Ecological Impact Assessment at Land Adjacent to 10, Poplar Road, Penycae, Wrexham, LL14 2PY

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1. Summary

The purpose of the report is to assess the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development at land adjacent to 10, Poplar Road, Pen-y-Cae and advise on any mitigation measures to comply with local planning policy and government legislation.

The proposed scheme involves the construction of two dwellings with associated parking and access.

The site and adjacent land were examined to establish the presence of or evidence of use by protected species of animals. None was found, however the adjacent trees provided potential for nesting birds and possibly roosting bats. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/
Bat and bird boxes as well as an additional hedgerow and trees are required to ensure Net Biodiversity Benefit in accordance with legislation. (pages 8 and 13)
Trees or hedges should not be pruned or trimmed between May and September to avoid disturbance to any nesting birds.

If the recommended mitigation measures are taken there should be no net loss of nesting sites, nor any danger of harm to any species.

2. Introduction

Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM is an experienced wildlife surveyor, licensed bat worker and voluntary bat roost visitor. Registration number CLS0895 2015-12555-CLS-CLS (CL15 Bat Roost Visitor Level 1) and registration number CLS 0895 2015-12556-CLS-CLS (CL18 Bat Survey Level 2) (Natural England) and S086005/1 (Natural Resources Wales);
Licensed great crested newt worker, registration number 2016-19947-CLS-CLS (NE) and S086057/1 (NRW)
This report was commissioned by Spencer Cullis for the client.
The site, at land adjacent to 10, Poplar Road, Pen-y-Cae comprises a small area of former pasture. The proposed scheme involves construction of two dwellings with associated parking and access. The purpose of the report is to identify and address any significant ecological effects which are likely to occur as a result of the proposed development. This is necessary to comply with local planning policy and government legislation and avoid any offence being committed. Also, to describe any compensation, mitigation and enhancement measures which should be taken.

3. Methodology

3.1. Scope of the Assessment

The report incorporates an extended phase 1 habitat survey, searching for use or potential use by any rare, threatened, endemic and non-native invasive species which might be associated with such a site in accordance with:
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and listed in:
Schedule 2. European protected species of animals
Schedule 5. European protected species of plants
The protection of Badgers Act 1992
Protected species which might be associated with such a site include bats, owls and other breeding birds. The area around the site might be used by dormice, amphibians and reptiles, and might contain protected plant species.
The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 4th March 2024 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM.

3.2. Desk Study

Wrexham Planning Portal was consulted for a review of previous ecological surveys carried out in the area. Magic Maps was consulted for the presence of designated sites and protected habitats. Maps of the site and surrounding environment were examined to identify any nearby waterbodies suitable for use by great crested newts within an influencing distance of the site.

3.3. Field Survey

The site was examined to establish the presence of any protected species or habitats, and for evidence of use by protected species of animals. Trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and birds. The site and surrounding habitat was examined for signs of use by badgers and dormice. The variety of plant species was mapped according to the convention of Phase 1 habitat surveys as described by the JNCC (2010). Photographs were taken of all relevant areas. The visual assessment of the site was carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2017) on 4th March 2024 by Susan Worsfold BSc (Hons) ACIEEM.
Photographs were taken of all areas and those of relevance are shown in the appendices.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions/Results

4.1 Designated Sites

The nearest designated site is Johnstown Newt Sites (SSSI and SAC) 1.5 km east.

4.2 Habitats

Site: The area of the site to be affected is approximately 0.2 ha. It is in a village location. The land is not currently in use. The west boundary were all fenced, with several mature trees . The southern boundary was a holly and hazel hedge. There was a pile of rubble and a few young hazel, elder and blackthorn at the south east section, where access is proposed.
Adjacent land: There are several small areas of woodland within 250 m. The River Eitha is 25 m south. It is separated from the site by a road. There is a good network of hedgerows surrounding the site. There are no ponds shown on maps within 250 m.

4.3 Species and Species Groups

Invertebrates
The site has some limited value for use by invertebrates but none were seen at the time of the survey.

Amphibians and Reptiles
None seen. There are no ponds within 250 m.

Birds
The hedges and trees on site and those adjacent could provide food and shelter for birds and also nesting potential. No birds or nests were seen at the time of the survey.

Bats
The site is suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats. There is some roosting potential behind the ivy on some of the trees at the west boundary.

Badgers
There were no badger setts, tracks or latrines found on the site or within 30 m of the site.

Plants

Common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), grasses, daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), lesser celandine, lords and ladies, ground elder, bramble, bracken, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), conifer, oak (*Quercus sp.*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (S*ambucus nigra*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus syvestris*),

No species of conservation value or Schedule 9 species were seen on site. No rare or threatened species of plants were found on site or near the site.

5. Description of the Development

The proposed scheme involves the construction of two new dwellings with associated access and parking. This will involve the removal of some short vegetation and the removal of 10 m hedgerow.

6. Assessment of Effects and Mitigation Measures

Designated Sites:
It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant impact on any designated sites due to the low impact of the project and distance from the sites.

Habitats:
No priority habitat is affected by the proposal. A small amount of vegetation will be removed.

Species:
Birds
Trees and hedges should not be pruned or trimmed between March and September, to avoid harm to any nesting birds.

Bats
There is not considered to be any threat to the conservation status of bats or danger of harm to individuals. The site is suitable for foraging and commuting bats. There are some some potential bat roost features behind the mature ivy on some of the trees along the west boundary.
A lighting plan should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Reptiles and Amphibians
There should not be any significant impact on reptiles or amphibians

Residual Effects
No significant residual effects anticipated.

7. Compensation

n/a

8. Net Biodiversity Benefit

A woodcrete bat box and woodcrete bird box will be fixed to each new dwelling, on the south and north side respectivbely. These should be at least 2 m from the ground. Further information is given in the bat box information pack available at https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes.
Bat and bird boxes are available from NHBS https://www.nhbs.com/ and Wildcare https://www.wildcare.co.uk/ as well as other suppliers.
A new hedge will be planted along the north boundary to the northernmost dwelling, as shown on page 14. This will comprise native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, elder, field maple, oak and holly. This will be done prior to the first occupation of the dwelling and it will be maintained by the owners, who will be the current owners of no. 10.
A native tree will be planted in each garden, such as rowan, wild cherry or crab apple. These would be attractive and provide foraging potential for birds and insects.

9. Ecological Constraints

The survey was undertaken at a sub-optimum time of year, however it is unlikely that any significant features or flora would have been missed due to this.

10. Monitoring

Not considered necessary.

11. Conclusions

If the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures are taken there will be a net gain in biodiversity and no net loss of roosting or nesting sites, nor any danger of harm to any species.

12. Bibliography

Bat Conservation Trust available at: http://www.bats.org.uk

BCT and ILP Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting available at: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

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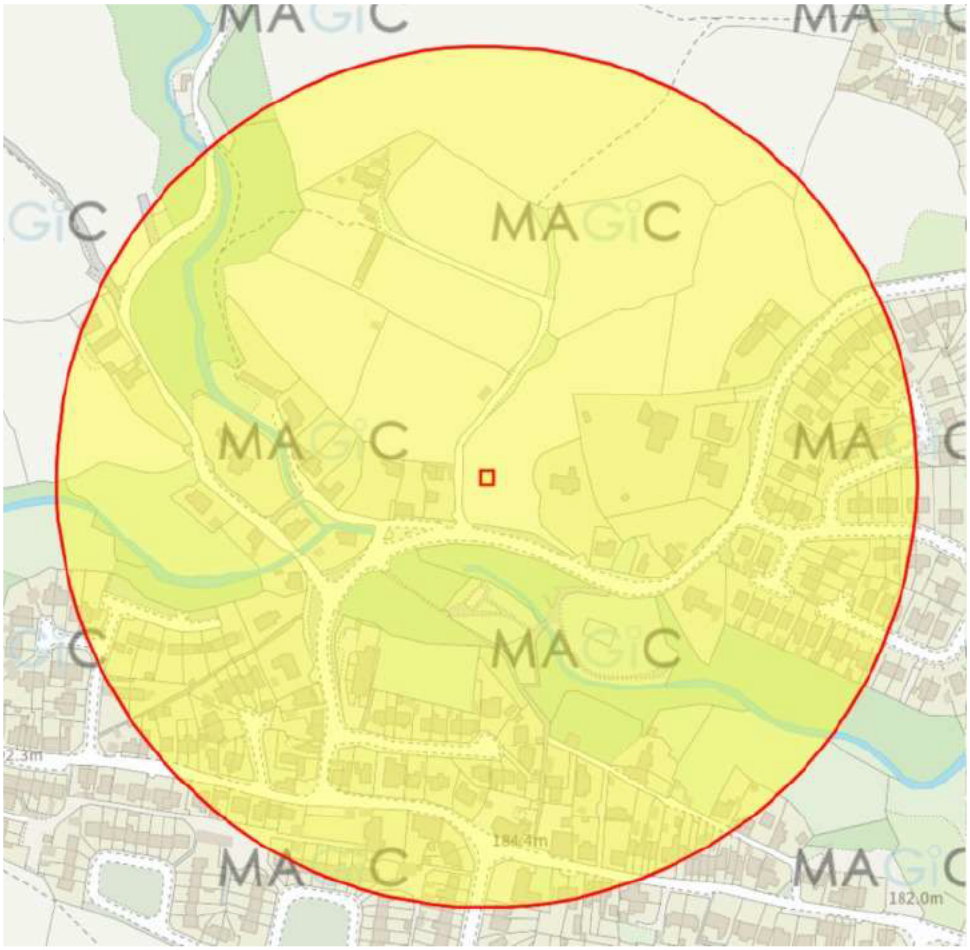
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation available at: https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation

Wrexham Council Planning Portal available at: http://planning.wrexham.gov.uk/Planning/lg/GFPlanningSearch.page

Appendix 13.1: Aerial Photograph



Appendix 13.2: Designated Sites and Zones of Influence



Appendix 13.3: Photographs

South east section



South boundary



West boundary



View from the south



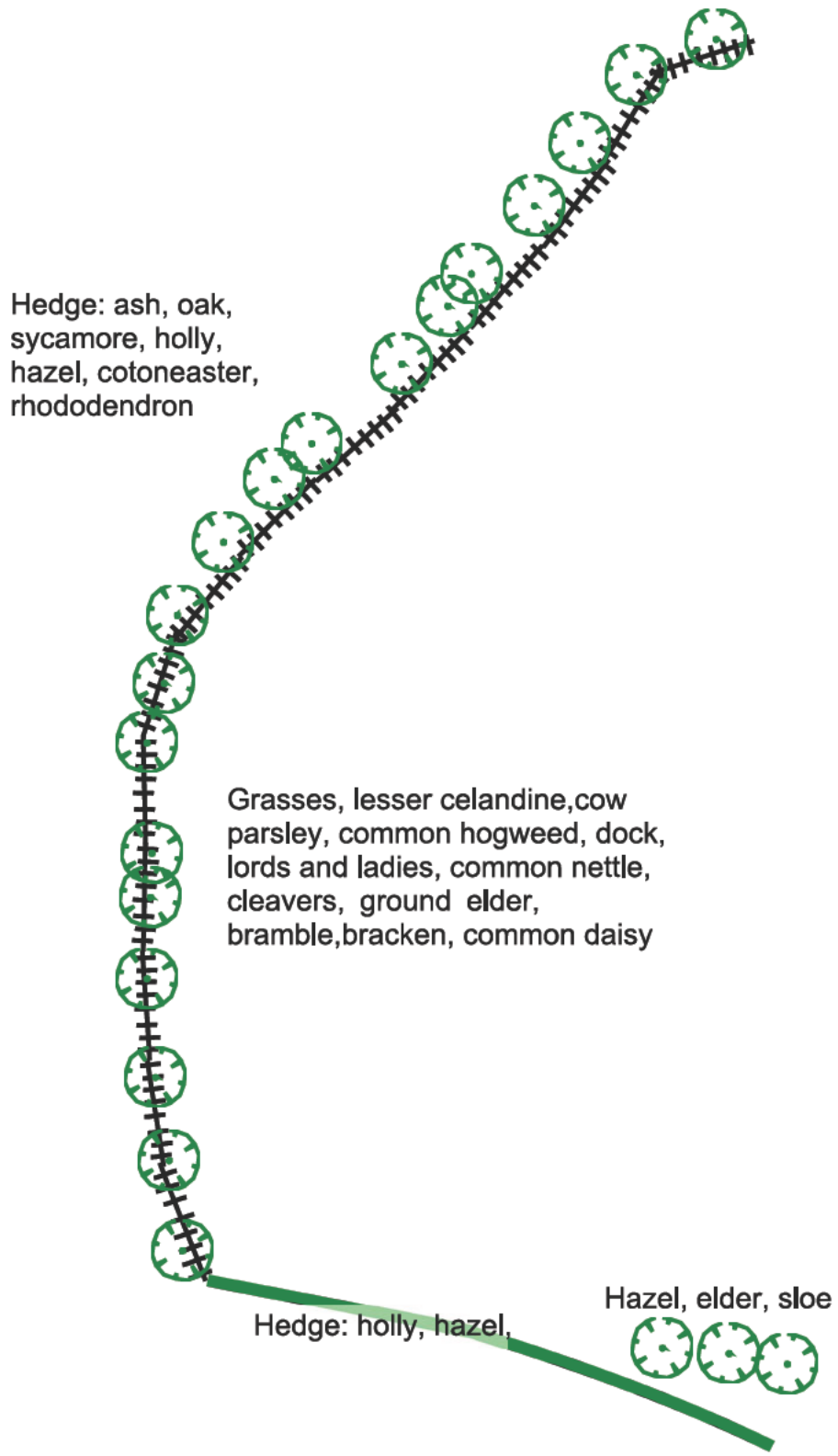
North west boundary



View from the north



Appendix 13.4: Survey Diagram
(tree positions approximate)



Appendix 13.5: Site Plan as Proposed



Appendix 13.6: Legislation Relating to Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected. It is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird,
- take, damage or destroy the nest of a Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle or Osprey (even if disused),
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built,
- take, damage or destroy an egg or any wild bird,
- possess any live or dead wild bird or the egg of any wild bird, or any derivative

Many rare birds are listed on Schedule 1, which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb a Schedule 1 bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturb dependent young of such a bird

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) issues licences for specific purposes, so that you can undertake legitimate work without breaking the law. See ‘Bird licensing’ for more information.

Appendix 13.7: Legislation Relating to Bats

All species of bats in the UK are European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy a bat's breeding site or resting place (known as a roost), or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb a bat

Bats are the only mammals which can fly. They are warm blooded, they suckle their babies and are intelligent, social animals. British bats feed only on insects, of which they consume vast numbers to sustain their energetic lifestyles. A pipistrelle bat can eat up to 3000 midges in a single night!

We have 12 species of bat breeding in Wales. Many of these have suffered severe declines, not just in Britain but throughout Europe.

All British bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Bats have a unique relationship with humans, sometimes sharing our homes for part of the year. For this reason, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) deals with many hundreds of bat enquiries each year from householders.

Under the Habitats Regulations, it is an offence if you:

deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS
deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species
damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal
Disturbance includes, but is not limited to, any disturbance which is likely:

1. to impair their ability –
to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

2. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Defra and the Welsh Government will publish a joint guidance document on the interpretation of the offences relating to disturbance, and to damage and destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

There are other offences relating to possession, transport and sale.

NRW issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

If you are a householder and have concerns about bats at your property (other than queries related to planning applications or a development), contact the NRW Enquiry Line for advice, telephone 0300 065 3000