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Ruthin Road
Bwlchgwyn
Wrexham
LL11 5UR

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The report should be read in its entirety. Questions arising from the survey report should be directed to the author of the report who will be pleased to clarify any technical issues raised.

Whilst the surveyors make every reasonable effort, Greenscape Environmental Ltd cannot guarantee that all protected species have been identified and survey results are definitive. Many species are cryptic and transitional in habit.

Reports are considered valid for two years for planning purposes, after which time further survey information may be required.

Greenscape Environmental Ltd can provide advice and support for recommendations and planning conditions.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Greenscape Environmental Ltd was commissioned by En-Plan on behalf of the client, Mr & Mrs Kelly, to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal of Graig-y-corn to provide supporting information for a retrospective planning application for an extension to a barn.

The survey report has these principal aims:

- To provide an initial assessment of the ecological value of the site in local context.
- To provide details supporting further surveys that may be required.
- To identify potential ecological constraints relating to the development, and recommend measures to avoid, reduce or manage negative effects, and to provide a net ecological gain.

1.2 Methodology

The appraisal included a desktop study for nearby designated sites and previously recorded protected species and a site visit undertaken at the site, OS grid reference SJ26445311 on 22nd March 2023 by C Sheil.

1.3 Key Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The desktop study revealed no impact on designated sites. It was considered that the site could provide potential habitat for bat and bird species and these should be the main focus of the ecological appraisal.

The site comprises a single skinned barn on hardstanding. The barn has negligible roost potential for bats and no evidence was found. No impact on roosting bats is expected. External lighting may reduce dark corridors for foraging and commuting bats. Development must therefore follow a lighting plan.

The construction of the extensions may have caused the loss of nesting habitat for birds including for swallows. A range of woodcrete boxes are to be erected around the site to provide an enhancement for passerine birds, including nesting cups for swallows.

1.4 Conclusion

It is recommended that the biodiversity value of the site will be enhanced post-construction with the inclusion of bat and bird boxes. The method statements provided in section 6.3.2 and 6.5.2 of this report will be followed.



2 Introduction

This report has been compiled by Chloe Sheil MZool (Conservation) who has 5 years' experience conducting ecological appraisals. It has been reviewed in line with Greenscape's Quality Management System.

For full details of surveyors and licences please see Appendix A.

2.1 Project Background

Greenscape Environmental Ltd was commissioned by En-Plan to conduct a survey to determine the presence of protected species and potential for the damage or destruction of habitats of value. This forms part of the planning application for an extension to a bran at Graig-y-corn.

2.2 Purpose of the Report

This report aims to:

- Identify the key ecological constraints to the proposed development relating to priority habitats and species, and protected species (HMSO, 1981).
- Inform planning to allow significant ecological effects to be minimised or avoided where possible.
- Allow any necessary mitigation or compensation measures to be developed following the mitigation hierarchy.
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform the assessment.
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement (HMSO, 2018).
- Provide information to assist landowners with avoiding committing legal offences in relation to wildlife (HMSO, 2000)

2.3 Site Context and Location

The site is located in the south of Bwlchgwyn, OS grid reference SJ26445311. It is set in a rural environment surrounded by the rest of Bwlchgwyn, open fields and a small area of woodland 50m to the east. There is moderate connectivity to the surrounding countryside via the woodland and hedgerows. The surrounds provide potential foraging, hibernating and commuting opportunities for mammals, birds and amphibians.



3 Methodology & Constraints

Broad methodologies for data collection and interpretation were informed by PEA guidance (CIEEM, 2017). Full details can be found in Appendix B.

3.1 Desk Study

The desk study provides contextual information such as the site's proximity to designated areas and previously granted licences (Natural England, 2018). Previously recorded species in the vicinity are obtained from local records centres (Cofnod, 2023).

3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 Date and Survey Conditions

Table 3.1. Survey conditions

Date	Time	Equipment Used	Weather
22/03/2023	10:00	Camera, strong torch	Windy, dry, partly cloudy
Comments	One surveyor used: C Sheil Constraints: None All undated photographs in this document were taken on this date by C Sheil unless otherwise stated.		

3.2.2 Habitats

The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to support protected species and therefore assist in the determination of site value.

The habitats on site were assessed in line with current UKHab classifications and secondary codes (Butcher, et al., 2020).

The survey revealed that the site had not be subject to any form of specific management, maintenance or cleaning and was in a natural redundant state.

3.2.3 Hedgerows

No hedgerows are on site so no assessment was made.

3.3 Species Survey

3.3.1 Bats

An assessment of the suitability of site to support roosting bats was conducted following best practice guidance looking for evidence of roosting or potential access points (Collins, J. BCT, 2016). There were no constraints to this methodology.

3.3.2 Other Mammals

An assessment of the suitability of site and its surrounds to support badgers was conducted following best practice guidance looking for tracks, signs or setts (Scottish Badgers, 2018). There were no constraints to this methodology.

No bodies of water were found on or near the site so no habitat assessment for water vole or otter was conducted.

No woodland or vegetation was on or near the site so no habitat assessment for hazel dormice was conducted.



3.3.3 Birds

An assessment of the suitability of site and its surrounds to support nesting birds was conducted, looking for current/old nests and listening for bird calls. There were no constraints to this methodology.

3.3.4 Barn Owls

An assessment of the suitability of site and its surrounds to support barn owl was conducted following best practice guidance looking for droppings, pellets or nesting signs (Barn Owl Trust, 2012).

3.3.5 Amphibians

An assessment of terrestrial habitats of site and its surrounds to support great crested newts was conducted by looking for potential shelter and commuting features (Langton, et al., 2001).

3.3.6 Reptiles

No vegetation or stored materials was found on or near the site so no habitat assessment for reptiles was conducted.

3.3.7 Invertebrates

No vegetation of significant value for invertebrates was found so no further assessment was conducted.

3.3.8 Invasive Species

Signs of invasive non-native plant species were searched for throughout the site.



4 Baseline Ecological Conditions

4.1 Nearby Features of Importance

4.1.1 Designated Sites

The map from Natural England presented in Figure 4.1 indicated that the site is within 1km of two designated areas.

MAGiC

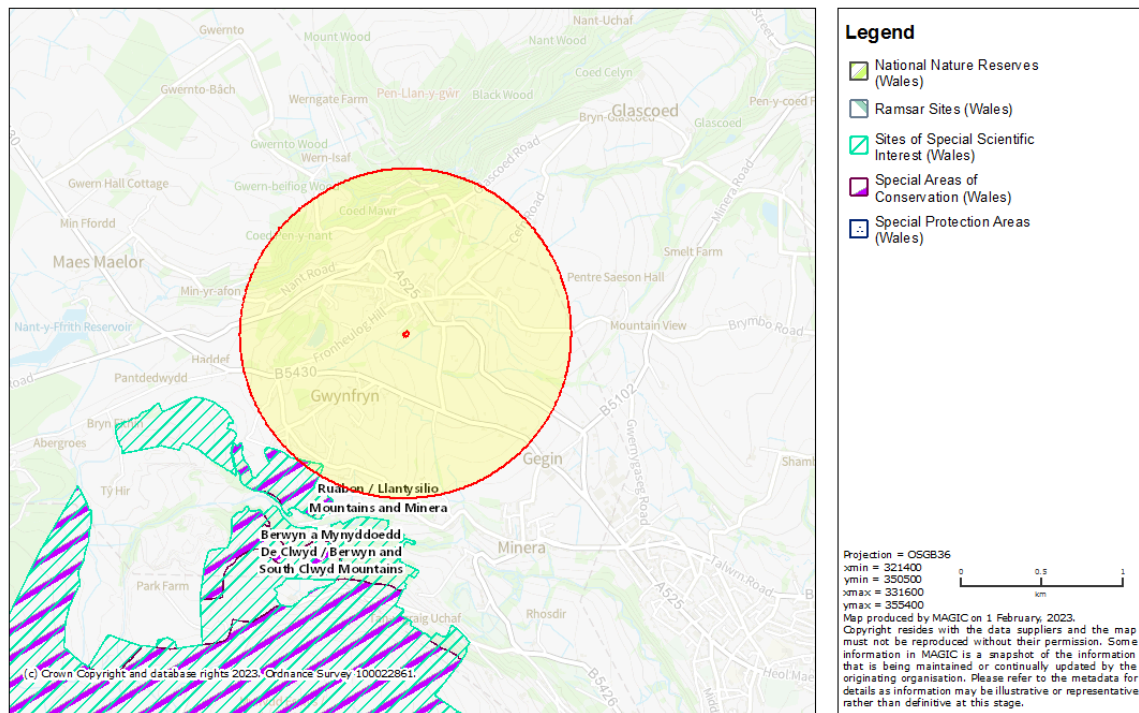


Figure 4.1. Identifying any designated areas near site, a 1km buffer is shown

Table 4.1. Details of statutory designated sites within 1km

Type of Designation	Site Name & Ref	Reason for Designation	Distance & Direction
Statutory - SSSI	Ruabon / Llantysilio Mountains and Minera	Biological and Geological – heather moor, limestone and neutral grassland, mines used by bats, range of breeding birds, three geological sites	900m Southwest
Statutory - SAC	Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains (UK ref: UK0012926)	Biological – wetland habitats, grassland on dry alkaline soils, heathland.	900m Southwest



4.2 Habitats on Site

The site comprises a barn (u1b5 88) on hardstanding (u1c 1230). A habitat map is not considered necessary due to the simplicity of the site.

The barn is single skinned and is constructed of profile sheet metal and both steel and wooden beams.



Figure 4.2. External view of the barn from the south



Figure 4.3. External view of the eastern extension



Kelly

The barn is used to store horses and dogs and is constantly disturbed. There is no central ridge beam.

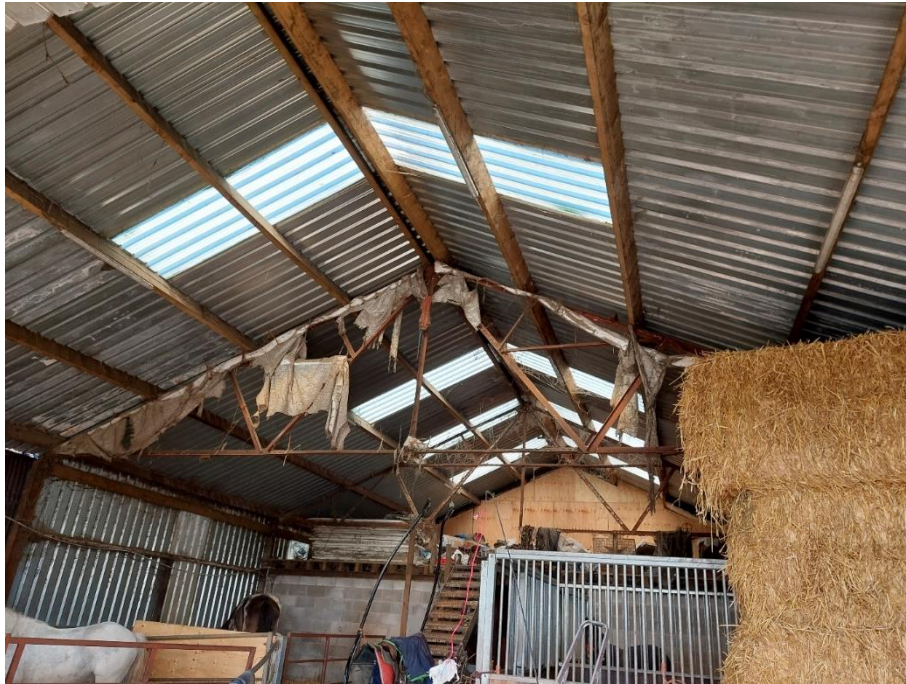


Figure 4.4. Internal view of the eastern extension

The kennels are in the western extension.



Figure 4.5. Western extension



Figure 4.6. Internal view of the kennels



4.3 Bats

4.3.1 Records

Records of bats within 2km include Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Whiskered bat (*M. mystacinus*), Natterer's bat (*M. nattereri*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

The nearest records are of common pipistrelle within 700m, from 2017. All other species are recorded within 1km from 2011.

4.3.2 Field Observations

The barn has negligible roost potential for bats as it is not thermally stable and is light. No evidence was found.

4.4 Other Mammals

4.4.1 Records

Records of other mammals within 2km include hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), hare (*Lepus europaeus*), badger (*Meles meles*) and polecat (*Mustela putorius*).

The nearest records of badger is within 1km from 2008. Hedgehog is recorded 300m away from 2015. Polecat is recorded 900m away from 2014.

4.4.2 Field Observations

The barn is constantly disturbed and the hardstanding offers no habitat of value. No evidence of any mammals was found.

4.5 Birds

4.5.1 Records

Records of birds within 2km include house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and barn owl (*Tyto alba*).

The nearest records are house martin, swallow, house sparrow and starling within 500m from 2002 to 2007. Barn is recorded within 1.5km from 2016.

4.5.2 Field Observations

Old swallow nests were found in the barn. No evidence of any barn owl could be found as the site is constantly disturbed.



Kelly



Figure 4.7. Old swallow nest



4.6 Amphibians

4.6.1 Records

Records of amphibians within 2km include common toad (*Bufo bufo*), palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), smooth newt (*L. vulgaris*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

The nearest records are of common toad 1.4km away from 2008. Palmate newt, common frog and great crested newt are recorded 1.6km away from 2017 to 2018. Smooth newt is recorded 1.7km away from 2020.

4.6.2 Field Observations

The site had no terrestrial habitat for amphibians. There are no ponds shown on the OS map within 250m.

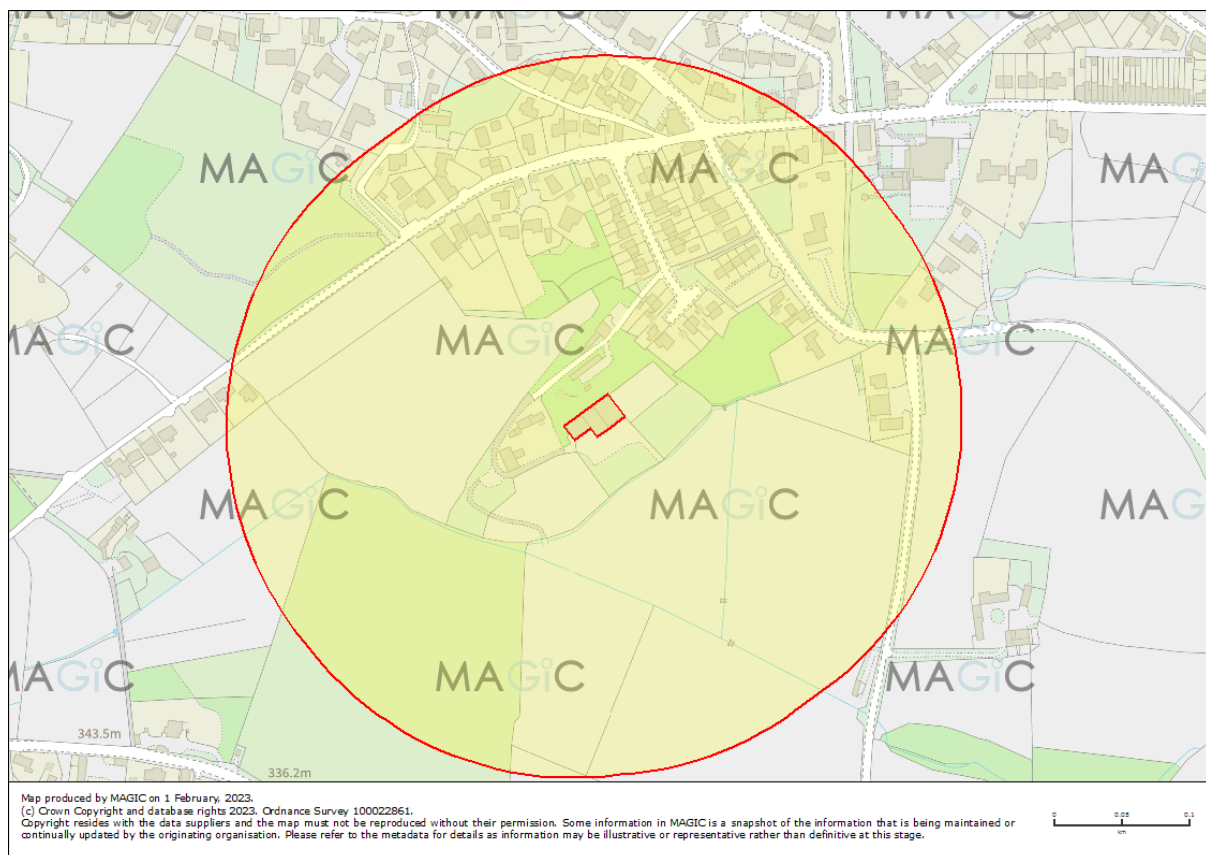


Figure 4.8. OS Map showing a 250m buffer around site, showing lack of ponds

4.7 Invasive Species

4.7.1 Records

Records of invasive species within 2km include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

The nearest records are of Japanese knotweed, 700m away, from 2017. Himalayan balsam is recorded 1km away from 2010.

4.7.2 Field Observations

No evidence of invasive species was found.



The original plans were for two extensions either side of the barn of the same construction and materials of the existing building. The extensions were built slightly differently to originally planned so a retrospective planning application is to be submitted.





6 Impacts, Enhancements and Mitigation

6.1 Nearby Features of Importance

Figure 4.1 shows that the nearest SSSI is 900m away. As the extensions are single skinned and built of metal sheeting their construction would have been quick and very low impact. No impact on the SSSI would be expected from such a development. No compensation is needed.

6.2 Habitats on Site

The development as proposed will result in the loss of bird nesting habitat.

As the site is not comprised of any habitats of principal importance listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act (HMSO, 2016), mitigation will be delivered at a species level.

6.3 Bats

6.3.1 Impacts

The barn has negligible roost potential and no evidence was found. No impact on roosting bats is expected to have occurred. External lighting may reduce dark corridors for foraging and commuting bats.

6.3.2 Mitigation

The external lighting must follow the following lighting plan.

Lighting

Lighting needs to be designed to have minimal impact on bats and their commuting and foraging areas. This results in the recommended use of downlights and the horizontal spread of lighting to be kept to a minimum.

Where it is not possible to reduce the horizontal spread of light, a 2700°K to 3000°K LED light bulb is recommended, which will provide a warm white light. This range has the least impact on bats and invertebrates.

1. A lighting scheme will be drawn up in line with best guidance (ILP, 2018).
2. All newly proposed external lighting will be directed away from any vegetated boundary features to retain dark corridors for commuting bats.
3. There will be no direct illumination of any enhancement features erected for bats.
4. All domestic lighting will be orientated towards the ground and controlled by PIR (Passive Infra-red), set on a short timer.



Figure 6.1. Example external down light design



6.3.3 Enhancements

It is recommended that provision be made for roosting opportunities for bats with the erection of at least one woodcrete bat box suitable for day roosts in a nearby tree or on a building. These will be erected at a height of 3-4 m and in a southerly, westerly or easterly facing direction.



Figure 6.2. Example woodcrete bat box: Schwegler 1FF & Beaumaris Bat Box Midi

6.3.4 Monitoring

Failing boxes or enhancements will be replaced at the cost of the developer if deterioration or damage is noted within five years post-development.

6.4 Other Mammals

No evidence of any mammals was found so no impact is expected.



6.5 Birds

6.5.1 Impacts

The construction of the extensions may have caused the loss of nesting habitat for birds including for swallows.

6.5.2 Compensation

A range of woodcrete boxes are to be erected around the site to provide an enhancement for passerine birds, including for swallows, and a selection of the following would be appropriate.

- Sparrow Terraces should be erected under the eaves of a building at a minimum height of 3m, in a westerly, northerly or easterly aspect.
- 26/32mm hole nest boxes (e.g. Schwegler 1b) should be installed at a minimum height of 3m in a westerly, northerly or easterly aspect.
- Swallow cups should be installed on the exterior of the building at eaves height, ideally beneath an overhang to shelter the cup.



Cedarwood Sparrow Terrace



Schwegler 1b Bird Box



Swallow Nest Cup

Figure 6.3. Bird boxes

6.5.3 Monitoring

Failing boxes or enhancements will be replaced at the cost of the developer if deterioration or damage is noted within five years post-development.

6.6 Amphibians

Potential impacts were ascertained in conjunction with chapter 6 of the mitigation guidelines (English Nature, 2001).

No ponds were found within 250m and the site has no terrestrial habitat for newts. No impact from the development would have been expected.

6.7 Invasive Species

No invasive species were found on site. No management is required.



7 Concluding Remarks

The survey has focussed on the potential habitats or protected species to be damaged or destroyed as part of this development.

The barn has negligible roost potential and no evidence was found. No impact on roosting bats is expected. External lighting may reduce dark corridors for foraging and commuting bats. It must follow a lighting plan. It is recommended that the site is enhanced with bat boxes.

The construction of the extensions may have caused the loss of nesting habitat for birds including for swallows. A range of woodcrete boxes are to be erected around the site to provide an enhancement for passerine birds, including nesting cups for swallows.

Work which can be conducted immediately once planning permission has been granted. The external lighting must follow the following method statement.

The method statements provided in sections 6.3.2 and 6.5.2 of this report will be followed and works will be done at a suitable time of year. Other than those listed above, there are no ecological constraints to the development as currently proposed.



Appendix A – Surveyor Details

Table A.1. Details of surveyors' experience and licences held

Name	Membership of associations/ experience	Licenses
Chloe Sheil MZool (Conservation)	Chloe has a master's degree in Zoology with Conservation from Bangor University. She has 5 years' experience assisting with surveys.	Holder of survey licence for bats and newts in England; GCN: 2022-10485-CL08-GCN Bats: 2022-10941-CL17-BAT Listed as an accredited agent on Ben Jones' licence: NRW bat licence – S091847/1 NRW newt licence – S091242/1
Ben Jones BSc(hons) MSc	Senior Consultant Ben has a degree in Marine and Freshwater biology and a Master's degree in "Managing the Environment". He has 8 years' experience conducting environmental appraisals and phase 2 surveys for bats and newts in England and Wales.	Holder of survey licenses for bats and newts in England and Wales. <u>England:</u> Bats - 2017-29112-CLS-CLS GCN - 2016-25209-CLS-CLS <u>Wales:</u> Bats – S091847/1 GCN – S091242/1



Appendix B – Methodology

Desk Study

Table B.1. Data sources

Organisation/Resource	Information Assessed
Cofnod	Protected/Priority Species records (2km)
MAGIC website	International statutory designations (1km) • Special Protection areas (SPA) • Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) • RAMSAR sites National statutory designations (1km) • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • National Nature Reserves (NNR) EPS Licenses for protected species (2km)

A data search was purchased from Cofnod on 24th March 2023.

A search on Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (Magic Maps) determined nearby designated areas. The map is presented in Section 4.1.

Field Survey

An assessment of habitats was conducted broadly following the UK Habitat Classification.

Table B.2. UK Habs metadata

Metadata	Information
Scope and purpose of survey	Preliminary ecological appraisal
Area surveyed	~0.07ha
Edition of UKHab used	UKHab-Professional
Minimum Mapping Unit	1m ²
UKHab Primary Hierarchy used	Level 5
Secondary groups recorded	All secondary Codes
Year of survey	2023
Organisation and individual undertaking survey	Greenscape Environmental Ltd Chloe Sheil

The level of survey is aimed to identify field signs of or habitats with the potential to support protected species and therefore assist in the determination for detailed phase 2 surveys.

Determination of Ecological Value is based on the general criteria provided by IEEM (IEEM 2006).

**Table B.3. Criteria of ecological values**

Ecological Value	Description and Examples
High	Habitats or features that have high importance for nature conservation, such as statutory designated nature conservation sites of international or national importance or sites maintaining viable populations of species of international or national importance (e.g. Red Data Book species; European protected species).
Medium	Sites designated at a county or district level, e.g. Local Wildlife Site (LWS), ancient woodland site, ecologically 'important' hedgerows or ecological features that are notable within the context of a region, county or district (e.g. a viable area of a Priority Habitat or a site that supports a viable population of a priority species).
Low	Sites of nature conservation value within the context of a parish or neighbourhood, low-grade common habitats, such as arable fields and improved grasslands and sites supporting common, widespread species.

Species Surveys

Bats

Features on site were assessed for potential for bat roosts, foraging and commuting.

An external assessment of all structures on site was undertaken to determine potential roost features (PRF). The potential suitability of the structures assessed was assigned a rating of low to high in accordance with table 4.1 of Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition.

An internal assessment of all structures was undertaken by a suitably licensed surveyor for evidence of roosting bats such as droppings, feeding remains and staining.

Daytime surveys were conducted with the aid of a strong torch. Bat species may leave little evidence of their presence.

Evidence for the presence of bats includes:

- Holes, cracks and rot holes used as roosts, marked by streaks of urine and faeces.
- Smoothed, darkened edges where bats have rubbed and left natural body oils when entering and exiting a space.
- Faeces under a roof access point, a well-used feeding point or a resting spot.
- Feeding signs such as discarded insect wings under a feeding point.
- Lack of cobwebs around eaves, roof spaces, beams or ceilings where routes are kept clear by bats or presence of droppings in a cobweb.
- Presence of roosting or dead bats in or behind any object.

Badgers

Surveys were conducted in line with Harris, S., Cresswell, P. and Jefferies, D. (1989) Surveying Badgers. Mammal Society - No9.

Daytime surveys for badgers involved looking for:

- Scrapings where badgers have dug for food or used as latrines.
- Signs of a sett, including signs of use such as presence of badger hair.
- Tracks and prints.



Birds

Searching for evidence of nesting birds, including barn owls, involved looking for:

- Presence of nests
- Collections of droppings and/or feathers
- Highly distinctive droppings or splats under roosting points.
- Presence of owl pellets/feathers
- Listening for bird song
- Recording bird activity

Amphibians and Reptiles

The terrestrial habitats at the application site were surveyed and assessed for their suitability and potential value for the support of GCN. The general topography, ground conditions and presence or absence of vegetation were recorded. A refugia search was conducted for amphibians and reptiles by looking under any logs, large stones and other debris.



Appendix C – Policy

The following areas of policy and legislation are of relevance to ecology and provide context to the surveys conducted. Findings presented in this report are in line with the following:

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 – as listed in:

- Schedule 2. European protected species of animals
- Schedule 5. European protected species of plants

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) – as listed in:

- Schedule 1. Birds protected by special penalties at all times
- Schedule 5. Protected animals
- Schedule 8. Protected plants

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)

Environment Act (2021) – Part 6 – Nature and Biodiversity

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992)

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)

Planning Policy Wales 2002, updated Dec 2018

Section 6.4 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks

The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales – Setting the course for 2020 and beyond (2015)

Environment Act (Wales) (2016)

Section 7

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan – EC6 Biodiversity Conservation

Bats

All bat species are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Deliberately capture or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species.
- Deliberately disturb any such animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal.
- Keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal or plant of a European Protected Species, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal or plant.

A person found guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to an unlimited fine or to both .

Seven bat species are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and are listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, “*planning policies should... promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations*”.



To allow a development that might result in an offence, a derogation licence can be sought via the implementation of a European Protected Species Licence. This is provided by Natural Resources Wales.

Badgers

Badgers and their setts are specifically protected (HMSO, 1992). The act was primarily brought into force to prevent the deliberate injury to or death of badgers. Some aspects of the act affect developers. It is important that developers are aware of any badger setts located on the land they intend to develop.

All personnel working on sites where there are badgers should be aware of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Damage a badger sett or any part of it.
- Destroy a badger sett.
- Obstruct access to, or any entrance of a badger sett.
- Causing a dog to enter a badger sett.
- Disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett.

Birds

Under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), birds, their nests and young are all protected from damage, particularly during the breeding season. The Act allows for fines or prison sentences for every bird, egg or nest destroyed. It makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- Take damage or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- To have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive or egg or any part of a wild bird or egg.

Some bird species are included in the UK and local BAPS and are recognised as species of principal importance for nature conservation in accordance with section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Such species and their habitats receive protection through the provisions of the NPPF.

Amphibians

All species of amphibians receive a measure of protection under legislation.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000. This applies to England and Wales only. The key relevant fact is:

- Section 9(4) is amended to create an additional offence of reckless damage to, destruction of, or obstruction of access to, any structure or place used for shelter or protection; and reckless disturbance while occupying such a structure or place.



Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Deliberately capture or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species.
- Deliberately disturb any such animal.
- Deliberately take or destroy eggs of any such wild animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal.
- Keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal or plant of a European Protected Species, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal or plant.

Great crested newts are listed as a priority species on the UK BAP and Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, *"planning policies should... promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations"*.

A person found guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to an unlimited fine, or to both.



Appendix D - Bibliography

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