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# **AMPHIBIAN SPECIES RISK ASSESSMENT & METHOD STATEMENT (RAMS)**

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**New Foundary, Wrexham**

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Note that the recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals upon which this report was based on.

### Report Reference & History: Document 1, V1.

| Issue Status | Prepared by:                       | Approved / Date |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Draft 1      | Charlotte Mercer M.Sc, B.Sc (Hons) | 27/10/2021      |
| Client issue | Gary Tudor CBIOL, MRSB, MCIEEM     | 29/10/2021      |

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 Planning Permission was awarded, subject to conditions in May 2013 for a change of use of New Foundry buildings from offices to 12 residential apartments together with associated external and internal alterations, landscape works and other ancillary works (P/2012/0561). The works are completed, and the residential apartments are occupied.
- 1.2 The residential apartments are located directly adjacent to Johnstown Newt Sites, Special Area of Conservation (SAC)<sup>1</sup>. Annex II species – Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) are the primary reason for the site designation.
- 1.3 The bin store is currently shown on the northern gable end of the apartments; in that location the positioning of the bin store contravenes fire regulations. Adra (Tai) Cyfyngedig (the client) have identified an alternative location for the bin store and have contacted Applied Ecological Services Ltd., (AES-LTD) to undertake a site walkover survey and provide a risk assessment and method statement for undertaking works for installation.

### Proposals

- 1.4 The proposal is understood to be the construction of a new bin store within the current carparking area.

### Aims of Survey

- 1.5 The aim of this survey was to identify and describe the habitats within the survey area and assess the potential of the proposed development area, the site, to support great crested newts (GCN) and /or other amphibian species.

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<sup>1</sup> This site lies near to Wrexham in north-east Wales and is composed of two post-industrial sites where coal and clay have been extracted. The population of **great crested newts** *Triturus cristatus* is one of the largest known in Great Britain and has been the focus of much conservation management over the last few years. Breeding sites are provided in part by a mining subsidence pool, and natural water-filled hollows on clay, whilst other ponds have been created as part of nature conservation management. Terrestrial habitat varies from marshy grassland, grazed farmland and swamp through to scrub and broad-leaved woodland. Good populations of the widespread amphibian species are also present.

## 2.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### Scope of the Survey

2.1 The scope of the investigation was as follows:

- Daytime protected species walkover;
- Production of Method Statement

### Surveyor Information

2.2 The daytime survey was carried out by Gary Tudor CBiol, MRSB, MCIEM on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Gary is Principal Ecologist / Director employed by AES-LTD; he holds the following licences; Natural England great crested newt Survey licence and GCN Low Impact Class Licence (LICL). Gary has over 30 years' experience as a field ecologist.

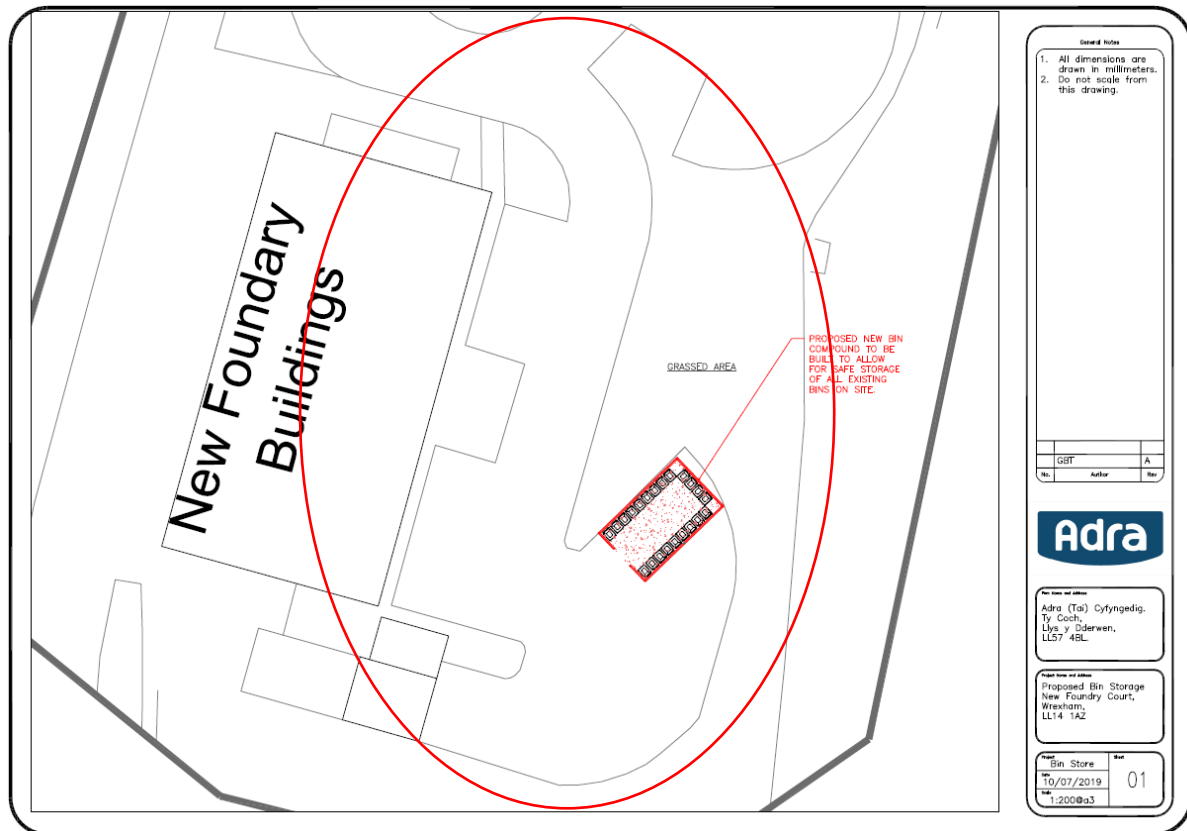
### Field Surveys

#### Protected species risk assessment

2.3 The field survey involved a walkover of the location of the proposed bin store and the access for workmen for construction. The purpose of the survey was to record habitats within the survey area, to look for field sign indicative of the presence of protected species and habitat suitable to support them. Photographs of the site were also taken.

2.4 The survey area is centred on grid reference SJ29854628, the location of the survey area is shown on **figure 1**.

**Figure 1: Survey area and proposed bin store site location**



### 3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The New Foundry apartment block is accessed off the B5426 Gutter Hill. There is a tarmac road through the site with car parking spaces located outside the apartments blocks and around the site periphery. The proposed location of the new bin store is within two of the carparking spaces in the east of the site boundary. There is a green wire fence around the site boundary. There is an amenity shrub bed immediately to the west of the proposed location, to the north and east is amenity grassland and southeast is silver birch *Betula pendula* / Rose *Rosa canina* / hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* scrub. Ground flora was limited within the scrub but ivy *Hedera helix* was present.



Plate 1. Looking north. Area of proposed bin store.

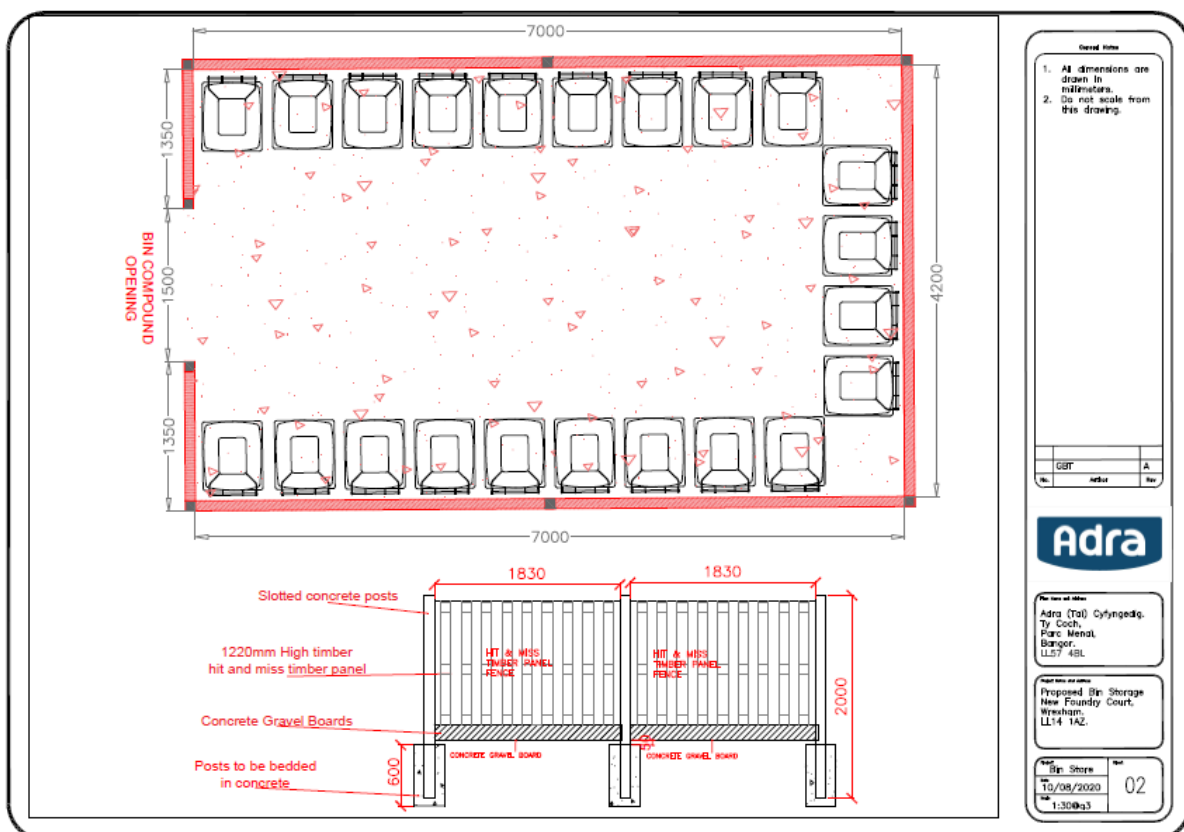


Plate 2: Area of scrub to the southeast of the proposed bin store

- 3.2 The nearest reported GCN breeding pond is located approximately 170m to the south of the location of the proposed bin store.

## 4.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The proposed bin store will be located within an area of tarmac hardstanding – a sealed surface.
- 4.2 The works will involve digging through the tarmac and bedding slotted concrete posts into concrete for stability. A concrete gravel board will be placed at the bottom between the posts and 1220mm high timber hit and miss panels will be secured to the posts. The bin store will be used as an area to secure wheelie bins and to prevent any rubbish from coming out from the bin store.
- 4.3 The works are small scale and very localised. The area where the bin store is to be built is a sealed tarmac surface which is unsuitable for amphibians. Access for workmen is good, there are roads and carparking areas for work vans etc.
- 4.4 It is understood that the bin store would take a maximum of two days to construct.



## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Due the localised area of the works, short duration of works and unsuitable habitat for amphibians where works will be undertaken, it is recommended that the works are carried out under a risk assessment and method statement. (See **Section 6.0**).
- 5.2 If possible, the works will be undertaken during the winter months (Nov – end February) when newts are largely inactive.

## 6.0 OUTLINE RAMS FOR AMPHIBIAN SPECIES

6.1 A further site walkover and assessment of works will be undertaken if the works are not undertaken within 12 months from the date of this survey. All contractors, site staff and other workers will be given a '**Toolbox Talk**' by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW). The main contractor will keep a record and display a copy of the Tool Box Talk in the site office. This RAMS is drafted to apply to all amphibian species using methods and terminology usually applied to sites supporting.

6.2 GCN and all places they use for shelter (aquatic and terrestrial) are afforded full protection by the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) (Section 9, Schedule 5). In addition to the above protection, great crested newts are also protected under European legislation which is implemented in the UK via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are combined, the legislative protection afforded to the species makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally/deliberately kill, disturb, injure or capture a great crested newt.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of a great crested newt.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

6.3 In order to comply with the above legislative requirements in relation to all amphibian species, the following actions will be undertaken, immediately prior to, and during the commencement of the works:

- All works to be supervised by a licenced and suitably experienced ecologist- the ECoW;
- Site areas to be affected by works will be thoroughly searched for the presence of any amphibian species by the ECoW prior to the onset of works. Particular attention will be given to the undersides of any litter on the site, and all other materials that may be used by sheltering amphibians.
- If GCN are detected in the search area all works will be halted immediately, the situation will be assessed, and the appropriate licence will be applied for. The site will

only be declared 'safe to work in and free of GCN' by the licenced ECoW. No machinery, materials and / or site facilities will enter the site until directed by the ECoW.

- If any other amphibian species are found / observed in the search area, then they will be removed and relocated into suitable habitat off site.
- If any building materials need to be stored in the site, they will be stored in the carparking area in a manner so as not to attract amphibian species. This will involve storing construction materials on pallets. In addition, any site rubbish will be placed directly into a suitable receptor / bins / skips for disposal.
- Post holes will be dug immediately prior to erecting posts within them so there is no requirement to leave holes open for any period of time.
- If, at any time during the implementation of the risk assessment / method statement GCN are discovered as present in or near to the site then all works will be halted, and the appropriate actions will be undertaken. Appropriate actions will include safeguarding any individual GCN and making a licence application to continue with the development.