

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY & DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

TYN Y COED, CHESTER ROAD,
ROSSETT, WREXHAM

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APPENDIX A: PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Fiona McClements, via Mersey Design Group Limited, to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey at Tyn Y Coed, Chester Road, Rossett, Wrexham (O.S. grid reference: SJ 36755 57375 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a detached dwelling, with a disused tennis court and mature gardens, most of which have been recently cleared. To the north and south lie commercial properties and residential dwellings. Chester Road borders the site to the east and to the west lies disused land.

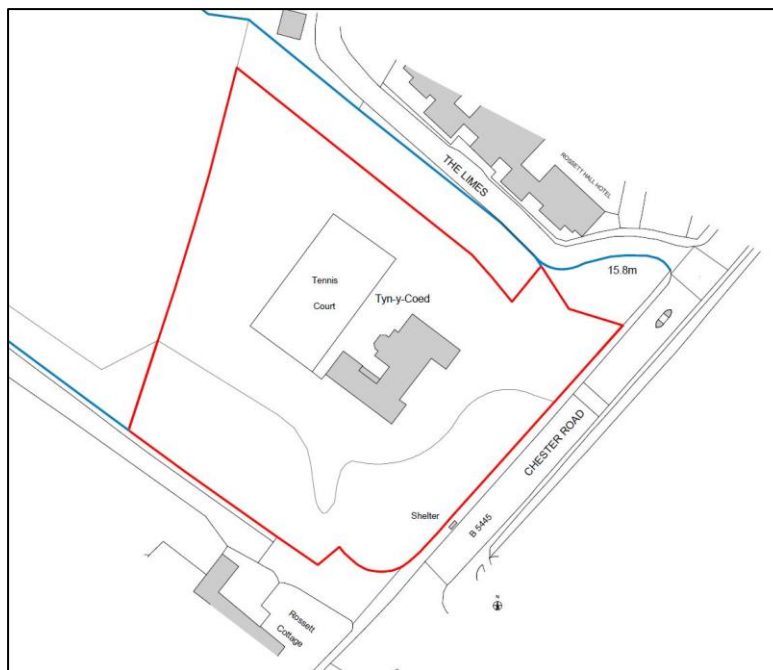


Figure 1 showing the location of the site (courtesy of MDG)

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application to demolish the existing building and construct 10no. dwellings on the site. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site. A daytime bat survey is required to assess the potential use of the property by bats.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 6 of the Planning Policy Wales (December 2018) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt and assessing any habitats for nesting birds.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.4 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost.
- 2.5 An external assessment of the building on the site was undertaken, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges. An internal assessment was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.6 A ground-level assessment of any trees affected by the proposals was also undertaken. This involved a search for potential roosting features (PRF's), including peeled bark, knot holes and branch splits.
- 2.7 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and, where necessary, an endoscopic camera, were used to search for evidence of bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.8 Andy Harmer (Principal Ecologist) and Sam Harmer (Ecologist) carried out the surveys on the 12th April 2022. Both surveyors are experienced ecologists and fully trained in habitat surveys and protected species assessments. April is a sub-optimal month for botanical work, however given the habitats present on site, a thorough assessment could be undertaken. Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The weather at the time of the survey was mild, calm and wet.

Survey Constraints

- 2.9 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at Appendix A.

Bare Ground (Hardstanding and Cleared)

- 3.2 The site supports hardstanding, at the disused tennis court (see Photograph 1), access driveway and parking areas. Much of the vegetation, including trees, on site has been recently cleared and this has left bare ground (see Photograph 2).



Photograph 1 showing the hardstanding at the tennis court



Photograph 2 showing the cleared bare ground on site

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3 Amenity grassland occurs across a lot of the site, as mown lawns (see Photograph 3). The habitat is species-poor and include mostly Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* with Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*.



Photograph 3 showing the amenity grassland

Introduced Shrub

- 3.4 Small shrub beds occur on site (see Photograph 3). These include amenity varieties such as roses, conifers and bulbs.



Photograph 4 showing the one of the shrub beds



Mixed Plantation Woodland

- 3.5 A belt of coniferous and deciduous trees exists along the western and part of the southern boundary (see Photographs 5 and 6). These include Lawson's Cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Variegated Holly *Ilex* var., Cherry *Prunus* var., Hemlock *Tsuga* sp. and Leyland Cypress *C. x leylandii*.



Photograph 5 showing the plantation woodland belt along the western boundary



Photograph 6 showing plantation woodland belt along the southern boundary

Spoil Heaps

- 3.6 Spoil heaps occur on site (these can be seen in numerous photographs above). They comprise brash piles, bonfire remains and garden waste.

Scattered Trees

- 3.7 A small number of scattered trees exist on site, including fruit trees and trees that form part of a deeper tree belt along the northern boundary (see Photograph 7). Species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Apple *Malus* var. and Beech *Fagus sylvatica*.



Photograph 7 showing the scattered trees

Existing Building and Other Structures

- 3.8 A detached dwelling exists on site as well as two sheds. These are described in detail within the daytime bat survey results, below.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.9 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.10 No waterbodies exist on the site. No ponds could be found within 250 metres of the site. The site supports limited suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat, within the remaining shrub beds and tree belts. The site is disturbed and the open ground and amenity grassland offer sub-optimal habitat for Great Crested Newt.

Bats

- 3.11 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 A detached dwelling and two sheds exist on site. These are described below.

Dwelling – External Survey

- 3.13 The dwelling is part single-storey and part double-storey, with an attached garage and is in use. It is constructed of brick, which has been mostly rendered and painted white. The garage remains as exposed brick (see Photographs 8 and 9). The brickwork and render are in good condition, with no missing bricks or mortar. The window panes are all intact and the window and door frames are flush to the surrounding masonry. A glass conservatory exists at the rear and this is also intact.



Photograph 8 showing the exterior of the dwelling at the rear



Photograph 10 showing the front of the dwelling

- 3.14 The building has pitched, tiled roofs (see Photographs 10 and 11). All tiles are in place, with no missing or slipped tiles. Most are covered in moss. Where chimneys and ventilation pipes occur, the lead flashing is intact and flush to the tiles. The chimney stacks are intact.



Photograph 10 showing the roof at the front of the dwelling



Photograph 11 showing the roof at the rear as well as lead flashing

- 3.15 The roof edges are generally well-sealed, with most mortar intact although parts are crumbling (see Photograph 12). Soffits and bargeboards exist in places. These are mostly intact and flush to the walls (see Photograph 13), but some have small gaps between wooden panels.



Photograph 12 showing the roof edge at the garage



Photograph 13 showing the soffits at the two-storey section

Dwelling – Internal Survey

- 3.16 The ground and first floor rooms of the dwelling are in use and well-sealed. They do not support suitable bat roosting habitat.
- 3.17 Two loft spaces are present; one above the single-storey section and one above the two-storey section. The garaging is open to the roof. The single-storey loft void is shallow, with a layer of insulation (see Photograph 14). It was difficult to access the whole void. The roof timbers are in excellent condition and offer no gaps or cavities for bats to exploit. The roof void is boarded. The internal walls are intact. The roof tiles are lined and the lining is intact. A small number of bat droppings (<5) were found scattered on top of the insulation.



Photograph 14 showing the roof void above the single-storey part of the dwelling

- 3.18 The double-storey loft void is also shallow, with a deep layer of insulation (see Photograph 15). It was difficult to access the whole void. The roof timbers are in excellent condition and offer no gaps or cavities for bats to exploit. The roof void is boarded. The internal walls are intact. The roof tiles are lined and the lining is intact. A small number of bat droppings (<5) were found scattered on top of the insulation.



Photograph 15 showing the roof void above the double-storey part of the dwelling

- 3.19 The row of garages is open to the roof, with no voids or cavities (see Photograph 16). The roof timbers are in excellent condition. The roof is lined with bitumen felt and this is intact. The garages are well-lit and the internal walls are all intact. No evidence of bat activity was found within the row of garages.



Photograph 16 showing the interior roof of the garaging

Sheds

- 3.20 A wooden shed with a pitched bitumen felt roof exists on site (see Photograph 17). This is in good condition and offers no suitable bat roosting opportunities. A woodstore also exists on site (see Photograph 18). This is open, with no walls and also offers no suitable bat roosting opportunities.



Photograph 17 showing the shed



Photograph 18 showing the woodstore

Trees

- 3.21 The mature trees on site were searched for potential roosting features (PRFs), and none were found within the remaining mature trees. All mature trees are to be retained.

Badger

- 3.22 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.23 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.24 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.25 The scattered trees and tree belts provide suitable bird nesting habitat.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.26 Variegated Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* exists on site, within the ground beneath the tree belts (see Photograph 19). This is a non-native, invasive species and is listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to allow this species to spread into the wild.



Photograph 19 showing the Variegated Yellow Archangel on site.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.27 No statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. The nearest statutory protected site is Marford Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which lies 1.3km to the south-west of the site. Vicarage Moss Ramsar and SSSI lies 3.1km to the south. Old Pulford Brook Meadows SSSI lies 3.4km from the site to the east. River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies 3.5km to the east.
- 3.28 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on the protected sites nearby. The proposed development type is not listed as being a concern to nearby protected sites.
- 3.29 No non-statutory protected sites exist on or adjacent to the site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site mostly comprises mown amenity grassland and bare ground (either hardstanding or recently cleared ground). These are habitats of low ecological value, which offer a limited pollen and nectar source for invertebrates and no cover from predation. The tree belts and scattered trees provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals involve the loss of the majority of the habitats on site, with the retention of the mature trees. No landscaping is proposed but it is recommended that the garden spaces are turfed with a species-rich amenity grassland and bird and bat boxes are erected onto retained trees.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds exist on the site. No ponds could be located within 250m of the site. Given the lack of breeding habitat in the locality, and the limited suitable terrestrial habitats on site, it is considered reasonably unlikely that Great Crested Newt occurs on site. No further amphibian survey work is required.

Bats

- 4.5 A small number of scattered bat droppings were found within both loft voids of the dwelling. The building is well-maintained and very few potential bat access points were found. The building is located close to good quality bat foraging and commuting habitat (the tree belts and surrounding landscape). No evidence of a bat roost of high conservation concern, such as a maternity bat roost, was found. The dwelling is considered to offer **moderate** bat roost suitability and two dusk emergence surveys are recommended. These would allow a robust characterisation of the bat roost present and allow a derogation licence to be applied for.
- 4.6 No bat droppings or other evidence of bat activity was found within the sheds on site and these are considered to offer **negligible** bat roost suitability. No further survey work is required on these.
- 4.7 The trees are to be retained but do not support potential roosting features (PRFs). The trees offer **negligible** bat roost suitability. The tree belts are to be retained and therefore, there is expected to be no deleterious impact upon suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat on site.

Badger

- 4.8 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.9 The site does support suitable nesting habitat for birds, within the scattered mature trees and tree belts. If any work to the scattered trees or tree belts will proceed within the bird nesting season (which is generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.10 Variegated Yellow Archangel is present on site. This is an invasive, non-native species and should be removed using an approved methodology as part of the site clearance works.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.11 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site or immediately adjacent. The nearest statutory protected site is Marford Quarry SSSI, which lies 1.3km to the south-west of the site. At this distance, and with barrier habitats between the SSSI and the proposed development site, there is expected to be no deleterious impact on the SSSI or any other protected site from the development.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further Surveys

5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey will be required:

- **Bats** - Two dusk emergence surveys (or dawn re-entry surveys) of the dwelling are required to determine the type of bat roost present. A minimum of four surveyors are required and these surveys must be undertaken between May and September. If an active bat roost is present, a derogation licence will be required prior to demolition and bat mitigation must be designed into the site.

5.2 Depending on the timings of vegetation removal (if any), the following survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the scattered trees or tree belts needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Habitat Enhancement

5.3 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the retained trees.
- Trees and hedgerow planting of native species on site, particularly on the boundaries.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A – PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

