BAT AND GCN APPRAISAL

GARDEN HOUSE, ERBISTOCK

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This report has been prepared by Sambrook Associates Ltd on behalf of Cassidy and Ashton in connection with the re-development of Garden House and takes into account their particular instructions and requirements. It is not intended for, and should not be relied on, by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION 4
1.1 Background Information 4
1.2 Site Description 4
2 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY 5
3 METHODOLOGY 9
3.1 Introduction 9
3.2 Walk-over Survey 9
3.3 Bat Activity Surveys 9
3.4 GCN eDNA Survey 10
3.5 Limitations 10
4 RESULTS 11
4.1 Introduction 11
4.2 Bat Activity Surveys 11
4.3 Appraisal of Potential Effects 12
5 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS 17
6 REFERENCES 18

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

1.1.1 Sambrook Associates Ltd was instructed by Cassidy and Ashton to undertake a Bat and Great Crested Newt (GCN) Appraisal in relation to the proposed re-development of Garden House, Erbistock. This appraisal is in addition to the Preliminary Ecological Assessment undertaken by TEP in October 2023. The two reports should be read in conjunction; the TEP report provides baseline information on habitats and potential key protected and notable species, and the Sambrook Associates report provides information on follow up (or Phase 2) surveys for bats and great crested newts.

1.1.2 As part of the Appraisal, a site walk-over of the Site, three nocturnal bat surveys, and great crested newt eDNA surveys were undertaken in 2024. This report provides the results of these, as well as an appraisal of the potential effects the proposed development may have on bats and great crested newts, and recommendations for further survey, mitigation and enhancement, where required.

1.1.3 The aim of the appraisal is to provide sufficient information on bats and great crested newts for the local planning authority (LPA) to determine the associated planning application. The objectives of the study were to:

- Provide baseline information on bats and great crested newts within the features identified as potential habitats in the TEP report, namely Buildings 2,3 & 4 for bats and two on-site ponds for GCN;
- Provide recommendations for further pre-construction survey work and / or mitigation measures if required and present opportunities for habitat enhancement.

1.2 Site Description

1.2.1 The proposed development is hereby referred to as the Site and comprises the land within the red-line boundary. The landownership boundary (blue line) covers an area larger than the Site area and it was therefore possible to assess habitats outside of the red line. The Site is located within a rural setting within the hamlet of Erbistock. The site is a former garden centre and therefore comprises soft landscaping including green houses and timber buildings, trees, shrubbery, hedgerows and ornamental planting. There are two ponds just outside of the site boundary, within the blue line boundary. See the TEP report for further information on habitat structure.

2 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

2.1.1 Many sites, animals and plants are protected by European and/or UK legislation either because of their decline across Europe and the UK or due to the persecution they have placed upon them by negligent or illegal acts such as baiting or trade. Legislation is also in place to prevent the spread of introduced or non-native invasive species and harmful weeds. When undertaking an appraisal of a proposed development, such legislation is taken into account as follows.

- **European:** Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive'); and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) (the 'Birds Directive').
- **UK (England & Wales):** The Environment Act 2021, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (the 'Habitat Regulations') which transposes the Habitats Directive in UK law. Since 1st January 2021, the UK is no longer a member of Europe but since the Habitats Directives are embedded into UK statute, The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 was published and still applies in England and Wales; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000; the Protection of Badgers Act 1992; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) (2006) and the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990.

2.1.2 Species such as bats, great crested newts, otter, water vole, reptiles, birds and badgers are all protected to varying degrees under this legislation.

2.1.3 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (Section 6 Duty). This duty applies to public authorities in the exercise of their functions in relation to Wales and will help maximise contributions to achieving the well-being goals. The Nature Recovery Action Plan supports this legislative requirement to reverse the decline in biodiversity, address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by putting nature at the heart of decision-making and increasing the resilience of ecosystems by taking specific action focused around the 6 objectives for habitats and species.

2.1.4 In addition to legislation, there are also national and local planning policies pertaining to the protection of biodiversity. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 (February 2024) requires the planning system to have a key role in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement. Development plan strategies, policies and development proposals must consider the need to:

- support the conservation of biodiversity, in particular the conservation of wildlife and habitats;
- ensure action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for biodiversity and habitats;

- ensure statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed;
- safeguard protected and priority species and existing biodiversity assets from impacts which directly affect their nature conservation interests and compromise the resilience of ecological networks and the components which underpin them, such as water and soil, including peat;
- secure enhancement of and improvements to ecosystem resilience by improving diversity, condition, extent and connectivity of ecological networks;
- provide measurable biodiversity net benefit which is secured through the production and implementation of a Green Infrastructure Statement which comprises a commitment to biodiversity gain through the creation and long term management of valuable habitats.

2.1.5 Chapter 6 of PPW 12 specifically requires (as per Annex to Heads of Planning Letter Dated 11 October 2023: Addressing the Nature Emergency through the Planning System: Updated National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales):

- Green Infrastructure: stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure covering cross boundary considerations, identifying key outputs of green infrastructure assessments, the submission of proportionate green infrastructure statements with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards.
- Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach: further clarity is provided on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step. The use of the green infrastructure statement as a means of demonstrating the stepwise approach is made explicit. A simplified diagram of the policy approach has been developed (which will be further refined in the consolidated version of PPW12). The importance of strategic collaboration to identify and capture larger scale opportunities for securing a net benefit for biodiversity is recognised.
- Protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest: strengthened approach to the protection of SSSIs, with increased clarity on the position for site management and exemptions for minor development necessary to maintain a 'living landscape'. Other development is considered unacceptable as a matter of principle. Exceptionally, a planned approach may be appropriate where necessary safeguards can be secured through a development plan.
- Trees and Woodlands: closer alignment with the stepwise approach, along with promoting new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place.

2.1.6 To accompany the PPW, Technical Advice Note 5 (TAN5) demonstrates how local authorities, developers and stakeholders can deliver sustainable development that does not result in losses to biodiversity and takes the opportunity to protect and enhance it. Flintshire council also have their own guidance and local policy to promote ecological resilience in their decision making.

2.1.7 Under the NERC Act, local authorities (and other public bodies) have a duty to conserve biodiversity. The Act confers responsibility on the local authority to take the protection of priority habitats and species (as listed in Section 41) into consideration when making a planning decision. Habitats listed in this section include eutrophic standing waters, rivers, lowland meadows and lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Species listed in this section include great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, sky lark *Alauda arvensis*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, otter *Lutra lutra*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris.* Full habitats and species' lists can be found at the Natural History Museum website, nhm.ac.uk or jncc.defra.gov.uk.

2.1.8 Because of the type of development proposed, it is usual that bats and great crested newts are often most affected and so the legislative and licensing obligations pertaining to bats and great crested newts are described in more detail below. Bats and great crested newts are referred to as European Protected Species (EPS).

2.1.9 All bat species are protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The species is also protected under Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the EC Habitats Directive). This has been transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) in England and Wales.

2.1.10 It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat; intentionally or recklessly disturb in a way that would affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, or breed. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost and to possess, advertise, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

2.1.11 Similarly for great crested newts, it is an offence to deliberately capture, injure, disturb or kill a great crested newt, deliberately take or destroy its eggs, damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, and intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure of place used for shelter or protection, or disturb a great crested newt in such a place.

2.1.12 If you wish to undertake works that would affect an EPS then you will need a licence. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Natural England (NE) as statutory authorities, in exercise of the powers conferred under regulation 53(1) and 56(3) (a) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, may issue licences for the following purposes:

- Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- Preventing the spread of disease;
- Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property or to fisheries; to allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal;

2.1.13 Before issuing a licence under the Habitats Regulations, the licensing authority must be satisfied that “there is no satisfactory alternative” to the work as proposed and, that the proposed actions “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status (FCS)”.

2.1.14 To ensure these requirements are met, the licensing authority must have enough information to complete an assessment of the application. This includes sufficient survey data so that how the site is used, and how important the site is to an EPS is understood and impacts upon the EPS are appropriately assessed so that mitigation and/or compensation can be designed into the proposed development that will ensure the EPS population can be incorporated and maintained in the long term.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 To inform this Ecological Appraisal, a walk-over survey was conducted on 17 July 2024 which comprised site orientation and GCN eDNA surveys. Further to this, bat activity surveys were undertaken in August and September.

3.2 Walk-over Survey

3.2.1 Sambrook Associates Ltd. carried out walk-over survey of the Site on 17 July 2024. The weather was warm with an average temperature of 21°C.

3.2.2 The walk-over survey was carried out by Rebecca Sambrook MCIEEM. The surveyor is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and adheres to that organisation's Code of Professional Conduct. Rebecca has gained over 24 years as a professional ecologist, conducting surveys and authoring reports including PEAs, Ecological Impact Assessment chapters, Habitat Regulations Assessments, Biodiversity Management Plans and other specialist technical reports, including mitigation design and licence applications.

3.3 Bat Activity Surveys

3.3.1 The surveys followed the methodology set out in the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023).

3.3.2 The nocturnal bat emergence surveys comprised three dusk surveys and were undertaken during appropriate weather conditions. The dusk surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset until 1.5-2 hours after.

3.3.3 Three surveyors were positioned strategically so that good coverage of the buildings and all identified potential roosting features was achieved (see Figure 3.1 below). The surveyors are experienced in bat activity surveys; Rebecca Sambrook (NE licence no. 2022-10249-CL17-BAT), Niamh Sambrook and Mark Benson.

3.3.4 The surveyors each used a Wildlife Acoustics' EM Touch detectors. Two Firefox Swift Pro 2 IR cameras with two Westlite IR torches 850nm were also used. The data was analysed by the surveyors and reviewed by Rebecca Sambrook.

3.3.5 The following table provides details of the surveys.

Table 3.1: Survey data

Variable	Date		
	01-08-2024	22-08-2024	19-09-2024
Survey type	Dusk	Dusk	Dusk
Sunrise/Sunset	20:05	20:23	19:14
Time started	19:50	20:00	18:59
Time completed	21:45	21:35	20:44

Start weather	Warm, humid still	Warm, dry, still	Mild, brief, slight drizzle, still
Start Temperature	20º	18º	16º
Start rain	0	0	1
Start cloud	0	0	0
Start wind	0	0	0
End weather	Warm, humid, still	Warm, dry, still	Mild, dry, still
End temp	16º	18º	15º
End rain	0	0	0
End cloud	0	0	0
End wind	0	0	0

Plate 3.1: Surveyor Locations ● Camera locations ●



3.4 GCN eDNA Survey

3.4.1 A great crested newt eDNA survey was conducted on 17 July on Ponds 1 and 2. The survey was carried out by Rebecca Sambrook (NRW licence no. S087134/1).

3.5 Limitations

3.5.1 No significant limitations were encountered during the surveys – all known potential roosting features were covered by the surveyors. The western elevations of the buildings are flanked by overgrown hedgerow so they cannot be easily viewed but that said, this provides for a very cluttered area and so bats would not be able to navigate through this to the buildings therefore there was no limitation to the survey.

3.5.2 The GCN eDNA surveys were undertaken outside of the core period for this type of survey which is 15 April to 30 June. Nevertheless, a positive result in both ponds means that the results can be relied upon to inform baseline, impacts and mitigation/compensation.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides a commentary on the data collected during the surveys undertaken in 2024.

4.2 Bat Activity Surveys

4.2.1 The surveys were undertaken during the period August to September meaning that maternity, summer and transient roosts would all be active at the time of the survey, if they were present.

4.2.2 **General activity:** activity across the Site was generally low with activity attributed to up to seven soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus,* occasional common pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* occasional Myotis sp. and noctule *Nyctalus noctula* (overhead) and a single brown long eared *Plecotus auritus.* The Myotis and brown long-eared were brief passes. Soprano pipistrelles emerged from the buildings and continued to forage around the buildings and gardens for much of the early-mid part of the surveys.

4.2.3 **Building 2 Roosts:** the TEP report identified building B2 as a confirmed roost due to the presence of droppings within the building. It was considered that this was a feeding perch. During the second activity survey in August, seven soprano pipistrelle bats were seen to emerge from a knot hole on the eastern gable wall of the building at 20:15. Since the part of the building they emerged from contains a large, industrial refrigerator, it is considered the bats are roosting in the void between the top of the refrigerator unit and the apex of the stable block. Since these bats were not recorded roosting during the second or third survey, this is considered to be a transient day roost.

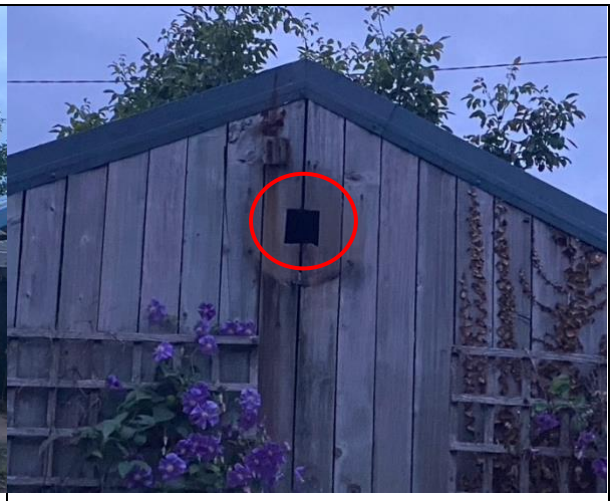




4.2.4 **Building 3:** no roosts identified during the building inspection by TEP or the subsequent activity surveys.

4.2.5 **Building 4 Roosts**: the TEP report already identified building B4 as a confirmed roost due to the presence of droppings within the building. It was considered that this was a feeding perch. During the first emergence survey in August, two soprano pipistrelles emerged at 21:10 and 21:18 respectively. Both bats emerged from the square hole in the eastern gable wall. It is considered due to the nature of the building that they must be roosting between the ridge beam and the corrugated metal roof. Since these bats were not recorded roosting during the second or third survey, this is considered to be a transient day roost.





4.3 Appraisal of Potential Effects

4.3.1 The proposed scheme will include:

- Demolition of existing buildings (including Buildings 2-4);
- Construction of a new dwelling
- Construction of a triple garage
- Construction of a new driveway and car parking
- Landscaping

4.3.2 **Bats:** Works on buildings often gives rise to numerous effects on bats in the absence of mitigation. Direct impacts can include disturbance, loss or modification of roosts due to building work including demolition, removal of roofs, re-pointing of brickwork, installation of insulating materials and non-breathable membranes, closing up of access points, increased people presence and installation of lighting. Since the buildings will be demolished, all roosts will be destroyed. A derogation licence from Natural Resources Wales will be required to undertake works and a mitigation compensation strategy is to be devised.

Table 4.6: Scale of Impact (in absence of mitigation)

Building	Roost Type, species and no. of individuals	Proposed Works	Likely Impact	Roost Location	Conservation Significance	Scale of Impact on Population Viability
B2	Summer day roost of soprano pipistrelle (7)	Demolition	Destruction and permanent loss of roost	No access into the void but given species, likely to be between ridge beam and roofing sheets	Low	Low
B4	Summer day roost of soprano pipistrelle (2)	Demolition	Destruction and permanent loss of roost	Apex of roof between ridge beam and roof sheets	Low	Low

4.3.3 There are no trees within the proposed works area or within the assumed zone of potential disturbance (20m) that support potential roosting features and therefore trees in relation to bats are not considered further.

4.3.4 Fragmentation and isolation due to modification of habitats that bats may use to commute to areas for foraging and roosting can also occur. The surrounding landscape offers suitable foraging and commuting opportunities but these, in the main, will be retained in situ in the long term and the gap that will be created in the hedgerow to make way for the new driveway will be narrow (less than 10m wide hence and effects on foraging or commuting bats or their habitats are not anticipated.

4.3.5 Lighting at night can cause direct and indirect disturbance to bat roosts and foraging/commuting routes. Light sensitive species such as brown long-eared bats will avoid areas that are subject to light pollution and this can cause significant disturbance to commuting and foraging bats and often cut off pathways between roosts and valuable foraging areas, often leading to abandonment of roosts.

5.1.1 Impacts on bats as a result of the proposed works are anticipated and therefore a mitigation and compensation strategy is proposed. This mitigation strategy will form the basis of a licence application to Natural Resources Wales. **Demolition/construction activities that may cause a disturbance to the buildings (and therefore roosting bats) must not commence until a licence has been granted and appropriate mitigation and compensation measures have been implemented, as appropriate.**

5.1.2 The overriding emphasis of the mitigation and compensation strategy is preventing harm and securing the long-term viability of populations. The following principles of mitigation will be taken forward:

- Toolbox talk will be provided to Site personnel prior to the commencement of works. The talk will include information regarding the protection of species, habitats, legal implications, their responsibilities and what to do if a bat is encountered. If bats are found

during the course of works, works must stop immediately, and the named ecologist (or their accredited agent) will be contacted and advice sought.

- The works to the buildings will commence outside of the two most vulnerable periods; breeding (late April to September) and hibernation (November to February). Should works to the buildings commence between March to October, a dawn survey will be undertaken on the morning of the start of works. This will identify if any bats are present and will give the named ecologist (or their accredited agent) the opportunity to move the bat/s to a replacement roost.
- The licence named ecologist (or their accredited agent) will provide a watching brief during the initial works, including removal of roof materials and will be available on an on-call basis throughout the works.
- A 'soft demolition' technique will be used for the works to the buildings, to comprise removal of roof materials by hand, under the watch of the named ecologist or their accredited agent.
- The following compensation measures are to be incorporated in the design:
    - 2no. ridge tiles on the proposed garage will be raised slightly (max 1cm gap between bottom of ridge and slate underneath), or ridge air vents will be installed to allow bats to use ridge tiles;
    - An integrated Ibstock C bat box (or equivalent) to be installed on the eastern gable end of the garage at least 2m above ground level, near to the apex;
    - 2no Habitat access slates are to be installed on the southern roof elevation. Behind the access slates will be a $2m^2$ non-breathable membrane e.g. Bitumen type F.
- A lighting scheme will be designed that is sensitive to the requirements of bats in accordance with the current guidance jointly issued by the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust; Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK; the replacement roosts will not be illuminated.
- The landscape immediately around the replacement roosts will remain intact, no trees or hedgerow will be removed.
- No monitoring or habitat management is proposed.

4.3.6 **Great crested newts:** the two on-site ponds within the site proved to be positive for GCN through eDNA testing. It is assumed both ponds are GCN breeding ponds.

4.3.7 Given the presence of GCN in the ponds within the site and within 50m of the proposed works area, there has been significant consideration of GCN in the scheme design. Although much of the proposed new infrastructure will be based within the existing hardstanding, in the absence of

mitigation and compensation, there will be a small amount of permanent loss of suitable high value core GCN habitat, temporary disturbance of habitats, and risk of killing/injury of GCN during the construction phase. A scheme of mitigation is required and the development can only commence upon the granting of a derogation licence issued by NRW.

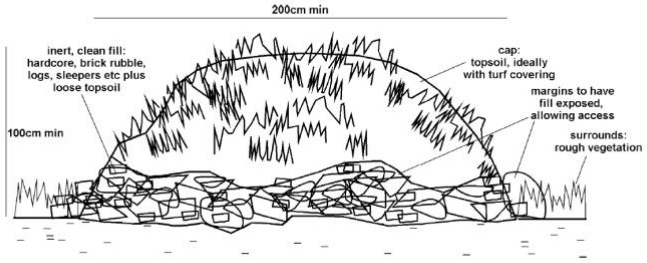
4.3.8 Following the mitigation hierarchy, the first step in the appraisal was to amend the scheme design to allow the retention of both GCN eDNA positive ponds and avoid impacts on GCN aquatic habitat; the proposed triple garage has been moved to an area adjacent to Pond 1 (the original design resulted in the infilling of the pond to make way for the garage). To reduce the severity and extent of impacts that cannot be completely avoided on terrestrial habitat that GCN would use, the proposed location of the proposed new dwelling is within existing hardstanding/gravel areas where Building B9 and B10 are currently located and the new driveway has also been designed to, in the main, encompass the existing access which comprises hardstanding.

4.3.9 Given the loss of GCN habitat is minimal and mainly restricted to hardstanding/gravel, compared to the amount of suitable retained habitat which is of excellent foraging and sheltering value for GCN, it is not proposed to compensate. However, there remains a risk to killing and injury of GCN during the course of the works and therefore a scheme of mitigation is proposed which includes the trapping and translocation of the work areas.

4.3.10 A trapping and translocation programme will be implemented to encompass the working area and to include either the spring or autumn migration; the duration and trapping effort will be determined in consultation with NRW. Temporary amphibian fencing will be installed and trapping will be undertaken and completed prior to works commencing; the fencing will be left in place during the course of the works and only removed once works are complete. The fencing pattern will be designed such that only the work areas (mainly comprising hardstanding/gravel) will be encompassed and will exclude valuable features so that interchange between ponds can continue to occur and the vast majority of high value GCN habitat will remain accessible to GCN. Any trapped GCN will be relocated into a receptor area near to Pond 2.

4.3.11 **Enhancement of terrestrial provision:** Although no significant compensation is proposed due to the high value habitats that will be retained within the site and wider landholdings, it is proposed that a hibernacula will be constructed within 2m of the eastern banks of Pond 2. The hibernacula will provide a dedicated enhanced feature specifically for GCN. The hibernacula will be designed in accordance with the specification provided in the Natural England GCN Mitigation Guidelines 2001, as per the below.

Figure 3: Suggested hibernaculum design
This design mimics artificial and natural conditions in which great crested newts have frequently been found over-wintering. Dimensions should not be below 2m length x 1m width x 1m height. The illustrated design would be suitable for locating on an impermeable substrate. On free-draining substrates, the design is largely similar but the bulk of the fill is sited in an excavated depression in the ground. Hibernacula should ideally be positioned across a site, both close to and distant from breeding ponds, always in suitable terrestrial habitat and above the flood-line.



4.3.12 **Enhancement of aquatic provision:** The ponds in their current state are clearly valuable aquatic resources for GCN and did not appear to dry out during the summer months (pond water levels were checked during August and September). However, Pond 1 is severely choked by aquatic vegetation and this should undergo some vegetation clearance to open up areas and create some open water. Similarly, Pond 2 does support open water but is also heavily vegetated and so to prolong the longevity of this pond, it would benefit from some vegetation clearance and de-silting. It is proposed to produce a Pond Management Plan to accompany the licence application to ensure the provision of aquatic habitat remains optimal in perpetuity.

4.3.13 **Other Ecology:** other ecology is dealt with in the TEP report but for clarity on badgers; no evidence was identified during the 2024 walk-overs of any badger setts. It is highly likely badgers frequent the site (although no evidence was seen during the three nocturnal surveys). Nevertheless, a pre-construction badger survey should be undertaken.

4.3.14 **Site contractors, directors, owners, other personnel and their agents are reminded that many species and habitats are protected by law, and to kill, injure or harm such species and their habitats is a criminal offence. Custodial sentences and/or large financial penalties are expected if you break the law. Protected species and habitats commonly found on development sites include (but not limited to):**

- **bats including their roosts in buildings;**
- **great crested newts including their areas of shelter such as hedgerows, ponds and natural and artificial habitats such as log and rubble piles.**

5 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 The site and wider landholdings have been the subject of an Ecological Appraisal in 2023 by TEP and bat and GCN surveys in 2024 which conclude that the Site is of ecological value to protected species and a scheme of mitigation and compensation is required to be implemented in order to address anticipated impacts and ensure the development demonstrates that the proposal will result in the maintenance of the Favourable Conservation Status of the species concerned.

5.1.2 As such, the following requirements are made in respect of bats.

- **Recommendation:** a licence from Natural Resources Wales is required to be in place before any works that may cause a disturbance to bats roosting in the buildings can commence. It may be possible to commence works on other parts of the site prior to the licence being in place, but this must be agreed with the retained ecologist prior to commencing.

- **Recommendation:** the outline mitigation and compensation strategy detailed in Section 4 above is to be implemented. A detailed strategy based upon the outline described above will be designed at the licence stage.

5.1.3 As such, the following requirements are made in respect of great crested newts.

- **Recommendation:** a licence from Natural Resources Wales is required to be in place before any works on site can commence.
- **Recommendation:** the outline mitigation and aquatic enhancement strategy detailed in Section 4 above is to be implemented. A detailed strategy based upon the outline described above will be designed at the licence stage.

5.1.4 In regards to badgers, the following recommendation is made:

- **Recommendation:** a pre-construction badger survey is to be undertaken prior to works commencing**.** This survey should check for the presence of newly constructed setts. If setts are discovered, any works that may impact the sett are to be delayed until a resolution is found; this may involve scheme amendments or a licence application to Natural Resources Wales to derogate the disturbance/destruction of a sett, if required.

5.1.5 Taking into consideration these recommendations, long term negative effects on biodiversity are not anticipated and the proposed development actually gives rise to biodiversity enhancement opportunities within the Site, improving biodiversity at a local level.

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