

Unit B6, Old Tannery, Haverigg

Ecology Assessment

19th November 2025

Report no. 1125/6

Report commissioned by;

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of this report

This report is a summary assessment detailing any potential ecology impacts or concerns likely to result from the extension of an existing building in the Old Tannery industrial area in Haverigg.

The report was requested by the Planning Authority in response to the pre-application statement, and required a particular focus on potential impacts on natterjack toads (as the Old Tannery is in an area highlighted as having potential for these animals).

1.2 Proposed works

The client wishes to extend an existing industrial building (unit B6) by approximately 7m to the east on existing hardstanding.

1.3 Survey methods

A walkover site survey was carried out, alongside a desktop search for records and other information about the distribution of natterjack toads in the vicinity of the Old Tannery.

The site visit was carried out by Tamsin Douglas MCIEEM of South Lakes Ecology on 14th November 2025. The weather was overcast and cool with a light breeze after recent rain.

The desktop search included a search of South Lakes Ecology's biological records, checks on recent local searches carried out for natterjack toads for nearby properties, searches for potential breeding ponds on maps and aerial images, and searches on DEFRA's mapping website for records of natterjack toads (www.magic.defra.gov.uk).

1.4 Legislative background

Natterjack toads *Epidalea calamita* are a European Protected Species, and their breeding sites and resting places are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

It is an offence for anyone intentionally or recklessly to kill, injure or disturb a natterjack toad, to possess one (whether live or dead), or sell or offer for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by natterjack toad for shelter or for breeding.

1.5 Natterjack toad ecology

Natterjack toads are rare in the UK – the Cumbrian coast is a stronghold for them. The toads tend to inhabit coastal grassland habitat (including sand dunes), foraging for small invertebrates on short grassland. They are active at dusk and through the night, and spend the days in refugia/ under debris or in burrows (which is why sandy substrate is a preferred habitat). Unlike the other native amphibians, they have an extended breeding period (can arrive in breeding ponds anytime between late March and late July), and prefer ephemeral, shallow pools which have few predators in (such as fish or beetle larvae).

Natterjack toads hibernate (usually from November to March/ April) – often in burrows, under tree bases or in suitable undisturbed refugia.

2 ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF FEATURES

Habitat on site

The habitat on site of the Old Tannery is urban, with large areas of warehouse/ industrial buildings and hardstanding. There is a lot of noise, and numerous vehicle movements.



Image 1. Unit B6 – proposed to be extended

Surrounding habitat

Beyond unit B6, the remainder of the Old Tannery area comprises hardstanding and industrial units, with roads to the north, east and west. To the south of the units, and beyond the boundary roads the land is predominantly agricultural (especially pasture). To the south-east are some holiday developments (lodges and caravans), and residential properties and Haverigg village to the south-west. The nearest ponds identified were 250m south-west near allotments, and 450m to the south-east in Harbour Lights caravan site.



Image 2. Aerial image showing surrounding habitat (red circle indicates location of unit B6)

Local records of natterjack toads

There are a lot of natterjack toad records amongst data searches in the Haverigg area from Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre, and the nearby coastal dunes area is regularly surveyed for these animals (most of the other amphibian records were collected during natterjack surveys).

Records of natterjack toads are from various coastal sites to the south and south-west of the Old Tannery (Haverigg Haws, Hodbarrow, Ironworks and Borwick Rails. The search on the magic website produced are several records of EPS licences for natterjack toads from the Devonshire Road/ Borwick Rails area from 2014 and 2015.

The search through South Lakes Ecology records found a local record of breeding natterjack toads in some newly created pools 450m to the west of the property.

Summary of site suitability for natterjack toads

The Old Tannery area does not provide any suitable foraging habitat for amphibians, as there is no grassland. There are areas of debris that could be used for refuge by amphibians, but as it is surrounded on 3 sides by roads it is considered very unlikely that dispersing toads would use the site.

There are no ponds on site. The closest pond appears to be a permanent pond, 250m to the south-west (so unlikely to be used by natterjacks). The ponds 450m to the south-east have been used by breeding natterjacks, and as such dispersing toads could be present on and around the surrounding grassland. As stated above, however, it is considered unlikely that these toads would cross the road into unsuitable habitat around the Old Tannery when dispersing from breeding sites, and would be more likely to forage in suitable coastal habitat or agricultural land to the north and east. See image below for view of habitat between unit B6 and the road by Harbour Lights caravan site.



Image 3. View from unit B6, looking east towards the known breeding ponds and agricultural fields

3. ASSESSMENT

3.1 Recommendations for further survey/consideration

Natterjack toads

Natterjack toads are present in the local area, and have been known to breed within 500m of the proposed works. Due to the type of habitats present around the proposed development and the barriers to dispersal from the known breeding pond to the Old Tannery site, it is considered to be very unlikely that any natterjack toads would be encountered during the proposed extension work to unit B6. As such, no further survey work or assessment is required.

Other protected species

The property was assessed for its potential to host other protected species (such as bats and nesting birds). It is considered highly unlikely that the building would be used by either of these animal groups due to the fabric of the building, surrounding habitat and regular noise disturbance.

3.2 Recommended mitigation and possible enhancements for ecological impacts

Natterjack toads

As it is considered highly unlikely that any natterjack toads would be encountered on site, no avoidance or mitigation measures are required.

If an amphibian is seen on site it should be carefully removed and placed away from building works (such as by a nearby hedgerow), unless natterjack toad is suspected (clear pale yellow stripe down their back). If natterjack toad is suspected, please take a photo and then leave the animal alone (unless it is in immediate danger) and get in touch with South Lakes Ecology immediately for advice as to how to proceed.

Other protected species

No scope for other protected species (such as bats or nesting birds) was noted, so no additional avoidance/ mitigation measures are required.