

Ecological Impact Assessment at
Braemore, Hill Street,
Cefn Mawr,
Wrexham, LL14 3BB
Grid Ref. SJ 2791 4210

On 24th November 2023

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1. Summary

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

The proposed scheme involves the construction of a new dwelling 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 trees provided potential for nesting birds. 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 and artificial swallow nests are required to ensure Net Biodiversity Benefit in accordance with legislation, as well as compensatory planting (pages 9 and 17)

Trees or hedges should not be removed 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 Blueprint for the client.

The site, at land adjacent to Braemore, Cefn Mawr comprises three sheds on an area of hard standing which has become colonised by short vegetation. A small wooded area will also be affected.

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 November 2023 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 November 2023 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) 580 m south west.

4.2 Habitats

Site: The area of the site to be affected is approximately 800 m². It is in an urban location. The land is part of the garden of Braemore. There were several mature trees at the south west section (D), in an area separated by a wood fence. The area proposed for the new access drive was a path through section D which had become overgrown. The ground flora on the area to be affected was not well established due to the substrate being tarmac and gravel which had become colonised by some ruderal species. Plant species listed below. Boundaries were fenced and there were also hedges on all sides except the south west side which was a wire fence.

All sheds were of wood with felt roofs. Windows were glazed and intact. None had any bat roost potential or bird nests.

Adjacent land: There is an area of unmanaged grassland adjacent, at the south west side. The nearest pond is 410 m north west. The nearest woodland is 100 m north west. There is a tributary of the river Dee 280 m west. Nearby hedgerows are domestic and closely managed. There are no ponds shown on maps within 250 m.

4.3 Species and Species Groups

Invertebrates

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

Amphibians and Reptiles

None seen. The nearest pond is 410 m north west. Section D and the adjacent grassland are suitable for use by herpetofauna.

Birds

The hedges and trees on site and those adjacent could provide food and shelter for birds and also nesting potential. No birds or nests were seen at the time of the survey.

Bats

The site is suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats. No potential bat roost features were seen on any of the trees on site or adjacent trees. The sheds were not suitable for use by bats.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Plants

Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), rhododendron, laurel (*Laurus* spp.), St. John's wort (*Hypericum* sp.), cherry (*Prunus* sp.), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), red dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), ivy (*Hedera helix*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), poplar (*Populus* sp.), cyclamen, box (*Buxus* sp.), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), bracken (*Pteridium* sp.), conifer, forget-me-not (*Myosotis* sp.), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), shining cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*), grasses, speedwell (*Veronica* sp.), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and box (*Myosotis* 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.

5. Description of the Development

The proposed scheme involves the construction of a dwelling with associated parking and access. Six of the trees in section D will need to be felled to provide access to the new dwelling, as well as three apple trees will need to be felled in section B to provide parking. Approximately 6 m of holly 'hedge' will also be removed to provide access.

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. Replacement tree planting is proposed as shown on page 17.

Species:

Birds

Trees and hedges should not be removed 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 reptile or amphibian populations, but there may be some danger of harm to individuals foraging or sheltering in some areas. Reasonable care should be taken while sheds, vegetation and trees are removed to avoid harm to any sheltering animals.

Plants

Ten trees will be removed altogether, but only eight of these due to the development. The other two, a crab apple and ash, are recommended for removal on arboricultural grounds. The eight due to the development are two apple trees (*Malus* sp.) a sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), a cedar (*Cedrus* sp.), a cypress, hawthorn and two silver birch . A short section of holly will be removed at the west corner.

Residual Effects

No significant residual effects anticipated.

7. Compensation

Eight native trees will be planted to replace those lost to the development. These will comprise three fruit trees, e.g. apple, pear, plum, in the grounds of the proposed dwelling, and five in section D e.g. field maple (*Acer campestre*), bird cherry (*Prunus padus*), oak (*Quercus robur*), holly, hazel (*Corylus* sp.), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*).

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit

An integrated bat box to be incorporated into the new dwelling at the south east gable end. 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>.

One woodcrete nest suitable for small birds such as robin, blackbird, tit species and sparrow to be fitted to each new dwelling at the north west 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.

Two artificial swallow nests will be placed in the garage. Access via a large open window or door will be needed.

Two further bat boxes and two bird boxes to be fitted to appropriate, mature trees in section D.

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

9. Ecological Constraints

The survey was undertaken at a sub-optimum time of year, however it is unlikely that any significant features or flora would have been missed due to this.

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

English Nature (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* Peterborough: English Nature

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

Great crested newts: surveys and mitigation for development projects available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/great-crested-newts-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

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

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

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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>

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000) Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) *Herpetological Journal* 10 (4), 143-155.

Shields S., (2003) *Arboricultural Impact Assessment Ref: AIA/HCM/09/23*

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

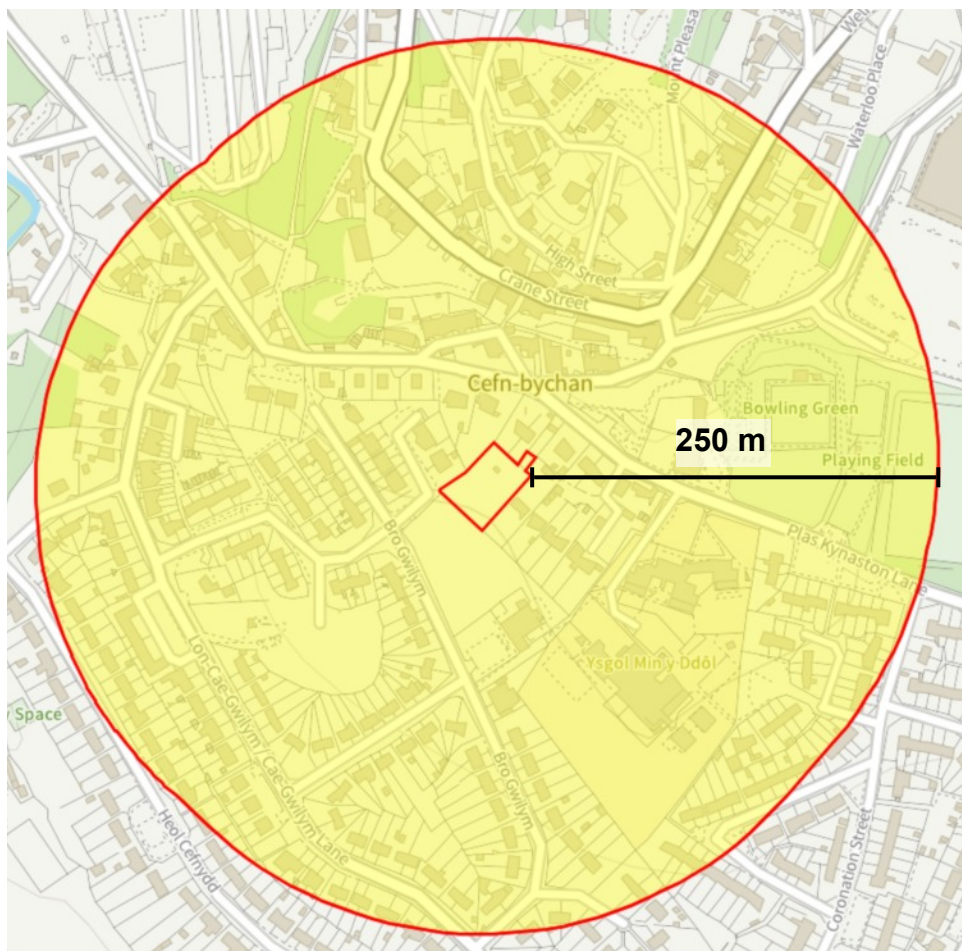
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation available at: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation>

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 Influence



Appendix 13.3: Photographs



Appendix 13.3: Photographs

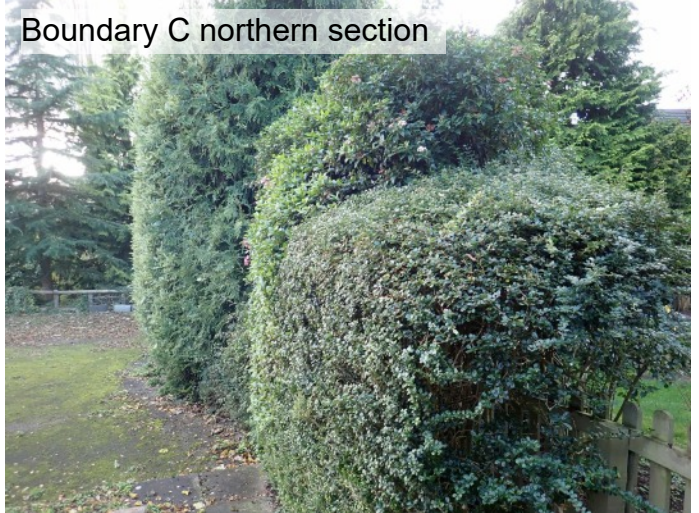


Appendix 13.3: Photographs

Boundary B



Boundary C northern section



Section D



Section D



Section D - trees
to be removed



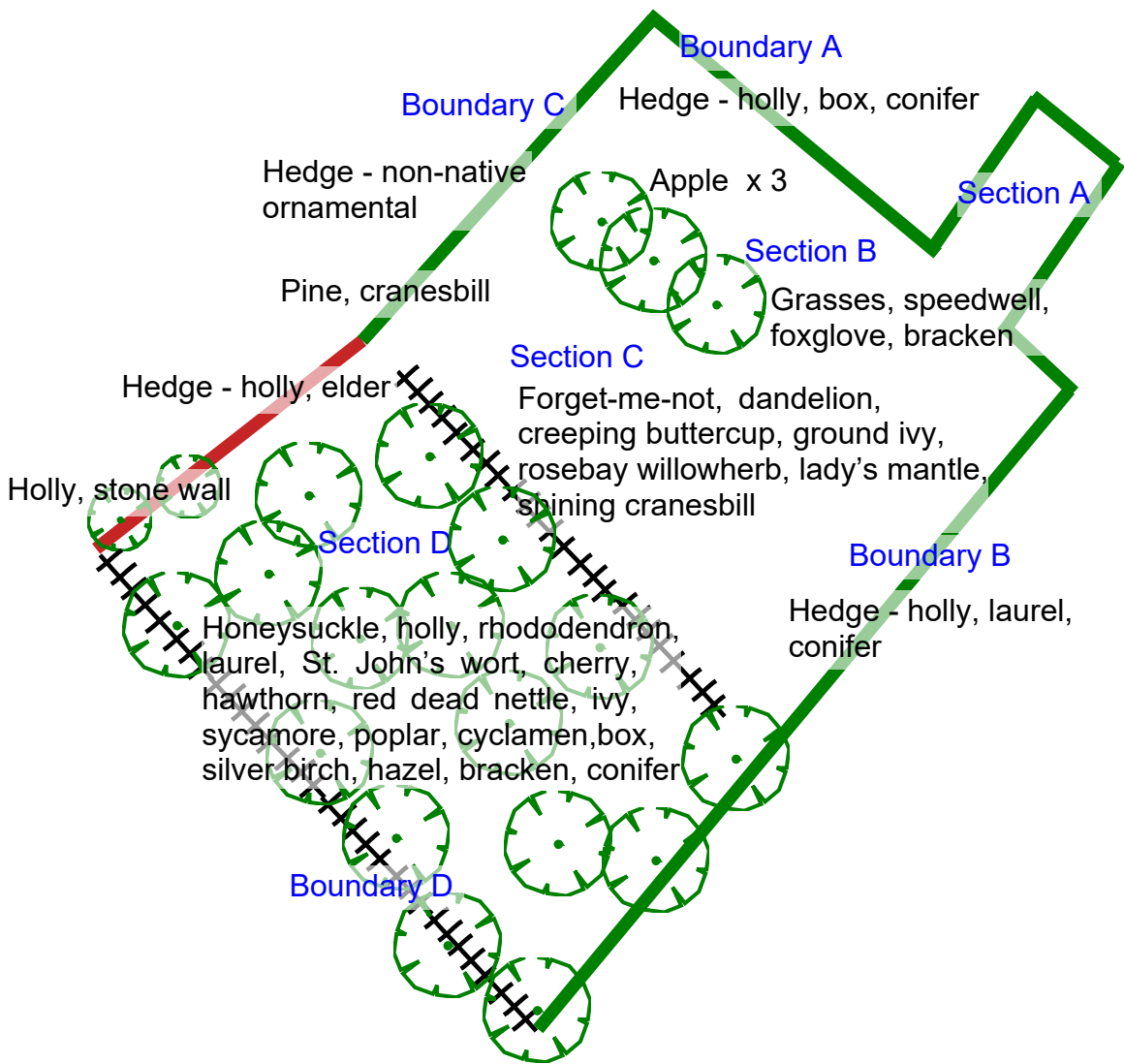
Section D - holly
to be removed



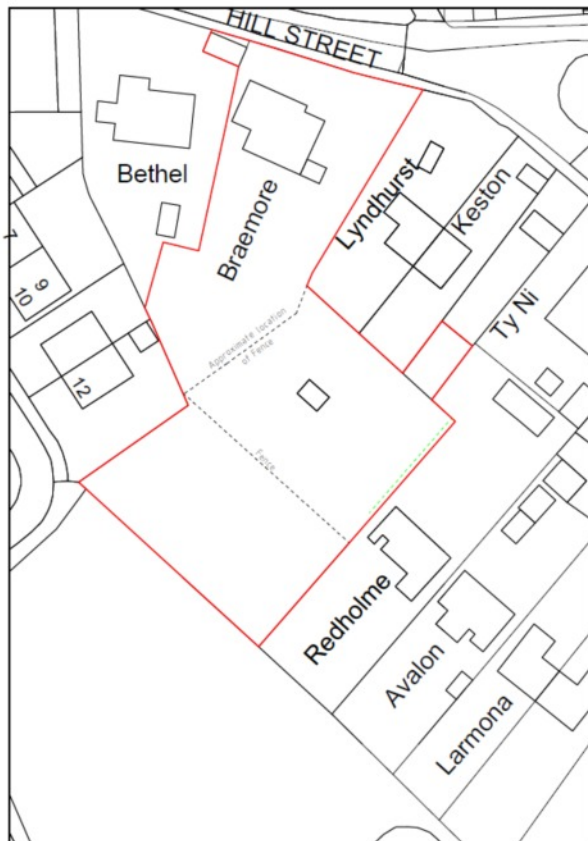
Appendix 13.3: Photographs



Appendix 13.4: Survey Diagram



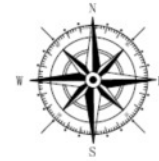
Appendix 13.5: Site Plans as Existing and as Proposed



Site Plan 1:500



Location Plan 1:1250



Rev	Date	Detail	Initial

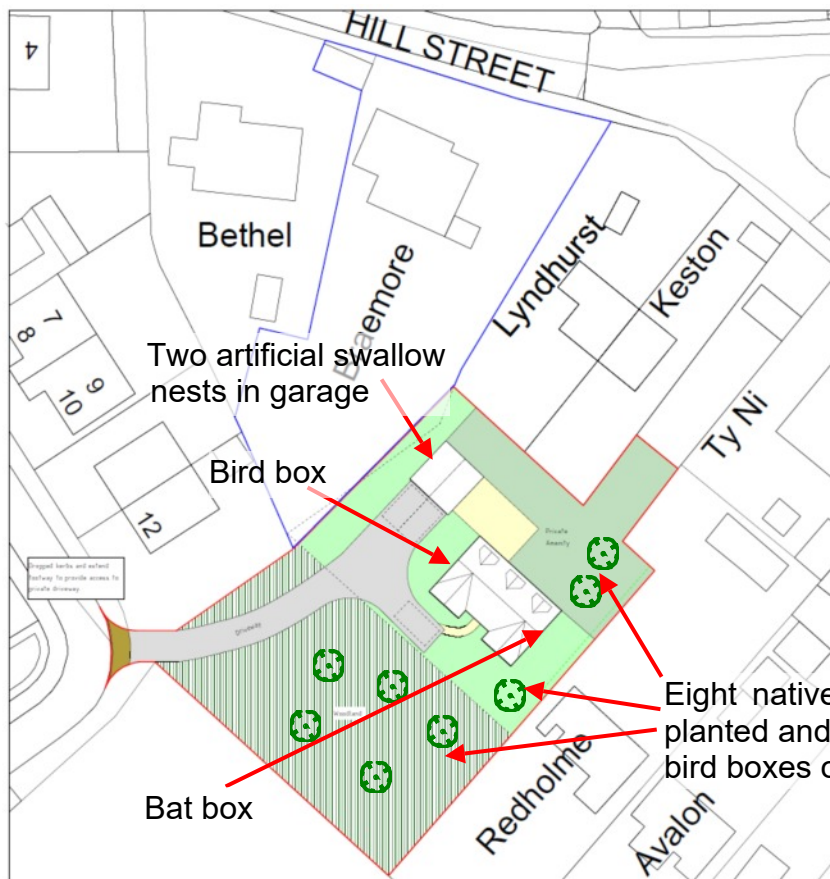
Project: Proposed Residential dwelling on land associated with, Braemore, Hill Street, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham, LL14 3BB	
Title: Existing: Site # Location Plan	Scale: (A3) 1:500 # 1:1250

Drawn By: D.J.Edwards	Date: July 2023
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Drawing No: R126/001	Sheet: 1 of 1
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Site Plan 1:250



Location Plan 1:1250



Building Description	Ground Area	Ground Area
Existing	1000	4000
Proposed	1000	1000
Proposed	1000	1000

Rev	Date	Detail	Initial

Project: Proposed Residential dwelling on land associated with, Braemore, Hill Street, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham, LL14 3BB	
Title: Planning: Site # Location Plan	Scale: (A3) 1:250 # 1:1250

Drawn By: D.J.Edwards	Date: August 2023
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Drawing No: R126/003	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.