Report Type:	**GCN RAMS**
Client Name:	**Plant & Robinson Construction Ltd**
Site Address:	**Lower Farm Barns** **Lower Farm Road** **Bowling Bank** **Wrexham** **LL13 9RY**
Report Reference:	**MS BJ24-234.1**
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The report should be read in its entirety. Questions arising from the survey report should be directed to the author of the report who will be pleased to clarify any technical issues raised.

Reports are considered valid for two years for planning purposes, after which time further survey information may be required.

Ben Jones Ecology can provide advice and support for recommendations and planning conditions.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This method statement is prepared on behalf of Plant & Robinson Construction Ltd as part of planning permission P/2019/0647, granted by Wrexham County Council in January 2020. The approved development is for the conversion of farm buildings to form 6 no. dwellings, erection of associated car ports / garages, and change of use of land to allow for the grazing of horses.

1.2 Background

Condition 18 of the planning permission states:

18. No part of the development shall commence until details of the proposed Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the following:

a) Details of a toolbox talk on the identification and ecology of great crested newts to be made available to all construction staff employed on the project;

b) Details of an artificial amphibians hibernacula to be constructed adjacent to the site (Details of the design can be found in great crested newt mitigation guidelines – August 2001);

c) Details of a walk over survey of the site prior to commencement of development, and a destructive search (under the supervision of a licensed great crested newt handler) made of any potential great crested newt habitat (such as rubble piles or sheet materials that are on the site) on the site. Any amphibians found should be relocated to the artificial hibernacula;

d) Details of storage of materials on pallets off the ground and bulk materials which are to be developed on site and used within the day of delivery;

e) Confirmation that excavated trenches will be covered over at the end of each working day with plywood and the edges sealed with sand or soil. Trenches are to be checked each morning for amphibians. Any amphibians located are to be moved to the artificial hibernacula.

The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the RAMs as are approved.

This document has been prepared by Ben Jones who has 10 years' experience conducting ecological appraisals.

Name	Membership of associations/ experience	Licenses
Ben Jones BSc(hons) MSc	Senior Consultant MCIEEM Ben has a degree in Marine and Freshwater biology and a Master's degree in "Managing the Environment". He has 10 years' experience conducting environmental appraisals and phase 2 surveys for bats and newts in England and Wales. As a member of the CIEEM he is bound by professional conduct.	Holder of survey licenses for bats and newts in England and Wales. <u>England:</u> Bats - 2017-29112-CLS-CLS GCN - 2016-25209-CLS-CLS <u>Wales:</u> Bats – S091847/1 GCN – S094375/1

2 Method Statement

2.1 Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The aim of the working method statement is to eliminate as far as possible, the risk of killing, injuring or disturbing amphibians, particularly GCN.

Pre-Construction

1. The site will be kept under current management prior to construction. This will reduce the potential for newts to cross the land and reduce the potential for the terrestrial features to improve.
    - The site is almost entirely hardstanding concrete at present, but successional growth will begin if left unmanaged. Any developing plants will be kept short (<10cm) to ensure there is no shelter for great crested newts on the site

Site Setup

2. A consultant will be employed as the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to oversee the work in areas sensitive to great crested newts on site. This person will need to be licensed and an experienced surveyor for great crested newts.

3. The ECoW will provide contractors with a toolbox talk prior to work commencing. This will include information about the legal status of newts and responsibilities of the construction company to ensure no offence is committed. A document to assist with the identification of newts will be left on site, utilising photographs taken by the ecologist themselves but also excerpts from WildID guides created by Froglife, SEPA and the EA.

4. The site will be checked thoroughly by the ECoW prior to construction commencing. This will confirm there are no newts present and that there are no potential places of shelter.
    - Should any typical shelter features such as rubble piles be present, these will be cleared under watching brief of a licenced GCN worker/handler

5. Where required, soil and vegetation will be stripped prior to setting up the site compound to ensure the compound contains no vegetation which could potentially attract great crested newts. Ideally this will be undertaken during Spring when newts are most likely to be away from terrestrial shelter.

6. All cabins and equipment will be located on firm compacted ground, preferably a stone or concrete base.

7. Contractors are advised not to handle newts at any time.

Construction Phase

8. The site foreman will be responsible for ensuring all contractors are aware of the potential to find newts, and that they are familiar with the appearance of newts. If in doubt the ECoW will be contacted.

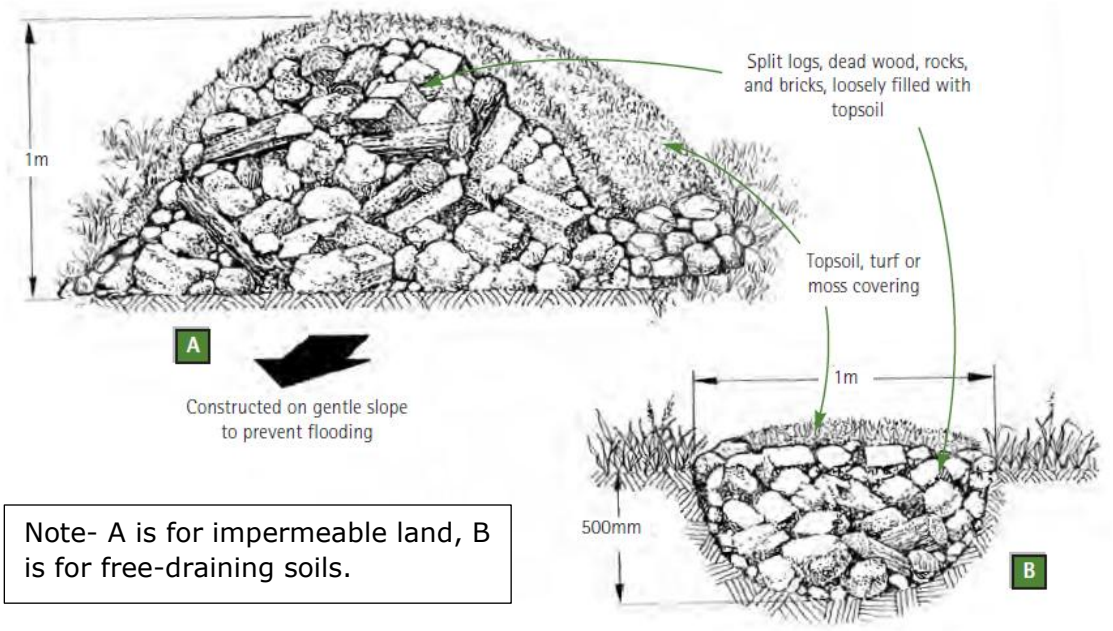
9. Contractors are advised to avoid handling newts at any time.

10. Stored subsoil must not be tipped onto any tall vegetation.

11. Any plants around the site will be kept short to stop the development of an area of terrestrial habitat more suitable for newts.
12. All groundwork will be conducted during daylight hours as newts are least likely to move during this time.
13. Trenches will be dug and filled in on the day created to avoid inadvertent capture of travelling amphibians
    - If this is not possible, trenches will be covered over with close-fitting boards (with edges sealed with sand or soil) at the end of each working day.
    - If it is not possible to cover the trench, a ramp will be placed from the edge of the trench to the base to allow newts to escape.
14. Open or covered trenches will be checked the following morning. This is particularly important when newts are most active, between March and November.
15. Pipes at ground level will be capped off if left open. This will prevent reptiles looking for refugia inside them. (e.g. sewerage pipes and water pipes and other conduits
16. If a newt is found, then work will stop immediately and the ECoW contacted for advice.
17. Any heavy machinery will be stored on an area of hardstanding to avoid refugia being created.
18. Stored material will be raised on pallets to reduce the potential they might act as a temporary resting place. This reduces the potential for damage or destruction of individual newts.
    - Materials delivered to site are most commonly delivered on pallets. They will be kept on these pallets until used.
19. All waste will be placed straight into skips to reduce the potential of creating refugia.

2.2 Enhancements

A hibernaculum will be constructed close to linear commuting features such as hedgerows, in areas of site least likely to be disturbed. A hibernacula is a generic term describing a place specifically designed to provide refuge for local fauna, in this case amphibians.



Note- A is for impermeable land, B is for free-draining soils.

Figure 1. Hibernaculum design from Froglife