



Bringing Together Over 20 Years of
Ecological Excellence

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, Suite 1, 3, Cross Green, Formby, L37 4BH

Method Statement in relation to Amphibians

January 2023

The Poplars,
Cockbank Lane,
Marchwiell,
Wrexham,
LL13 0SU

National Grid Reference: SJ35334609

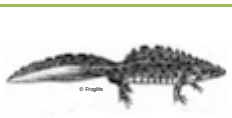


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1.0 Introduction & Objectives

- 1.1 As part of an ongoing planning application with Wrexham County Borough Council (Ref.: P/2022/0499) regarding the demolition of the existing dwelling and subsequent erection of a replacement dwelling at The Poplars in Marchwiel (see **Figure 1.1**), Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have undertaken several ecological surveys during the planning process. The application has been granted, subject to several conditions; Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have therefore been re-commissioned by Blueprint Architectural Services to address planning condition 9.

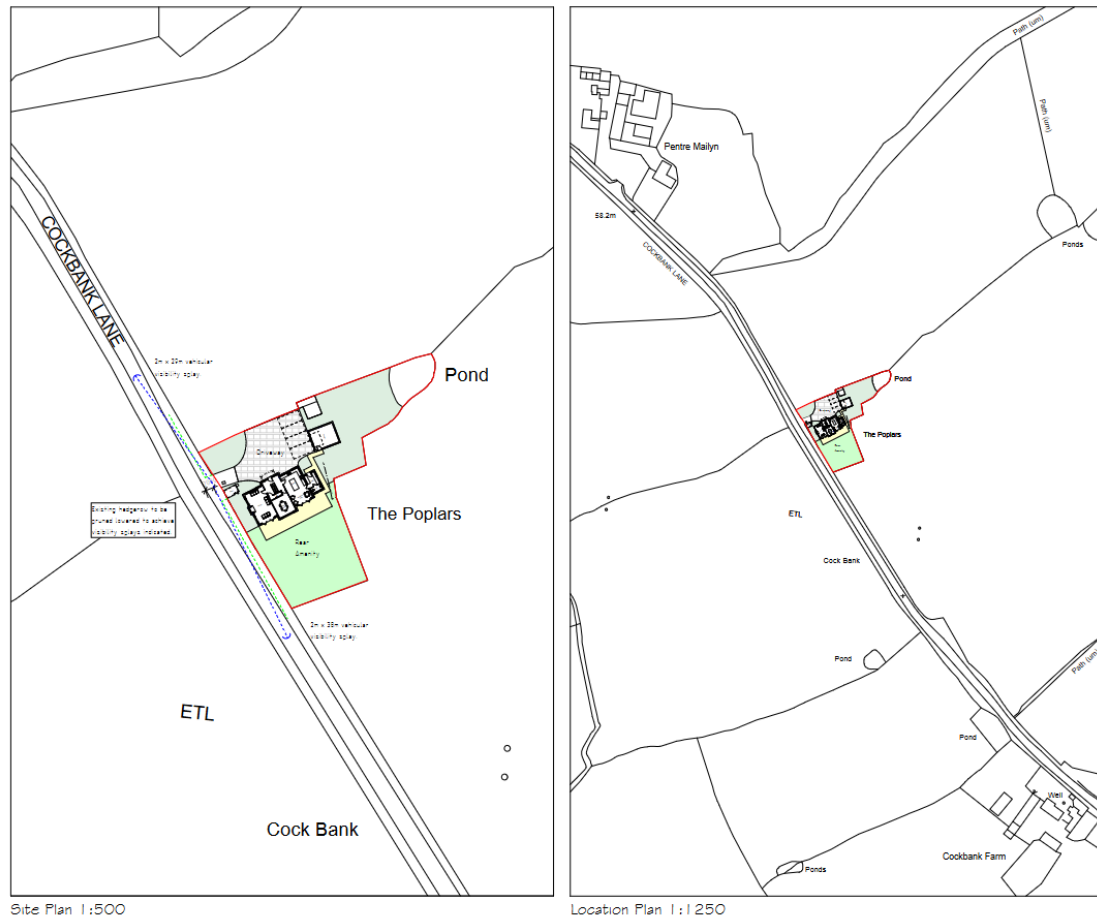


Figure 1.1: Proposed location plan with red line boundary (©Blueprint Architectural Services)

- 1.2 Condition 9 of the approval document states:

“No development or phase of development, including site clearance, shall commence until a site wide Great Crested Newt Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Method Statement should include detailed RAMs to be submitted, to minimise the possible impacts on Great Crested Newt. The Method Statement shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.”

- 1.3 The above condition will be addressed through a Method Statement detailing Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for amphibians.

2.0 Method Statement

Pre-works understanding

- 2.1 Before any works commence at the application site all site contractors/stakeholders will be briefed by a 'Tool-box' talk that covers the potential for protected species to occur on site. The talk will be led by an assigned qualified ecologist acting as ecological clerk of works (ECoW); the talk itself will discuss Great crested newt legislation, discuss identification tips, cover what to look out for and what to do if animals are found. The talk will also discuss legal ramifications of an offence occurring through, for example, reckless behaviour.
- 2.2 Contractors/stakeholders will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the toolbox talk or wider issues, as required, following the toolbox talk, before being expected to sign the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist/ECoW for audit trail.
- 2.3 Following the toolbox talk an "Environmental Champion" will be appointed on Site (most typically the Site Manager or lead Contractor), who will be responsible henceforth to report to the ECoW throughout the work schedule at agreed intervals, in the absence of an ecologist being present.
- 2.4 Photograph(s) of relevant protected species will be displayed at the site office memo board and/or kept by the contractor's personal being for visual reference purposes.
- 2.5 Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours 8.00am-6.00pm as opposed to the night time, when amphibians are most active.

Important elements of the construction phase

- 2.6 Timings:
 - Juvenile and adult amphibians are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period considered to be November to February** inclusive. Site clearance works will avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account the potential presence of hibernating animals within refuge and/or rubble piles, assorted items lay about site including plant pots, areas of dense vegetation including shrubs and tussocky patches of grass, for example, and any other site specific features that will be identified and pointed out to the contract team by the ECoW.
 - Pre-commencement check - a walkover and hand search is to take place by an Ecologist/ECoW before any rubble, pile, refuge, bulky item or vegetation clearance.
- 2.7 Habitat manipulation prior to works (March-Oct)
 - 3 to 5 days prior to clearance works in prep for development, it is recommended that habitats are trimmed in phases; initially trimmed to 150mm in height using mowers, brush cutters or similar approved cutting method. Strimming should commence directionally west to east across the site at all cutting phases allowing animals to move off site towards ponds off site, or towards desired or retained areas offering sufficient shelter.

N.B. *To avoid impacts to nesting birds, some vegetation may require clearance prior to March (for example dense scrub or ivy). Thus, clearance should be undertaken*

under supervision of the ecologist, and only when GCN are likely to be active, i.e. when night time temperatures remain above 3°C and there have been no ground frosts or snowfall in the preceding week.

- Once vegetation is cut to 150mm a further hand search should take place within 72 hours. Following the hand search, when herpetofauna are confirmed absent, the vegetation should then be cut to ground level (or below 100mm), raked bare and maintained at this sward thereafter during the construction period. Habitat manipulation like this will discourage animals from using the areas by making it open and hostile, thus less likely to be used by newts and therefore not harmed by works on site.
- Brash piles will only be accumulated on hardstanding and all brash piles will be removed within 48 hours of dumping it to avoid it being utilised by species seeking shelter.

During works

- 2.8 Any clearance works to areas of interest/ refugia as considered applicable by the ecologist/ECOW (such as log piles, brick piles) or loss of existing dense vegetative features, should only commence after a careful visual inspection (Hand Search) has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk. Any animals found that are not European Protected Species (EPS) will be removed from harm's way and placed into the hibernaculum, species pending and following correct protocols/biosecurity measures.
- 2.9 For the full duration no works will extend off site in to areas adjacent to the red line boundary or within agreed buffer zones/fencing. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and should instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground.
- 2.10 The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area and standard pollution prevention / environmental protection measures will be adopted.
- 2.11 Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- 2.12 Machinery and materials will remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts will be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter below.
- 2.13 Where excavations/trenches are excavated it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 10 cm wide should be placed in them at a 45-degree diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism to small animals including mammals and herpetofauna.
- 2.14 Excavations should be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night. Excavations should be backfilled as soon as possible.

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- 2.15 Site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the works and report any issues, anomalies, concerns or discrepancies to the ecologist or wildlife champion as appointed.
- 2.16 If any newts are found and cannot be identified work must stop immediately and contact should be made with the assigned Ecologist / ECoW. At no point should any person handle a suspected Great crested newt without the express permission of the Ecologist.
- 2.17 Any frogs or toads found should be carefully caught using wet gloves, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby like for like habitat that will be unaffected by the proposed works. Toads should not be touched using non-gloved hands as they secrete a toxin through their skin, and they should not be handled for longer than is necessary.
- 2.18 Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features should not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.
- 2.19 If in the event a Great crested newt is found work must cease; the Ecologist will be made aware of the finding and will appraise the situation providing further advice. Site staff must be made aware that if GCN are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and failure to halt works may result in committing an offence. At no point should any person handle a GCN or suspected GCN. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

A guide to timings

- 2.20 **Table 2.1** below outlines the correct timings in which to undertake the prescribed RAMs.

Table 2.1: Timings for RAMs to be undertaken at The Poplars

Operation	Months												Notes
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Toolbox Talk	Any time prior to works												Soon as possible for early understanding
Appoint Wildlife Champion	Following toolbox talk												-
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search												To avoid encroaching in sensitive area
Hand-search on site by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
Habitat Manipulation			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Staggered, as described, to allow animals to move away

Identification Aid:

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Identification Tips

- Largest Newt in the UK, up to 16cm in length, but juveniles are smaller,
- Big & black animal with rough, warty skin,
- Orange/yellow colouring on belly,
- Irregular black blotches on belly,
- Toes banded black/orange (yellow toenails),
- Male has a jagged crest on its back which sags when not in the water, and a separate smoother crest along tail, white stripe on tail too,

DO If a GCN is discovered during works, STOP ALL WORKS in the area, inform your site manager and contact the project ecologist IMMEDIATELY .	DON'T Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very delicate – and it is against the law. Penalties for breaking the law include unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of equipment. DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW
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For any questions call Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Tel: 01704 875 781

Toolbox Talk Audit Form

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd



Site:		Ecologist(s):	
I can confirm I have attended the formal Toolbox talk held by the named Ecological Consultant. I confirm I am aware of the legislation in relation to herpetofauna species that may be in the locale. I confirm I will endeavour, to the best of my capability, to follow the measures outlined in the RAMS to protect all animals from harm, and know what to do if I encounter protected species.			
Name:		Signed:	
Company:		Date	
Name:		Signed:	
Company:		Date	
Name:		Signed:	
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