

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

(Incorporating an baseline habitat survey utilising UK Habitat Classification system and Preliminary Roost Assessment and Habitat Suitability Index)

Project: Chapel Farm Meadows, Whitewell, Whitchurch, SY13 3AL

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On Behalf of: [REDACTED]

Foreword

Salopian Consultancy Ltd is an Arboricultural/Ecological consultancy which provides inputs to guide developers and architects during the planning process.

Core services include BS5837:2012 tree surveys, condition assessments, mortgage applications and woodland management. In addition, Salopian Consultancy Ltd have in house ecological expertise enabling them to perform a range of ecological inputs.

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Executive summary

Brief of the study and context of development

This report has been prepared to identify the key ecological constraints to inform a planning application for “Day Room” at Chapel Farm Meadows. The focus of the study has been to highlight those ecological constraints to ensure that they have been given due consideration during the design and planning process, whilst identifying opportunities for biodiversity enhancements.

Survey methods

A desk study of historic ecological records, past ecological assessments and an baseline habitat survey were performed to assess the site’s potential to support protected species. The main habitat types have been recorded in line with those classifications detailed in UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs). This study was extended to include a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) of ponds within 250m of the site and a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of those trees and structure on site by a licensed Ecologist.

Findings and recommendations

The site comprises predominantly of bare ground/hard standing (sealed surface u1b) and short modified pasture (g4), both of which are deemed to be of low ecological merit. The proposal is limited to the construction of a day room within an area already laid to hard standing used to park vehicles.

A single waterbody was identified approximately 159m southwest of the site which scored poorly (0.48) in it’s suitability for breeding populations of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) during the HSI assessment. This score was largely attributed to poor terrestrial habitat, impacts by waterfowl and the degree of shading.

It is considered highly unlikely that great crested newts would be encountered during construction taking into account the scale and nature of the proposed works, the distance from the pond, partial barrier by way of Whitewell Road and the poor suitability of the terrestrial habitat within the application. The use of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) have been proposed as a precautionary measure to future reduce the likelihood of encountering this species.

All trees, hedgerow and established vegetation can be retained as part of the proposal. A net gain in terrestrial habitat is expected following completion of the landscaping scheme through new hedgerow and tree planting depicted within the proposed site layout.

Further surveys and ecological enhancements

No evidence of protected species or notable habitats were identified on site, further Phase 2 surveys to inform licensing or mitigation measures are not deemed necessary.

The proposal has the opportunity to provide enhancements for protected species through the installation of both bird and bat boxes upon those trees adjacent to the boundaries of the site. Such provisions for wildlife could be secure by a suitably worded planning condition.

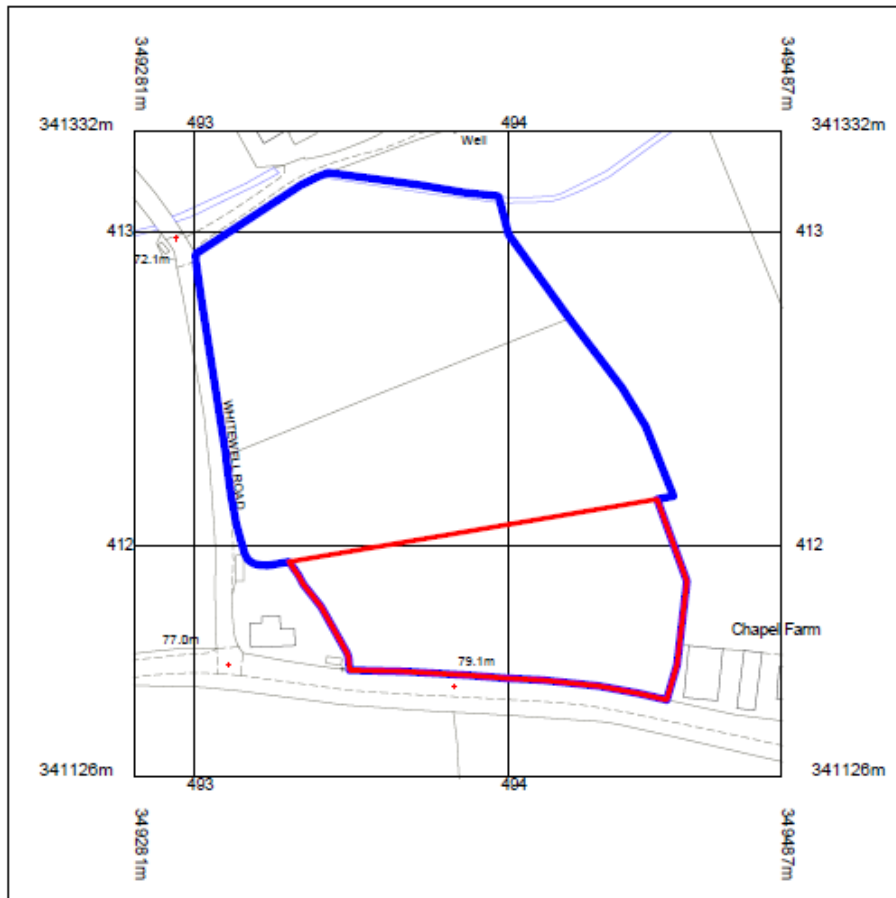
Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report, its plans and associated appendices have been prepared on behalf of Mr G Cartwright to meet those requirements of a baseline habitat survey, and scoping exercise for protected species at 'Chapel Farm Meadows' (Whitewell Road), hereafter referred to as 'The Site'. The Site is centred on approximate Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SJ 4939 4118 illustrated in **Plan 1**.
- 1.2 The aim of the baseline habitat survey has been to record and map the main habitat types and dominant plant species present in accordance with those classifications detailed in UK Habitat Classification¹, (Version 2) with essential and additional secondary codes recorded.
- 1.3 The study was extended to include an assessment of the sites suitability for protected species including a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of trees and structures on and adjacent to the site. A review of historic Phase 2 great crested newt survey information of those ponds within 250m of the site available on the planning portal and magic.gov.uk was also undertaken.
- 1.4 The data obtained from this survey is presented in a Habitat Plan (**Plan 2**) illustrating habitats recorded with secondary codes used to highlight features of interest. Further details on the methodology adopted during the baseline habitat survey and desk study are included in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5 The survey was performed on the 8th of January 2024 by Douglas Williams, Salopian Consultancy Ltd.'s Principal Ecologist to provide a update of the original phase 1 survey conducted in 22nd of June 2021, and to bring in with the UKhab methodology. Doug is an experienced Ecologist/Arboriculturist and has worked within these sectors for over a decade. He holds an MSc in Biological Recording, protected species licences for both bats and great crested newts, and memberships with the Royal Society of Biology, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and the Arboricultural Association. Doug has received training by CIEEM in the use of UKhab version 2 and version 4 of BNG metric, as well as botanical training with the Field Studies Council.

Site location and context of development

- 1.6 The site is located within a rural setting, situated directly adjacent to Whitewell Road which abuts the southern aspect of the application area and provides existing highway access arrangements. The application area includes a single field compartment bound by established mixed species hedgerows (h2a), which contain occasional mature specimens of ash. Works have commenced since the original 2021 tree survey associated with the construction of 8 caravan pitches as part of a previous planning application. An initial assessment of the proposal identified that permission is now sought for the construction of a day room.

¹ <https://ukhab.org/>

Figure 1: Site location plan

Scope of the study

1.7 The primary focus of the study is to;

- Meet the validation requirements of Wrexham County Borough Council by presenting the findings of an baseline habitat survey in a clear and concise manner.
- Include the content set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines², for ecological appraisals.
- Classify and map those habitat types within the application area using the UK Habitat Classification system.
- Identify both habitats and species constraints pertinent to the development proposal.
- Detail European Protected Species Mitigation licensing (EPSML) requirements, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) and mitigation measures where required.
- Identify opportunities for the proposal to provide enhancements to the ecological resource on site.

² Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management., (2015). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* Appendix A.

Limitations

- 1.8 The survey was not considered to be limited by seasonal or climatic factors given the relatively recent botanical data recorded in 2021 in relation to an earlier planning application.
- 1.9 This study (in combination with the previous assessment), are considered to have been undertaken within a suitable time of the year given the habitats and species likely to be present.
- 1.10 The baseline habitat survey provides a snapshot of the potential of habitats to support protected species. It should be noted that the absence of field signs does not necessarily confirm the absence of a species due to the dynamic and seasonal nature of many protected species. The suitability of a site may also increase with succession over time or with changes in land management practices. Further advice should be sought from Salopian Consultancy Ltd In the event that a protected species or field signs of such species are discovered during works.

Section 2 Planning policy & statutory controls

Statutory legislation

- 2.1 A range of EU and UK legislation offers statutory protection to species and habitats which Local Planning Authorities have a duty to consider whilst determining planning applications. The following EU directives are relevant to protected species, habitats, and designated sites;
- The EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
 - The Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and
 - EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
- 2.2 Much of the EU legislation is transposed into domestic legislation with respect to protected species and habitats, including;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)
 - The Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- 2.3 The Association of Local Government Ecologist (ALGE) provides a summary of the criteria and thresholds³ to determine when an Ecological survey should be performed. Many Local Planning Authorities have adopted this guidance to ensure that the correct information is presented when considering the impacts upon biodiversity during the planning process.
- 2.4 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector
- 2.5 The presence of Protected species and Species of Principal Importance need to be given consideration during the planning process to comply with Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 5 (TAN5).

³ Association of Local Government Ecologist., (2007). *Template for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*. Table 1.

Section 3: Survey findings

Desk study

- 3.1 The desk study summarised in **Appendix 1** forms an important part of the ecological assessment. It provides contextual information, such as the sites proximity to designated sites and the location of historical protected species records. This information is used to support those recommendations and evaluate the information gathered during the baseline habitat survey when assessing the site's suitability for protected species.
- 3.2 A review of OS maps and online mapping resources and previous ecological studies was undertaken to identify designations of conservation concern within 1km of the site and waterbodies within 250m.

Statutory/ non-Statutory Designation within 1km

- 3.3 No Local or National Nature Reserves were revealed during the desk study, nor were any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Biospheres identified within the 1km search radius. No Ancient or semi natural woodland were identified within 1km of the site.

Waterbodies

- 3.4 A single waterbody was identified during the desk study located approximately 159m southwest of the site beyond Whitewell Road.

Habitat Suitability Index

- 3.5 An assessment of the waterbody was undertaken using a HSI was undertaken to determine their potential to support breeding populations of amphibians detailed in **Table 2** below.

Table 2 HSI scoring of suitable ponds within 250m of the application area

Indices	Pond 1
Location	1
Pond area	0.1
Pond drying	0.5
Water quality	0.33
Shade	0.6
Fowl	0.67
Fish	1
Ponds	1

Indices	Pond 1
Terrestrial habitat	0.33
Macrophytes	0.3
HSI score	0.480545505
Suitability	Poor suitability

Preliminary roost assessment – structures/trees

- 3.6 A ground-based assessment of those trees located within the site's boundaries did not identify any features capable of supporting roosting bats.
- 3.7 A wooden framed shed like structure was noted adjacent to the site entrance which appeared to be in good condition with no obvious mean of ingress into the structure nor were any suitable crevices identified upon the exterior with potential to be used by bats.

Habitat classification

- 3.8 The application area is largely formed by hard standing (sealed surface u1b) and modified grassland (g4) dominated by cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*) as identified during the 2021 "Phase 1" survey.
- 3.9 Occasional flowering species typical of such agricultural land use are associated with the field margins which include, nettle (*Urtica dioica*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*). In addition, infrequent patches of purple vetch (*Vicia americana*), rosebay willow herb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), bitter night shade (*Solanum dulcamara*) & red campion (*Silene dioica*) were also noted during the previous assessment.
- 3.10 The field boundary hedgerows (h2a) comprise of blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) & elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with two large specimens of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) set within the northern hedgerow; and a further specimen close to the existing highway access point.
- 3.11 Whilst the site has historically been used for pasture, and topped for hay/silage, construction works have commenced for the construction of the camping pitches (see 2021 planning application), such that a significant proportion of the site now laid to hard standing.

Section 4: Evaluation of ecological constraints and opportunities

Designations

- 4.1 The site does not fall within, or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory sites of conservation concern.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that there will be some non-direct impacts upon this linear feature associated with noise and light spillage of the day room, the latter of which could be minimised through a sensitive lighting scheme. These impacts will be similar to those associated the use of the camping pitches which have already achieved consent and could be partially mitigated for through new tree and hedgerow planting along the northern and southern boundaries of the site.
- 4.3 Such provisions for new planting could maintain a degree of connectivity between sites and provide replacement opportunities in terms of foraging and refugia, notably for pollinating insects and nesting birds.

Habitats

- 4.4 Those habitats on site are restricted to hard standing (sealed surface u1b), and modified grassland (g4) bound by mature mixed species hedgerows (h2a).

Protected species

- 4.5 As highlighted above those tree and hedgerow on site do provide nesting opportunities for a range of common passerine. All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), this makes it an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
 - Take, damage or destroy the egg of any wild bird; or
 - To have in one's possession, or control, any wild bird (dead or alive) or egg or any part of a wild bird or egg.
- 4.6 Vegetation removal is not anticipated as part of the proposal. Any future hedgerow cutting, or tree management works will need to be timed to fall between September and February outside of the bird nesting season to avoid contravening the legislation above or immediately after a pre-commencement check by suitably qualified personnel.
- 4.7 The PRA confirmed that the site does support suitable buildings or trees capable of supporting roosting bats.
- 4.8 It is considered unlikely that great crested newts would be encountered during the proposed works. This is based on the rationale that the waterbody to the south west provides a "poor" suitability for this species as does the terrestrial habitat within the site itself, coupled with the distance from the ponds as well as the duration and scale of the works.

4.9 Great crested newt are listed as an EPS on Schedule 2 of the Conservation Regulations (Annex IV(a) to the Habitats Directive), affording it protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, It is an offence to;

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild animal of an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS wherever they are occurring, in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of a wild animal of an EPS; or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a wild animal of an EPS.

4.10 This risk can be further minimised through the timing of works and a pre-commencement check by a licenced ecologist as detailed in **Appendix 3**. As long as these provisions are adhered to the need for further Phase 2 surveys to inform an EPS license is not anticipated on the basis that:

- The risk of inadvertently injuring or killing great crested newt(s) during works is further minimised through timing of works; and
- No net loss of suitable great crested newt habitat (aquatic or terrestrial) is lost as a result of the proposed works.

4.11

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4.12 No field signs or habitats considered suitable to support other protected species such as dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) or water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) were identified on the site or highlighted during the desk study.

Artificial Lighting

4.13 All new Artificial lighting will need take into account those measures recommended in the 'Bat Conservation Trusts Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK to ensure dark corridors remain for nocturnal commuting/foraging wildlife.

4.14 Lighting should be directed to where it is needed to avoid unnecessary light spillage. All proposed new lighting should be directed away from any vegetated boundary features to retain dark corridors for commuting bats across the site.

4.15 Artificial lighting should lack UV element the use of LEDs is advised due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability. Metal halide, fluorescent sources should not be used.

- 4.16 Lighting should adopt a warm white spectrum, ideally below 2700 kelvin with a peak wavelength higher than 550nm, thus avoiding emitting those wavelengths of light most disturbing to bats⁴ (Stone 2012). Security lighting should be activated by movement sensors to reduce the amount of time the lights are activated, set on a short timer (maximum of 1 minute), and orientated towards the ground. The use of accessories such as hoods/cowls or shields is advised to help direct light to the required area only.
- 4.17 New planting can be used to provide an effective barrier to light spillage off site, this would be well placed upon the western and northern boundaries of the site to block light off site.

Biodiversity enhancements

- 4.18 Ecological enhancements could be achieved through new native hedgerow planting and areas of species rich grass. It is anticipated that the use of a Emorsgate EL1 flowering lawn mix which would be suitable for the proposed land use. This lawn mix includes slow growing grass species and a variety of wild flowers which respond well to regular short mowing. Shrub and ornamental planting should include a minimum 60% of native species with a focus of those known to be beneficial to pollinators as described in RHS plant for pollinators guidance.
- 4.19 In combination with the grassland mix and ornamental planting it is anticipated that the new hedgerow tree planting would complement the provision of new feeding resources. Such provisions are capable of providing a clear transition between the seasons and provide a feeding resource capable of supporting a range of taxonomic groups (including small mammals and birds) but predominantly insect pollinators.
- 4.20 It is recommended that enhancements to the site for bats are provided through the erection of two 2F Schwegler bat boxes upon selected larger trees situated upon the northern at a minimum height of 3m in a southern orientation.

⁴ Stone, E.L., Jones, G., Harris, S. (2012). Conserving energy at a cost to biodiversity? Impacts of LED lighting on bats. *Glob. Change Biol.* 18, 2458–2465

Section 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The application area comprises of modified grassland (g4) and hard standing (sealed surface u1b) which is considered to be of little ecological merit, bound by mature mixed species boundary hedgerows (h2a).
- 5.2 No evidence of other protected species were identified during the course of the study, therefore the proposal is not considered to be limited by any other ecological constraints.
- 5.3 The proposal has the potential to provide significant enhancements to the site as an ecological asset through the incorporation of both bird and bat boxes into the built form and new hedgerow planting.
- 5.4 The site should be maintained in its current context to ensure it's suitability for protected species does not inadvertently increase prior to development.
- 5.5 Subject to the implementation of those recommendations set out within **Section 4** no significant impacts upon protected species are considered likely to arise. In the event of a protected species being encountered during works; all works will halt, and further advice shall be sought from Salopian Consultancy Ltd.
- 5.6 The findings of this report are valid for up to two years from its date. In the event the development proposals/application area alters significantly a re-assessment of the likely impacts by a suitably experienced Ecologist will be required.

Appendix 1 Survey methodology

Desk Study

The desk study is an integral role in the ecological assessment. This desk-based study provides contextual information, such as the sites' proximity to designated sites and known records of protected species. This information is used to supplement the findings of the baseline habitat survey, and used to inform the recommendations and conclusions in **Section 2 & 3**.

MAGIC website⁵

- International statutory designations (1km)
- National statutory designations (1km)
- Waterbodies within 250m radius
- Protected species records

Habitat survey

The aim of the survey is to record and map the main habitat types and dominant plant species present in accordance with those classifications detailed in UK Habitat Classification⁶. As part of the study each habitats has been afforded a condition classification based on the guidance provided within Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Annex 1 – Condition Assessment Sheet and Methodology.

The survey was extended to include an assessment of the suitability of those habitats for protected species undertaken by an experienced ecologist holding appropriate protected species licences, and membership with Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and the Royal Society of Biology.

The survey does not aim to provide a complete floral and faunal inventory but seeks to identify field signs and/or habitats with the potential to support protected species. The need for further detailed Phase 2 Survey(s) were determined on this basis.

Bat Roosting Assessment: Trees

An assessment of all suitable trees located on site was undertaken by a Natural England licensed bat worker to determine their potential to support roosting bats. This assessment was undertaken from ground level using binoculars and/or endoscopes.

All trees examined were categorised based on the number and types of features known to be suitable to support roosting bats, summarised in **6.2.4 of "Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist: Good Practice Guidelines"⁷**. These features include but are not limited to;

⁵ Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website (www.magic.gov.uk/)

⁶ <https://ukhab.org/>

⁷ Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn) The Bat Conservation Trust, London

- Cracks and splits in limbs,
- Cavities,
- Woodpecker holes,
- Loose bark thick-stemmed ivy.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment: Buildings

A daytime external assessment of all structures on site was undertaken to determine their potential to support roosting bats, including but not limited to;

- Cracks and crevices in brick work, timber joist/purlins.
- Slipped or missing roof and ridge tiles.
- Gaps between soffits and barge boards.

An internal assessment of all accessible loft voids was undertaken by a Natural England licensed bat worker for evidence of roosting bats such as droppings, feeding remains and urine staining within accessible areas.

Potential suitability of the structures are assessed by assigning a rating of low to high based on the number and type of external features considered suitable for roosting bats. The need for Phase 2 Emergence Surveys is decided on this basis.

Reptiles

Terrestrial searches were undertaken during the baseline habitat survey for reptiles seeking refuge beneath debris, including log piles and brick/rubble where present.

Nesting Birds

An assessment from the ground of all trees and boundary vegetation located on or immediately adjacent to the site boundary was undertaken by an experienced ecologist, to determine the suitability of habitats for nesting birds.

Badgers

An experienced ecologist undertook a thorough site walkover to identify any evidence/field signs of badgers including setts, scrapings produced during foraging behaviour, latrines, paths and prints.

Where present, an assessment of excavations was made taking into account the shape of the entrance, quantity of spoil and presence of badger hair/claw marks. A classification of

sett type are made (Main Sett, Annex, Subsidiary, Outlier) based on the level of activity, number of entrances and proximity to other Setts in accordance with Harris et al (1989) ⁸.

Great crested newts - Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

A desk-based study was undertaken using OS maps and online mapping resources to identify waterbodies within 250m of the site's boundaries. These ponds (where accessible) were assessed for their potential to support great crested newts using the Habitat Suitability Index developed by Oldham *et al.* (2000)⁹. The HSI scoring was performed in accordance with ARG UK (2010)¹⁰.

The assessment uses a scoring system based on ten factors such as water quality, presence of fish/waterfowl and quality of surrounding terrestrial habitat. Water bodies with higher scores are considered more likely to support great crested newts compared to those with low scores.

Table A1: Pond suitability for great crested newts determined using HSI scoring system.

HSI Score	Pond suitability to support great crested newts
<0.5	Poor suitability
0.5 – 0.59	Below average suitability
0.6 – 0.69	Average suitability
0.7 – 0.79	Good suitability
> 0.8	Excellent suitability

In addition to the HSI assessment a terrestrial hand search was undertaken to identify any amphibians seeking refuge beneath debris. This was completed by a great crested newt licence holder during the baseline habitat survey.

⁸ Harris, S., Cresswell, P., and Jefferies, D. (1989). Surveying Badgers. Occasional publication of the Mammals Society.

⁹ Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155.

¹⁰ ARG UK (2010) Advice Note 5 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index.

Appendix 2 Secondary Codes

11 – Hedgerow with trees (mature ash)

16 – Tall forbs (predominantly nettle)

106 – Mown grassland

Appendix 3 Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) – Amphibians

Summary of the site's ecological significance

The proposed works area is considered to be of low ecological merit for amphibians, notably great crested newts comprising of hard standing (sealed surface u1b) bound by shortly mown modified grassland (g4). Suitable terrestrial habitat for this species was noted however adjacent to the boundaries of the site.

A single waterbody was identified within 250m of the site, located 159m to the southwest of the site beyond Whitewell Road.

Studies involving capture-mark-recapture and radio tracking of Great crested newt populations have shown that the large majority of a population remain within the first 50m of the breeding pond. Presence drops significantly as distances increase up to 100m from the breeding pond (Mullner 2001, Jehle 2000) ¹¹ hence the likelihood of encountering newt beyond 100m from their breeding ponds is significantly reduced.

English Nature Research Report 576 published the findings of research into mitigation schemes (Cresswell and Whitworth, 2004)¹² which mirrors the findings of the studies above *“The most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond. It will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, there should be careful consideration as to whether attempts to capture newts are necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality. At distances greater than 200-250m, capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate”*.

The likelihood of encountering this species during construction is considered very low, when acknowledging;

- The distance from neighbouring waterbody (beyond the 100m core habitat)
- Poor suitability of terrestrial habitat within the main body of the site
- The boundary features which do provide suitable opportunities for amphibians can be fully retained therefore no net loss of suitable terrestrial habitat
- Small scale and short duration of works

¹¹Müllner, A. (2001) *Spatial patterns of migrating Great Crested Newts and Smooth Newts: The importance of the terrestrial habitat surrounding the breeding pond*. Rana

¹²Cresswell, W. & Whitworth, R.(2004)) *An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt Triturus cristatus*. Report no 576.English Nature

Impacts of the works

The proposed works will require localised excavation to construct the day room.

Licensing requirements

The likelihood of encountering, killing, injuring, or disturbing notable amphibians such as great crested newts during the construction phase is considered unlikely. This is due to the localised nature of the proposed works and distance from neighbouring ponds. Further survey work to support a European Protected Species licence (EPS) issued from Natural Resource Wales is not considered necessary, subject to the level of risk being further minimised. This is a position has previously been suggested within NRW during the comments REF P/2021/0640 in relation to the static pitches and access route as part of the previous planning application.

To further negate the risk to great crested newts, RAMs have been proposed below and overleaf, which are to be adopted during the construction phase. These sensitive working methodologies will ensure a precautionary approach is adhered to during the implementation of construction activities.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The following sensitive working methodologies (referred to as Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended to ensure impacts upon amphibians such as great crested newts (where present), are avoided during the period of the proposed works:

Pre-construction

- Prior to the commencement of works, the ongoing management of the improved grassland within the site will continue to ensure connectivity of the site and suitability of terrestrial habitat does not inadvertently increase.
- The developer will appoint an experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to undertake a walkover of the work area to determine any changes in status of the habitats on site prior to the commencement of construction activities.
- A hand search for protected species of any debris or vegetation proposed for removal should be undertaken by the ECoW prior to removal of surface vegetation.
- Protective 'heras' type fencing will be installed prior to the commencement of the works. The purpose of the fencing will be to define the working area whilst ensuring protection to all off site habitats and boundary features; meeting the requirements of the Tree Protection Plan which accompanies the application.
- The installation and maintenance of such fencing is the responsibility of the developer, which should be checked by the appointed ECoW for its suitability and location.
- The protective fencing should demarcate a minimum of a 2m buffer between the development footprint and suitable terrestrial habitat.
- A tool box talk will be given to all personnel on site to make them aware of the possibility of encountering a great crested newt (albeit very low), the statutory protection afforded to the species and the course of action to take in this unlikely event (i.e. leave it in situ, stop works and contact the ECoW).

Timings

Ground work and landscaping

- The duration of works will be limited to daylight hours when amphibians are less active.
- Excavation will be undertaken in as short a time period as possible, excavating and infilling only the length which can be achieved within 24 hours before the next length is started, or alternatively covering any excavation with boards to prevent amphibians/animals inadvertently falling into excavations.

During construction works

- All excavations should be filled in on the same day as excavated or covered daily. The ECoW will check excavations immediately prior to backfilling.
- All materials will be palletised and kept on areas of hardstanding or bare earth within a secure site compound. All hazardous materials should be stored within an area determined by the ECoW.
- Following completion of the works the sensitive landscaping of all disturbed areas will be undertaken, including the planting of, hedgerows and trees incorporating native species of local provenance, thereby ensuring no net loss of suitable terrestrial habitat.

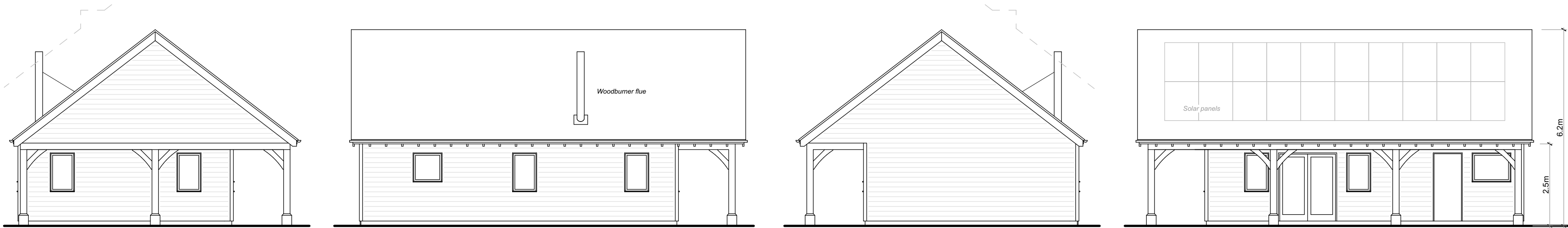
In the unlikely event a protected species is encountered during the proposed works; all works will temporarily cease, and further advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Subject to the implementation of the RAM's described above no significant impacts upon protected species 'potentially' utilising the site are considered likely to arise

Plans

Plan 1

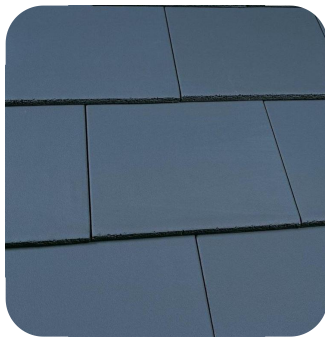
Site Plan



NORTH EAST
ELEVATIONS (1/100 @ A2)

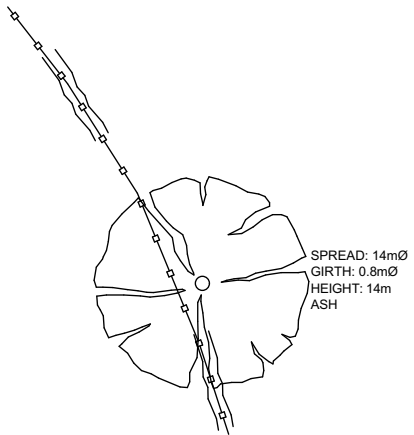


External walls to be clad in Softwood (Siberian Larch or similar) Featheredge Cladding.



Roof to be covered using Marley Edgemere slate effect interlocking concrete tiles dark grey in colour.

EXTRNAL MATERIALS FOR PROPOSED DAY ROOM / UTILITY BLOCK



- Key**
- Ecology**
- Proposed Bird Box
3 No. provided
 - Proposed Bat Box
3 No. provided
- Lighting**
- Low level illuminated bollard (approx 1m high)
Collingwood BOL301 BOLLARD (or similar)

- Trees and Hedgerows**
- New tree
 - Existing tree
 - New hedgerow
 - Existing hedgerow

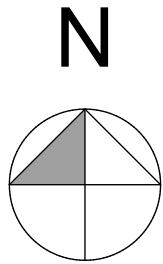
- Surfacing**
- Llynclys (or similar) compacted gravel
 - Tarmac entrance apron (verge crossing to the site shall be constructed to Highway Authority adoptable standards)
 - Grassland
 - Concrete



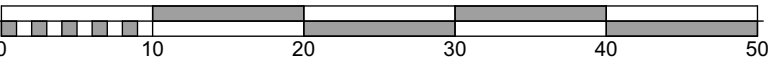
FLOOR PLAN (1/100 @ A2)

PROPOSED UTILITY BUILDING TO REPLACE EXISTING TOILET BLOCK

North



Scale



SITE PLAN AS PROPOSED (1/500 @ A2)



Notes

This planning application application proposes the replacement of an existing toilet block with a new Day Room / Utility Building.

The External Lighting, Landscaping and Ecology for the site have all been approved under planning application reference P/2021/0640 and subsequent Discharge of Conditions application Reference P/2023/0528.

The replacement building has no effect on the approved details.

Revision	Description	Date
1	Initial Design	2023-07-23

BLEAZARD & GALLETTA LLP
BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS

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Web: www.bgbuildingconsultants.co.uk

Project Location
Chapel Farm Meadows, Whitewell, Whitchurch, Wrexham, SY13 3AL

Project Description
Replacement of Existing Toilet Block with New Utility Block and Associated Works

Client
Mr G. Cartwright

Drawing
Utility Block and Site Plan As Proposed

Scale 1:100, 1:500, 1:3.96, 1:4.16 @ A2 **Date** July 2023

Drawing Number
3083 D 21

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Salopian Consultancy

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Plan 2: Habitat Plan

SCALE :
1 : 1000 @ A4

DATE :
19/01/2024



MAP FILENAME :
Chapel Farm Meadows



Key

- Sealed surface (ub1)
 - Modified grassland (g4)
 - Rural Tree
 - Mixed species hedgerow (h2a)
- Secondary Codes
- 16 - Tall forbs
 - 11 - Hedgerow with trees
 - 106 - Mown grassland

