

THE TYRER PARTNERSHIP



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**Moor Cottage, off Wrexham Road, Whitechurch, Shropshire, SY13 3AD
(Grid Reference SJ 5092 4134)**

Ecological Scoping Survey

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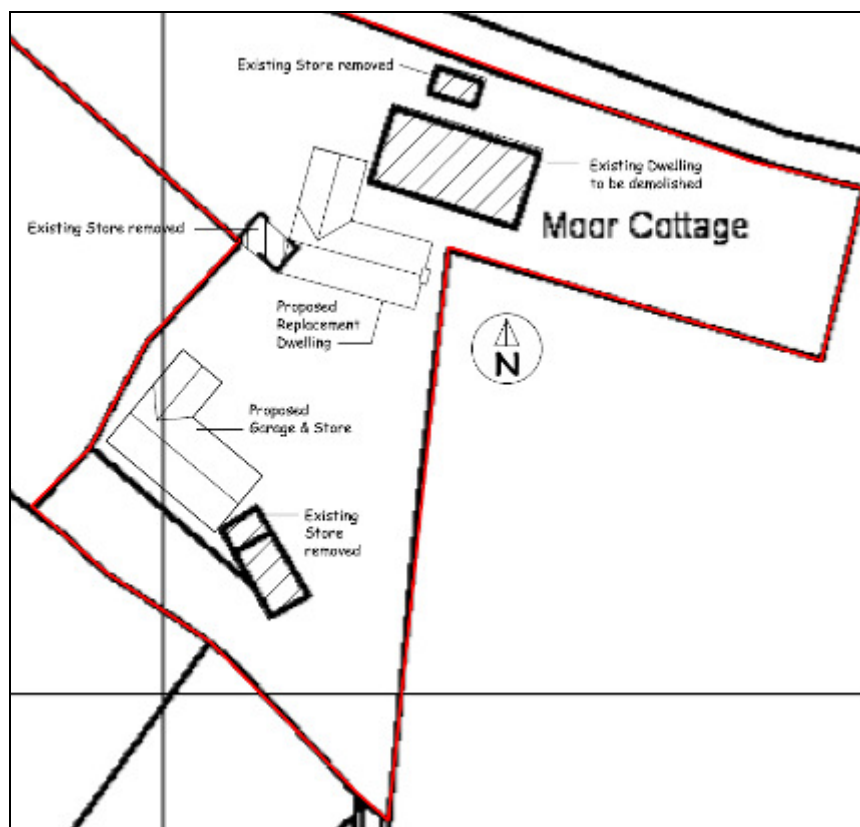
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APPENDIX 1 - Site Photographs

1.0 Introduction & Reason for Survey

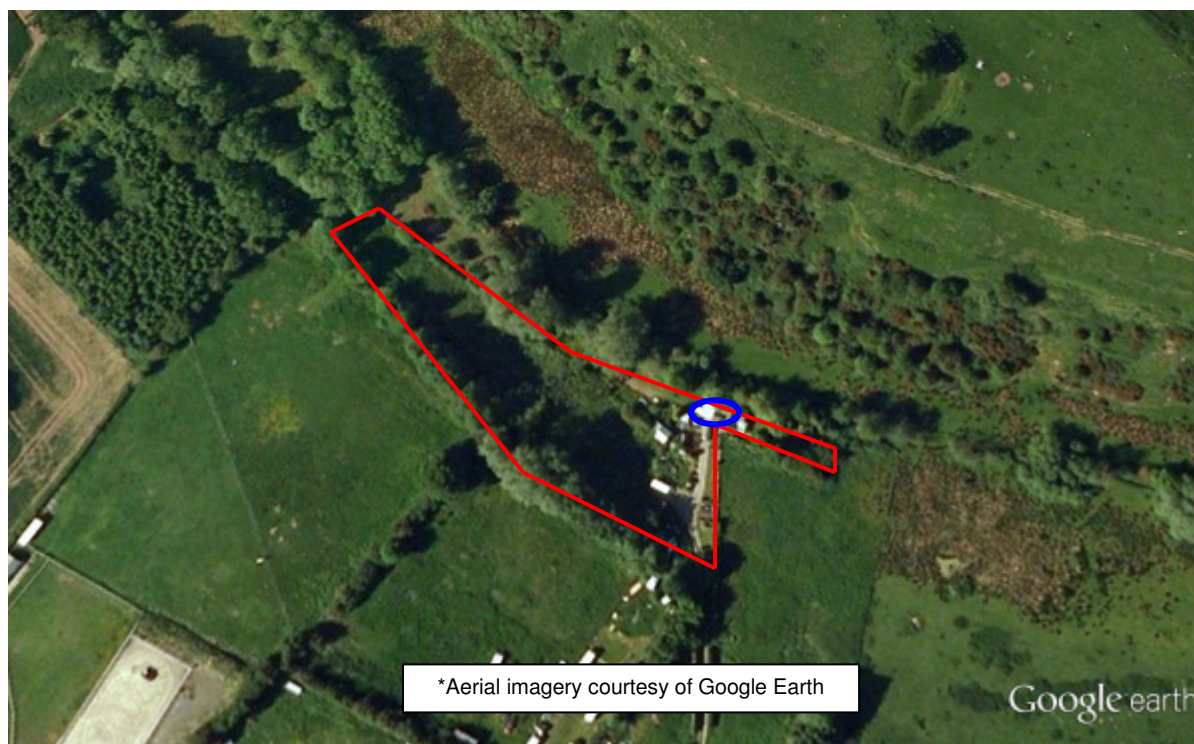
- 1.1 As part of a proposed Planning Application at Moor Cottage, Whitchurch, an ecological scoping survey was undertaken. It is understood that the proposals for the site involve the demolition of an existing dwelling and storage containers, followed by the construction of a new residential dwelling and garage. Ecological surveys, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present, are generally required as part of the Local Authority's Planning Policies, therefore, Philip Kelsall Associates on behalf of the site owner commissioned the survey and report.



Site plan showing existing buildings to be demolished and proposed replacement dwelling & garage

- 1.2 The basic objective of the survey was to ascertain the nature of the land and building and where possible obtain information on any sensitive wildlife habitats or species that may be present and if so if they will be affected by the development of the site or by the conversion of the farm buildings. To achieve this objective the survey aimed to identify/assess any of the following:
- The presence of species with non-statutory protection
 - The presence/potential presence of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)
 - Identify any species or habitats that require special consideration during the development.

If the habitat was found to be suitable for the aforementioned species or signs of use were found then more detailed surveys would be recommended. If bats or Great crested newts were subsequently found during those detailed surveys and may be affected by the development proposals then a European Protected Species Licence would be required to proceed with the development.



Approximate site boundaries and dwelling within the surrounding habitat

2.0 UK Biodiversity Plans

- 2.1 The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan lists priority species/habitats which might potentially use a given site, based upon the site visit there is the potential for a number of UK priority species/groups to be present i.e. Bats (*Microchiroptera*), West European hedgehog (*Erinaceous europaeus*), Common Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), Hedge accentor (*Prunella modularis*), Tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*) Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) although if such species were present most would be confined to the boundary hedgerow/trees.
- 2.2 The potential presence of these species is not necessarily based upon actual observations, but on an assessment of the nature of the site and surrounding habitat combined with existing population distribution data for the named species. Moreover, species listed above are primarily based upon the immediately contiguous habitat and its direct ecological relationship with the site, i.e. edge habitats and connected boundary features.

- 2.3 Two habitat action plans that meet the criteria listed within the UK Biodiversity list of priority habitats have been identified at the site i.e. Rivers & Streams: this habitat type includes a very wide range of types, encompassing all natural and near-natural running waters in the UK (i.e. with features and processes that resemble those in 'natural' systems). These range from torrential mountain streams to meandering lowland rivers. Hedgerows: The definition of this priority habitat has been amended from the pre-existing Habitat Action Plan for ancient and/or species rich hedgerows. A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less than 20m wide (Bickmore, 2002). Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow.

3.0 Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.1 LBAP are simply a way of encouraging people to work together and deliver a programme of continuing action for biodiversity at a local level. They set out practical steps that aim to:
- help protect biodiversity
 - enhance and improve biodiversity where possible, and
 - promote biodiversity at a local level
- 3.2 The Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) lists key local species/habitats considered to be rare or declining in the area. Some may be of national concern, while others may only be locally rare. Some are statutorily protected, although the great majority are not. Site related Habitat Action Plans are *Hedgerows* for which the following extract is relevant:-

1 Objectives and Targets

1.1 Objectives

- A. Ensure no further net loss of hedgerows and their associated features
- B. Increase the extent of hedgerows through new planting or re-planting
- C. Enhance the habitat value of hedgerows and their associated features through good management practices
- D. Improve knowledge of hedgerows in Shropshire through survey, research and monitoring
- E. Increase awareness of the importance of hedgerows

- 3.3 Species Action Plans relevant to the site include Dipper, Great Crested Newts, water vole and generic bird species. See extracts below:-

1 Objectives and Targets

1.1 Objectives

- A. In the short term, maintain existing populations and range of Dipper in Shropshire.
- B. In the longer term, reverse the decline in Dipper population, and restore its previous population and range
- C. Establish and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the distribution, status and ecological requirements of Dippers in Shropshire through research, survey and monitoring.
- D. Utilise Dipper distribution data to assess the water quality in streams and rivers
- E. Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of Dipper

1 Objectives and Targets

1.1 Objectives

- A. Conserve and maintain existing populations of great crested newts ensuring no further loss or fragmentation.
- B. Enhance the size and range of newt colonies through the restoration or creation of areas of open water near existing populations.
- C. Establish and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the distribution, status and ecological requirements of great crested newts in Shropshire through research, survey and monitoring.
- D. Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of the great crested newt.

Habitat / Species	Action Code	Action text	Location of action	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Assisting
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 01	Prepare Action Plan to increase area of wetland and suitable breeding habitat for Curlew and Snipe at Rhos Fiddle by 2015.	Rhos Fiddle	2006	2015	SWT	SOS
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 02	Establish monitoring arrangements to record the population, population change, breeding success and habitat usage for all BAP and PSA Target Bird Species on all farms covered by any Agri-environment scheme in Shropshire, and measure the effectiveness of such schemes.	Shropshire	2006	2007	NE	
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 03	Monitor population, population change, breeding success and habitat usage for all BAP priority bird species on all CSS & ESA Farms in Shropshire until 2015.	Shropshire	2006	2015	NE	FWAG, RS, SOS, AONB, SWT, UOWG
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 04	Publish an Annual Monitoring Report on the population, population change, breeding success and habitat usage for all BAP and PSA Target Bird Species on all farms covered by any Agri-environment scheme in Shropshire, and the effectiveness of such schemes.	Shropshire	2006	2015	NE	
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 05	Publish Annual County Bird Report.	Shropshire	2006	2015	SOS	
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 06	Produce Maps showing Distribution and Change in Distribution over previous 20 years (following repeated Fieldwork for Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 - 11).	Shropshire	2006	2014	SOS	
Generic Birds	SHR BRD AP 07	Ensure that the needs of priority bird species are incorporated into the AONB Management Plan, until 2015.	Shropshire	2006	2015	AONB	SCC

- 3.4 The potential presence of these species is not necessarily based upon actual observations but on an assessment of the nature of the building, immediate and surrounding habitat combined with existing population distribution data for the named species.

****Present-** based on the location of the site it is geographically feasible in relation to population distributions along with the habitat features/attributes for the site to be suitable for or at least partially fulfil the basic requirements of the named species as part of a wider ecological network.

4.0 Protected Species in Shropshire

- 4.1 Up to ten bat species have been regularly recorded in Shropshire most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Shropshire is reflected throughout the UK. All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2010 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the existing Planning Policy Guidelines. (PPG's) In relation to wildlife PPG 9 was one of the documents to which Planning Authorities referred to, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present and will be affected by a development for which a Planning application seeks consent. The aims of the NPPF in relation to species and habitats are that it places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage on the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

4.3 This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity' in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependant upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles

If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused

4.4 Use of Buildings by Bats

- a) Summer breeding roost.
- b) Hibernation.
- c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to "*a breeding site or resting place of such an animal*" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

4.5 Great crested newts are present within many parts of the Shropshire landscape and although many ponds have been lost, the County still remains a stronghold for this species; Additionally, records are present within the vicinity and this species has been located 785 metres of the site (Source: NBN Gateway). GCN are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). It is illegal to catch, possess or handle GCN without a licence and it is also illegal to cause them harm or death, or to disturb their habitat in any way. Water voles, are legally protected in Britain and in 1998 were included on Schedule 5, Section 9 (4) a & b of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are also recorded where favourable habitat exists within the region.

- 4.6 Badgers are frequently recorded within the County, notably in farmland and woodland habitat; the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates past badger legislation and, in addition to protecting the animal itself, makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct badger setts. Furthermore, records of badger are held by the NBN Gateway and this species have been located 385 metres east from Moor Cottage.
- 4.7 The water vole was once a familiar sight on waterways and ponds throughout England, however, it has suffered one of the most catastrophic declines of any British mammal this century and its widespread survival is now seriously threatened. This decline has been most rapid in the last 30 years, and a recent survey showed that the species has been lost from almost 90% of the sites where it occurred earlier this century. Many remaining populations are now severely fragmented and their survival must be in doubt. The reasons for this decline are complex but certainly involve a combination of loss and fragmentation of bank side vegetation, altered riparian management and, perhaps critically, the introduction and spread of the mink, an effective predator of water voles.
- Water voles are legally protected in Britain and in 1998 were included on Schedule 5, Section 9 (4) a & b of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), this protection has recently been extended (6th April 2008), so the water vole is now fully protected under Section 9. Water voles are recorded where favourable habitat exists within the region with the closest records of this species located 570 kilometres south along Red Brook, and 1 kilometre south east along the Shropshire Union Canal (Source: NBN Gateway).
- 4.8 The number of breeding barn owls within Shropshire appears to be relatively stable but as throughout most of the UK they are constantly under threat from loss of habitat and nesting opportunities. Barn owls (*Tyto alba*) are a specially protected as a Schedule 1 Part 1 species under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended), which gives protection to barn owls at all times. The main points in relation to nest sites are: "It is offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them at or near a nest containing eggs or young. Intentionally damage or destroy a barn owl nest whilst in use or being prepared for use. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb dependant young of a wild barn owl."
- 4.9 The potential presence of reptiles at the site, particularly rare UK species, is considered to be low, and no records of such species are present within 10 kilometres (Source: NBN Gateway), but where areas of rough grassland, scrub and garden waste are present then the potential for species such as grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) or slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) cannot definitively be ruled out, both species are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (As amended)

Guidance for Local Authorities: Extract from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Circular 06/2005

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision."

5.0 Survey Methodology

- 5.1 The daytime survey was conducted on 02nd December 2014 by Mrs K Wilding who is registered as a Class 2 Natural England bat licence holder and is an accredited agent on a Natural England barn owl licence. The building that is due to be demolished was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats and if evidence of use was present. A loft space is present which was searched for signs of use, which mainly includes droppings or remains of prey items. The exterior elevations were investigated, with the aid of close focussing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.
- 5.2 The optimum time to investigate buildings for evidence of a bat roost is May – August, however that is not to say they cannot be inspected and assessed outside of that time and frequently the results can be conclusive, which can save time and expense for Planning Applicants but it should be borne in mind that equally the inspection can be inconclusive. If evidence of bat use, potential for a bat roost was found or the results of the survey were inconclusive then recommendations would indicate the requirement for nocturnal surveys to be undertaken at the site during the breeding season of bats. (May – August)
- 5.3 **NB: Where more detailed surveys for protected species are recommended, following a daytime survey, then the Local Planning Authority, on the advice of their ecological advisor, are unlikely to determine an application until such time that all relevant information is gathered, i.e. until all additional survey work has been completed. The advice that is provided by the ecological advisor is also in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) Therefore it would be prudent to make enquiries to the relevant departmental Planning Officer or their ecological advisor before submitting a Planning Application which includes a report that recommends more detailed surveys.**
- 5.4 A number of factors are used for the bat survey methodology, which include:-
- Knowledge of bat species relevant to the site location
 - Nature of the immediate and surrounding habitat in relation to foraging opportunities
 - Condition of the building
 - Presence/absence of roost potential
 - Value of roost potential – if present
- Following the survey the results, conclusions and recommendations are based upon surveyor experience and knowledge of bat ecology.
- 5.5 The buildings were inspected internally and externally for signs of nesting birds, particularly barn owls, which would include pellets, discarded feathers or typical splashes of white faeces on or around roosting places.
- 5.6 A 'walkover' of the land close to and beyond the property to a distance of approximately 200 metres was conducted which included a search for typical signs of badger activity which includes digging, occupied setts, 'runs' leading to and from a sett or the existence of latrines or 'snuffle' holes where badgers have foraged in the ground. A map and field search was undertaken in relation to the presence of ponds or ditches that may support Great crested newts or water voles and the land assessed in relation to flora. The information gathered would then be used to establish if more detailed surveys are required.

6.0 Constraints

- 6.1 The daytime survey was conducted during the hibernation season of bats, which is outside of the optimum time to undertake such surveys, and as a result the presence of bat droppings on external elevations, tends to be more unlikely. Although outside of the main barn owl breeding season; signs of use by this species is generally quite obvious and if left undisturbed can still be present after many years following deposition. In relation to assessing the level of bat roost and nesting bird potential a full and unrestricted investigation of buildings was achievable.
- 6.2 The survey took place during a month when Great crested newts are outside of their active season and are within their hibernation period. Badgers and water voles are outside of their breeding season however, are still active although to a lesser degree, and field signs of the latter two species can still be found; birds will have completed their nesting season but it is always possible to locate historic use within buildings.
- 6.3 At the time of the survey it was possible to conduct an overall assessment of the land for its potential to support vegetation of ecological importance.
- 6.4 Taking into consideration the above it is considered that there were no significant survey constraints that would prevent the gathering of information on which to base conclusions and recommendations.

7.0 Site Description

- 7.1 Moor Cottage is set back off Wrexham Road, reached via private access track and is located within a rural environment approximately 3.40 kilometres west of Whitchurch town centre (grid reference SJ 50924134). The building is set within its own extensive grounds and the immediate habitat is represented by ornamental, semi mature and mature tree specimens, which form linear features extending to further favourable habitat located north west of the site within Iscoyd Park. Furthermore, the plot runs adjacent to Red Brook which also provides an important wildlife corridor with typical riparian habitats noted alongside its banks.
- 7.2 Within the extending habitat extensive open pasture and agricultural land is present to all aspects of the site; the combination of open pasture and associated field margins are considered as being of high value hunting habitat for barn owls. The previously mentioned habitats are favourable for most of the species for which the survey was undertaken. Where such habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats and barn owls, increases given that roost/nesting opportunities are available and vice versa.



Approximate location of Moor Cottage within the immediate & extending landscape

8.0 Daytime Results

Bats

The building that is proposed for demolition is currently occupied by the site owner and on the day of the survey was found to be in a reasonable condition; however, extensive modernisation and refurbishment work is required to bring the building in line with today's current energy efficient standards and to suit the requirements of a modern day family home. The dwelling is of typical design for a cottage of its era, and is of brick construction, painted white with a slate multi pitch roof; a section of which to the east appears to have been replaced in recent years. An adjoining flat roof garage attaches to the structure at the west elevation of the property.

During the interior inspection the loft space was found to be of complex design replicating the external roof construction; it was found to be to maximum dimensions of 5 metres long x 6 metres wide x between 0.5 – 1.75 metres high. Therefore, due to the layout and restrictive design it offers no realistic potential for the loft dwelling Brown Long Eared bat, (*Plecotus auritus*), despite the immediate and extending habitat offering potential for this bat species specific foraging requirements, furthermore no recent evidence of use by this bat species was observed within the loft during the daytime inspection.

Whilst conducting the inspection it was noted that bitumen roof lining is present beneath the roof slate, which will significantly increase potential for crevice dwelling bats, such as the Pipistrelle bat, (*Pipistrellus*) whereby they often roost between the two materials, provided that external access is available. The breeding roosts of Pipistrelle bats are proportionally higher in occupied residential dwellings where the warm, dry conditions favour the requirements of a maternity colony but other structures are also used, especially for hibernation or by male bats outside of that time as they do not need the same conditions as a maternity colony.

Moor Cottage, off Wrexham Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3AD

Ecological Scoping Survey

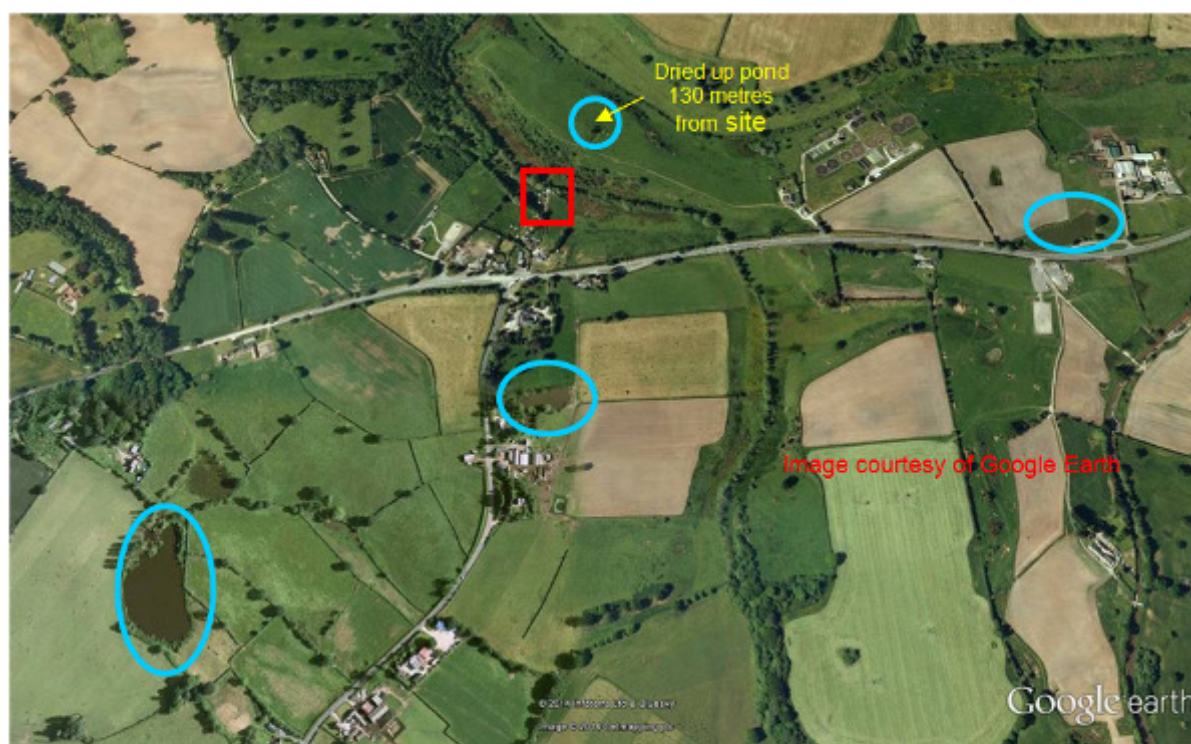
The external inspection revealed typical places favoured by crevice dwelling bats such as roof slates, roof verges, soffits boards and timber cladding are well pointed / tight fitting with no potential for ingress by bats; the majority of ridge tiles were similarly tightly affixed, however, two tiles either side of the chimney breast were slightly lifted which could provide access for bats.

The storage containers on site do not offer any roosting potential for bats for any purpose.

Great crested newts/Water voles

Four ponds are located within the vicinity of Moor Cottage, and range between 130 metres – 835 metres respectively; the closest pond 130 metres north east is shown on Ordnance survey data, however, from two sources of aerial imagery dated in recent years, it now appears to be completely dry and is currently represented as a vegetated depression. The subsequent closest pond is located 370 metres south of the site within farmland; however, this water body is isolated from Moor Cottage by the busy A525 Wrexham Road that will provide a natural migratory and terrestrial barrier for GCN. The remaining ponds located 800 metres south west and 835 metres east are a significant distance from the site, with the latter, Hadley Pool being used for fishing purposes, which in turn will reduce the potential for amphibians to be present, as the fish associated with recreation angling are a predatory species that have a direct impact upon the populations of newts.

A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) calculation for Great crested newts was not undertaken at any of the aforementioned ponds, due to the reasons previously discussed.



-  Location of ponds
-  Location of building proposed for demolition

Moor Cottage, off Wrexham Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3AD
Ecological Scoping Survey

Natural England's Rapid Risk Assessment in relation to Great crested newts was referenced and indicates that there is an unlikely of an offence being committed during the course of the work. Taking into account that the current known ponds are isolated from Moor Cottage then impacts upon GCN's is considered to be absent.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

To the north of the building it is noted that Red Brook runs adjacent to the site and garden; on the day of the survey, the water was found to be slow flowing to a maximum depth of 300mm and a silt bed. There are some exposed bank sides that could offer opportunities for burrowing water voles however throughout the search of approximately 200 metres of the brook signs of use were absent and aquatic vegetation is minimal. Furthermore, the proposed development will not impact upon the brook and the bank sides will not be affected should water voles choose to inhabit the brook.

During the inspection of the brook, a single standing dead wood is evident to the east of the building and garden, which offers potential for both bats and breeding birds whereby Wood Pecker holes are present, however, it is assumed that this will not be removed as part of the proposals.

Terrestrial Mammals

During the search of the immediate vicinity and localised habitat, animal runs or field signs indicative of badger along with setts are not present within or close to the site boundaries. It is probable that Hedgehogs could use the surrounding perimeter vegetation, undergrowth and general debris located within the plot.

Breeding birds

Evidence or the presence of breeding/roosting barn owls within the buildings is absent, and no recent or historic sign of use was located. The buildings are less than ideal for barn owls due to an absence of sheltered areas, cavities or secluded ledges. During the internal/external survey historic signs of other nesting birds that rely upon built structures, e.g. Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), House martin (*Delichon Urbica*) and Swift (*Apus apus*) were not found.

Potential for common woodland/garden birds is evident within the site by way of shrubs, hedgerows and undergrowth to all aspects of the site.

Common frogs & toads

The land at Moor Cottage could provide shelter and terrestrial habitats to support the life cycle of the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Toad (*Bufa bufa*) if present in the area, as they require both aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Vegetation

Within the site boundaries it is considered that there is no ecological significance in relation to flora, the plot consists of a hard core driveway to the front of the property, with general rubble and building material around the vicinity of the building proposed for demolition. The site generally consists of a maintained amenity grassed garden to the east, with a number of ornamental shrubs, Holly hedgerows, Alder, Rhododendron, Lleylandi, Crack Willow, Sycamore and Ash trees.

To the north west of the structure the large plot of land is a more unkempt nature with mature tree line to the north east perimeter, predominantly consisting of mature and over mature Willow, and Oak; the aforementioned offers bat roost potential whereby limbs have previously broken off, however, it is understood that the proposals will not include any arboriculture management of these identified trees. The area is currently being used to accommodate a number of chickens, and is predominantly represented by ruderal vegetation, self seeded saplings and scrub; the land has also undergone some excavation due to the requirement of a septic tank. The aforementioned habitats will provide provision for the benefit of general wildlife that is anticipated to be within the localised vicinity.

9.0 Daytime Conclusions

- 9.1 From the survey results it can be concluded that the buildings offer no potential for loft dwelling bats for any purpose and therefore the demolition of the structures will have no impact upon this species despite the habitat being considered as offering foraging potential.
- 9.2 Following the investigation a minor level of potential for crevice dwelling species was identified, notably beneath two raised ridge tiles either side of the chimney breast; however, potential is reduced somewhat due to the continual smoke escape and lingering effect around the ridge tiles as a product of the real fire that is regularly used for heating/ hot water purpose. Therefore, the bat roost potential that has been identified is considered to be less than low, however, precautionary measures will need to be adhered to prior to the demolition of the building.
- 9.3 The closest pond that is located 370 metres south of the site is somewhat isolated from Moor Cottage, and the busy A525 Wrexham Road provides a natural migratory and terrestrial barrier for GCN which significantly reduces potential for this species to be present at the site, and further surveys will not be required.
- 9.4 There are no current implications in relation to Schedule 1 specially protected bird species that would prevent the demolition of the buildings taking place. The presence of other more common bird species are probable within the hedgerows, undergrowth and shrubs at the site, and thus, if any site clearance is to be undertaken during the bird breeding season (April-August), then there may be an impact upon nesting birds.
- 9.5 On the day of the survey evidence of use such as a badger sett or latrines etc that would suggest the presence of badgers within or close to the boundaries was absent and based on the survey results there will be no impact upon this species.

- 9.6 Despite records of water vole being present within the vicinity, no field signs of this species were identified along the 200 metre section of Red Brook; thus the development will have no impact upon this species; furthermore, the proposals will not affect this identified water course.
- 9.7 The land within the development boundaries would provide shelter and terrestrial habitats to support Common Frogs and Toads.
- 9.8 Grassland is not species rich nor are there any plant species of ecological importance; the hedgerows and tree lines will provide conditions for invertebrates as prey items for bats and birds. Three trees to north boundary offer bat roost potential, however, it is assumed these specimens will not be affected by the current proposals.

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 As minor roost potential has been identified at Moor Cottage, it is recommended purely as a precautionary measure that a licensed bat ecologist should be present to supervise the careful and controlled removal of the identified area i.e. ridge tiles. If, in the unlikely event that bat/s is/are found during this time the area will need to be made good to its original condition and the bat/s left in situ. It should be noted that if bat/s is/are or evidence of use is found during the supervision work at the building then work would be delayed until such time that a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) is applied for and granted to allow any work to legally commence, which would affect bats or their roost. Notwithstanding the granting of a licence, works that would affect a roost cannot take place if a maternity colony is in occupation. As part of the licence application dusk emergence surveys will be required during the main active season (May- August) to gather information about the roost.
- 10.3 In relation to amphibians generic advice is recommended in that precautionary measures should be adopted in as much that building materials that brought on to the site are stored on pallets within the hard standing areas and not directly on ground surface. All debris should be immediately transferred in skips or moved off site, debris/rubble piles should not be created, particularly on grassed areas as they would potentially provide refuge for amphibians.
- 10.4 The habitat within areas of the site is considered to offer some potential for hedgehogs; therefore, during development provision of low angle sloping boards of approximately 300 mm wide should be placed within any excavations at the end of each working day to facilitate a means of escape for these mammals and checked the following day.
- 10.5 It is recommended that if during the development, or if future arboriculture work is required that will affect the dead wood along the brook or the over mature Poplar trees to the site boundary, then further investigation will be required to assess if bats and/or evidence of use is present prior to work commencing. Scrub and vegetation within the site if necessary, should be removed and cleared outside of the breeding season of birds (March – August); if this can not be achieved the aforementioned areas should be checked by an ecologist to identify if nesting birds are using them. All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

APPENDIX I – Site Photographs



South, east & north elevations of Moor cottage – two raised ridge tiles either side of chimney breast



Red Brook running adjacent to site



Standing dead wood with bat/bird potential

Moor Cottage, off Wrexham Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3AD
Ecological Scoping Survey



Land to north west of building



Trees to perimeter offering bat roost potential



Looking north towards the general nature of site where the proposed buildings will be constructed