

Ecological Impact Assessment at
Smithy View Garage,
Chester Road, Wrexham,
LL12 8DY
Grid Ref. SJ 3370 5289
On 2nd December 2023

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Survey by:
Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM
Lyngarth,
Ellesmere Road,
St. Martins,
Oswestry,
Shropshire
SY11 3HT

01691 772310
or 07752 105600
s.worsfold@hotmail.co.uk

Requested by:
Jack Felgate

07904626682

djfelgate@hotmail.com

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1. Summary

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

The proposed scheme involves the removal of two trees and the construction of two new dwellings with associated parking and gardens.

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 provide 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 are will be incorporated into the new dwellings, as well as planting of hedgerows and trees (pages 8 and 12)

Trees should not be pruned or felled 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. Tree and hedge planting will provide Net Biodiversity Benefit in accordance with planning policy.

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 client.

The site, at land adjacent to Smithy View Garage, Wrexham comprises an area of amenity grassland with four trees.

The proposed scheme involves construction of two new dwellings with associated parking and gardens.

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 2nd December 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. 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 2nd December 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 Midlands Meres and Mosses (SSSI and Ramsar) 3.3 km north east.

4.2 Habitats

Site: The area of the site to be affected is approximately 600 m². It is in an urban location. The land is currently not in use but is maintained and the grass is closely mown. There were three maple (*Acer* sp.) and one cherry (*Prunus* sp.) on site, and mature trees adjacent. No potential bat roost features were seen on any of the trees on site or adjacent trees. The ground flora was dominated by grasses, predominantly perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*). Plant species listed below. There were no physical boundaries; the site was surrounded by road or metalled path on all sides, as well as an enclosed car wash..

Adjacent land: There were no ponds, rivers, lakes or canals apparent within 500 m. There is a major road 100 m north west. There are no areas of woodland nearby but there are several trees. Nearby hedgerows are domestic and closely managed.

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 180 m north east. There were no refugia suitable for use by reptiles or amphibians on site.

Birds

The 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.

Badgers

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

Dormice

No evidence of use by dormice was found and the site was not suitable for use by them.

Plants

Perennial ryegrass dominated, with spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officianale*), plantain (*Plantago* sp.), chickweed (*Stellaria media*) and ragwort (*Jacobea vulgaris*) also present. 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 two dwellings with associated parking and gardens. This will involve loss of some short vegetation and removal of two trees.

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 small scale of the development and distance from the sites.

Habitats:

No priority habitat is affected by the proposal. Two trees will be lost but tree and hedge planting is proposed as described on page 9.

Species:

Birds

Trees should not be pruned or trimmed between March and September, to avoid disturbance 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 are no ponds within 500 m according to maps. There are limited foraging opportunities or shelter on site.

Residual Effects

No significant residual effects anticipated.

7. Compensation

Six trees will be planted to replace the two lost due to the development. These will be semi mature cherry x 2, field maple x 2, oak and rowan.

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit

An integrated bat box will be incorporated into one of the new dwellings 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 integrated woodcrete nest suitable for small birds such as robin, blackbird, tit species and sparrow to be fitted to one of the new dwellings at the north west gable end.

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 60 m hedgerow is to be planted with native species such as hawthorn, holly, blackthorn, oak, field maple, elder, ash, hazel, rowan, oak. This will provide foraging and nesting opportunities for birds and will attract insects.

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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Natural England available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

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.

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

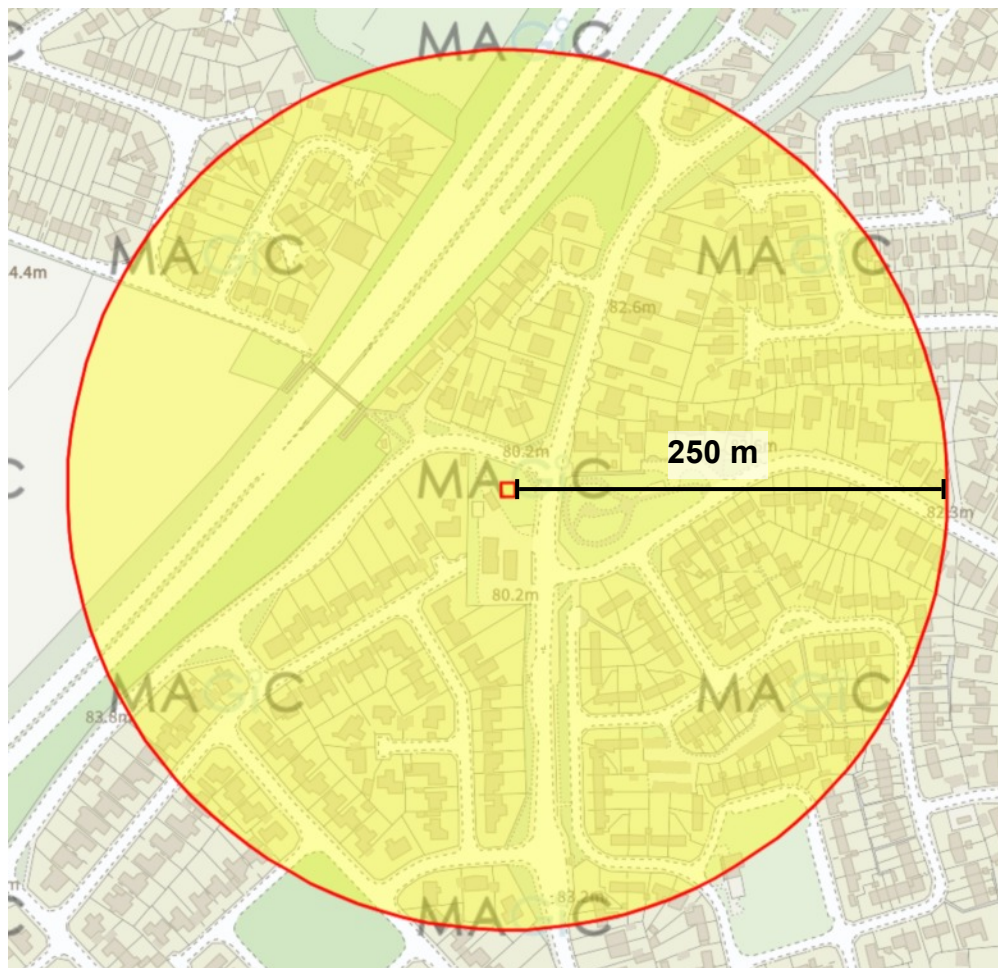
UK BAP Priority Habitats available at: jncc.defra.gov.uk

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

Appendix 13.1: Aerial Photograph



Appendix 13.2: Designated Sites and Zones of Influence



Appendix 13.3: Photographs



View from the north west

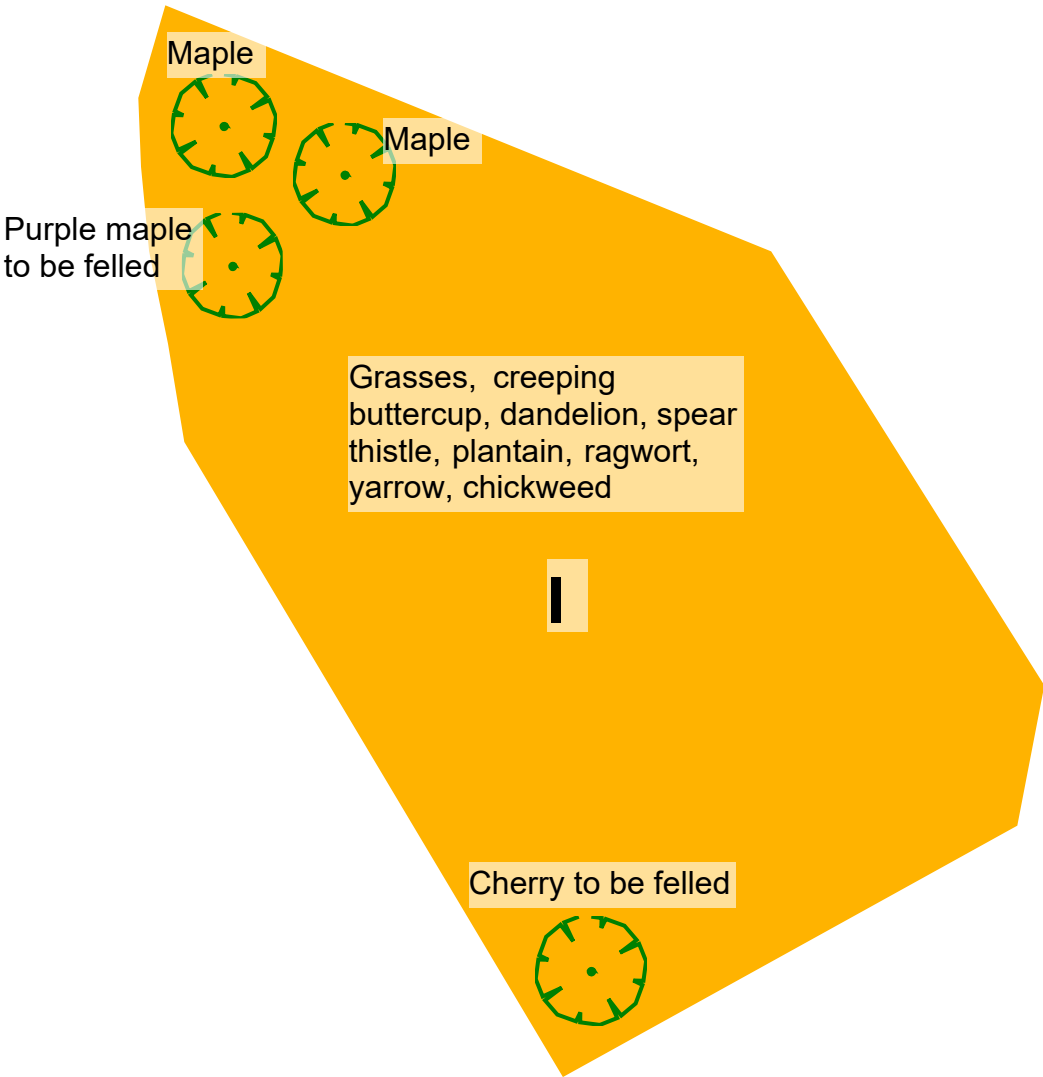


View from the east

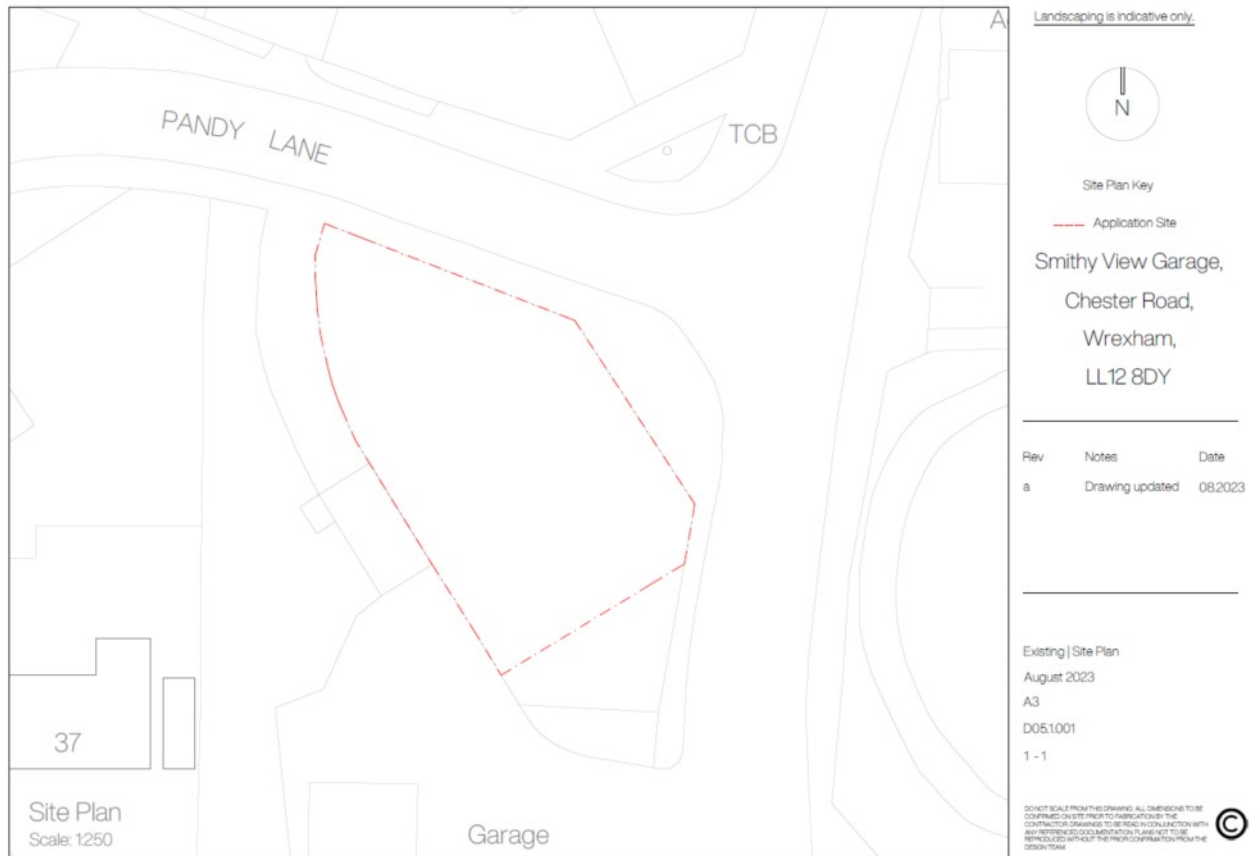


View from the south east

Appendix 13.4: Survey Diagram



Appendix 13.5: Site Plan as Existing



Appendix 13.5: Site Plan as Proposed



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.