



FORMER CAPARO WIRE FACTORY

ECOLOGICAL SITE WALKOVER

DATE	ECOLOGIST	APPROVED	VERSION	COMMENTS
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Enfys Report Ref: EE/410/LB

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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 former Caparo wire factory site, Ash Road South, Wrexham Industrial Estate.
- 1.2 The former factory site comprised a large metal industrial building, areas of concrete hard standing, amenity grassland, semi-improved grassland and scrub vegetation. Village Bakery Ltd have purchased the site and propose to reinstate the factory, add four small extensions onto the existing building, install silos in two areas and create an area for parking, both within the existing concrete yard area (Figure 1.1). A perimeter fence will also be erected around the site on existing hard standing and amenity grassland.
- 1.3 A report by Natural Resources Wales (Natural Resources Wales, 2017) states that '*Wrexham County Borough is a stronghold of great crested newts within the UK. The lowland parts of Wrexham have a particularly high density of suitable ponds and the pondscape of northeast Wales has been identified as being of European importance*'.
- 1.4 During 2015, Enfys Ecology Ltd carried out great crested newt (GCN) surveys of three ponds located approx. 120m to the south west 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 western boundary of the former factory 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.
- 1.5 The area of grassland immediately to the south of the former Caparo wire site was excluded from the newt fenced area and was retained as important habitat for GCN.
- 1.6 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.

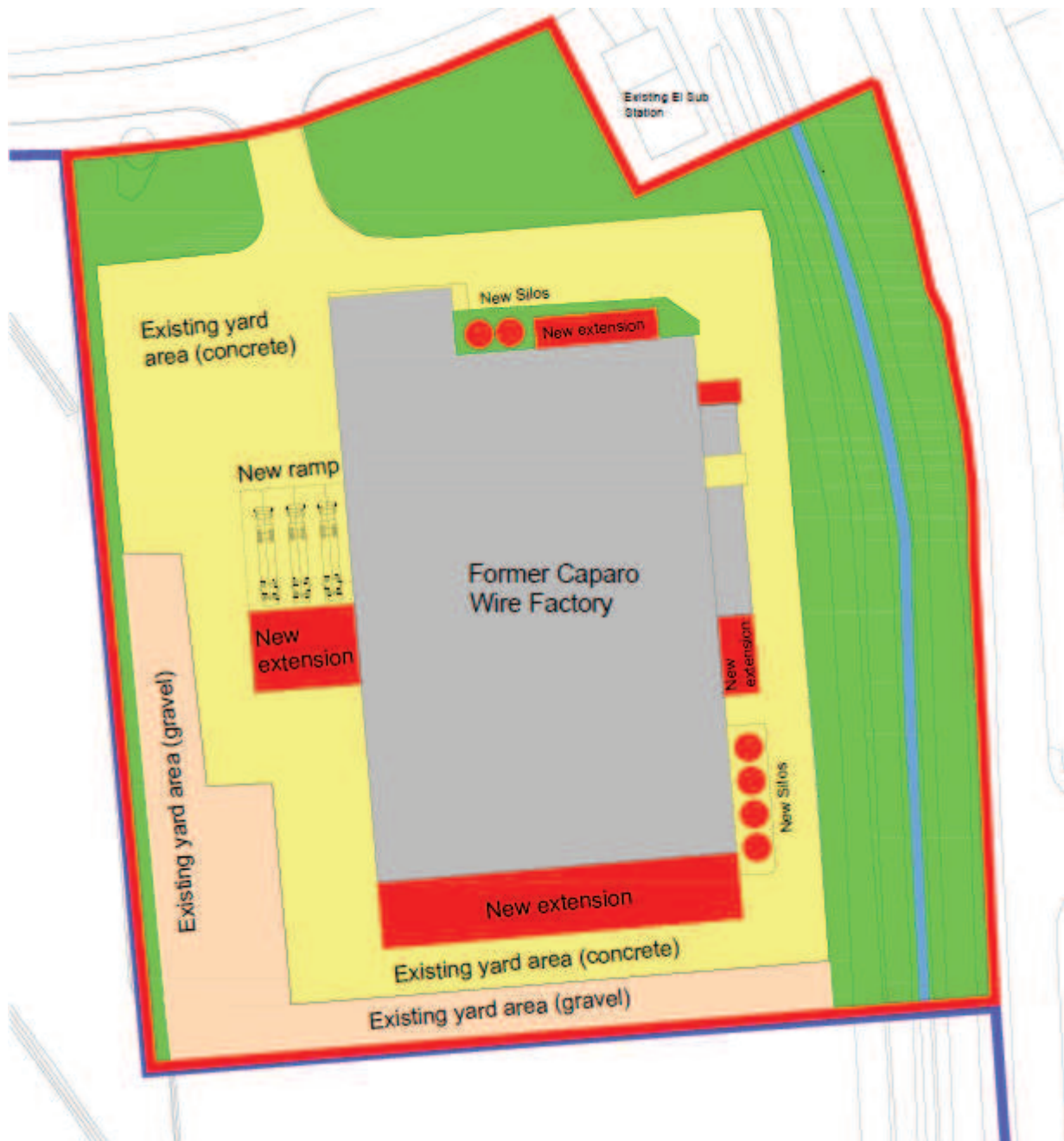


FIGURE 1.1. PROPOSED WORKS TO THE FORMER CAPARO WIRE FACTORY. PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AND SILOS ARE SHOWN IN RED.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The site boundary and area surveyed is shown by the red boundary line in Figure 2.1.
- 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 Prior to summer 2017, the land to the south and west of the site, was semi-improved grassland (as shown in Figure 2.1), however this area (apart from the area immediately to the south of the site) was vegetation and soil stripped in anticipation for a new factory development. At the time of survey this area was bare ground. Beyond this area to the south and west is a large area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland.



FIGURE 2.1. SITE BOUNDARY AND SURVEY AREA SHOWN IN RED. (THIS IMAGE WAS TAKEN PRIOR TO 2017 AND DOES NOT ACCURATELY REPRESENT WHAT IS ON THE GROUND AT PRESENT) © GOOGLE 2017.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A survey of the site was conducted by an experienced ecologist walking over the site on 5th December 2017. A search for evidence and potential for protected species was carried out and the habitats present classified into a series of categories according to the Phase 1 habitat standard methodology (JNCC 2010). The former factory building was inspected externally for bat roost potential.

3.2 *Limitations*

The survey took place in December, 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. The results of this survey should therefore be assessed with these considerations in mind. As the site was predominantly hard standing and amenity grassland, 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 Habitat Survey

4.1 *Habitat Types*

4.1.1 A Phase 1 habitat map of the site is provided in Figure 4.1 and a description of the habitats are provided below. Photographs of the site are included within the text.

4.1.2 The following standard Phase 1 habitat and feature types were recorded within the site (with their alphanumeric codes):

- A2.1 – Dense/continuous scrub
- A2.2 – Scattered Scrub
- A3.1 – Scattered Broadleaved Trees
- G2 – Running Water
- J1.2 – Amenity Grassland
- J3.6 – Buildings
- J4 – Bare Ground
- Hard Standing

The non-standard Phase 1 habitat type 'hard standing' has been used to show the access road and concreted areas. Semi-improved grassland (B6) and newt fencing present adjacent to the site have also been mapped.

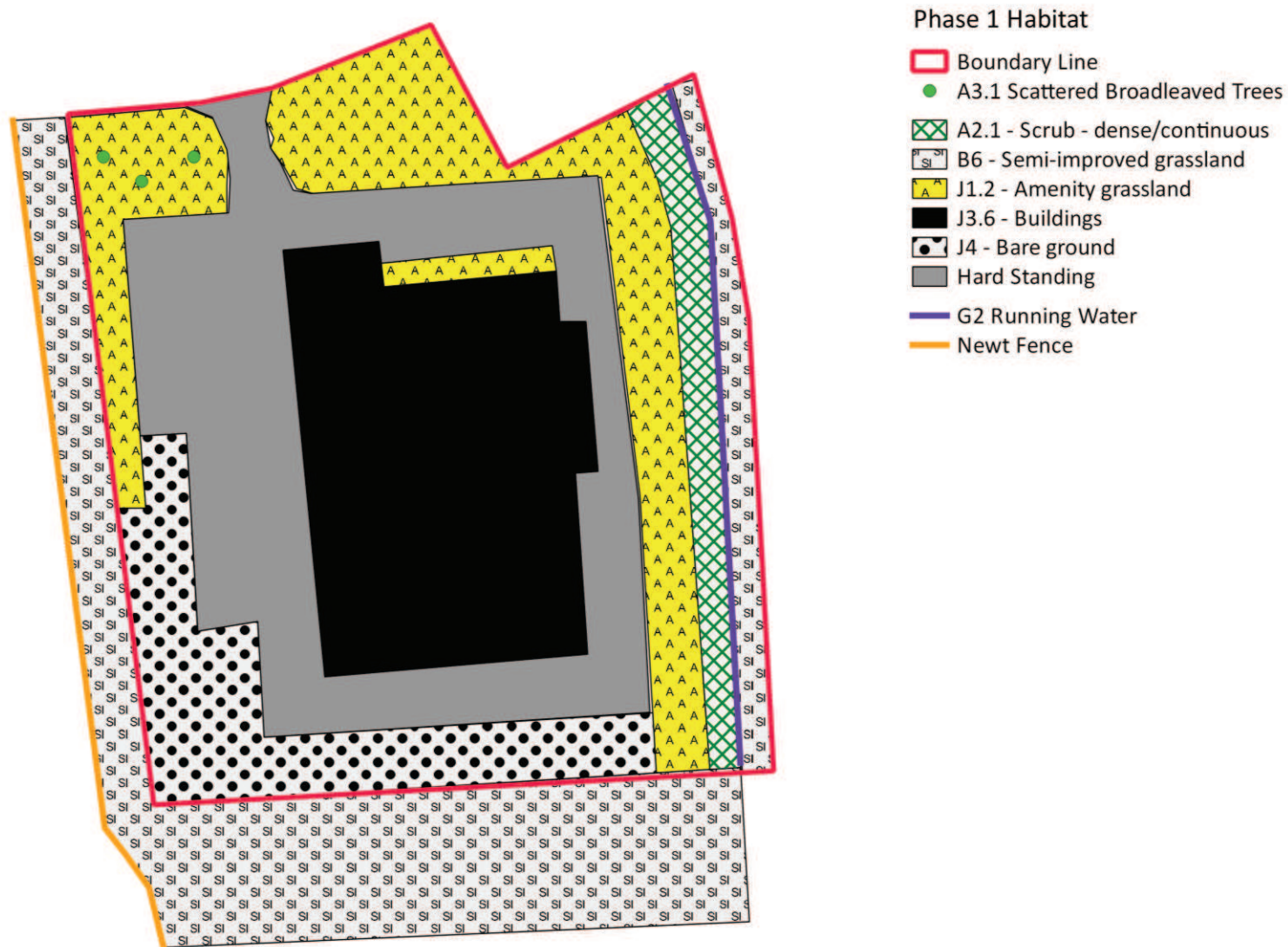


FIGURE 4.1. PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP OF SURVEY AREA

4.2 *Habitat Descriptions*

- 4.2.1 The former factory building comprised a large corrugated metal structure with a small brick section on the northern side. The main roofs were pitched with a small lean to section on the eastern side of the building. There were a number of standard sized entrance doors on all sides of the building and two large delivery entrances with metal shutters on the western side. There was a row of five large vents at the rear of the building to the south.



PHOTO 4.1 & 4.2. EASTERN AND WESTERN SIDES OF THE FACTORY BUILDING

- 4.2.2 The area immediately surrounding the building predominantly comprised a concrete yard, which had no vegetation growing up through it. Along the southern boundary, adjacent to the area of semi-improved grassland and part way up the western boundary was an area of bare ground (mud). This was an area hard core, which had been recently excavated. On the area of concrete, were several large piles of hard-core, which looked to have been from the excavations.



PHOTO 4.3. SOUTH WESTERN CORNER OF THE SITE SHOWING BARE GROUND

- 4.2.3 Running along the north side of the building was a small strip of amenity grassland followed by concrete hard standing and further amenity grassland along the northern boundary of the site. The amenity grassland areas looked to be regularly mown short.



PHOTO 4.4. AMENITY GRASSLAND ALONG NORTHERN SIDE OF THE BUILDING

- 4.2.4 Beyond the concrete, to the east of the site, was a strip of amenity grassland, continuous scrub including bramble, a ditch with running water and semi-improved grassland before reaching the road.



PHOTO 4.5. EASTERN SIDE OF SITE

- 4.2.5 The western boundary, beyond the concrete and bare ground, was a narrow bank of amenity grassland to the north and bare ground to the south. At the top of the bank was the boundary

fence, with a small strip of long semi-improved grassland before reaching the newt fencing surrounding the adjacent site.



PHOTO 4.6. WESTERN SIDE OF SITE LOOKING SOUTHWARDS

- 4.2.6 At the time of survey, the bare ground to the south of the site had standing water, which was approx. 10cm deep. There was no vegetation present within the standing water. The bare ground bordered a large area of long semi-improved grassland to the south of the site boundary. There was no physical boundary between these two areas, however the grassland area was approx. 1m higher with exposed earth along the edge.



PHOTO 4.8. SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

5.0 Discussion and Evaluation

5.1 The proposed plans are to reinstate the factory, add four small extensions onto the existing building, install silos in two areas and create an area for parking. A perimeter fence will also be erected within amenity grassland along the eastern boundary and existing hard standing/bare ground along the southern boundary, which will tie into an existing fence along the western boundary.

5.2 *Habitats*

5.2.1 There are no protected or notable habitats present on site. The proposed works will exclusively be carried out on existing hard standing and bare ground (previously gravel) and amenity grassland. The extension onto the northern end of the building will be on a small isolated area of amenity grassland, which will therefore be lost.

5.3 *Amphibians*

5.3.1 There is a known large population of GCN within the semi-improved grassland areas adjacent to the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the site. Apart from the small area of amenity grassland along the northern side of the building, which will be lost as part of the development, and the erection of the perimeter fence along amenity grassland on the eastern boundary, all other proposed works are to be on existing concrete or bare ground (previously gravel). The small area of amenity grassland, which is to be lost, was mown short and was isolated from further areas of grassland by hard standing. This area of short amenity grassland would not provide suitable foraging habitat for GCN and therefore its loss will not result in the loss of suitable GCN habitat.

5.3.2 As all works are to be carried out on existing hard standing, bare ground (previously gravel) and amenity grassland, GCN will not be present within these areas. To prevent GCN from moving into the area during the development works, a temporary newt fence will be erected around the site prior to works commencing until all works are complete. The fence will be installed using Reasonable Avoidance Measures along the boundary between the hard standing/amenity grassland and semi-improved grassland areas with the route to be agreed by a suitably qualified ecologist. A suitably qualified ecologist will be present during the newt fence installation and will undertake a fingertip search prior to fencing works commencing. Installing the newt fencing on the boundary between the hard standing/amenity grassland and semi-improved grassland and using Reasonable Avoidance Measures will minimise the risk of harming or disturbing GCN. An EPS licence will therefore not be required.

5.3.3 The current newt fence, which is preventing newts from accessing to the east of the site (where larger scale plans are proposed in the future) will be maintained with regular checks and a log of visits kept to be available for inspection by NRW.

5.4 *Bats*

5.4.1 The proposed extensions will tie into the existing factory building on all four sides. The building has negligible potential for roosting bats as its walls and roof are constructed from metal apart from a small area of wall constructed from brick. The temperature variation within potential roosting spaces would be too great for it to be suitable for bats. Therefore the works to the building will not have an impact on bats.

5.4.2 Bats may use the ditch and scrub vegetation along the eastern boundary as commuting 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. This can be implemented 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 Due to the time of the year no nesting birds were seen during the survey, however the roof of the existing building may be used during the nesting season. It is not known if the proposed extensions will affect the roof of the existing building, however if this is the case, works to the roof should ideally take place outside the bird breeding 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.

5.5.2 No vegetation clearance is due to take place, therefore no nesting birds will be affected within these habitats.

5.6 *Otter*

5.6.1 Otter are known to be present within the network of ditches and waterways within Wrexham Industrial Estate. The ditch along the eastern boundary has limited suitability for otters with limited suitable habitat available for a holt or lying up areas. As the territory for otters is so large, it is likely that otters move through the area but it is unlikely that they would spend large periods of time here; when they are present, it is likely to be in low numbers.

5.6.2 The risk of otters being present during the construction works is considered to be low, however as the presence during the works cannot be ruled out a precautionary approach needs to be adopted. Reasonable avoidance measures should be followed at all times to ensure that no otters are adversely affected during the construction works.

- Prior to works commencing fencing should be erected along the edge of the amenity grassland, along the eastern boundary to protect the ditch area from the works. The

planned newt fencing along this section will fulfil this requirement. This area shall be off limits to site workers at all times, except for the purpose of undertaking specific, pre agreed works.

- Any development near to water has an associated risk of pollutants that could negatively impact water quality and aquatic habitat and species. It is critical that all works should prevent any pollution of the water course. This is not limited to chemical pollutants, and includes runoff water, particularly if carrying significant amounts of soil or other suspended solids.
- 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 the 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, prior to this plant or machinery should be stored off site as far as is practicable.
- 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 at the furthest extremity away from the river corridor, 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 eastern 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 a otter 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.

5.7 Badger

5.7.1 There is a large known active badger sett approx. 200m to the south west of the site 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.

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.

UK BAP 2007 Available: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5705>