

Ecological Impact Assessment



Project: Former Open Hearth, Ringland

Instructed by: Willis Construction

Reported by: Ecological Services Ltd
10 Mount Pleasant, Llanelly Hill, Abergavenny, Monmouth NP7 0NT
Reported by

| Author | Checked by | Date | Updated by | Ammedment Date | Version |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------|---------|
| Vicky Hannaford | Ash Harris | 25 th January 2023 | Beth Lewis | 7th October 2024 | V2.0 |

T: 07305143857

E: ash@ecologicalservices.wales

W: www.ecologicalservices.wales

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1. Introduction

The applicant is seeking permission to develop a parcel of the land at the site of the Former Open Hearth Public House off Hendre Farm Drive, Ringland in Newport. The proposed development site lies directly adjacent to Hendre Farm Drive and Southern Distributor Road at ST 3547 8812.

An updated Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) of all the land within the development boundary was completed by Ecological Services Ltd in January 2023. The development site was found to contain, scrub, semi improved grassland, tree lines, a stream which is culverted within part of the site and open for part of the site, tall ruderal vegetation, large mounds of building rubble/debris and areas of hardstanding (tarmac and concrete). The PEA highlighted a number of ecological considerations that would be required should development plans for the site progress the details of which can be found in Section 4 of this report.

In order to undertake a full appraisal of the proposed development and the potential impacts and significance of impacts upon the habitats and species within the development site and adjacent habitats, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been undertaken. An EclA helps provide a clear and methodical way to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential significant effects of a proposed plan or project.

1.1 Site Description

The land within the proposed site boundary is roughly square in shape and slopes from north to south. The site measures approximately 2 acres with 1.2 acres being suitable for development. The site is accessed off Hendre Farm Drive which runs to the north of the site. The A48, Southern Distributor Road, lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The land within the site boundary was formerly the location of the Open Hearth building which has been recently demolished due to its state of disrepair and increased incidents of vandalism which contributed to the building being a health and safety hazard. The rubble and debris from the building remains on the site in large mounds.

The site is considered to lie within an urban location with residential housing to the north, east and west. The site lies to the east of the city of Newport and is situated within the suburb of Ringland. There do not appear to be any ponds within 500m of the proposed development site.

1.2 Surveyor Experience

Vicky is an experienced ecologist with at least eight years' experience. She has worked in larger consultancies previously completing a wide range of flora and fauna surveys, completed professional training courses and attended informal botanical meetings to gain valuable knowledge. This experience allows Vicky to assess and identify common habitats as per the JNCC Phase 1 Survey Guidelines. Vicky is also a licenced dormouse and great crested newt worker and holds licences from Natural Resources Wales for both species.

2. Legislation & Planning Policy

2.1 Legislation

The **Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC)** aims to '*contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States*'. The Directive requires the establishment and conservation of a network of sites within each member state which protect the rarest flora and fauna found across Europe. A number of species and habitats are listed in Annex 2 of the directive for which areas can be designated as a SAC. The aims of the Habitats Directive are transposed into British Law through the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**.

The **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)** as amended provide the legislation framework and protection for SSSI. A SSSI is designated by a statutory nature conservation body such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for its make up of flora, fauna, geological and / or physiographical features. Each SSSI should have a citation which describes the site and its special features.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is a wide reaching piece of legislation which seeks help to improve the management of Wales' natural resources into the future. The Act sets out a Wales wide approach to planning and managing its natural resources at a national and local level in a sustainable manner. One main requirement for all public bodies, such as local councils, is to maintain and enhance biodiversity where possible within their duties.

2.1.1 Habitats

Statutory Designations

There are two statutory protected sites lie within 2km of the site. Gwent Levels – Nash and Goldcliff Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 1648m away to the south of the site, and St Julian's Park Local Nature Reserve, which lies approximately 1403m away to the north west of the site.

Non-Statutory Designations

There are 14 local non-statutory sites within 2km of the site, all are Sites Important for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The nearest such site, Hartridge Wood SINC, lies approximately 193m away to the south of the site. Other SINC sites within 2km and their approximate distance from the site include: -

- Hartridge Fields (266m)
- Ringland Wood (288m)
- Dockwell Wood (466m)

- Ringland Way Marsh (607m)
- Ladyhill Wood (717m)
- Former Steel Works Site off Queensway Meadow (893m)
- Coed Rhedyn/Scotch Wood (964m)
- Flat Wood (1179m)
- Liswerry Playing Fields and Angling Ponds. (1240m)
- Monk's Ditch (1260m)
- Lawrence Hill (1333m)
- St. Julians Park (1576m)
- Coldra Wood (1623m)

Approximately 2.5% of the land within the 2km buffer zone is defined as a B-Line, which are non-statutory protected sites which aim to restore and create wildflower habitats forming stepping stones that link existing wildlife areas together creating a network of habitats across the landscape benefiting not only pollinators but a host of other wildlife. The site lies approximately 1.7km away from the B-Line at its nearest point.

2.1.2 Species

Great Crested Newt

Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Deliberate taking or destroying of eggs,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Great Crested Newts are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a great crested newt.

Bats

All British bats are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) also protects all species of British bat and their roosting locations. British bats are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance and or obstruction of their roosting places. Barbastelle, bechstein, noctule, brown long eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats are also listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Otter

The common otter (*Lutra lutra*) is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Otter are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale an otter. Otter is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Nesting Birds

All breeding birds are protected under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under this Act it is an offence to:

- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Enhanced protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, this additional protection makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Reptiles

Reptile such as the slow worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended). They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. In Wales sand lizard, smooth snake, adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard are listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Dormice

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Dormouse are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a native dormouse. Dormouse is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Badger

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. In summary they are protected from:

- Taking, killing or injuring;
- Cruelty;
- Interfering with a badger sett;
- The selling and possession of badgers;
- Marking or ringing.

Badgers are also listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Badgers tend to have a variety of setts with different uses and functions within the territory for the family unit. In general there is usually a main sett which the family will use the most. There are then annex, subsidiary and or outlier setts which depending on family structures and environmental pressures may be used at different times of the year. As female badgers tend to have their cubs over winter the disturbance and damage of badger setts is prohibited between December and June inclusive.

2.2 Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 11 published February 2021 provides national policy relating to Sustainability and Ecology. PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

Chapter 6 of PPW contains the following policies relating to ecology and biodiversity:

- 6.2 Green Infrastructure;
- 6.4 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5

TAN 5 (Welsh Government, 2009) specifically provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. The TAN provides advice for local planning authorities on the key principles of positive planning for nature conservation; nature conservation and Local Development Plans; nature conservation in development management procedures; development affecting protected internationally and nationally designated sites and habitats; and development affecting protected and priority habitats and species.

Under Section 2.4 within the TAN 5, 'when deciding planning applications that may affect nature conservation local planning authorities should:

- Pay particular attention to the principles of sustainable development, including respect for environmental limits, applying the precautionary principle, using scientific knowledge to aid decision making and taking account of the full range of costs and benefits in a long term perspective;
- Contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment, so as to improve the quality of life and protect local and global ecosystems, seeking to avoid irreversible harmful effects on the natural environment;
- Promote the conservation and enhancement of statutorily designated areas and undeveloped coast;

- Ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance;
- Protect wildlife and natural features in the wider environment, with appropriate weight attached to priority habitats and species in Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Ensure that all material considerations are taken into account and decisions are informed by adequate information about the potential effects of development on nature conservation;
- Ensure that the range and population of protected species is sustained;
- Adopt a step-wise approach to avoid harm to nature conservation, minimise unavoidable harm by mitigation measures, offset residual harm by compensation measures and look for new opportunities to enhance nature conservation; where there may be significant harmful effects local planning authorities will need to be satisfied that any reasonable alternative sites that would result in less or no harm have been fully considered.

3. Preliminary Ecological Assessment

3.1 Previous Ecological Survey Work - 2018

The site was previously subject to a PEA on the 13th September 2018 by Ecological Services Ltd. The majority of the site comprised tarmac hardstanding and a derelict pub building (the former Open Hearth), with trees and semi improved grassland across the site were considered to be of local ecological significance for birds.

Bat Surveys were carried out on the former Open Hearth Public House and found no evidence of bats roosting within the building. Bat activity surveys were completed by Ecological Services Ltd on the 29th August and the 13th September 2018. A small amount of Common Pipistrelle activity was observed around the site but no roosting activity was observed.

The site was considered unsuitable for other protected species with no further surveys were recommended. Recommendations were made within the 2018 report to ensure nesting birds were not harmed during works, a scheme of wildlife friendly lighting is implemented and consideration to the potential use of trees by bats was given. Consideration to biodiversity enhancement measures to be implemented as part of future development proposals was made as well.

3.2 Updated Habitat Assessment - 2023

Vicky Hannaford and Lee Gregory from Ecological Services visited the development site on 10th January 2023. Since the previous visit in 2018 the building of the former Open Hearth Public House has been demolished. All the **rubble and remains of the building** have been left in large piles on the site covering the footprint of the building and part of the surrounding car parking area which is tarmac.

Floral species beginning to colonise the tarmac and between the rubble piles include valerian, ragwort, purple toadflax, herb Robert, groundsel, common field speedwell, wild carrot, spear thistle, creeping cinquefoil, bristly oxtongue and small saplings of ash and a species of maple. The occasional grass species is also present, such as perennial rye grass, cock's foot and timothy. The tarmac car parking area extends towards the eastern boundary of the site, with a low brick wall dividing the area into two sections.

In the south east of the site there is an area of **concrete hardstanding** which is enclosed within palisade fencing. Within this enclosed area **scrub**, including buddleia and bramble, is present along the south and east boundary. There is also a tree line along the south and east boundary also along the south boundary, most trees are mature specimens with species such as hazel, willow, ash, sycamore, maple and wild rose. Other species scattered across

this enclosed area include mugwort, wild carrot, herb Robert and purple toadflax. There is some evidence of rubbish having been left.

An **open culvert** is present along the south western edge of the site. The open culvert lies below the level of the main area of the site, with a brick wall forming a barrier alongside the former car park area and the stream. Between the open culvert and the southern boundary fence there is a line of trees, comprising ash, lime, sycamore and oak, with an understorey comprising bramble, cow parsley and ivy. The watercourse is thought to be culverted under the south eastern part of the site, underneath the area of concrete hardstanding.

In the north and north east of the site there is an area of **species poor semi improved grassland**, with Yorkshire fog, perennial rye grass, fescue species. Other floral species present include ragwort, creeping buttercup, dove's foot cranesbill, groundsel, knot grass, creeping cinquefoil, dock and wild carrot.

Along the western boundary there is a **line of trees**, species include ash, field maple, sycamore and willow. A young willow tree has collapsed and lies fallen across the scrub. Adjacent to the tree line there is a band of bramble scrub. Near the south west corner of the western boundary there is a gated access to the adjacent property.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects

3.3.1 Bats

The trees within the site boundary were subject to a ground level visual assessment for the likely potential presence of bats during the phase 1 survey. If any trees were felt to have potential for roosting use by bats they would be subject to a further detailed survey following the BCT Survey Guidelines (2016).

The trees along the southern boundary and western boundary are mature trees with no visible gaps or cracks suitable for use as roosting features. Several trees along the western boundary, T16, **T22, T23**, T24 and **T25** have some ivy growth, although considered not overly dense, the trees are considered to have low potential for use by roosting bats.

An tree survey carried out by Treescene Arboricultural Consultants in December 2022 highlighted a number of trees recommended for removal, some due to Ash Dieback Disease and some due to damage. The trees numbered above correspond to those in the Tree Survey Report, those highlighted in bold are recommended for removal.

Mitigation measures will need to be put in place for the removal of mature trees across the site. These are detailed in section 4 of this report.

Mitigation measures to reduce the potential impacts of lighting on commuting and foraging bat species will be implemented as part of the development works. These are detailed in section 4 of this report.

3.3.2 Great Crested Newt

There are records for great crested newt (GCN), the nearest approximately 500m to the south west of the site on the former Llanwern Steelworks site, dated 2017. Other records are more than 1.5km away and are considered to be historical. There doesn't appear to be any ponds within 500m of the site, although garden ponds may be present in the immediate vicinity of the site and are not visible on aerial imagery. The scrub, grassland areas and piles of rubble/debris of the site have potential to be used by GCN during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle. While it is considered highly unlikely GCN are present within the site their presence cannot be ruled out entirely.

Precautionary measures in respect of GCN will be recommended, and will be included in the mitigation strategy for reptiles, to include timing constraints for site clearance, careful clearing of the rubble and a two-stage cut of vegetation. Details of the mitigation measures can be found in Section 4 of the report.

3.3.3 Dormouse

There are numerous records for dormouse within 2km of the site. The nearest approximately 758m away to the south of the site on the former Llanwern Steelworks site. The site is considered to have limited suitable habitat to support dormouse and the overall potential for the presence of dormouse to be low. The site is not directly connected to any surrounding woodland or hedgerows. It is thought unlikely dormouse are present within the site. No further recommendations will be made for this species.

3.3.4 Otter

There are several records for otter, the nearest approximately 1249m away to the south dated 2020. The scrub within the site is not considered dense enough to provide suitable cover for use by otter. The culverted stream along the south of the site does not appear to connect to any other watercourses and is likely used to collect surface water which empties into the sewerage system. It is thought unlikely otter use the site. No further recommendations will be made for this species.

3.3.5 Badger

Badger has been recorded approximately 900m away to the south east, the record is of field signs. No evidence of the presence of badger, such as hair, mammal paths, digging or sett creation, was noted during the site inspection. Habitats within the site are considered

suitable for commuting and foraging purposes only. No further surveys for badger are recommended.

3.3.6 Birds

No direct evidence of bird nests was noted during the site survey, however the trees within the site have potential to be used by birds for nesting purposes. **Precautionary measures in respect of nesting birds during site clearance will be recommended, to include timing constraints for vegetation clearance across the site. Details of mitigation measures can be found in Section 4.**

3.3.7 Reptiles and Amphibians

The nearest records for the presence of reptiles are for grass snake and slow worm, approximately 785m and 810m away, both on the former Llanwern Steelworks site. The large piles of rubble etc. provide potential habitat for reptiles to use, particularly for hibernation purposes. Scrub habitat which has grown up particularly along the western and southern boundaries now also provides commuting and foraging habitat as does the grassland.

Overall, the site is still considered to have low potential for reptiles and it is assumed low numbers of reptiles may be present across the site. A reptile survey is considered impractical as there is so much rubble/debris across the site which would be more preferable a habitat for reptiles to use rather than reptile refugia used for a survey. In addition, there is the likelihood that obvious refugia used during a survey would be disturbed by locals and any results skewed. **Precautionary measures in respect of reptiles are recommended, to include timing constraints for site clearance, careful clearing of the rubble and a two-stage cut of vegetation. Details of the mitigation measures can be found in Section 4 of the report.**

4. Impact Assessment

The role of a EclA is to address significant effects which the project may have. For the purpose of this assessment significant impacts will be those that affect legally protected sites and species within and directly adjacent to the proposed development site.

The EclA process presents a hierarchy of approaches to ensure a project of plan lowers its potential impacts. The works should seek to

- **AVOID** - Consider options to avoid any potential harm to an ecological feature,
- **MITIGATE** - If negative effects are unavoidable, measures should be implemented to minimise and reduce potential effects,
- **COMPENSATE** - If negative effects are still likely to be experienced despite measures to reduce impacts being implemented appropriate compensatory measures should implemented.
- **ENHANCEMENT** - Works should always seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity to help meet the section 7 requirements of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016.

The scope of the proposed development works has been reviewed and streamlined to ensure only works necessary are to be undertaken.

The development proposals have the potential to negatively impact on the below features. However, mitigation and compensation measures have been considered and are included within the development to reduce the impact the development works may have. Features to consider are:

- Bats
- Nesting Birds
- Herptiles
- Habitat loss

4.1 Ecological Feature – Bats

Potential Impacts

- Disturbance to commuting and foraging bats
- Loss of habitat used for foraging purposes
- Loss of potential roosting opportunities

Measures to be implemented

- Five trees are assessed as having low potential for roosting use by bats, if their removal is required the trees must be section felled during the winter months when bats are least likely to be present. The ivy will be cut at the base to prevent its continued growth and encourage it to die back.
- If bats are found at any time during the work, NRW will be contacted for advice. This advice may include that all work stop until a development licence from NRW is gained for the tree removal.
- Ideally all low bat roost potential trees will be removed during the winter months of November to February inclusive, when bats are least likely to be present. If it is not possible to remove the trees during the winter any tree removal must be immediately preceded by a dawn survey by ecologists to ensure bats are not present. If bats are found at any time during the survey work, NRW will be contacted for advice. This advice may include that all work stop until a development licence from NRW is gained for the tree removal.
- Tree removal during the winter months would also prevent potential issues with nesting bird use. Nesting bird season is generally accepted to be March to August inclusive.
- All external lighting will be kept to the bare minimum required for health and safety reasons.
- Any external light source installed on individual plots as part of the construction works will be motion activated and set to the lowest time to remain lit that is possible.
- Any external light source will be directional and will only illuminate a doorway or footpath as required. A directional light source can be cowled or recessed back into the casing to prevent light spill.

- All lighting must meet the recommendations in the BCT Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK document <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8- bats-and-artificial-lighting/>
- Bat boxes will be installed within some of the newly created buildings in the site.

4.2 Ecological Feature – Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

- Disturbance of the nesting birds.
- Loss of bird nesting and foraging habitat.

Measures to be implemented

- Any tree and scrub removal within the site boundary will be completed **outside of the bird nesting season of March to August inclusive**. If this is not achievable an ecologist must inspect any trees or ground vegetation with the potential for birds to be present, for active birds' nests prior to removal works beginning. If an active nest or activity indicating a nest might be present is identified a buffer zone of at least 5m, up to 20m depending on species, around the nest must be observed until the chicks have fledged. Only then can the vegetation be removed.
- Compensatory planting within the proposed development will include native species to provide a food source for local wildlife including bird species. Planting will include scattered trees, shrub planting with species attractive to a range of invertebrate species. Details of planting will be included in a soft landscaping plan. Bird boxes will be installed within some of the new buildings created within the site.

4.3 Ecological Feature – Herptiles

Potential Impacts

- Damage or injury to hibernating reptiles between October – February, inclusive
- Damage or injury to commuting/foraging reptiles during the year
- Killing or injury GCN
- Loss of GCN foraging habitat
- Damage, obstruction and or destruction of a GCN resting place

Measures to be implemented

- All site contractors will be given a toolbox talk which covers the legal protection given to reptiles and GCN, what they look like, where they may be found, and what to do if herptiles are found on site.
- If GCN are found at any point during the work NRW will be contacted for advice. This advice may include that all work stop until a development licence from NRW is gained.

Site Clearance - Vegetation and Rubble/Debris Clearance

- Site clearance will be completed outside of herptile hibernation period which is weather dependent but is generally considered to be October to March inclusive. Any ground disturbance works must avoid the hibernation period when such animals are torpid and cannot move away from machinery. **Providing the local temperatures are above 9°C for at least 5 consecutive days and there is no snow or frosts, site clearance works in March may be allowed.** However, the project will aim to start groundworks between April and September inclusive in any given year.

Rubble/Debris Clearance

- Removal of the piles of rubble/debris from the former derelict building will be carried out in the first instance. This will be done using a toothed bucket of a JCB or an appropriately sized digger. The rubble will be carefully lifted, inspected and removed from the proposed development site. Any reptiles or common amphibians which are found will be carefully gathered up using gloved hands and taken for release in the wildlife protection zone in the south east of the site.

Vegetation Clearance – Grassland, Scrub and Trees

- Once the vegetation has been deemed suitable for clearance works may commence. In the first instance the vegetation will be cut, using hand tools, to a height of between 100-150mm. The cut material will be raked and removed from the site to avoid potential future colonisation by reptiles.
- During the second stage cut, vegetation will be cut to ground level (a maximum height of 50mm) and the arisings raked and removed from the site as above. Any reptiles or other fauna will be treated as above.

- Any herptiles present should naturally move away of their own accord due to the disturbance from cutting. However if any reptiles or other fauna are encountered during this operation they will either be carefully collected and moved away to the protection zone in the south east of the site or allowed to do so of its own accord.
- Once the ground level vegetation has been cleared as detailed above, removal of any trees can begin. The trees will be removed in two stages.
- First stage, the trees to be removed will be cut down to a height of 50cm above ground level. The brash will be removed from the construction site entirely within 24hrs of being cut.
- Second stage, the tree roots will be grubbed up using a toothed bucket of a JCB or an appropriately sized digger. The roots will be removed under ecological supervision and any reptiles found will be captured and moved to adjacent habitat. The roots systems will be removed slowly and gently to allow any reptiles present to escape. All roots will then be removed from the proposed development site.
- Once all vegetation has been cleared from within the site boundary, the construction site footprint must remain in a vegetation free state. This will help to reduce the likelihood of reptiles using the site while construction works are underway.
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4.4 Ecological Feature – Habitat Loss

Potential Impacts

- Loss of habitat used by a wide range of local fauna
- Loss of trees

Measures to be implemented

- Install Heras fencing around all areas of vegetation to be retained. Heras fencing must take into account Root Protection Zones (RPZs) and arboricultural advice provided by Treescene. A clear fence line around retained vegetation will ensure contractors do not work within or negatively affect such areas.
- A Landscape Plan for the development site will be agreed and implemented and will include native tree species to compensate for any trees lost across the site. The landscape strategy for the site will seek to enhance the areas of retained and created habitat within the site boundary.

5. Enhancement Measures

The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a duty on competent authorities to ensure biodiversity is not only conserved but enhanced. The proposed development works create potential features that can be improved for the benefit of biodiversity.

5.1 Provision of Bat Roosting Opportunities

A total of six integrated bat boxes will be provided within the new development. All boxes will be built into the walls no lower than eaves level of the building with the access gap left open for use. Istock Enclosed Bat Box 'C' will be installed within the below plots. These are all outlined within the LeTruccodesign Architect Proposed Site Layout Plans.

- Plot 2. Western elevation.
- Plot 6. Western elevation.
- Flat Plot 7-10. Western elevation.
- Flat Plot 11-14. Western elevation.
- Flat Plot 15-23. Western elevation.
- Flat Plot 24-32. Western elevation.

No external lighting will be placed within 2m of any bat box. Photographic evidence of the boxes will be sent to the local planning authority ecologist once completed. Types of bat boxes can be found in Appendix 2 and the approximate location each box can be found in Appendix 3.

5.2 Provision of Bird Nesting Opportunities

Six integrated bird boxes will be provided within the new development. All bird boxes will be integrated into the walls at eaves level (a minimum height of 3m above ground level, swift boxes are ideally located 5m above ground level). Six Schwegler Lightweight Swift Box Type 1A or similar will be installed at least 3m from ground level within the below plots on site. These are all outlined within the LeTruccodesign Architect Proposed Site Layout Plans.

- Plot 1. Eastern elevation.
- Plot 5. Eastern elevation.
- Flat Plot 7-10. Eastern elevation.
- Flat Plot 11-14. Eastern elevation.
- Flat Plot 15-23. Eastern elevation.
- Flat Plot 24-32. Eastern elevation.

Photographic evidence of the boxes will be sent to the local planning authority ecologist once completed. Types of bird boxes can be found in Appendix 2 and the approximate location each box can be found in Appendix 3.

5.3 Habitat Enhancements

A Landscape Strategy will be provided for the site, new planting is to include a range of wildlife friendly plants and must be from stock which is of local (or at least UK) provenance. The Landscape Strategy must include native tree species to compensate for the loss of any trees across the site.

Long term management of soft landscaping to ensure suitable habitats for wildlife are created and maintained in perpetuity is important. Any landscape strategy must seek to create areas of short on longer vegetation. Consideration to the creation of diverse grassland areas with low intensity cutting and grass collection must be given. Once established, any hedgerow must be cut once every 2 years between the months of November to February inclusive. The management company or contractors who maintain the site will need to ensure their actions on site match the habitat aims within the landscaping proposals

5.4 Fencing

Any close board or mesh fencing within the site boundary will incorporate features to ensure it is wildlife friendly. Such fencing will have either:

- a 13cm by 13cm gap cut at ground level every 2m or;
- a continuous gap of 13cm from the base of the fence and ground along the entire fence line. Any mesh fencing must have a continuous gap of 13cm from the base of the fence and ground along the entire fence line.

6. Management Responsibilities

The proposed development site owner will have the responsibility to ensure the measures within this document are fully and continually implemented during the life time of the project. All site sub-contractors must be fully inducted and made aware of the ecological constraints and required working methods.

Maintenance of the soft landscaping will be installed as part of the development works will be the responsibility of the site owner. The site owner will appoint and fund contractors who will undertake the work as detailed within the landscape documents and this Ecological Impact Assessment.

It is anticipated that the soft landscaping will be installed during the 2024/2025 planting season. This is considered year 0. The created habitats, bat and bird boxes will be subject to a monitoring visit by a suitably licensed ecologist 5 years from the landscape work being finished to monitor use and establishment of planting. Any changes to the management details on Section 5 of this report can be made if required, based on the findings of the monitoring visit. Any changes to management must be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

The buildings within the site will be owned by Melin Homes and let to various tenants. Melin Homes will have the obligation to maintain each property and all areas of public space within the development boundary.

Reference List

- Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat surveys for Professional Ecologists; Good Practice Guidelines' (2nd Edition)
- BCT Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK document
<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>
- Ecological Services Ltd (November 2018) Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Treescene Arboricultural Consultants (6th December 2022) Tree Survey at Open Hearth Ringland Newport
- Treescene Arboricultural Consultants, Tree Constraints Plan, Open Hearth Ringland Newport

Appendix 1 – Site Photographs



View of site looking south



Rubble/debris from demolished building



Scrub and tree line along western boundary



Culverted stream looking east, flowing underneath the concrete hardstanding area



Culverted stream looking west



Former car park area in east of site



Grassland area in north and north east of site

Enclosed Concrete Hardstanding Area – South East of Site



Area looking north east



Area looking south



Rubbish in north east corner



Pile of debris along south boundary



Scrub in south east corner



Scrub in south west corner

Undevelopable Area in South West of Site



Scrub and tree line looking west



Pathway over culverted stream



Access onto A48

Appendix 2 - Bat and Bird Box Design



Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C'

1FR Schwegler Bat Tube



Schwegler Lightweight Swift Box Type 1A

Swift Box - Custom Brick facing





Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

Sparrow Box - Smooth Brick



Vivara Pro Build-In Half Open Nest Box

Appendix 3 – Proposed Location of Bat and Bird Boxes

Please refer to LeTruccodesign Architect Proposed Site Layout Plans for this detailed plan document.



