



Cambrian Ecology Ltd
Anwylfan, Croesor
Penrhyndeudraeth
Gwynedd
LL48 6SS

chris@cambrianecology.com

07765 254035

kate@cambrianecology.com

07760 909574

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY
Proposed Glamping Site
Rackery Farm, Rossett

March 2018



Report by: Chris Hall ACIEEM

Client: Mr A Jones, Rackery Farm, Higher Lane, Burton Rossett, Wrexham. LL12 0AD

Planning Authority: Wrexham County Borough Council

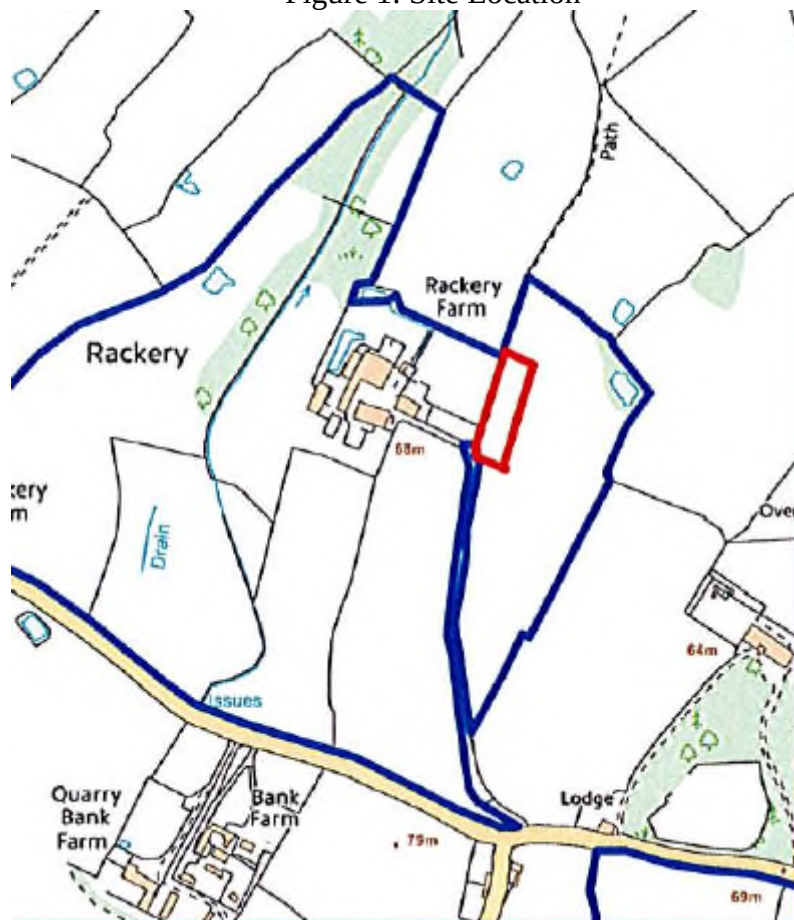
Grid Reference: SJ 33741 57428 (Approximate site centre)

Cambrian Ecology Ltd/Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey /Rackery Farm/2018

CONTENTS

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Methodology
4. Survey Limitations
5. Site Description
6. Habitat Evaluation
7. Species Evaluation
8. Impact Assessment
9. Mitigation Measures
10. Legal Implications
11. Appendices
 - 11.1 Site Photographic Record
 - 11.2 Phase 1 Habitat Map
 - 11.3 Review Table

Figure 1: Site Location



EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY REPORT
Proposed Glamping Site
Rackery Farm, Burton Rossett
Wrexham, LL12 0AD

28th March 2018

1. Summary

An extended Phase 1 Habitat survey was carried out by Cambrian Ecology Ltd on land at Rackery Farm in Burton Rossett near Wrexham. It is intended to submit a planning application to Wrexham County Borough Council for the erection of three safari tents and the provision of car parking for a maximum of six cars. Additional facilities will include an aggregate surfaced access path and the possible installation of a septic tank. A final decision regarding this latter feature had not been made at the time of this survey.

The Phase 1 Habitat survey revealed that the only habitat that will be impacted by the proposals is heavily improved grassland on this working dairy farm.

Present on the site boundary is a hedge and four mature trees to the immediate west. Some precautionary measures have been recommended to prevent damage to root systems during the excavations for the installation of a septic tank.

No other recommendations have been made with regards to the loss of habitat as this will be restricted solely to the loss of a minimal area of heavily improved grassland. All botanical species present are common and widespread and of no conservation or Biodiversity concern.

There was no evidence of any protected species within the scope of the proposals. Some precautionary measures have however been recommended with regards to excavations for the septic tank due to the presence of both great crested newt; (*Triturus cristatus*) and badger; (*Meles meles*) within the 1km radius of the site for which a biological record search was carried out. Additional recommendations have been made regarding the installation of any lighting due to the potential for inappropriate lighting to affect bat roost usage and commuting behaviour.

Some Biodiversity enhancements have been recommended, e.g. the planting of native species of benefit to wildlife in any associated landscaping scheme. This complies with Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act (2016), which requires Planning Authorities to seek Biodiversity gain as a routine part of planning consents being issued.

2. Introduction

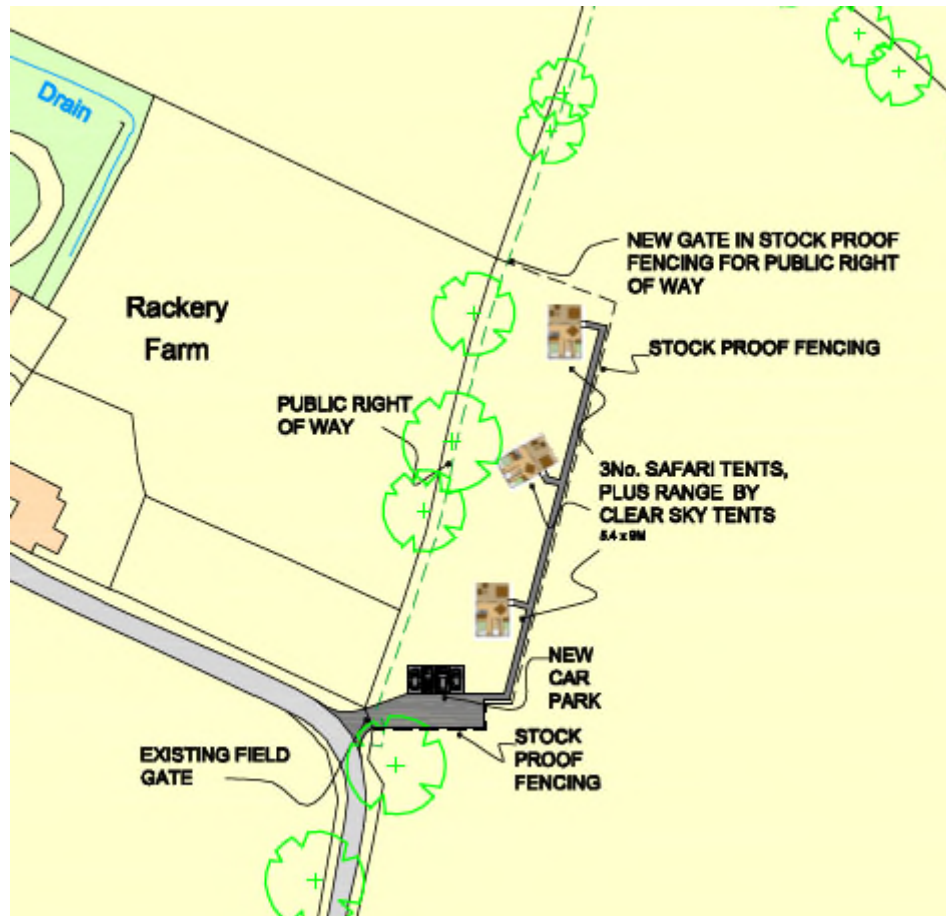
Cambrian Ecology Ltd was commissioned by the client Mr A Jones, to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey on land at Rackery Farm in Burton Rossett near Wrexham. It is intended to submit a planning application to Wrexham County Borough Council for the erection of three safari tents and

the provision of car parking for a maximum of six cars. Additional facilities will include an aggregate surfaced access path and the possible installation of a septic tank. A final decision regarding this latter feature had not yet been made at the time of this survey. The creation of the car parking area will not require any excavation. The proposed car parking area already has a hard-core substrate due to the heavy farm traffic in this area immediately adjacent to the access gate.

The relevant planning authority is Wrexham County Borough Council, (WCBC).

The approximate centre of the site is located on a working dairy farm at Grid Reference SJ 33741 57428.

Figure 2: Proposed Site Design



3. Methodology

3.1 Habitats

The Phase 1 Habitat survey was carried out on 28th July 2018 by ecologist Chris Hall. The survey took the form of an extended Phase I survey and identified baseline ecological conditions, as well as any important or notable habitats. All habitats within the proposed development site were classified and mapped as accurately as possible, using target notes to identify features of particular ecological interest. Species lists were drawn up for each habitat type identified and the habitat condition was assessed. In the context of this report, *important or notable habitats* are considered to be those which are of a sustainable size and which meet any of the following criteria:

- Habitats which have a high intrinsic ecological value, i.e. they support a diverse range of vascular plant and/or faunal species;

- Mature or semi-natural habitats in built-up areas;
- Any UK BAP priority habitats;
- Local BAP habitats considered having a significant extent and/or ecological interest.
- Potentially Invasive Non-Native Species, (INNS)

All habitats considered to have the potential to support rare, protected or otherwise notable species of flora and fauna were noted, as were any direct signs of these species. Where possible, habitats were cross-referenced to any relevant UK priority habitats or WCBC's Biodiversity Action Plan habitats.

3.2 Protected Species

The site was assessed also on its potential to support any protected or important species. During this survey, a search was made for field signs of protected or notable species and assessments made of the potential of habitats to support these species. In the context of this report important or notable species are considered to be those that meet any of the following criteria:

- Species protected by British or international law
- UK BAP priority species or local BAP species
- Nationally rare or scarce species
- Species of Conservation Concern (e.g. JNCC Red List, RSPB/BTO Red or Amber lists)

3.3 Desk Study

The desktop study aims to collate existing information about priority species, habitats and designated sites within 1km of the survey area. This information has relevance to the likelihood of priority species being present within the survey area, as well as giving context to any species and habitat records from the actual site.

A data search for all priority species, habitats and designated sites was conducted with the Local Environmental Records Centre; Cofnod. The search parameters were 1km from the survey site area.

4 **Survey Limitations**

Field signs for protected and important species are often difficult to find or absent from a site. For this reason, the site and its habitats are assessed on their potential to support these species.

5 **Results**

5.1 Habitat

The Habitat on the proposed glamping site currently consists primarily of heavily improved, grazed grassland. There are also four mature trees and a hedge present to the immediate west of the proposed location of the tents. The location of these habitats is shown in Appendix 2.

A. Improved Grassland

This grassland habitat dominates the site which is on a working dairy farm, and is consequently also heavily grazed.

The dominant grass species in this habitat is perennial rye grass; (*Lolium perenne*).

The broadleaved species are only present as minor components and include dandelion; (*Taraxacum officinale*), red dead-nettle; (*Lamium purpureum*) and lesser stitchwort; (*Stellaria graminea*).

B. Hedge

There is a hedge on the western site boundary with a large gap in the centre.

The southern section of this hedge near the access gate is dominated by holly; (*Ilex aquifolium*). The remainder of the hedge at the northern end is more diverse with hawthorn; (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel; (*Corylus avellana*), elder; (*Sambucus nigra*), cherry; (*Prunus avium*) and ivy; (*Hedera helix*) also present. Other species associated with the hedge include cow parsley; (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), cuckoo pint; (*Arum maculatum*), nettle; (*Urtica dioica*), garlic mustard; (*Alliaria petiolata*) and cleavers; (*Galium aparine*).

C. Mature Trees

There are four mature trees in the vicinity of the proposed glamping site. Three of these trees are sycamore; (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and the fourth is an oak; (*Quercus spp*)

Figure 3: Aerial Image



5.2 Protected Species

There was no evidence of the presence of any protected species.

There is however the potential for protected species to be present, and associated with the habitats on the western boundary. The hedge and mature trees have the potential to support nesting birds at the appropriate time of year and the base of the hedge has some potential to provide terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. The mature trees also have some potential to support roosting bats but neither the hedge nor trees are to be affected by the proposals.

5.3 Desk Study

The most relevant records received from the biological record search are of great crested newts and badger within the 1km radius search area. The closest record of great crested newt is 937m away from the approximate centre of the site and the nearest badger record only 110m away.

6 **Habitat Evaluation**

A. Improved Grassland

The improved grassland habitats are currently of minimal Biodiversity value.

B. Hedges

The hedges on the site comprise relatively common and widespread species of no conservation concern. Hedges and other linear landscape features do however have the potential to be of benefit to protected species.

C. Mature Trees

Mature trees are of significant importance to Biodiversity and due to their nature, take a very long time to replace. While the trees will remain unaffected by the proposals and the erection of three tents will have no impact, due to their ecological importance, precautionary measures must be taken to prevent damage to tree root systems during excavations for the septic tank.

7 **Species Evaluation**

A. Badgers

Although there are records of badgers within 1km of the site, there was no evidence of the presence of the species in the vicinity of the proposals. The improved grassland does however represent optimal foraging habitat for this species.

B. Bats

The tree lines and hedges around the site perimeter potentially provide habitat connectivity for a range of bats species, including those recorded in close proximity. These features could therefore be of significant importance in the wider landscape. Tree lines and hedges also provide shelter and feeding opportunities for foraging bats. These features are to be retained as part of the proposals.

There is also the potential for roosts to be present in hollows and crevices in the mature trees, although this is very difficult to establish, partly due to the mobility of tree roosting species and partly due to the density of the crowns making observation almost impossible, even during an emergence survey.

C. Great Crested Newts

The heavily improved grassland of the site has minimal potential to provide terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. The sward is very short providing little in the way of cover and the constant trampling from dairy cattle would be a significant hazard. There is the potential for the base of the hedge to provide cover for newts and habitat connectivity with the wider landscape.

D. Nesting Birds

There is the potential for nesting birds to be present in the hedge and trees on the site at the appropriate time of the year. It is unlikely that the proposals will present any significant disturbance to these birds as the tents are to be located some distance from the western boundary to preserve continuity of access as a public footpath runs down this boundary.

8 Impact Assessment

8.1 Habitat

A. Improved Grassland

The improved grassland habitat on the site displays the impoverished species assemblage usually associated with this heavily managed and grazed habitat. No negative impact is therefore anticipated as a result of the loss of any of this habitat.

B. Hedges

The hedges are to be retrained as part of the proposals. No impact on the hedge will therefore take place.

C. Mature Trees

Any damage to tree roost systems could result in the death or destabilisation of trees which would inevitably result in the felling of the trees for safety reasons. This would have a negative impact on an important habitat that takes decades to replace.

8.2 Protected Species

A. Badgers

No setts will be damaged and no animals will be disturbed as a result of the proposals. It is also not considered that the loss of such a small area of potential foraging habitat will have any negative impact on the badgers in this locality. There is some minimal potential for animals to get trapped in excavations for the possible septic tank if excavations are left open overnight.

B. Bats

The hedge and mature trees are to be retained as part of the proposals and as a result there will be no negative impact on habitat connectivity for bats. Although there is the potential for bats to be roosting in hollows and crevices in the mature trees, the tents are to be located far enough away from the trees to ensure that no remedial tree surgery will be required. No potential roosts will therefore be lost or damaged. The one potential impact on both roosts and habitat connectivity is the issue of the installation of inappropriate lighting as this can inhibit both the use of roosts, and flight paths. This issue must be addressed in the mitigation strategy as there is the potential for a negative impact on bats.

C. Great Crested Newts

No impact on great crested newts is anticipated as a result of the loss of such a small area of improved grassland. This is considered to be sub-optimal terrestrial habitat for this species. No excavations are to take place in the location of the proposed car parking area as this already has a layer of hardcore substrate. There is however the potential for the killing and/or injury of animals during the excavations for the septic tank, combined with the potential for animals to get trapped in any excavations left open overnight.

D. Nesting Birds

There is the potential for nesting birds to be present in the hedge and mature trees on the western boundary of the site. No work is planned for these habitat features and as a result, no negative impact on nesting birds is anticipated. All birds, with the exception of some 'pest species' which can be controlled under licence are protected while nesting.

9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Habitats

A. Improved Grassland

No mitigation measures for the loss of improved grassland are required. This habitat is botanically impoverished and extremely widespread in this locality.

B. Hedge

The hedge is to be retained as part of the proposals. No mitigation measures are therefore required.

C. Mature Trees

Any excavations for the possible installation of a septic tank must be located far enough away from the trees to avoid any damage to roost systems.

9.2 Protected Species

A. Badgers

If any excavations are left open overnight, escape ramps must be provided to allow badgers and other animals to escape.

B. Bats

Any lighting installed on the site must be on low level bollards and restricted to the access path on the eastern boundary of the site. The lights must be shaded from above to avoid illuminating tree canopies and from the west to avoid illumination of the hedge.

C. Nesting Birds

No potential nesting habitat will be affected by the proposals. No mitigation measures for nesting birds are therefore required.

D. Great Crested Newts

It is recommended that a site inspection of any areas of excavation is carried by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works commencing on any excavations. If any excavations are left open overnight, a thorough inspection of the excavation must be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works commencing the following morning to ensure that no animals have become trapped inside.

9.3 Biodiversity Gain

The following recommendations could be adopted within the development plans to deliver a level of Biodiversity gain on the site.

- Any planting scheme for the site should contain native species and/or species of value to wildlife. Lists of appropriate species are available from many sources, including the North Wales Wildlife Trust.
- The planting of any native tree species or fruit-bearing species will be of benefit to birds and invertebrates.

10 Legal Implications

There are currently no legal implications with regards to protected species and the proposed erection of three safari tents, car parking area, access path and septic tank installation.

11 Appendices

11. 1: Site photographic record



Above: The holly dominated southern section of hedge



Above: the mature trees on the western boundary.



Above: There is already a layer of hard-core under the proposed car parking area.

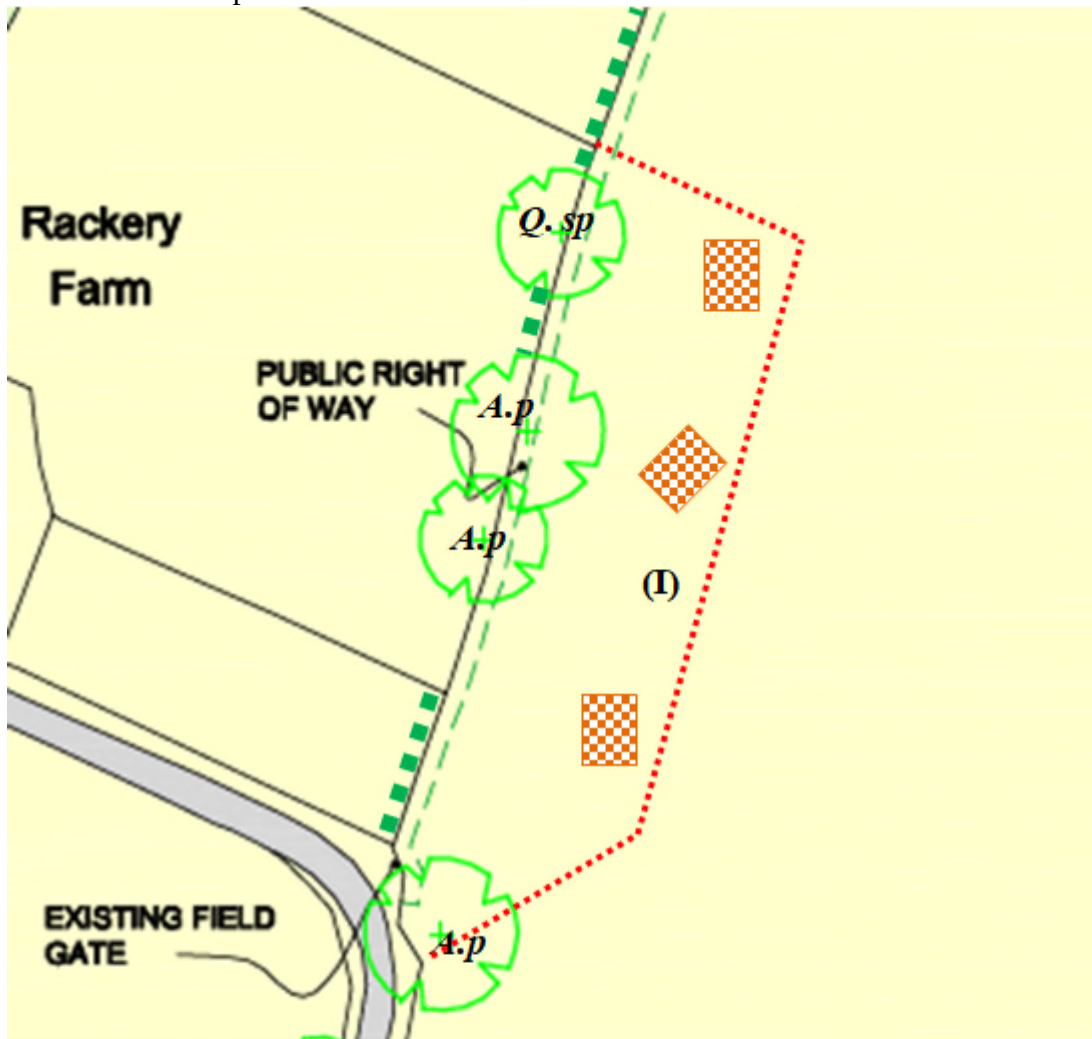


Above: The grazed, improved grassland of the site



Above: Other species such as this red dead nettle are only present as minor components.

11. 2: Phase 1 Habitat Map



Key

A.p *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Q.sp *Quercus spp*

(I) Improved Grassland

■ ■ ■ Hedge

..... Site Boundary

■ ■ ■ Location of tents

11.3: Review Table

Name	Task	Date
Chris Hall	Author	2/4/2018
Kate Williamson	Review	4/4/2018