

Welsh Mine Heritage Site Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Context

Environment Systems was commissioned to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to support the planning application for creating a Welsh Mine Heritage site and Conservation Project at Old Goginan, near Aberystwyth. The project has been designed to operate as a low impact venue for a local interests business.



The existing site was vacant and only used for access to the old silver mine which was abandoned in 1975

What we did

To support the planning application for change of use from predominately greenfield into a low impact venue we undertook a PEA which included a detailed desk study of protected sites and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats as well as a protected and priority species records search. A field survey was conducted during August 2015 using the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 2010) methodology paying particular attention to habitat features that may support protected and priority species and may be affected by the development.

The findings of the extended desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were written into a technical report which followed the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2013) and detailed the method used, results, habitat mapping, scope for protected species and identification of potential impacts as a result of development.

Results

Based on the information gathered during the desk study and field survey it was considered that habitats and flora on site were of limited nature conservation status generally due to their extensive local presence. The loss of a minority land cover of improved grassland and semi-improved grassland was unlikely to result in significant ecological effects that would be detrimental to local populations of reptiles and wider foraging wildlife such as badgers. Findings also found that the mines were known to support roosting bats. A stand of Japanese knotweed, an Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) was also recorded during the field survey.

The report prepared on behalf of the client was submitted to the local planning authority and included the recommendation of a Habitat Management Plan (HMP). The HMP was outlined to include the eradication of the INNS and to provide habitat connectivity measures for reptiles. Furthermore a sensitive lighting strategy was recommended to prevent disturbance of bats using the mines for roosting.

Planning permission was granted in January 2016.

Context

- To identify and map habitats
- To identify protected and priority species
- To propose measures to ensure ecological sustainability of the site post construction

Outcomes

- Phase 1 Habitat Map
- Identification of habitats that support reptiles and bats
- Identification of INNS
- Report suitable for planning
- Planning permission granted

Benefits

- Fast repeatable approach
- Local ecologists able to attend site quickly
- Simple, effective mitigation measures

