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| <b>Title</b>          | <b>Proposed Dairy Parlour, Knolton Farm, Overton-on-Dee, Wrexham, LL13 0LG – Walkover Survey &amp; Net Benefit for Biodiversity Statement</b> |
| <b>Date issued</b>    | <b>15<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>                                                                                                          |
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| <b>Client</b>         |                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Report Version</b> | <b>C530/ V1.0</b>                                                                                                                             |

## 1 Introduction

### Background

- 1.1 This brief report presents the findings of an ecology walkover survey of land at Knolton Farm, Overton-on-Dee, Wrexham, LL13 0LG. The walkover survey was required to consider whether there may be any ecological constraints due to the proposed construction of a dairy parlour at approximate NGR 336480, 340653. Knolton Farm is located in a rural landscape, approximately 1.4 km to the southwest of Overton.
- 1.2 A net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) Statement is also provided. As such this report includes the following:
1. A description and assessment of the existing habitat/ (potential) protected species to be impacted by the proposed dairy parlour.
  2. Potential ecological constraints and recommendations.
  3. Identification of locations and opportunities for potential ecological enhancements.
  4. Demonstration of how NBB (and ecosystem resilience) will be secured and maintained. Full details of the recommended ecological enhancements.
- 1.3 A planning application is to be submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) for which this report would provide supporting information. Email consultation has been sought with Emma Broad (WCBC's Ecology and Biodiversity Officer) to agree the approach and inform this report<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 Methodology

### Walkover Survey

- 2.1 The walkover survey focused on the footprint of the proposed dairy parlour as indicated on a pdf plan, File ref: 'Image\_20231012\_0001/' associated land (hereon referred to as the survey site), along with immediately adjacent land where this was deemed relevant. The survey site extends to approximately 0.2 hectares and is indicated on *Figure 1* appended to this report. The existing land use comprises hard-standing and a disturbed grassland area associated with a ground-mounted solar panel array, located between existing dairy sheds (to the north) and the B5069 (to the south).
- 2.2 The walkover survey involved walking the survey site making notes on the habitat/ vegetation and assessing the potential for protected or other priority/ notable species to be present. It was undertaken on 05<sup>th</sup> December 2023 by Max Ellson of Marches Ecology.

<sup>1</sup> The NBB recommendations as included within this document have been agreed in principle by email on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The weather was cloudy, dry and with a light breeze. There had been substantial rain the preceding night/ morning.

- 2.3 The MAGIC<sup>2</sup> website has been consulted to determine whether there are any statutory protected sites close to the survey site and that may have implications for the proposed development. No information on non-statutory protected sites has been obtained as part of this study.

#### **Survey Limitations**

- 2.4 No particular limitations were encountered during the walkover survey.

### **3 Proposed Development**

- 3.1 The proposed development is indicated on a pdf plan, File ref: 'Image\_20231012\_0001'. This plan includes a location plan, a block plan, a drainage plan, and proposed/ draft elevations. Standalone elevations plans are provided on 2 no. GEA plans dated 08.08.2023.
- 3.2 The dairy parlour will have external dimensions of approximately 54.8 m by 34.2 m, with walls to approximately 5.5 m high (to roof). It will include a 44-point flow system with office, wash room etc (western third), and an associated internal collecting yard (eastern two-thirds). The exterior will variously comprise of concrete panels and dark green metal cladding (eastern two-thirds), and brick (western third). The collecting yard will have open sides on the north, south and eastern elevations. The roof will be dark green metal cladding.
- 3.3 Permanent livestock access from the existing dairy shed to the north will be gained via creation of ground-floor opening(s).
- 3.4 It is understood that remaining external areas within the survey site will be largely laid to concrete hard-standing. Slurry will be pumped to an existing facility on the opposite side of the B5069 – it is understood that this will likely be facilitated by mole-trenching under the road.
- 3.5 Access during the construction/ operation phases will be gained from the existing trackways off the B5069.
- 3.6 No further information is currently available.

### **4 Results**

#### **Statutory Protected Sites**

- 4.1 The closest statutory protected site is the River Dee/ Afon Dyfrdwy Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This protected site is located approximately 577 m to the north of the survey site at its closest point.
- 4.2 The River Dee SSSI is a component part of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. SACs are of international (European) importance and are designated under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*<sup>3</sup>. SSSIs are of national importance and are designated

<sup>2</sup> <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> HMSO (2017). *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*. HMSO, London.

under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended)<sup>4</sup> and are also affected by the *CRoW Act 2000*<sup>5</sup>.

- 4.3 There is no obvious/ direct hydrological link between the River Dee and the survey site.
- 4.4 There are no other statutory sites within 1 km.

#### **Habitat and Flora**

- 4.5 Target Note locations (numbered 1 to 6 for the survey site, and 5 and 7 to 9a for immediately adjacent land) described in the text below are indicated on *Figure 1*; no separate target note descriptions are provided.

#### Survey Site

##### *Scrub*

- 4.6 Within the survey site, scrub is limited to a small number of semi-mature *Salix caprea* (Goat Willow) shrubs at *Target Note 3*, and a small area of disturbed *Rubus fruticosus* agg. (Bramble) vegetation at *Target Note 6*.

##### *Grassland*

- 4.7 Disturbed grass-dominated vegetation characterises an area of land supporting a ground-mounted solar-panel array at *Target Note 2*. This vegetation appears to have, at least partly, developed over areas of shingle/ hard-standing pads associated with the solar-panel mounts. It does not appear to be mown. Areas under the panels are frequently bare. There appears to be other infrastructure present including above ground pipe(s).
- 4.8 The sward is species-poor and is dominated by the grasses *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog) and *Agrostis stolonifera* (Creeping Bent). Other grasses scattered throughout at low levels of abundance include *Poa annua* (Annual Meadow-grass), *Dactylis glomerata* (Cock's-foot), *Arrhenatherum elatius* (False Oat-grass) and *Elymus repens* (Common Couch). A variety of characteristic forbs and (tall-)herbs are scattered throughout at various levels of abundance, such as: frequent/ locally abundant *Epilobium hirsutum* (Great Willowherb), and *Epilobium* sp. (a Willowherb), frequent *Jacobaea vulgaris* (Common Ragwort), occasional *Ranunculus repens* (Creeping Buttercup), *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover), *Cardamine hirsuta* (Hairy Bittercress), *Taraxacum* sect. *Ruderalia* (Common Dandelion), *Veronica persica* (Common Field-speedwell), *Urtica dioica* (Common Nettle), *Cirsium vulgare* (Spear Thistle), *Cirsium arvense* (Creeping Thistle), and *Rumex obtusifolius* (Broad-leaved Dock), and less amounts of *Galium aparine* (Cleavers), *Anthriscus sylvestris* (Cow Parsley), *Heracleum sphondylium* (Hogweed), and low-growing Bramble.
- 4.9 This vegetation extends to the north at *Target Note 2a* where it is located on the banks of a manure storage facility.

<sup>4</sup> HMSO (1981). *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*. HMSO, London.

<sup>5</sup> HMSO (2000). *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. HMSO, London.



**Above and Below. Views of the disturbed/ species-poor grassland at Target Note 2.**



- 4.10 An adjacent smaller area of disturbed grassland at *Target Note 4* has also largely developed over hard-standing. The sward is also species-poor, with a species-composition similar to that at *Target Note 2*, although with the addition of *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Rye-grass). There are various materials stored here.

- 4.11 *Target Note 5* denotes a narrow trackside verge (which continues outside of the survey site) which supports managed (mown)/ disturbed species-poor grassland/ a narrow line of tall-herbs adjacent to the associated fence line.

*Other Habitats*

- 4.12 Other habitats within the survey site are restricted to open/ metal roofed shelters/ associated pods (used for animal shelters) located on hard-standing at *Target Note 1*, a disturbed area of Common Nettle dominated tall-herb and Bramble vegetation at *Target Note 6* (with various stored materials), fences, and hard-standing.



**View of the survey site from the south-east corner. Some of the open/ metal roofed shelters/ associated pods at *Target Note 1* are visible. The grassland at *Target Note 4* is on the LHS.**

Immediately Adjacent Land

- 4.13 A disturbed area comprising bare ground with ruderals/ tall-herbs is located at *Target Note 7*. It was not assessed in detail.
- 4.14 A short length of hedgerow at *Target Note 8* is located between the survey site and the B5069. This appears to comprise *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) and *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn) only. The base appears to be species-poor being dominated by a carpet of *Hedera helix* agg. (Ivy).
- 4.15 Existing dairy sheds/ a manure storage facility are located at *Target Notes 9/ 9a*.



**Hedge at Target Note 8 is on the RHS.**



**Southern elevation of existing dairy sheds at Target Note 9.**

*Flora*

- 4.16 No plant species of note were recorded within the survey site or immediately adjacent land.

## Fauna

- 4.17 Only those species/ species groups that might reasonably be expected to be present at this location or potentially be affected by the proposed development are considered here.

### *Badger*

- 4.18 No evidence of Badger (*Meles meles*) was recorded within the survey site/ immediately adjacent land. Considering the location/ character and current uses/ disturbed nature of the habitats present, the potential presence of Badgers (and or setts) at this location is deemed to be negligible. As such this species will be discounted and will not be considered further in this report.

### *Bats*

- 4.19 There are no trees within/ immediately adjacent to the survey site which could provide potential value for roosting bats. There are no structures within/ immediately adjacent to the survey site which could provide (more than negligible) potential value for roosting bats. This is limited to the existing dairy sheds at *Target Note 9* – these were not inspected in detail however from a view of the southern elevations adjacent to the survey site these structures appear to be constructed of a single skin (of various materials), with frequent openings/ holes. Overall they appear to be in poor condition.
- 4.20 Although the potential for individual bats to forage over the survey site/ immediately adjacent land cannot be entirely discounted, it is considered to provide negligible potential foraging habitat for bats (the habitats are species-poor and disturbed) and is not deemed to be part of any potential commuting corridor. The adjacent short length of hedge at *Target Note 8* could however be utilised for such purposes, and connects (albeit via gaps across track entrances *etc.*) to resources in the wider countryside.

### *Great Crested Newts*

- 4.21 There is no aquatic habitat (suitable for breeding Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*)) within the survey site/ immediately adjacent land.
- 4.22 The terrestrial habitat resources provided by the survey site (disturbed grassland/ tall-herbs, hard-standing) are largely of low/ negligible potential value for this species (although this may vary throughout the year depending on the height/ condition of the sward at *Target Note 2* in particular).
- 4.23 However, the potential presence of Great Crested Newts in terrestrial habitat is governed more by the proximity of a suitable breeding pond than by the quality of the terrestrial habitat. An initial review of the OS map 1:25, 000 scale and relevant internet-based mapping including aerial photography<sup>6</sup> indicates that there may not be any waterbodies within 250 m of the survey site. Given the perceived lack of ponds within 250 m, the likelihood that this species may be present at the survey site is deemed to be negligible. As such this species will be discounted and will not be considered further in this report.

### *Reptiles*

- 4.24 Given the character/ scale of, and perceived existing disturbance to, the terrestrial habitat resources provided by the survey site and its location on the edge of a busy dairy farm complex/ within an intensive agricultural landscape, the likelihood that reptiles may be

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@52.9597688,-2.9456625,737m/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu>

present at the survey site is deemed to be negligible. As such this species group will be discounted and will not be considered further in this report.

#### *Birds*

- 4.25 Minimal nesting opportunities are provided by habitats within the survey site; these being limited to the small number of semi-mature Goat Willow shrubs at *Target Note 3*, and possibly the disturbed area of Common Nettle dominated tall-herb and Bramble vegetation at *Target Note 6*. The Goat Willow shrubs are 'open' and no historic nests were observed. The tall-herb/ Bramble vegetation is used for the storage of materials and is unlikely to offer any particular potential value for nesting.

## **5 Potential Ecological Constraints and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 The information provided in Sections 1-4 of this report has been utilised to undertake a brief assessment of the potential ecological issues associated with the proposed works. Refer to *Appendix 1* for a summary of relevant species-specific legislation.

### **Statutory Protected Sites**

- 5.2 The proposed development would not result in any direct impacts on any statutory protected sites. Due to the nature/ scale of the proposal, habitat within the survey site and location of the survey site, no indirect impacts on any statutory designated sites are anticipated<sup>7</sup>.

### **Habitats and Flora**

- 5.3 Direct impacts (permanent or temporary) associated with the proposal will be limited to loss of the Goat Willow shrubs at *Target Note 3*, the grassland resources at *Target Notes 2, 2a, 4 and 5*, and the tall-herb/ Bramble vegetation at *Target Note 6*. These resources are associated with existing uses at the farm, including an existing ground mounted solar-panel array, and are disturbed and species-poor. No further survey with regards habitat/ flora is deemed necessary. Recommendations provided below (under 'General Avoidance and Mitigation Measures') include for temporary fencing of the adjacent hedgerow at *Target Note 8*.
- 5.4 The general advice contained in the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) leaflets produced by SEPA, EA and the Environment and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland) should be adhered to, particularly the following:
- GPP1: Understanding Your Environmental Responsibilities – Good Environmental Practices.
  - PPG6: Working at Construction and Demolition Sites.

### **Bats**

- 5.5 No further consideration regarding roosting bats is deemed to be warranted. The existing cow sheds at *Target Note 9* are considered to be of negligible potential value to roosting bats. As such, the creation of ground-floor opening(s) for permanent livestock access to the new dairy parlour is not deemed to require the implementation of any further survey or mitigation measures.

<sup>7</sup> This report does not however consider any potential issues regarding potential increased nutrient load to the River Dee associated with the proposal.

- 5.6 Assuming best practice measures with regards bats and any external lighting proposals are implemented, no direct impacts on potential foraging/ commuting resources (for example the adjacent hedgerow) are envisaged to result from the proposal. Any external lighting should follow guidance included in Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023)<sup>8</sup>. Construction should be completed in daylight hours only.

### **Birds**

- 5.7 The destruction of any bird nests that are in use is illegal. The simplest option to avoid issues arising from the presence of nesting birds is to schedule work that affects nesting habitat (e.g., clearance of shrubs/ Bramble at *Target Notes 3 and 6*) outside the nesting period (March to August inclusive). Should any occupied nests be found during the construction phase, a buffer zone (determined on the basis of the species concerned and the location of the nest in the context of the surrounding vegetation, but no less than 5 m) would be retained until it can be ascertained that the chicks have left the nest. The buffer zone will be appropriately fenced and signed.
- 5.8 If it is not possible to clear the shrubs/ Bramble at *Target Notes 3 and 6* outside the nesting season this should be subject to a precautionary check by site personnel prior to commencement of works. This approach is considered warranted in this instance as the shrubs at *Target Note 3* are semi-mature/ 'open' and the potential for nests at *Target Note 6* is deemed to be unlikely (due to perceived existing levels of disturbance). If any active nests are found/ suspected to be present at this time, an ecologist should be contacted to undertake a more detailed visit. Should any active nests be confirmed, a buffer zone as detailed above would be provided.

### **General Avoidance and Mitigation Measures**

- 5.9 The potential risks to the various ecological resources detailed in *Section 4* above are generally considered to be negligible. Given the nature of the survey site, likely scale and duration of the works, it is considered sufficient for a watching brief to be maintained by personnel throughout the works for most species. As a precautionary approach the following general avoidance and mitigation measures should be adopted throughout preparatory/ construction phases:
1. Watching Brief. A watching brief will be maintained at all times by site personnel specifically for bird nests. If a bird's nest is observed at any time (or suspected of being present), all works should immediately cease and an ecologist contacted for advice. Works should only re-commence when an ecologist confirms permission to do so.
  2. Protection Measures for Retained Hedgerow. Due to the proximity of the roadside hedgerow at *Target Note 8* to the works, it is recommended that temporary protective fencing (e.g., heras panels) is installed prior to the start of any works. This fencing should remain in place throughout the construction work. The aim of this fencing is to avoid inadvertent damage to this habitat. Site personnel should be made aware of the purpose of this fencing.
  3. Nesting Bird Season. The avoidance measures as detailed above should be followed.

<sup>8</sup> Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023). *Guidance Note 08/23. Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.*

## 6 Biodiversity Enhancement

### Introduction

- 6.1 Technical Advice Note 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)<sup>9</sup> and Wrexham County Borough Council (2011)<sup>10</sup> seek developments to achieve net biodiversity gain. The requirement to secure and maintain net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) (through enhancements) was reinforced in a letter issued by the Chief Planner (Welsh Government) to all planning departments in October 2019. NBB has been defined as *'the concept that development should leave biodiversity and ecosystems in a better state than before, through securing long term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, primarily on site'*<sup>11</sup>.
- 6.2 Subsequently, Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales has been updated as of 11/10/23 which provides *'further clarity .... on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step'*<sup>12</sup>.
- 6.3 WCBC (2011, *op. cit.*) lists *'examples of how enhancements could be achieved on development sites'*. The options provided include for provision of *'roosting opportunities for bats'* and bird boxes. CIEEM (2022) states that *'a key requirement is that the measures put forward are suitable in the local context of the site'*<sup>13</sup>, and that NBB provision *'should be proportional to the extent and impact of development'*.

### Assessment of Required Level of Provision

- 6.4 The proposed dairy parlour can be categorised as a small/ low impact development. The footprint is associated with existing uses at the farm, including disturbed and species-poor grassland associated with an existing ground mounted solar-panel array, and a small number/ area of peripheral Goat Willow shrubs/ tall-herb/ Bramble vegetation. These resources are of low/ negligible ecological value. The loss of these habitats would not result in a significant impact on any valued ecological resource at this location. A short length of roadside hedge (*Target Note 8*) will be retained, otherwise the proposal is not close to valued ecological resources.
- 6.5 The proposed enhancements will therefore target priority species/ species of nature conservation interest likely to be present at the site: House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and several species of bat are priority species listed on *Section 7* of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016*<sup>14</sup>, with House Sparrow and House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*) being on the 'Amber List' of Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales.

<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government (2009). *Planning Policy Wales - Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning*. September 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Wrexham County Borough Council (2011). *Local Planning Guidance Note 32 Biodiversity and Development*. Adopted March 2011.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/targeted-policy-changes-planning-policy-wales-net-benefit-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-resilience>

<sup>12</sup> Summary taken from a letter from Julie James AS/MS (Minister for Climate Change) to all planning departments dated 11 October 2023.

<sup>13</sup> CIEEM (2022). *Welsh Government's Approach to Net Benefits for Biodiversity and the DECCA Framework in the Terrestrial Planning System*. CIEEM Briefing Paper September 2022. CIEEM, Romsey.

<sup>14</sup> HMSO (2016). *The Environment Act (Wales) 2016*. HMSO, London.

## Biodiversity Enhancement Recommendations

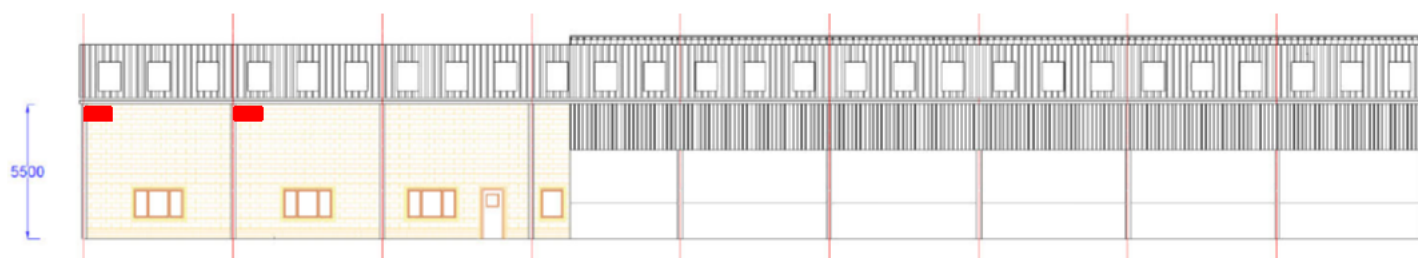
### General

- 6.6 All the proposed boxes as detailed below will be installed either by, or under the direction of, a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure correct installation. On installation the location of each box will be photographed and recorded using a hand-held GPS, with a final plan prepared indicating the locations.

### Bird-boxes – House Sparrow

- 6.7 It is proposed to install six double chamber Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow nest-boxes<sup>15</sup>. This would provide potential nesting opportunities for at least six pairs of House Sparrow. Four are to be affixed to the new parlour building, and two to an existing shed which is located to the east of the new parlour. These nest-boxes would be attached to the outside of the buildings; they would be fitted to the external surface of the walls using screws and wall plugs. Should guttering be present they should be located approximately 15-20 cm below the gutter.
- 6.8 The nest-boxes should be attached to northern and eastern elevations. The nest-boxes should be installed at just below eaves/ soffit or wall top level (more than 3 m above ground level) out of direct sunlight, and at least 1 m apart. They should have unobstructed access and should not be located directly above any windows or doors. They should be placed in locations where droppings will not cause future nuisance, though it is likely that most faecal matter will be removed from the immediate area around the nest-box by the parent birds.
- 6.9 The approximate locations for the four nest-boxes on the north and east elevations of the proposed parlour are shown on the plans reproduced below<sup>16</sup>, with the approximate locations for the nest-boxes indicated by red rectangles.

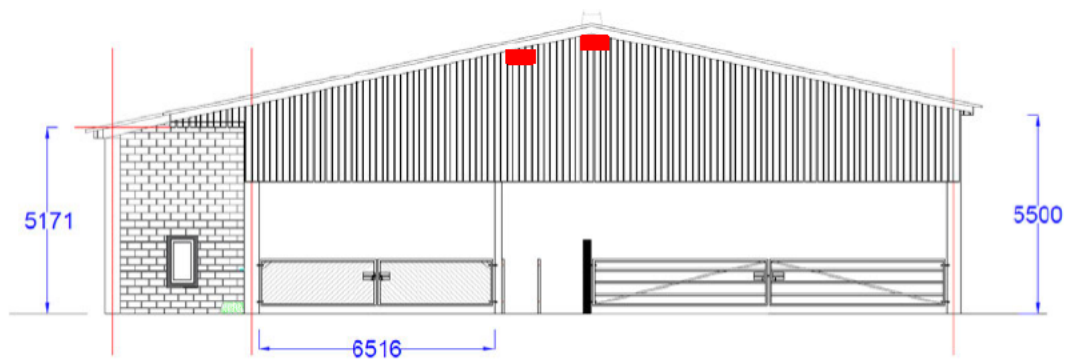
### North Elevation:



Side elevation concept from existing building side.

<sup>15</sup> For example, <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box>

<sup>16</sup> Images taken from 2 no. GEA plans dated 08.08.2023.

**East Elevation:**

End elevation concept from existing tank end.

- 6.10 The other two House Sparrow nest-boxes will be affixed to an existing shed to the east of the new parlour. The photo below provides the approximate proposed locations. Approximate NGRs for each location are 336548, 340674 and 336548, 340684.



Proposed locations for two House Sparrow nest-boxes on existing shed.

*Bird-boxes – House Martin*

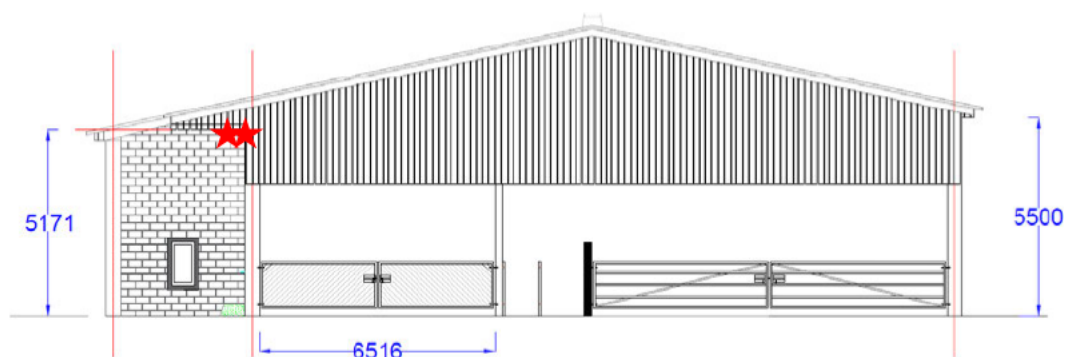
- 6.11 It is proposed to install two double cup Schwegler 9a House Martin Nests<sup>17</sup>. This would provide potential nesting opportunities for at least four pairs of House Martin. They are to be installed on the southern side of the new parlour, above the feed barriers and underneath an approximately 3 m wide roof overhang which creates a 'walkway' at the location. This is

<sup>17</sup> For example, <https://www.nhbs.com/9a-schwegler-house-martin-nest>

deemed to be the only practicable location for these boxes on this building – although south facing they will be sheltered from full sun by the roof overhang. One of the double cups however can be installed on an eastern facing wall along the southern elevation (refer below).

- 6.12 These double cups would be attached to the external fabric of the building/ tucked underneath the roof overhang, using screws and wall plugs. They will be affixed at the top of the wall height, with the top boards butted up tight against the roof structure. The two double cups will be installed immediately adjacent to each other, to allow a potential 'colony' of four nesting pairs. They should have unobstructed access and should not be located directly above any windows or doors. They should be placed in locations where droppings will not cause future nuisance. Otherwise, if achievable, a droppings board can be installed at least 2 m below the nest cups.
- 6.13 There is some evidence that House Martins are attracted to white walls as they stand out more; as such the walls within the vicinity of the boxes could be painted white. It is also possible to install an artificial 'call system' to attract prospecting birds; further details are available on the internet<sup>18</sup>.
- 6.14 The approximate locations for the two double cups are shown on the plan reproduced below<sup>19</sup>, with the approximate locations for the double cups indicated by red stars. The left-hand star indicates a double cup to be installed on the east facing wall, the right hand star is on the immediate south facing wall.

#### East Elevation:



End elevation concept from existing tank end.

#### Bird-boxes – General Purpose

#### Bat-boxes

- 6.15 It is proposed to erect one general purpose nest-box<sup>20</sup>, and three Vivara Pro WoodStone bat-boxes<sup>21</sup>, within a small copse of semi-mature *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) trees located

<sup>18</sup> For example, <https://housemartinconservation.com/artificial-nests>

<sup>19</sup> Images taken from 2 no. GEA plans dated 08.08.2023.

<sup>20</sup> For example, <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-seville-32mm-woodstone-nest-box>

<sup>21</sup> For example, <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-bat-box>

to the north-east of the new parlour, at approximate NGR 336554, 340755, as shown in the following photo:



**Proposed location for general purpose nest box and bat-boxes.**

- 6.16 The nest-box will be installed out of reach, 3 m or more off the ground, and should be located somewhere between (facing) north through east to southeast; avoiding prevailing winds and direct sunlight where possible.
- 6.17 The bat-boxes will be sited in a cluster on a single tree (where possible, or otherwise on immediately adjacent trees), no lower than 3 m from the ground (ideally between 3 m and 5 m), generally facing south, southwest and southeast wherever possible (so that they are not overly exposed). There should be no over-hanging branches/ other vegetation and there should be direct and easy access to the entrances. Generally the bat-boxes should be located in the darkest area possible, away from artificial light sources.
- 6.18 All the boxes should ideally be installed utilising wire or similar (not nails) to facilitate easy maintenance.

#### **Maintenance and Monitoring**

- 6.19 The importance of securing long-term management/ maintenance and monitoring is central to the NBB approach (e.g., CIEEM 2022, *op. cit.*). This should also be proportional to the scale and impact of the development.
- 6.20 Each of the nest-boxes (House Sparrow, House Martin and General Purpose) should be inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. This can be undertaken by the land-owner. All maintenance should be carried out when the last bird has left the nest-box; at least October. As such all nest-boxes should be cleaned in late-autumn (late October/ November). At least 2 to 3 weeks should be allowed after fledging before undertaking any

cleaning. The *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*, as amended states that cleaning should only be carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> January and that any eggs present should be destroyed immediately. All nest material should be completely removed and disposed of safely along with any other debris. To ensure that parasite build-up is controlled the inside of the nest-box should be cleansed with boiling water. Care should be taken when opening nest-boxes as it is possible that they could be inhabited by bees, wasps or even bats.

- 6.21 It is important to remember that once discovered, a bat roost is legally protected and must not be disturbed. If a bat roost is suspected to be present a suitably qualified bat consultant or the Clwyd Bat Group<sup>22</sup> should be contacted and may need to undertake the annual maintenance operations detailed below. To discover whether a bat-box is being used they can be watched at dusk during the summer to see if any bats emerge or a search can be conducted beneath the box entrance for the characteristic crumbly bat droppings. Again should it be necessary to inspect the bat-box an appropriately licensed individual may be required to undertake this work. Occasionally a bat-box may be used by nesting birds. If this is the case it should be cleaned as per the procedure outlined above.
- 6.22 The bat-boxes require annual maintenance. All maintenance should be carried out when bats have left the bat-box to hibernate in winter (late autumn to early spring). At this time the slotted entrance should be carefully brushed to remove any build-up of dust, dirt or cobwebs that could block the opening. Any branches or other vegetation that may have grown up around the bat-box should also be pruned/ removed. If any of the bat-boxes is not used after two years they should be re-sited.
- 6.23 The use of any of the nest-boxes should be recorded during the nesting season (March to August inclusive). House Sparrows typically raise two to three broods a year, usually between April and August. House Martins largely raise two broods, between May and August. The general purpose box is likely to be used by Tit species. Where possible a record should be maintained of which bat boxes have been utilised and by what species. Records of nesting birds/ bats should be submitted to Cofnod<sup>23</sup> (the Local Environmental Records Centre for North Wales).

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.clwydbatgroup.com/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cofnod.org.uk/Home>

## 7 Appendix 1

### Introduction

7.1 The species-specific legislation below is presented here due either to the actual or suspected/ possible presence of each species on the site or within the zone of influence and is therefore considered to be relevant for this study.

7.2 This sub-section provides a brief summary of key relevant species legislation. It should not be considered a comprehensive review and is not meant to be so. It is provided here for information only and is not intended to replace specialised legal advice. It does not replace the text of the legislation, but summarises the salient points.

### Bats

7.3 All species of British bat are listed on *Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), and receive full protection under *Section 9*. They are also listed as European Protected Species on *Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* which gives them full protection under *Regulation 42(1)*. Protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (the CROW Act 2000).

7.4 Under the above legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take an individual of such a species;
- possess any part of such species either alive or dead;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by such species for shelter, rest, protection or breeding;
- disturb such a species whilst using any place of shelter or protection; or
- sell or attempt to sell any such species.

7.5 Several species of bat are included on *Section 7 of the Environment Act 2016*.

7.6 All species of British bat are also protected under *Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). This protection relates specifically to trapping and direct pursuit of the species.

### Birds

7.7 All species of bird are protected under *Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). The protection was extended by the *CROW Act 2000*.

7.8 The legislation makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

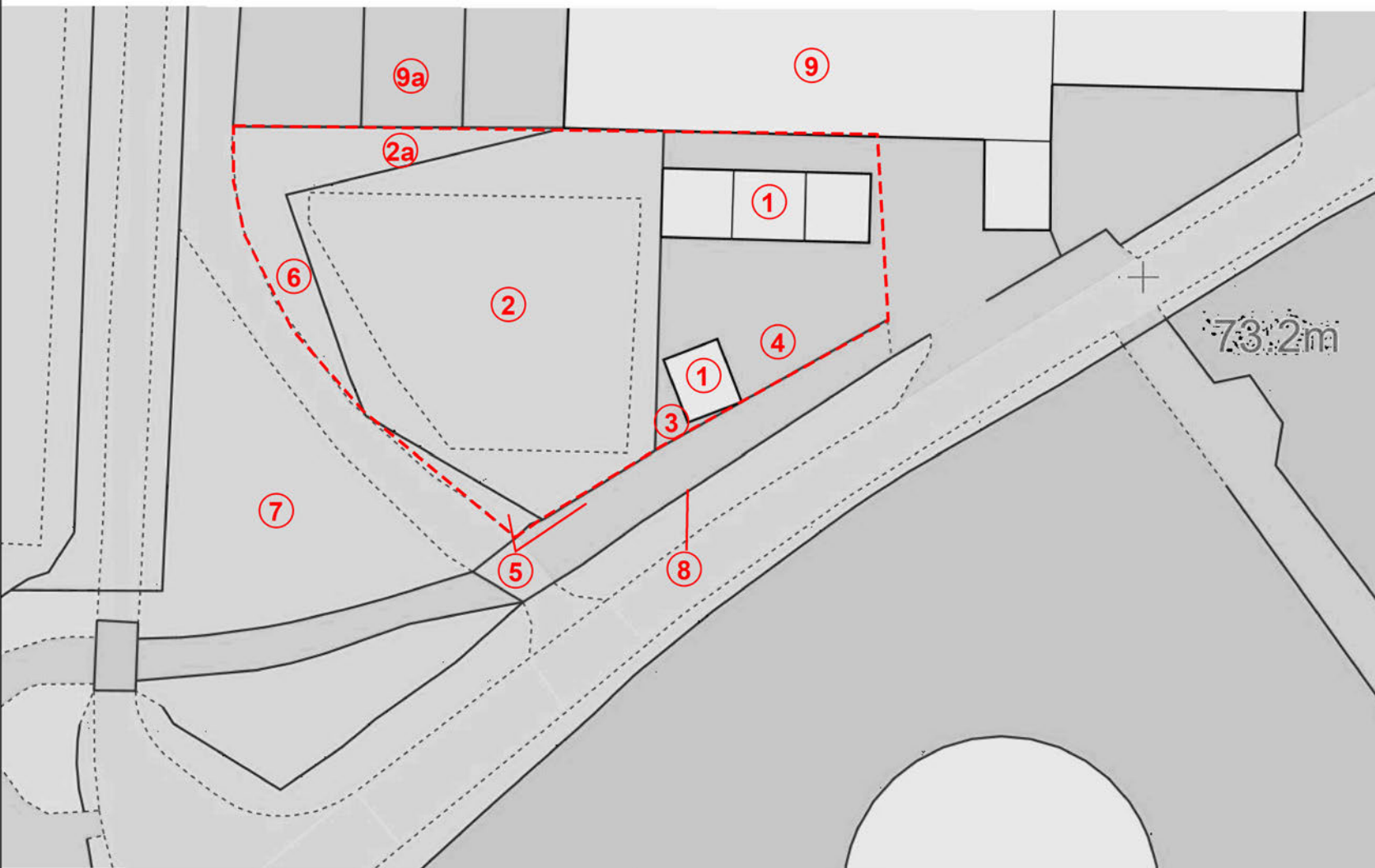
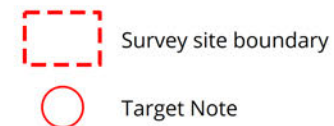
- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

7.9 Certain species of bird are listed on *Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and receive protection under *Sections 1(4) and 1(5)* of the Act. The legislation confers special penalties where the above mentioned offences are committed for any such bird and also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird, whilst building its nest or it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or

- disturb the dependant young of such a bird.

7.10      *Section 7 of the Environment Act 2016* includes several birds.



C530 Proposed Dairy Parlour, Knolton Farm, Overton-on-Dee, Wrexham, LL13 0LG - Walkover Survey & Net Benefit for Biodiversity Statement

Figure 1 - Target Notes

Date: 06/12/2023

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