



UNIT 7

ECOLOGICAL SITE WALKOVER

DATE	ECOLOGIST	APPROVED	VERSION	COMMENTS
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Enfys Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Village Bakery Ltd to undertake an ecological walkover of the proposed extension to Unit 7, Coed Aben Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate.
- 1.2 Village Bakery obtained planning permission in 2018 to construct a single storey store to the north of the main factory building off Coed Aben Road. This work was completed in 2018.
- 1.3 In August 2019 there was a fire within another of the Village Bakery bakeries on the industrial estate, leaving the company with an urgent need to be able to increase capacity within other production buildings in the Village Bakery Estate.
- 1.4 The proposal is to add an extension to the eastern side of the building. This will be attached to the new store building which was constructed in 2018.
- 1.5 As the site is a very small area, currently a gravel area, a full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is not needed, however an overview is provided below.
- 1.6 During 2015, Enfys Ecology Ltd carried out great crested newt (GCN) surveys of three ponds located approx. 85m (closest) to the east of the site and a medium population of GCN was recorded. Newt fencing was installed and trapping carried out of the large area of semi-improved grassland adjacent to the eastern boundary of the proposed development site during 2016 and 2017. This was in preparation for a new factory development by Village Bakery Ltd. During the trapping period, 420 GCN were translocated into the woodland to the south. This number showed that there was actually a large population of GCN present within the immediate area.
- 1.7 The aim of the ecological walkover survey was to gain baseline ecological data on the species and habitats present, identify any possible ecological constraints and recommend suitable mitigation and/or compensation strategies if appropriate. Particular regard was given to great crested newts and bats.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The site boundary and area surveyed is shown by the red boundary line in Figure 2.1. The aerial photo is dated from before the new building (which is to be extended) was constructed, the approximate location and the size of this building is shown in blue, with the proposed extension in red. The site is at the approximate grid reference SJ377 499.



FIGURE 2.1. SITE BOUNDARY AND SURVEY AREA SHOWN IN RED. (THIS IMAGE WAS TAKEN PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING – THIS IS INDICATIVELY REPRESENTED IN BLUE)
© GOOGLE 2019.

- 2.2 The site is located within the centre of Wrexham Industrial Estate, a large area of industrial units and open grassland with pockets of semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
- 2.3 The land to the east and north east is fenced off with GCN exclusion fencing, has already had GCN trapped out of the site and a destructive search carried out, and is now ready for development of a new bakery to commence on this area shortly. At the time of the survey the vegetation had started to recolonise the area in the main large field (north east), but large amounts of bare ground were still present. Beyond this area to the east is a large area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland with three ponds which have been improved for GCN.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Ecological walkover

A survey of the site was conducted by an experienced ecologist walking over the site on 2nd October 2019. A search for evidence and potential for protected species was carried out. The western side of the factory building was inspected externally for bat roost potential.

3.2 Limitations

The survey took place in October, which is outside of the optimal time of year for this type of survey. At this time most vegetation is not in flower and can be hard to identify, and most will have died back, however, as this site is limited to hardstanding it is considered that the survey still provides a valid assessment of the habitats present and the ecological impact that the proposed works may have.

4.0 Ecological Walkover Survey

4.1 The proposed plans are illustrated in figure 4.1

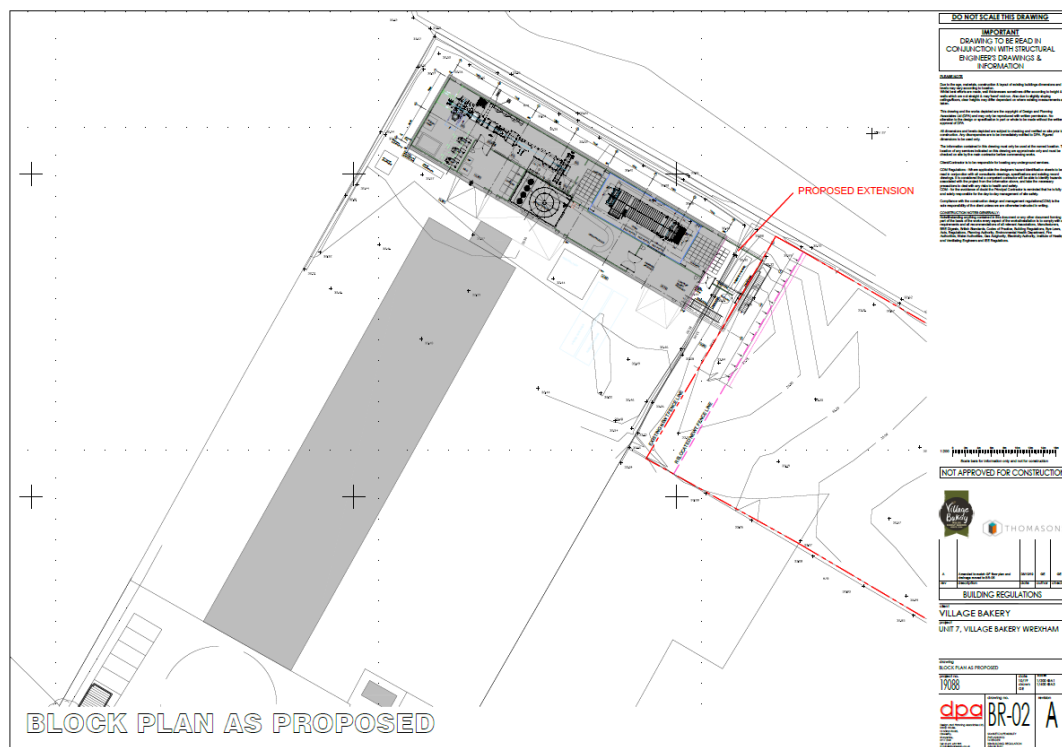


FIGURE 4.1. PROPOSED WORKS TO UNIT 7

- 4.2 The area to be developed is an extremely small area to the east of the current building, at the time of the survey this was laid to hardcore. The site is immediately adjacent to the newt fence, however, to allow for construction the newt fence will have to be relocated eastwards. At the time of the survey, the newt fence had been removed that morning, and was re-instated further eastwards at the end of the day.
- 4.3 The construction compound was located within the newt fenced area to the east of the site, this area is clear of newts, clearance works and a destructive search of the area was carried out in 2017.



PHOTO 4.1 – LOCATION OF NEW PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE EAST OF THE STORAGE SHED

- 4.4 The current storage shed comprises a large corrugated metal structure. No other vegetation will be affected by the proposed works.
- 4.5 The area surrounding the building to the north is Erlas Black woods which is being managed by North Wales Wildlife Trust on behalf of Village Bakery. To the east of the site is the GCN trapped out area, to the south and west of the site the area comprises the rest of the Village Bakery estate, including buildings and tarmac roads.

5.0 Discussion and Evaluation

5.1 The proposed plans are to construct an extension to the metal storage in line with other industrial units on site and metal cladding.

5.2 *Habitats*

5.2.1 There are no statutory or non-statutory habitats present on site. The proposed works will exclusively be carried out on existing hard standing/hardcore. Providing all works are carried out on existing bare ground and areas of tarmac there will be a very limited loss of biodiversity from the surrounding area.

5.3 *Amphibians*

5.3.1 There is a known large population of GCN within the surrounding woodlands and pond areas adjacent to the east of the site. At present there is no suitable breeding or foraging habitat for amphibians, including GCN, are present on the proposed development site. The construction of the original storage shed have already been mentioned in the amended GCN licence for the site (73736d:OTH:EPS:2018), this can be updated with the proposed extension.

5.3.2 As all works are to be carried out on existing bare ground which provides no foraging or breeding potential for GCN, and any materials which need to be stored will be stored on pallets on the tarmac area the risk to GCN is low. Due to the construction design (limited to a slab, portal frame and cladding) and the short period of construction (approx. 1 month) works can commence without the need for additional newt fences. Reasonable avoidance measures as laid out in 5.9 must be followed.

5.3.3 Any further alterations to the GCN fence will be carried out under the supervision of a GCN licenced ecologist, following a search of the area, and a toolbox talk to all those involved.

5.3.4 As the storage area is within the GCN excluded area, a toolbox talk is to be provided to all workers covering the ecology of great crested newts and legislation. The fence is currently monitored weekly by Village Bakery, during the period of construction, a daily check of the newt fence in the immediate vicinity of the works (ie the fence surrounding the south west section of the main GCN site) will be required, and a log maintained. At present access to the build area is gained by passing over the newt fence, this must be reinstated every evening, and a log maintained. It is imperative to install newt gutters as soon as possible to allow for easier access into the site.

5.4 *Bats*

5.4.1 The proposed extensions will tie into the existing storage building on the eastern side. The building has negligible potential for roosting bats as its walls and roof are constructed from

metal and the only gaps present at the eaves were sealed internally. Therefore the works to the building will not have an impact on bats.

- 5.4.2 Bats may use the trees in Erlas Black woodland to the north as a roosting and foraging habitat. The development itself will not affect these habitats, however to reduce the impact of any light spillage on foraging and commuting bats along this boundary during the construction and post construction phases of the development, light levels should be minimised along this boundary, if lights are to be erected on the buildings this should be limited to the south side away from the northern boundary. Light spillage can be minimised through the types of light used, the orientation of the lights and use of accessories to direct the light away from the sensitive areas.

5.5 *Birds*

- 5.5.1 There is no suitable habitat on the proposed site for breeding birds, therefore the proposed works are unlikely to affect breeding birds within the area. Additionally, no vegetation clearance is due to take place, therefore no nesting birds will be affected within these habitats.
- 5.5.2 If any additional works are required in Erlas Black wood this should be carried out outside of the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a search for nesting birds should be conducted prior to works commencing, if any nests are found or the area cannot be adequately searched; all activity must stop until the birds have fledged or the nesting period has ended.

5.6 *Otter and water vole*

- 5.6.1 Otter are known to be present within the network of ditches and waterways within Wrexham Industrial Estate. There are no ditches or streams within the near vicinity of the site and therefore the proposed work poses no risk to otter or water vole.

5.7 *Badger*

- 5.7.1 There is a large known active badger sett within the near vicinity of the site boundary (over 30m away) and so it must be assumed that badgers may visit the site and surrounding area for foraging.
- 5.7.2 To prevent any harm to foraging badgers during the works all excavations should be covered at night or a suitable method of escape should be provided, for example a secured scaffold board to enable trapped badgers to climb out of the footings/holes.

5.8 *Other protected species*

5.8.1 There was no evidence or potential for other protected species with the site or immediate area.

5.9 *Reasonable avoidance measures*

5.9.1 To ensure that no protected species are adversely affected during the construction works, Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be in place throughout the duration of the proposed works.

- Suitable and appropriate measures or precautions should be taken to avoid any issues relating to fuel spillage. This could involve the use of spill kits (absorbent materials) on site.
- Any excavations resulting in areas of bare soil within 30m of any identified watercourse and which may drain into it should be covered with sheeting at all times when not actively being worked on, in order to prevent eroded material being carried into the watercourse
- Storage of plant or machinery should be restricted as much as practical to hardstanding areas of the site, once created.
- Any chemical and/or fuels on site must be stored within a locked, sealed and bunded container, ideally at the furthest extremity away from the river corridor.
- Refuelling of machinery/vehicles should occur in one location and a drip tray should always be used.
- All excavations should be covered at night or a suitable method of escape should be provided, for example a secured scaffold board to enable trapped otters to climb out of the footings/holes.

Lighting

- Light spill should be avoided along the northern boundary at all times during the construction works. Any security lighting should be on a timer to prevent over lighting, and be faced downwards to prevent light spill onto nearby habitats.

At All Times

- If at any point in the works any protected species or evidence thereof is found all works in the vicinity of the sighting and watercourse must immediately cease, and an ecologist be called. The ecologist will review the situation and advise on further action.

6.0 References and useful Information Sources

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment*. IEEM.

JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a technique for environmental audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Natural Resources Wales. 2017. *Spatial Action Plan for Great Crested Newts in Wrexham A Manual for Achieving Favourable Conservation Status* Report No77.

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