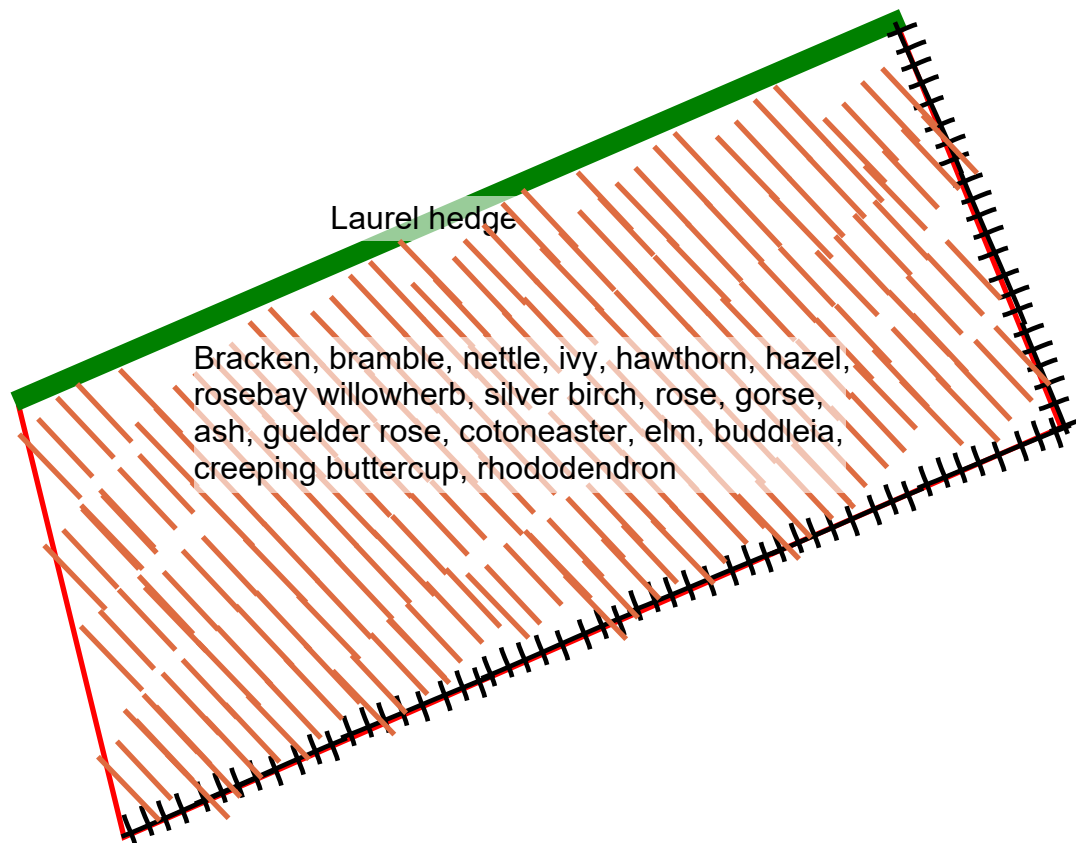
Appendix 13.2: Designated Sites and Zones of



Appendix 13.3: Photographs



Appendix 13.4: Survey Diagram



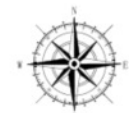
Appendix 13.5: Site Plan as Proposed



Site Plan 1:500



Location Plan 1: 1250



Rev	Date	Detail	Initial

Project:
Proposed dwelling on land
adjacent to Bryn Gwyn,
Chapel Street, Acrefair
Wrexham, LL14 3TB

Title:	Scale: (A2)
Site and	1:200 &
Location Plan	1:1250

Drawn By:	Date:
S Hatherall	Jan 2024

Drawing No: J 193/001	Sheet: 1 of 1
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Appendix 13.6: Legislation Relating to Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected. It is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird,
- take, damage or destroy the nest of a Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle or Osprey (even if disused),
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built,
- take, damage or destroy an egg or any wild bird,
- possess any live or dead wild bird or the egg of any wild bird, or any derivative

Many rare birds are listed on Schedule 1, which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb a Schedule 1 bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturb dependent young of such a bird

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) issues licences for specific purposes, so that you can undertake legitimate work without breaking the law. See 'Bird licensing' for more information.

Appendix 13.7: Legislation Relating to Bats

All species of bats in the UK are European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy a bat's breeding site or resting place (known as a roost), or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb a bat

Bats are the only mammals which can fly. They are warm blooded, they suckle their babies and are intelligent, social animals. British bats feed only on insects, of which they consume vast numbers to sustain their energetic lifestyles. A pipistrelle bat can eat up to 3000 midges in a single night!

We have 12 species of bat breeding in Wales. Many of these have suffered severe declines, not just in Britain but throughout Europe.

All British bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Bats have a unique relationship with humans, sometimes sharing our homes for part of the year. For this reason, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) deals with many hundreds of bat enquiries each year from householders.

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
damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal
Disturbance includes, but is not limited to, any disturbance which is likely:

1. to impair their ability –
to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
2. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Defra and the Welsh Government will publish a joint guidance document on the interpretation of the offences relating to disturbance, and to damage and destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

There are other offences relating to possession, transport and sale.

NRW issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

If you are a householder and have concerns about bats at your property (other than queries related to planning applications or a development), contact the NRW Enquiry Line for advice, telephone 0300 065 3000