



**Updated Preliminary Ecological Assessment
for a proposed development
at
Station Road,
Nantgaredig
Carmarthen**

Client:	Obsidian Homes
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1. Introduction

Aderyn Ecology were originally contracted to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal in support of an application to Carmarthenshire County Council for a building development with associated access (Jenks, 2020). The proposal was for a housing development with associated access works on land at Station Road, Nantgaredig. The grid reference is SN494210.

The site is now being taken forward by Obsidian Homes, and entails a development of c.38 homes.

The aim of the survey is to update baseline data on habitat and species within the previously surveyed area, and to investigate any further potential impacts that may occur during construction and post-construction stages. A revised assessment is made of any potential impact on protected species or sites in the area.



Figure 1. Survey Area

Site Description

The proposed site is a level, dry field, between existing dwellings. It is used for silage production, and had been mown prior to survey. The field is bordered by hedges; there are no watercourses.



Figure 2. Proposed Development Site (2026)

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Exercise

No new desk exercise was carried out. The original desk exercise established that there are two designated conservation sites within 2km of the proposed development, Afon Tywi SSSI/SAC (800m distant at its closest point) and Cwm yr Abbey Stream Section SSSI (c.1500m distant, designated for its geology). Impacts on the latter site can be immediately discounted. The application area has no shared features with the former site, and no mobile protected species associated with that site, such as otter, are likely to be present. There are no watercourses on site, thus no direct hydrological continuity, but the addition of nutrients from sewerage associated with the proposed development would be expected to contribute to increased nitrogen and phosphorus levels within the catchment.

2.2 Extended Phase I Survey

The original site inspection by Aderyn Ecology was made on 11th March 2020; the current survey was carried out on 29th July 2026. Both surveys followed the methodology set out by the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 1993) and then subsequently by the Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995). The methods provide quick and accurate classification of habitats.

In addition, the surveys looked for field signs of protected species and assessed the habitat for their potential presence. Measures taken included:

- A search for signs of badgers on the site.
- Consideration of the potential impact of the development on bats and other protected species.
- Recording birds and identifying the suitability of the habitat for nesting birds especially those listed as species of conservation concern.
- Recording a list of plants found on the site, shown in Appendix 1.

2.3 Constraints

There were no significant constraints to the survey. The field had been mown for silage earlier in the year, but the predominance of agriculturally-favoured species was apparent from vegetative material.

3. Results

3.1 Vegetation and habitat survey

The habitats at and adjoining the site location were recorded in detail. The application area comprises improved grassland (B4) with hedgerows - intact species-poor (J2.1.2) alongside.



Figure 3. Phase I habitat map

TN1: Mature Dutch elm

Improved Grassland (B4)



The application area is dominated by rye-grasses, with scattered broad-leaved dock.

The original survey noted that the grassland across the field had been subject to past agricultural improvement and was strongly dominated by grasses. Perennial rye-grass and a *Poa* species (presumably *P. pratensis*) were prominent in a species-poor sward, and the limited diversity of associated species were all agriculturally-favoured species such as creeping buttercup, broad-leaved dock and common mouse-ear.

The current survey found the sward to still be strongly dominated by perennial rye-grass, with Italian rye-grass also noted. White clover and the aforementioned agriculturally-favoured species are still frequent. The western part of the field shows some signs of reversion towards poor semi-improved grassland, with ox-eye daisy locally-frequent. Single plants of cat's-ear, meadow buttercup and common centaury were also noted in the mown sward towards the field edge, the latter perhaps associated with some edge disturbance near the recently completed housing estate. Common bent also becomes the dominant grass at the field edge. Other indicators of semi-improved grassland, such as common bird's-foot trefoil and lesser knapweed remain absent. The habitat is of little or no ecological significance; it does not classify as the 'Lowland Meadows' Priority Habitat.



Common centaury was found near the field edge

Hedgerow – Intact, Species-poor (J2.1.2)



Mature Dutch elm in roadside hedge

The original PEA noted that the four hedges were all very similar both in structure and species composition. All appeared to have been mechanically trimmed on an annual basis over a protracted period, and had a very open internal core structure, with all the foliage concentrated at the edge. Trees were few and far between, with single examples of a wych elm, an ash and a holly. The shrubs were dominated by hawthorn, with blackthorn and hazel also being fairly frequent. The roadside hedge also had a species of elm, and field maple. The field layer was reasonably diverse, with a range of common hedgerow plant species typical of neutral soils, such as red campion, primrose, hart's tongue, dog's mercury and cow parsley.

The current survey noted no significant changes to the hedges. The roadside elm was identified as a Dutch elm (although Huntingdon Elm, *Ulmus x vegetata* was not fully ruled out); it is unusual to find a mature specimen unaffected by Dutch elm disease. The adjoining lengths of hedge also have suckering plants of this species. The management still comprises annual flailing, and no new standard trees were apparent. These boundary features are of minor interest; the mature elm is of some local interest.

3.2 Protected species

No badger setts, latrines or signs of foraging were found on the site during either survey. The development will not affect badgers.

The site is generally unsuitable for amphibians; there is no water. It is also of low suitability for reptiles, with the hedge-banks providing the only potential habitat for species such as common lizard. No further survey is required.

The site is of little value to nesting birds. No birds of conservation concern were seen. Skylark

is the only species which could conceivably nest in the grassland, but is unlikely to favour a field so close to housing and hedges.

The hedges are of only low suitability for dormice, being annually-flailed and with reduced flowers and fruits to provide food sources as a result. There are no hedges or woodland nearby offering optimal habitat, and no records from the surrounding area.

No bat activity survey was carried out, but the few hedgerow trees were assessed for potential roost features. There is little potential for roosting bats on the site – the only significant standard tree – a mature elm in the roadside hedge - had no obvious cavities or other features suitable for bats, and the ivy cover on the trunk comprises relatively thin-stemmed growth. The site is of low suitability for foraging or commuting bats. No further survey should be required.

3.3 Invasive Species

No invasive non-native species were seen.

4. Discussion

4.1 Scheme Details

The development proposal is for a housing development of approximately 38 units; the site layout is yet to be determined although drawings for a previously approved scheme were seen. The roadside hedge will require the creation of a visibility splay, necessitating removal of the mature elm. No details on intended sewerage were available prior to survey; a mains connection is assumed. SuDs features in the previously approved scheme included an attenuation basin in the south-west of the site.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Afon Tywi SAC

The proximity of the Afon Tywi SAC means that all drainage and sewerage associated with the scheme should take account of the potential for pollution.

4.2.2 Invasive Non-native Species

The site is currently free from invasive non-native species. Both the construction practices and landscaping associated with the scheme should avoid inadvertently or intentionally introducing invasive species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam or cotoneasters.

4.2.3 Lighting

Adoption of a sympathetic lighting regime to avoid excessive light spill should be encouraged. In particular, any external lighting should seek to avoid the boundary hedges, which could be used by commuting bats or other nocturnal wildlife.

4.2.4 Hedgerow Translocation / Removal

Any works impacting the hedges should take place outside of the bird breeding season (March 1st to August 31st), unless bird survey by a competent ornithologist takes place immediately prior to works.

4.3 Compliance with Environment Wales Act / Net Biodiversity Gain

Carmarthenshire County Council requires that biodiversity enhancements are included in all developments to meet the Authority's Duty of Care under Section 6 of the Environment Act 2016. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that *"planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity"*.

Some biodiversity features could be incorporated in the landscaping associated with the development. Some or all of the following recommendations could be incorporated into scheme drawings and detailed in a Green Infrastructure Statement:

- Native hedgerow / tree and shrub planting could be carried out along the eastern boundary of the site to provide new habitat and improved wildlife linkages. Loss of a mature elm in the roadside hedge should be compensated by new native tree planting at an appropriate ratio.
- Pollinator-friendly plants could be included in the landscape planting for insects.
- Hedgehog gateways should be included in all fences between gardens
- Integrated bat boxes could be included on houses
- Bird nesting features should be provided on each property, e.g. artificial house martin nests or swift bricks
- Proposed SuDs features should be designed with wildlife in mind, with exposed natural clay where possible and a maintenance regime which avoids summer mowing of surrounding edges. Any supplementary planting should be of native species such as ragged robin and yellow flag iris. The use of some non-native cultivars proposed in the previously approved scheme (eg. *Cornus* 'midwinter fire') should be reviewed and adjusted.

5. Summary and Conclusions

The proposed development does not present a significant risk to habitats or species in the area. Opportunities exist to achieve net biodiversity gain.

6. References

Jenks, P. (2020). *Extended Phase I Survey, Land at Station Road, Nantgaredig, Carmarthen*. Aderyn Ecology Report.

Appendix 1 Plant species recorded during the walkover visit 29/7/2026

Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Hedge Bindweed	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>
Common Centaury	<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Hazel	<i>Coryllus avellana</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Perforate St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>
Ox-eye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Italian Rye-grass	<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Pineapple-weed	<i>Matricaria matricoides</i>
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Common Dog-rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Marsh Woundwort	<i>Stachys palustris</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Scentless Mayweed	<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>
Dutch Elm	<i>Ulmus x hollandica</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>