

# **Clarke Webb Ecology Limited**

ECOLOGICAL SURVEYORS & CONSULTANTS



## **Kentrev Nursery, Llangrove** - **Proposed residential development** - **Ecological Appraisal**

**Survey date:** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018

**Surveyor:** Dr Peter Webb MCIEEM

## **1 Background and site description**

- 1.1 This survey relates to proposed removal of existing outbuildings and their replacement with two new dwellings and associated infra-structure/landscaping at Kentrev Nursery, Llangrove.
- 1.2 A plan of the site can be found at Figure 1 with photographs at Figure 2.
- 1.3 The site is currently operated as a plant nursery and includes:
  - i. an existing, modern two-storey brick dwelling;
  - ii. associated with the dwelling, a small garden given over mostly to paving and/or lawn;
  - iii. associated with the dwelling, a single-storey brick garage currently used as a cold store;
  - iv. a ranged of outbuildings (mostly large greenhouses) used for commercial horticultural or associated purposes.
- 1.4 Other than some short sections of fencing and/or garden hedgerow, the site boundaries are predominantly marked by intact field boundary hedgerows of around 2 m in height.
- 1.5 Adjacent land is given over to fields of improved grassland to the northeast/northwest, a field under arable cultivation to the east, a further field of improved grassland (used as a garden?) to the south and otherwise by the gardens of neighbouring dwellings.
- 1.6 The site lies in a rural location to the north of the village of Llangrove.
- 1.7 We understand that the proposals include:
  - i. the retention of the existing dwelling (B1), associated garden shed (B2) and garage (B3);
  - ii. the removal of all other buildings/structures.

## **2 Survey method**

- 2.1 A walkover survey of the site and accessible immediately adjacent land was carried out during fair weather by day on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The intent of the survey was to identify:
- i. the presence of any habitats of conservation importance or other features of ecological interest likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed works;
  - ii. the presence or possible presence of protected species likely to be affected;
  - iii. any need for further ecological survey.
- 2.2 The survey covered:
- i. the site as indicated on Figure 1;
  - ii. immediately surrounding accessible land where thought appropriate;
  - iii. any other accessible adjacent land or features thought to be of potential relevance.

### **Habitats**

- 2.3 Habitat survey followed the guidelines given in the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 1993). Target notes were used to identify specific areas on a plan, cross-referenced where appropriate in the text. Detailed species lists were not compiled.

### **Protected species**

#### **Bats**

- 2.4 Affected buildings/structures were thoroughly searched, inside and out (if and as appropriate), for any sign of use by bats including:
- the presence of free-hanging bats or bats within crevices;
  - bat droppings, urine stains or feeding remains on horizontal and vertical surfaces (eg floors, walls, foliage) within and around them;
  - the presence of potential access routes for bats into likely roosting sites and indications (where accessible for survey - such as scattered droppings or urine staining around or within entrances) of use of such potential access points by bats;
  - any other sign of use by bats.
- 2.5 There are no trees present.
- 2.6 Where appropriate, survey was aided by the use of binoculars, a powerful hand torch, an endoscope, a mechanics mirror, a penlight torch and a 5 m ladder.
- 2.7 With reference to the Bat Conservation Trusts 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition' (the 'Bat Survey Guidelines') buildings/structures were assessed as to their potential to house roosts (bat roost potential) that may not have been apparent during the survey.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding the above a subjective assessment was made of likely use of the site by bats for foraging and/or commuting.

Badger

- 2.9 The site and immediately adjacent accessible land were searched for evidence of use by badger including the present of setts, dung, tracks, foraging and any other sign.

Barn owls

- 2.10 Buildings were searched for sign of recent use by barn owls including the presence of barn owls themselves, their pellets, feathers or any other sign.

Nesting birds

- 2.11 A check was made for sign of birds having nested recently within or upon buildings/structures. Habitats otherwise present were assessed as to their potential for use as nest sites by birds though a thorough search for old birds nests was not carried out.

Reptiles

- 2.12 An assessment was made of the likely use of the site by reptiles based on habitats present within and surrounding the site.

Great crested newts

- 2.13 An assessment was made of the risk of use of the site by Great crested newts based upon the presence/absence of suitable ponds or terrestrial habitats and the likely accessibility of the site to newts should they use other ponds in the vicinity.

Other

- 2.14 Any other sign of use by protected species and/or the presence of habitats with a reasonable potential to support protected species was noted.

**Data search**

- 2.15 The MAGIC website was checked for the presence of adjacent statutory or non-statutory wildlife sites.

### **3 Survey results**

#### **Habitats**

- 3.1 The site is a commercial plant nursery given over almost entirely to buildings and/or associated areas of hard-standing.
- 3.2 Buildings present include a single dwelling and associated detached garage (both to be retained), several large glass or plastic greenhouses and a number of other small/ramshackle outbuildings.
- 3.3 Other than the buildings, the site includes areas of hard-standing or paving, a small lawn (domestic garden) and various marginal strips of disturbed ground supporting a patchy cover of ephemeral or tall ruderal vegetation.
- 3.4 Site boundaries are mostly marked by intact, managed, field boundary hedgerows (c 2m high). Surrounding land is mostly either fields of improved pasture, arable cultivation or the gardens of neighbouring properties.
- 3.5 Further details of habitats present can be found on the site plan and associated Target notes at Figure 1 with photographs at Figure 2.
- 3.6 According to the MAGIC website, the site does not constitute, fall within or lie adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory wildlife site.

#### **Protected species**

##### Bats

- 3.7 No evidence was found for any use of any of the buildings/structures by bats.
- 3.8 Further to the above, the following table summarises the unresolved bat roost potential of the various buildings/structures (with reference to Table 4.1 in the Bat Survey Guidelines):

<b>Building</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Unresolved potential*</b>
B1	Two-storey, modern, occupied dwelling	Not assessed
B2	Timber garden shed No flying access Generally in good condition	Negligible
B3	Garage Fully accessible for survey Ground floor sealed and used as a cold-store Roof space not accessible for survey Bitumen underlay present below roof tiles Ridge tiles well-bedded Gable end tiles mostly well-bedded Roof tiles lie flush against one another other than a single row, slightly lifted' on the southern roof slope Render sound Soffits with various broken/missing sections but unlikely to provided suitable	Moderate

	roosting locations/access points for bats	
B4	Metal shed No flying access	Negligible
B5	Enclosed lean-to with plastic roof No flying access	Negligible
B6	Various large glass or plastic green houses	Negligible
B7	Various metal silos/storage tanks	Negligible
B8	Sealed pellet store No flying access Fully accessible for survey Metal roof Tight, sterling board walls	Negligible
B9	Open-side/fronted sheds Flying access throughout Fully accessible for survey Metal roofs Timber-framework tight	Negligible
B10	Tin and plastic-sheet shed Flying access throughout Fully accessible for survey No sheltered internal voids (eg roof spaces) Timber-framework tight	Negligible

\* risk of roosts being present that have not been identified/characterised during the daytime survey and assessment. With reference to Table 4.1 in the Bat Survey Guidelines.

- 3.9 The main body of the site is unlikely to be suitable for material use by commuting/foraging bats. However, given the rural location, bats of various species are likely to forage/commute to at least some extent along the various site boundary hedgerows.

#### Badger

- 3.10 No evidence was found for use of the site by badgers.

#### Barn owl

- 3.11 No evidence as found for recent use of any of the buildings by barn (or any other) owls.

#### Nesting birds

- 3.12 Evidence was found for a tits and house sparrows currently or recently nesting within the soffits of the garage (B3) and of swallows nesting recently within the tin shed at B10. No other evidence was found for birds having nested recently within or upon any of the buildings.
- 3.13 Common 'garden' birds are highly likely to nest within areas of taller/denser vegetation (namely the boundary hedgerows) during the spring and summer months.

Reptiles

3.14 Neither the site nor surrounding land appear suitable for material use by reptiles.

Great crested newts

3.15 A minority of the site (including boundary hedgerows and marginal areas of disturbed ground) appears suitable for use by terrestrial great crested newts if accessible to them. However, there are no ponds present within the site or apparent in the near vicinity or marked on the OS 1:25000 plan within at least 250m. An historic pond within the field of improved (amenity) grassland immediately to the south of the site is no longer present.

Other

3.16 No other evidence was found for use or likely material use of the site or immediately adjacent land by protected species.

## **4 Interpretation and recommendations**

### **Habitats**

- 4.1 The site does not constitute, fall within or lie adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory wildlife site.
- 4.2 Native hedgerow is a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat. There are no other such habitats or other habitats of particular ecological interest or conservation concern present within or adjacent to the site.
- 4.3 Given the above we recommend that:
  - i. the various existing boundary hedgerows are retained wherever possible;**
  - ii. as enhancement, consideration is given to the planting of new native hedgerow along those section of the site boundary from which they are currently absent.**

### **Bats**

- 4.4 No evidence was found for use of any building/structure by bats.
- 4.5 With the exception of the dwelling (B1) and the garage (B3) all buildings/structures were judged to offer no more than negligible potential for use by bats as roosts. With reference to Tables 7.1-7.3 in the Bat Survey Guidelines we therefore recommend that:
  - i. should the proposals include material works to the dwelling (B1) or the roof of the garage (B3) then such buildings are first subjected to further survey with regard to bats. Further survey is likely to need to include a check of any roof spaces (which could be carried out at any time of the year) and at least one watch for bats emerging from each building over dusk and one speared watch for bats returning to roost within each building over dawn (survey which is normally only considered valid if carried out sometime between May and August inclusive though a minority carried out in September may be acceptable).**
- 4.6 Other than the above, no further bat survey of buildings/structures is warranted.
- 4.7 Bats of various species are likely to forage/commute to at least some extent around the boundaries. In this regard we refer to the recommendation at paragraph 4.3 above and further recommend that:
  - i. any external lighting be such as not to spill significantly onto existing or new boundary hedgerows.**

### **Badger**

- 4.8 No evidence was found for use of the site by badgers.

### **Barn owls**

- 4.9 No evidence was found for use of any building/structure by barn owls.

### **Nesting birds**

- 4.10 It is an offence to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is being built or in use. We therefore recommend that:
  - i. any significant removal of vegetation (namely hedgerow/shrubs/scrub) be carried out between October and February inclusive (so as to avoid the nominal bird nesting**



**season) or otherwise only following a thorough check to confirm that no active birds nests are present at the time. Should birds commence nesting upon or within buildings/structures at any time then all works liable to impact upon such nests should be delayed until the nests are no longer occupied.**

Reptiles

- 4.11 The site does not appear suitable for material use by reptiles. No further survey is therefore warranted.

Great crested newts

- 4.12 The risk of use of the site by Great crested newts is low enough not to warrant any further survey.

Other

- 4.13 No evidence was found for use, or likely material use, of the site or immediately adjacent land by any other protected species.
- 4.14 Other than any and all of the above, we see no need for any further ecological survey in relation to the proposed development of the site.

**Disclaimer.** All reasonable effort was taken to ensure an accurate assessment of the situation at the time of the survey. However, the absence of recorded sign should not be taken as an absolute guarantee that the site was not being used by a particular species. There is also no guarantee that any particular species will not use the site at any time in the future. Survey results may be weather or seasonally dependent.

Figure 1. Site plan.



## Buildings

- B1 Two-storey brick dwelling with a pitched roof fitted with clay tiles. Occupied.
- B2 Garden shed. Timber.
- B3 Single-storey single garage. Rendered. Pitched roof fitted with interlocking double Roman clay tiles. Ridge and gable end tiles bedded in mortar. Roof pace present.
- B4 Metal shed.
- B5 Lean to. Mono-pitched roof fitted with plastic sheeting.
- B6 Various large, commercial greenhouses. Walls and roofs of glass or clear plastic sheeting on metal framework.
- B7 Various metal/plastic silos/storage tanks
- B8 Single-storey pellet store. Walls of sterling board with a mono-pitched roof fitted with tin sheeting.
- B9 Open-fronted/sided storage sheds with mono-pitched roofs fitted with tin sheeting.
- B10 Ramshackle single-storey shed constructed from tin and/or plastic sheeting.

## Target notes

- 1 Areas of hard-standing/paving.
- 2 Close-mown lawn.
- 3 Marginal areas mostly disturbed ground with patchy cover of ephemeral or tall ruderal vegetation including Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Willowherbs (*Epilobium* sp), *Myosotis* sp., thistles (*Cirsium* sp), Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), White clover (*Trifolium repens*) etc.
- 4 Field boundary hedgerow. Intact and to around 2 m in height, Includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Privet, Elm (*Ulnus* sp), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) etc
- 5 Garden hedge. Intact and to around 2 m in height.
- 6 Field boundary hedgerow. Intact and to around 2 m in height, Includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Elm (*Ulnus* sp), Rose (*Rosa* sp), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) etc
- 7 Field boundary hedgerow. Intact and to around 2 m in height, Mainly Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) but included Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Elm (*Ulnus* sp), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) etc

**Figure 2.** Photographs.



P1. The dwelling (B1)



P2. The garden shed (P2) with the dwelling beyond.



P3. The garage (B3) as viewed from the southwest.



P4. Building B4 as viewed from the southeast.



P5 and P6. Typical views of various of the green houses (B6) and storage tanks/silos (B7)





P7. Building B8 (pellet store).



P8. Looking north between building B9 (on the right) and the adjacent green houses.



P9 and P10. Building B10 as viewed from the south and the interior respectively.



P11. Looking west across the area of lawn at Target note 2.



P12. Looking east towards the site entrance across the 'yard' at Target note 1.