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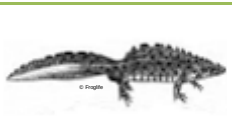
Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, Suite 1, 3 Cross Green, Formby, L37 4BH

# Method Statement in relation to Amphibians

November 2022

**Land to the rear of 5 Queen Street**  
Rhos  
Wrexham  
LL14 1TB

National Grid Reference: SJ29354630



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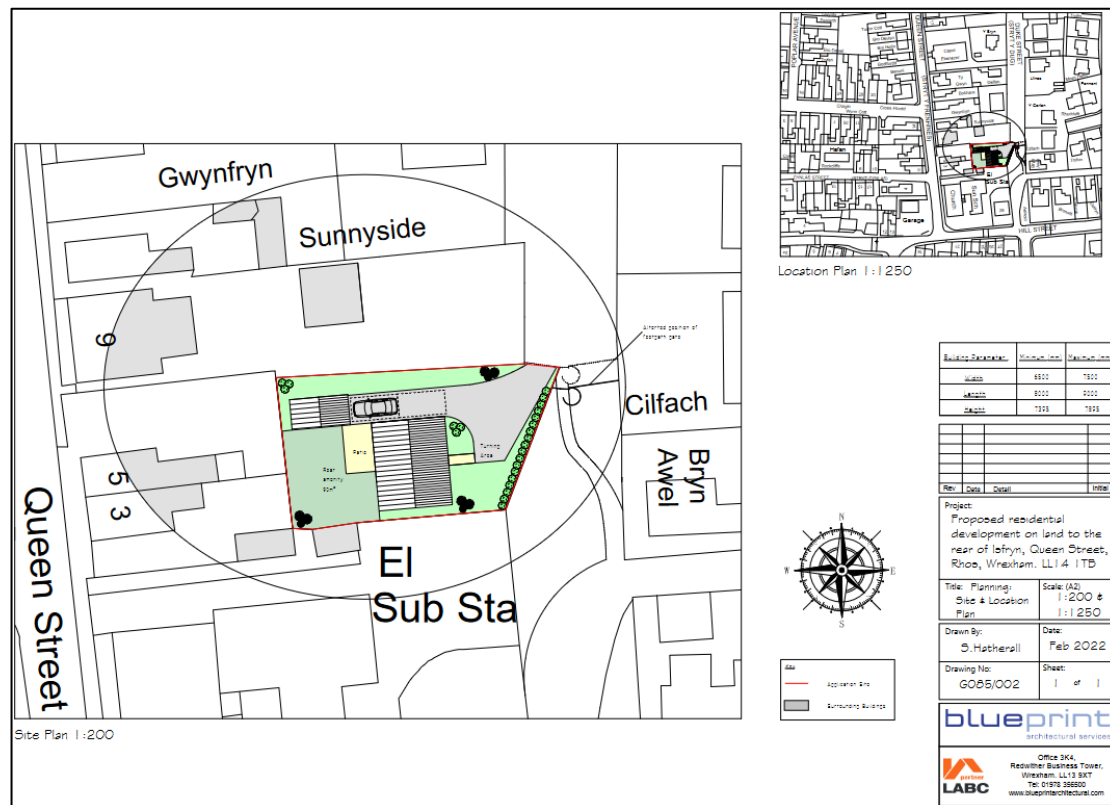
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# Land to the rear of 5 Queen Street, Rhos, Wrexham, LL14 1TB

## Method Statement in relation to Amphibians

### 1.0 Introduction & Objectives

- 1.1 As part of an ongoing planning application with Wrexham County Borough Council (Ref.: P/2022/0542) to construct a new dwelling and detached garage at a plot of land to the rear of 5 Queen Street in Rhos, Wrexham (see Figure 1.1), Wrexham Council provided comments in relation to nearby designated sites.



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

- 1.2 In summary, the comments provided by Wrexham Council pertain to the Johnstown New Sites Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/ Stryt Las a'r Hafod Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and River Dee and Bala Lake SAC; the application site occurs approximately 422m from the former, and within the catchment area of the latter. Whilst a number of issues are raised by Wrexham Council, this document will seek to address that which relates to ecology only, which is as follows:

*"I have now had the opportunity to consider your proposal in detail. The site to the rear of 5 Queen Street lies within the 500m buffer for the Johnstown Newt Site Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is important for it's Great Crested Newt Population. As part of this application an ecology survey is required with method statement and mitigation for Great Crested Newts. I attach our current guidance note for your information. I have therefore invalidated this application and advise that no further consideration will be given to the proposal until the supporting information has been submitted."*

- 1.3 The above comment will therefore be addressed through an assessment of the application site in relation to Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN), a Method Statement detailing Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for amphibians, and a Proposed Compensation Scheme as per Local Planning Guidance in relation to the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC.

## **2.0 Methods**

- 2.1 As part of the site assessment, desk-top and field-based studies were conducted. Methods for both components of the appraisal are given below.

### Desktop Study

- 2.2 Prior to a site visit a desktop study was conducted using online resources to obtain information pertaining to any sites afforded statutory (e.g. SSSI) and non-statutory (e.g. LWS) designations within 2.0km of the site boundary. To do so, the 'Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC – provided by Defra)' along with data from the 'DataMapWales' was accessed to gather such information.
- 2.3 Historic satellite imagery was reviewed using sources such as Google Earth (© 2018-2022) to help establish past use of the land and determine the nature of adjoining and extending habitats; such information aids in the understanding of how the site might interact with its surroundings ecologically and its value in that context, and how the development may impact at a wider scale.

### Field Survey

- 2.4 A daytime assessment in relation to GCN was conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in dry conditions (15°C), wind 1/12 (Beaufort scale), 95% cloud Mr. J. Pescod Qualifying CIEEM, a Senior Ecologist with five years of professional experience and training, and holder of a Natural England Great Crested Newt: CL08 Class 1 Licence (2022/10653-CL08-GCN).
- 2.5 As a part of the assessment, a site walkover was undertaken in which the habitat present on site was assessed for suitability to host GCN. GCN populations have declined within the UK over recent years due to destruction and fragmentation of breeding ponds and terrestrial habitat. They spend a high percentage of their adult life in terrestrial habitat such as woodland, and shelter in environments with piles of rubble, log piles, tree roots, miscellaneous other for safety, refuge and hibernation. In Wrexham County, GCN can be found where favourable habitat coincides with connectivity to breeding pools; however, the county is host to stronghold populations of the species located within and adjacent to urbanised areas notably including at Wrexham Industrial Estates and at the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC.
- 2.6 The site was therefore assessed for features that might typically be utilised by GCN in the county, including but not limited to:
- Rubble piles, paving slabs, and piled cut vegetation;
  - Established scrub, woodland, or lone trees;
  - Ephemeral ponds and pools.

### Limitations

- 2.7 Due to the presence of dense, impenetrable vegetation throughout the entirety of the site, it was not possible to access, and the field assessment was undertaken from a path immediately adjacent to the site boundary. However, based on both the field and desk study, it is considered that sufficient information about the character of the application site could be attained from this assessment on which to base sound ecological conclusions and recommendations.

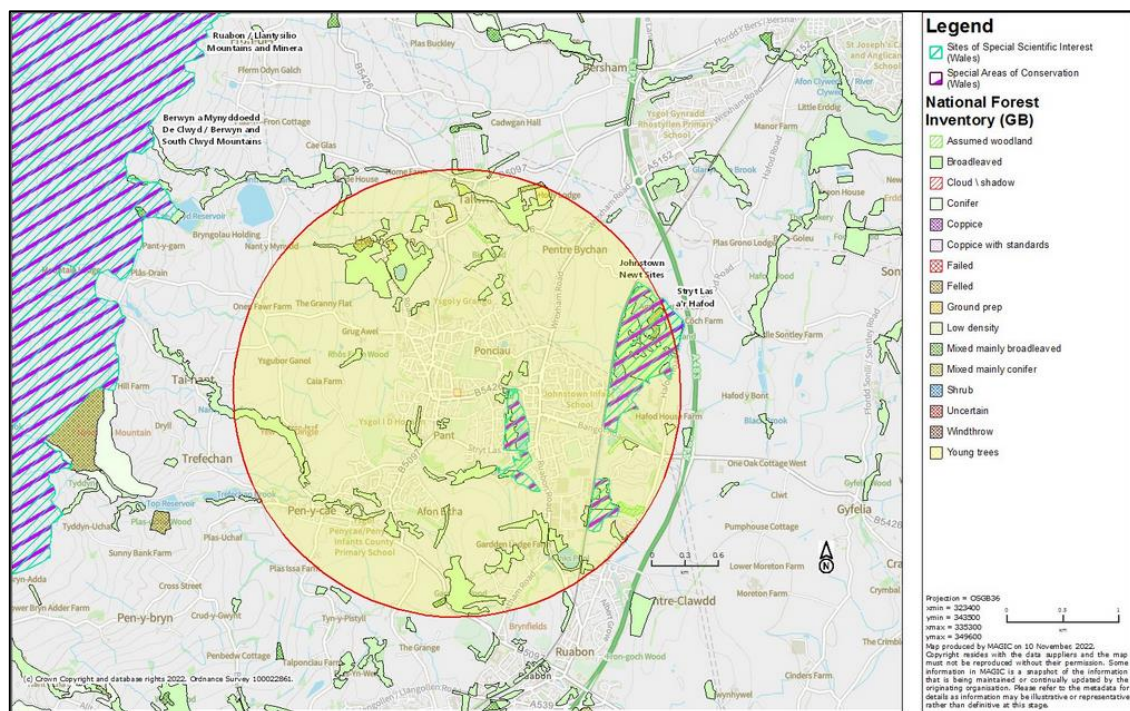
### 3.0 Desk Study Results

- 3.1 The Land to the rear of 5 Queen Street covers an area of circa 500m<sup>2</sup>, and is a small open space encapsulated by dwellings and associated garden, with access via a footpath to the south-east or from the Duke Street cul-de-sac to the north-east; this site lies within Rhos and is located approximately 6.2km south-west of Wrexham city centre (see Figure 3.1).



**Figure 1.1:** Location of application site within Rhos (Source: Google Maps, 2021)

- 3.2 The immediate habitat is comprised of the predominantly residential areas of Rhos, with the extending habitat continuing in similarity with the addition of agricultural fields beyond the urbanisation. Semi-natural habitats are sparse and limited to pockets of broadleaved woodland scattered to all aspects; though further areas of woodland, ponds, and a large lake are present at the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC/SSSI to the east (Figure 3.2). The site also falls within an area designated “Potential Habitat for Great Crested Newts” on DataMapWales.



**Figure 3.2:** Location of application site relative to designated sites (Source: MAGiC Maps, 2022)

#### **4.0 Field Survey Results**

- 4.1 In order to assess risk to GCN, a number of factors need to be considered. These include:
- Site proximity to a potential breeding pond and to any additional ponds,
  - Habitat linkage / barriers between potential breeding ponds and the site,
  - Nature and extent of available terrestrial habitat (50-100m) around the pond(s),
  - Area of site habitat loss and permanence of that loss,
  - Nature of habitat to be lost and its potential value to GCN as refuge/overwintering habitat.
- 4.2 Habitat on site was found to consist entirely of dense scrub regrowth, made up predominantly of Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) with Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bindweed (*Calystegia* sp.), with additional tussocky grasses such as Cock's-foot (*Dactylus glomerata*) and young deciduous trees including Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Willow (*Salix* sp.) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).
- 4.3 It was not possible to conclusively ascertain the presence/absence of ephemeral waterbodies, or rubble piles/other potential refugia (see section 2.7); however, based on the complete cover of the site with dense vegetation it is considered highly unlikely that any such waterbodies would be present, though refugia could easily be concealed beneath the vegetation.
- 4.4 The application site is considered to host good quality foraging, refuge and hibernation habitat for Great Crested Newts, though with poor connectivity to other similar habitat pockets in the wider area. Based on the site's location within the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC buffer, a precautionary approach in the form of a Method Statement detailing a list of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) to prevent risk to individuals of this species during the course of the works is detailed below, with mitigation/compensation for loss of terrestrial habitat within the buffer also provided.

## 5.0 Method Statement

### Objectives

- 5.1 Development related activities on the application site, such as piling, vegetation clearance, or excavation in areas of suitable newt habitat, for example, may potentially affect Amphibians that may inhabit the local area; notably including at the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC which occurs 422m to the east. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect these species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

### Summary

- 5.2 To avoid harm to individual GCN, it is proposed temporary amphibian fencing is erected along the sites entrance to the east to deter GCN that may be present within the vicinity from entering the site from the designated site during the works; due to the presence of wooden panel fencing to the north, south, and west fencing may not be required to these aspects, though such wooden fencing may not act as a suitable impermeable barrier and the decision should be made by the attending fencing contractor and ecologist following a site visit. Within the fenced area, vegetation will be cut back under the supervision of a licensed ecologist and carefully hand searched for GCN before complete clearance. Any rubble or brash piles will be similarly hand searched immediately prior to clearance. Should Great Crested Newts be found during the search, works must cease immediately, and a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will likely to be required from NRW prior to continuation of the works.

### Pre-works understanding

- 5.3 Before any works commence at the application site all site contractors/stakeholders will be briefed with a 'Tool-box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on site by an assigned Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), including amphibians and reptiles, what to look out for and what to do if animals are found. This talk should cover ID aids and legal ramifications of an offence through reckless behaviour.
- 5.4 Contractors/stakeholders will ask any questions as required following the toolbox talk, before signing the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist/ECoW for audit trail.
- 5.5 Following the toolbox talk an "Environmental Champion" will be appointed, likely to be the Site Manager, who will be responsible henceforth to report to the ECoW throughout the work schedule at agreed intervals in the absence of ecological supervision.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours 8.00am-6.00pm as opposed to the nighttime, when amphibians are most active.

### Pre-works

- 5.8 Timings:
- Juvenile and adult amphibians are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period considered to be November to February** inclusive. Where possible site

clearance works should 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 rubble piles, assorted items lay about site, areas of dense vegetation, for example.

- Pre-works erection of temporary one-way amphibian fencing along the eastern site entrance and other site boundaries as necessary to direct newts away from the site during the works; the installation will be supervised by the licensed ecologist and the Environmental Champion will monitor and repair the fence on a daily basis (see Figure 5.1). Newt grids will be installed at the site access points (see Figure 5.2).
- Pre-commencement check - a walkover and hand search is to take place by an Ecologist/ECOW before any rubble, pile, bulky item or vegetation clearance.

#### 5.9 Habitat manipulation prior to works (March-Oct)

- 3 to 5 days prior to stripping the site bare of vegetation in prep for development, it is recommended that habitats are first trimmed in phases; initially strimmed to 150mm in height using mowers, brush cutters or similar approved cutting method. Strimming should commence directionally south to north across the site at all cutting phases allowing animals to move off site, or towards desired or retained areas.

***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 thus less likely to be harmed by works on site.
- Brash piles to be accumulated on hardstanding and all brash piles to be removed within 48 hours of dumping to avoid being utilised by species seeking shelter.

#### During works

- 5.10 Any clearance works to areas of interest/ refugia as considered applicable by the Ecologist (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.
- 5.11 In order to ensure the temporary amphibian fence is maintained in an appropriate condition, the Environmental Champion will undertake daily checks at the end of the working day, and any overhanging vegetation will be removed to ensure the barrier cannot be breached. If minor tears are noted in the membrane, these will be repaired using duct tape. If there are major

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breaches in the fencing, the ecologist will be contacted, and a repair programme devised to ensure there is no risk of GCN accessing the construction site.

- 5.12 For the full duration no works are to extend off site in the 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.
- 5.13 The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. All work must strictly be in accordance with all relevant Pollution Prevention Guidelines published by the Environment Agency which may include, but is not limited to, PPG1 (general), PPG5 (works in, near, or liable to affect watercourses) and PPG6 (work at construction & demolition sites).
- 5.14 Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- 5.15 Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must 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 reptiles and amphibians from seeking shelter below.
- 5.16 Any excavated materials stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 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.
- 5.19 All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the ecologist or wildlife champion as appointed.
- 5.20 If any newts are found work must stop immediately and contact should be made with the assigned licensed, qualified ecologist / ECoW.
- 5.21 At no point should any person handle a reptile without the express permission of the Ecologist.
- 5.22 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.
- 5.23 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.
- 5.24 If in the event a GCN 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

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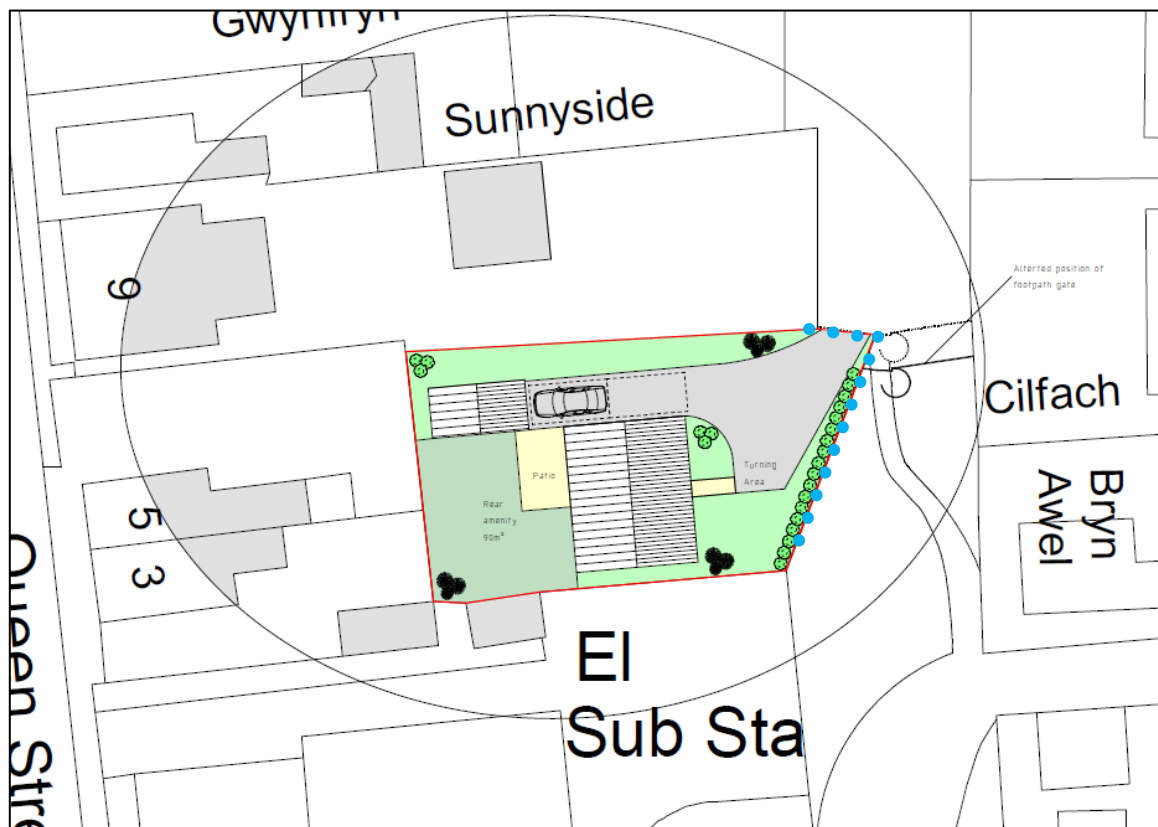
result in committing an offence. At no point should any person handle a GCN or suspected GCN. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

A guide to timings

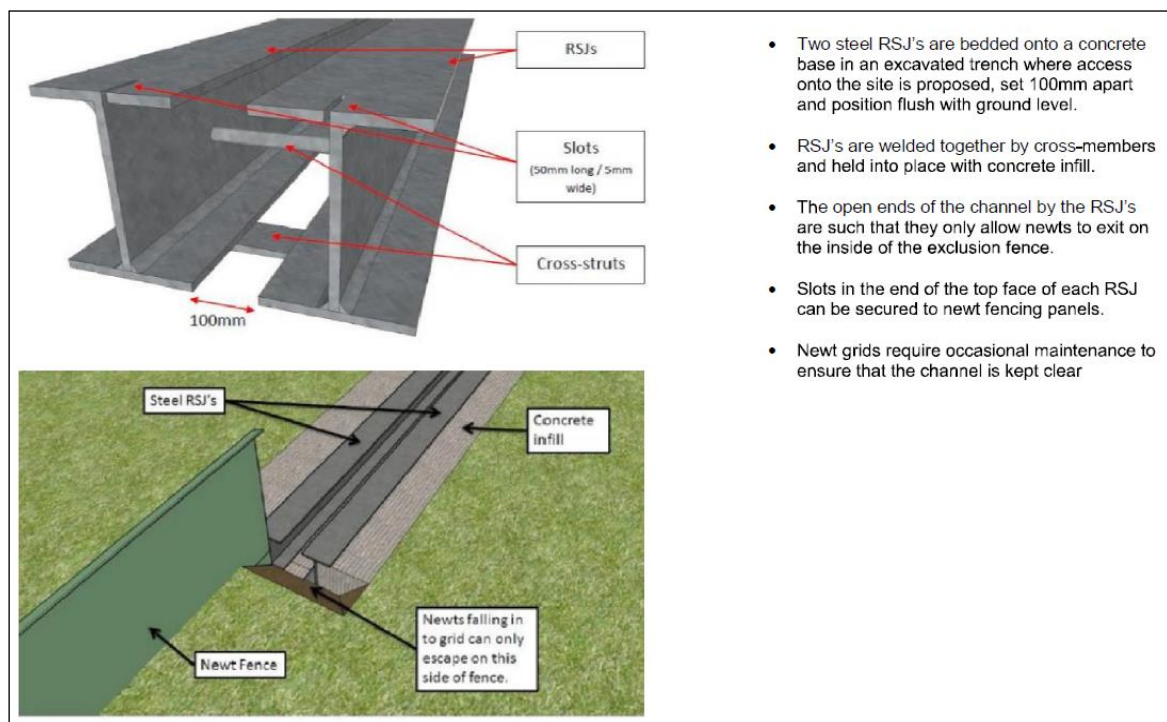
5.25 Table 5.1 below outlines the correct timings in which to undertake the prescribed RAMs.

**Table 5.1:** Timings for RAMs to be undertaken at the land to the south of Lynwood

| Operation                                       | Months                                 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Notes                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 | Jan                                    | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |                                                        |
| Early understanding                             |                                        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                                        |
| Toolbox Talk                                    | Any time prior to works                |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Soon as possible for early understanding               |
| Appoint Wildlife Champion                       | Following toolbox talk                 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | -                                                      |
| Pre-works                                       |                                        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                                        |
| Buffer zone demarcation & signage               | Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | To avoid encroaching in sensitive area                 |
| Erection of newt exclusion fencing              | Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | To prevent GCN from accessing the site                 |
| 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 |
| Establishment of buffer zones during management | During habitat manipulation            |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Specifics To be sanctioned by LPA                      |



**Figure 5.1:** The application site with the proposed one-way, temporary amphibian exclusion fencing marked in blue.



**Figure 5.2:** Newt grid site access illustration.

Identification Aids:

**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 toe nails),
- 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,

|                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DO</b><br>If a GCN is discovered during works,<br><b>STOP ALL WORKS</b> in the area, inform<br>your site manager and contact the<br>project ecologist <b>IMMEDIATELY</b> . | <b>DON'T</b><br>Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very<br>delicate – and it is against the law.<br>Penalties for breaking the law include<br>unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of<br>equipment.<br><b>DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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          |  |
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## 6.0 Biosecurity Risk Assessment

- 6.1 Due to the application site's location in a sensitive area, a Biosecurity Risk Assessment has been created in relation to invasive non-native species (INNS) and diseases. It is considered that the measures detailed in this assessment, if followed fully, will ensure all relevant legislation and guidelines are adhered to and will ensure risk of transfer of biohazards are minimised.
- 6.2 Biodiversity Risk Assessments are intended to ensure developers and contractors are aware of the harmful organisms that are at risk of being spread as a result of their works. These can include plant species such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), invasive animals such as signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) and plant and animal diseases such as ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and Chytridiomycosis caused by the Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*). These organisms could be on-site or could be introduced to the site when importing material; there is also the risk of aerial spread of the species via spores, spread through water (such as seed transport downstream) or via animal vectors (e.g. if birds eat berries or in mud tracked off-site by construction vehicles). In order to avoid unintentional spread, control measures are needed to be implemented for the duration of the works. As the mechanisms of transfer vary, the biosecurity risk assessment needs to be site specific and tailored to the development, with control measures employed accordingly.

### Relevant legislation

- 6.3 The key legislation pertaining to transfer of harmful organisms is The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Section 14 which states that:

*Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person releases or allows to escape into the wild any animal which—  
Is of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or  
is included in Part I of Schedule 9,  
he shall be guilty of an offence.*

*Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence.*

- 64 Schedule 9 is a list of plants and animals to which this section applies, and includes plant species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), some cotoneaster species (e.g. *Cotoneaster horizontalis*) and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), plus animal species such as Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) and slipper limpet (*Crepidula fornicata*) along with others.
- 6.5 In addition, there are guidelines provided by organisations on avoiding the spread of novel pathogens in the environment, such as SARS-CoV-19 (which causes Covid-19 in humans).

### Existing site conditions

- 6.6 The site from aerial assessment using Google Earth Pro (2021) and street view and from the field survey, comprises an area of disused yard encroached by scrub and ruderal vegetation accessed from a footpath to the east.

Proposed works and biosecurity implications

- 6.7 Clearance of the site in its entirety is proposed followed by construction of one new dwelling with associated landscaping and detached garage. Other ground works may also commence around this time, including soil testing for contamination for example. There are risks associated with vegetation transfer during investigative groundworks should they occur prior to commencement of the works, and vegetation and ground clearance also pose risks. Once construction commences there is a lower risk of biosecurity infringements, however measures will need to be taken to ensure organisms in the soil are not tracked off-site, or new organisms track on-site. The Biohazard Risk Assessment and Mitigation Table below (Table 6.1) identifies each risk and details measures to be taken to limit the transfer of potentially hazardous organisms, including pathogens.

Conclusions

- 6.8 It is considered the measures outlined above and within the table below, if fully followed, will ensure all relevant legislation and guidelines are adhered to and will ensure risk of transfer of biohazards are minimised.

**Table 6.1: Biohazard Risk Assessment and Mitigation Table**

| No | Phase of Development | Biohazard                                                  | Transfer pathway                                                                                                                                             | Working Methods to mitigate risk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Completed by<br>(print name, date and sign) |
|----|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Ground investigation | Risk of spread of INNS or injurious weeds on- or off-site. | Seeds or plant fragments tracked within mud accumulated on vehicle wheels and under wheel arches. Seeds or plant fragments within mud on contractors' boots. | Wheel wash vehicles prior to entering or leaving site on an area of hardstanding ensuring the water does not run off-site.<br><br>Ensure contractors' boots are clean prior to entering or leaving site. Brush off mud or wash as appropriate within a dedicated cleaning area to avoid material being washed off site.                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                             |
| 2  | Vegetation clearance | Risk of fragments of vegetation being deposited off-site   | Initial strimming to enable hand searching for great crested newts                                                                                           | The site will be checked for INNS prior to strimming commencing. Plants, or areas containing plants, will be marked for hand clearance with tape and the contractors advised to avoid the area until the plants are removed. If seeds/berries are present, a bag will be tied around them to avoid the seeds/berries dropping onto the ground during removal. The plants will be removed by a licenced invasive species contractor, and disposed of at a landfill authorised to accept invasive species waste. |                                             |
| 3  | Site clearance       | Risk of transfer of pathogens to amphibians                | During relocation of amphibians from the site to the receptor area                                                                                           | The licenced ecologist that will handle any amphibians will have clean boots that are treated daily with a bleach solution. Fresh disposable non-latex gloves will be used and kept damp during handling of amphibians. Any equipment used to transfer the amphibians such as buckets or containers will have been washed in bleach solution 12 hours prior to use and thoroughly rinsed and dried to ensure the bleach solution is no longer present.                                                         |                                             |

| No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Phase of Development | Biohazard                                                                                                                                | Transfer pathway                                                                                                                                                                                | Working Methods to mitigate risk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Completed by<br>(print name, date and sign) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Ground clearance     | Risk of spread of INNS or injurious weeds on- or off-site.                                                                               | Seeds or plant fragments tracked within mud accumulated on vehicle wheels and under wheel arches.<br>Seeds or plant fragments within mud on contractors' boots.<br>Soil material moved off-site | Wheel wash vehicles prior to entering or leaving site on an area of hardstanding ensuring the water does not run off-site.<br>Ensure contractors' boots are clean prior to entering or leaving site. Brush off mud or wash as appropriate.<br>Any soil accumulated during ground clearances and levelling will be reused on site. This soil will be kept weed free through glyphosate spraying as necessary until landscaping has been completed.<br>If any spoil is taken off site, it will be treated as controlled waste and disposed of at a landfill authorised to accept invasive species waste, purely as a precautionary measure.         |                                             |
| 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Construction         | No biohazards have been identified during construction, however if any are identified, this Risk Assessment will be updated accordingly. | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                             | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                             |
| 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Landscaping          | Risk of transfer of plant pathogens on- or off-site                                                                                      | <b>Importing/exporting plant pathogens</b>                                                                                                                                                      | Checks to be made of plant stock to ensure no <i>Phytophthora</i> is present prior to leaving the nursery, or plant stock sourced from a supplier which can verify plant health. In order to avoid the risk of ash dieback <i>Chalara</i> being imported, ash trees should not be specified in the landscaping scheme. Timber produced by felling of any ash tree within the site should be brushed clean of leaf and shoot material prior to removal from site to prevent the spread <i>Chalara</i> off-site by human vectors.<br>Species listed on Schedule 9 of the W&C Act should not be included within the planting proposals for the site. |                                             |
| <b>Any other points to note/comments from auditor:</b> Due to the risk of Covid, safety precaution measures will be followed by all contractors in line with National and Regional Guidelines to avoid spread of the virus to humans, and potentially bats. |                      |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                             |

## 7.0 Proposed Compensation Scheme

- 7.1 Wrexham Borough Council released a local planning guidance note adopted in June 2018 and entitled "GREAT CRESTED NEWT MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS – Johnstown Newt Site SAC and the Wider Countryside", referred to in part as "GCN mitigation requirements". The note provides a framework for assessing the potential impacts of developments upon GCN and subsequent mitigation requirements depending on their scale, proximity to GCN breeding/resting sites, or proximity to the Johnstown Newt Site SAC.
- 7.2 Table 2 of the GCN mitigation requirements has been used to determine the mitigation requirements at the Land to the rear of 5 Queen Street (see Figure 7.1), with the proposals considered a 'minor development' of 'up to 10 dwellings', which is within the buffer of the SAC. Under this guidance, it is clear that habitat loss at the site must be mitigated for on a like-for-like/50% basis, whilst an Appropriate Assessment (to be undertaken by the Local Planning Authority as a part of their Habitats Regulations Assessment) will also be required and should take into account potential impacts to the SAC.

| Table 2 - Development affecting designated sites with GCN as the main feature (Johnstown Newt Site)                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Development type                                                                                                                           | Major Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Minor Development  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                            | Outline/ Approved Matters/etc<br>Mineral & Waste, Transport applications etc                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Up to 10 dwellings | Extension/ Conservatory/Garage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| A2<br>Directly affects SAC or functioning of SAC with GCN as key feature                                                                   | Like for like principle; Need to provide replacement habitat capable of its purpose e.g. breeding pond prior to destruction of existing, so that the "favourable conservation status" of the population is maintained. Also need to demonstrate through a "ToLS or AA that the development will not significantly affect the Conservation Features of the SAC. |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| B2<br>Adjacent to, and within key ecological corridors associated with Johnstown Newt Site SAC                                             | Mitigate for loss of habitat type on a like for like basis –<br><i>Refer to management costs within appendix 1.</i><br><br>Also need to demonstrate through a ToLS or AA that the development will not significantly affect the Conservation Features of the SAC directly or indirectly.                                                                       |                    | Only need to undertake a ToLS dependant on suitability of site to be lost<br>Undertake Reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) to prevent harm to GCN (see appendix 4). This depends on suitability of site if poor e.g. hardstanding / amenity grassland then a note to applicant might suffice. |
| C2<br>250m – extent of Johnstown SAC Buffer (appendix 2)<br><i>Refer to local knowledge, Cofnod and "likelihood maps" (see appendix 3)</i> | Mitigate for loss of habitat type on a like for like/50% basis –<br><i>Refer to Appendix 1 of management costs.</i><br><br>Also need to demonstrate through a ToLS or AA that the development will not significantly affect the Conservation Features of the SAC directly or indirectly.                                                                       |                    | Unless the habitat lost represents key connecting habitat or important habitat type, test of significance is not required.<br>Note to applicant will generally suffice.                                                                                                                        |

**Figure 7.1:** Extract from the GCN mitigation requirements showing mitigation determined to be appropriate.

- 7.3 The GCN mitigation requirements further provide a guide for quantifying and designing mitigation, with the options for habitat mitigation in order of preference including: onsite provision > a combination of onsite and offsite provision > offsite provision but this must be close to the site > a financial contribution towards strategic GCN mitigation/compensation in lieu of direct provision. However, the guidance also states that developments of up to 10 dwellings will generally not be required to provide mitigation land due to size constraints, and instead the financial contribution option can be acceptable. In the case of the Land to the rear of 5 Queen Street, the small scale of the application site (<0.1ha) leaves little space for onsite mitigation, and therefore a financial contribution/commuted sum is instead proposed as per the NRW comments.
- 7.4 'Building Wildlife', a Trust established to distribute monies generated during development to appropriate projects, were therefore contacted to provide further advice; the Trust states its objects as "*to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation and protection of species and their habitats, including **Great crested newts**, considered of principal importance through current wildlife legislation in Wales in areas of North East Wales (Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and **Wrexham***". The Trust raised this proposed development at a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022, and returned the following comment:
- "For minor developments of under 12 properties as a rule of thumb a one off payment of £2,500 per property has been found acceptable for previous schemes in Flintshire."*
- 7.5 It is therefore recommended that prior to commencement of any works a commuted sum of £2,500 be paid to Building Wildlife, to be utilised towards the conservation of GCN and/or their habitat within proximity to the Johnstown Newt Sites SAC. This sum should be used, at the Trusts discretion, solely for completion of a single project, to be disseminated where most needed throughout projects in the region, or to be amalgamated with other similar monies to enable larger scale conservation strategies.
- 7.6 The sum could be secured, for example, through a section 106 agreement with Wrexham County Borough Council; however, the mechanism for securing the commuted sum should be decided by the Local Planning Authority.

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