

# Clwydian Ecology

Arosfa, Rhes y Cae, Holywell, Flintshire, CH8 8JG

T: 01352 780787 M: 07891 802 653

[www.clwydianecology.co.uk](http://www.clwydianecology.co.uk)

## **REPTILE MITIGATION PLAN**

### **MOUNT PLEASANT**

### **FRONCYSYLLTE**

### **WREXHAM, LL20 7SE**

### **FOR**

### **Tyddyn Ysgubor Builders**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

David Bennett MSc MCIEEM

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A preliminary ecological survey was undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013. The survey was carried out by David Bennett, a licensed and experienced surveyor and ecologist following a request by Tyddyn Ysgubor Builders. The survey was requested to satisfy planning requirements in respect of any protected species issues for a property known as Mount Pleasant, Pleasant View, Froncysyllte, Llangollen, Wrexham, LL20 7SE. A planning consent is being sought to permit the demolition of the property as part of a proposed redevelopment.

Concerns have also been raised by the Local Planning Authority in respect of an existing population of slow worm which exists within the garden area of the existing property.

## **2. LEGISLATION**

All species of British reptile are protected against intentional killing, injury or sale under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Sand Lizard and the Smooth Snake are afforded a higher degree of protection under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, take or injure these species of reptile.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct a place a these species use for breeding, resting, shelter or protection or to disturb these species in such a place.
- Possess or control these species alive or dead, or any part of them, or anything derived from them.
- Sell, offer for sale, advertise for sale or offer to these species, or a part of them or anything derived from them.
- Deliberately disturb or deliberately take or destroy the eggs of these species.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

**The front of the cottage has a moderately large garden which is presently covered with rank and uncut neutral grassland. The side bordering the road supports a mortared stone wall with very few crevices while the remainder of the boundaries are fenced. There do not appear to be any piles of stone or other suitable refugia, although the length of the grass makes it difficult to see. There is a raised area of ground just in front of the cottage by the wall but this seems quite solid and may just be compacted soil.**

**Information has been put forward to confirm that the site does support a healthy slow worm population. Therefore to ensure that no harm comes to any slow-worm (or any other reptile which may be present in the area) the following Reasonable Avoidance Measures and mitigation should be undertaken.**

#### **4. MITIGATION MEASURES**

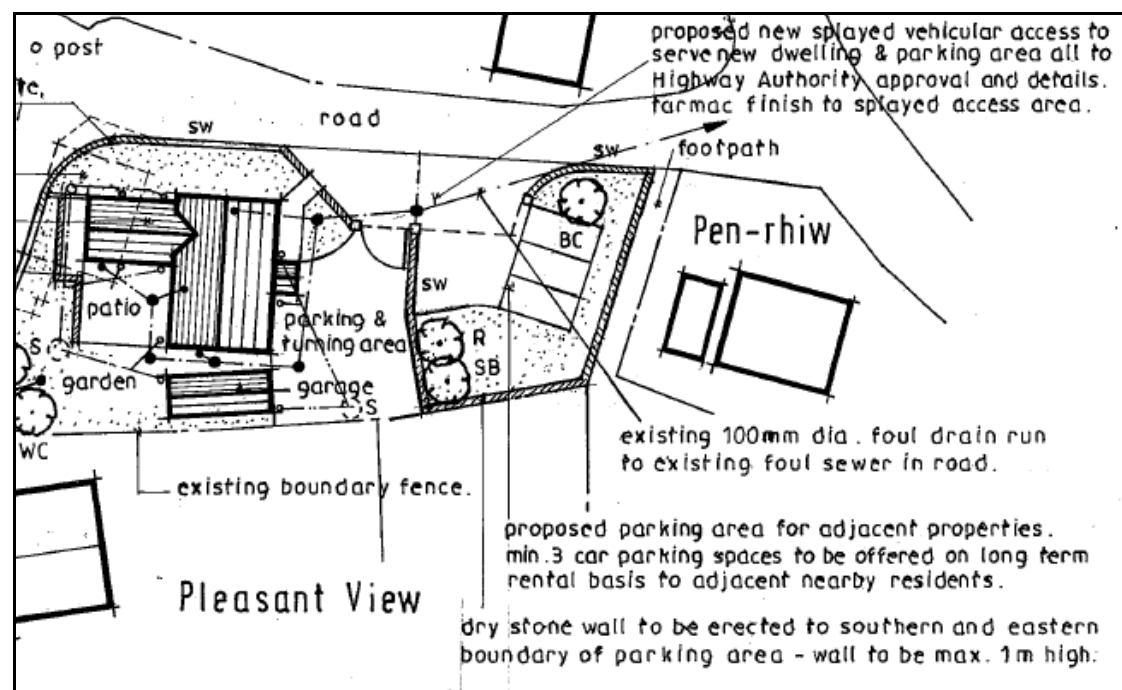
- The mitigation area will comprise the land at the end of the site and another connecting strip at the rear of the parking area, this is shown on the plan below.
- The mitigation area will consist of rank grassland along with a hibernacula bund on the southern boundary.
- The hibernation bund will consist of rough hardcore (left from the demolition of the cottage) which is then covered completely with grass turfs and it will measure at least 2 x 1 metres. This will provide a winter and summer refuge and will also provide a raised bank for basking (make the main long axis run east to west to give a sunny south facing bank).
- A large log pile topped off with brash cuttings will be placed near the hibernation bund.
- The vegetation in and around the mitigation area needs to retain the rank structure with some bramble growth.
- A multi-tiered rockery arrangement will be constructed within the garden of the new house. This will be constructed with loose stone (ie no mortar) and it will be at least 2 metres square. This will provide additional refuge areas for slow worms.
- A dry stone wall will be built around the southern and eastern boundary of the parking area. The coping stones can be fixed with mortar but the remainder of the wall will be open crevice. This will provide a useful habitat instead of the existing fenceline.

#### **5. REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES**

- A copy of this report will be given to all site staff or person/s that will undertake any groundworks regarding the potential issues relating to reptiles (particularly slow-worm) and the appropriate working methods.
- An ecologist will be available as required during the initial stages of demolition, site clearance and preliminary groundworks.
- The area of grassland (within 5 metres of the house) will be kept mown to a level of no more than 10cm, the remainder further down the garden must remain long. This will hopefully discourage any reptiles from using the immediate area around the cottage. The grass will be kept at this low level for a period of at least 2 weeks prior to the start of any works. The cuttings should be removed to a location at the far end of the garden well away from the working area because slow-worms in particular will be attracted to the internal heat of decaying material.

- The working area will be kept clear of rubble/stone/building materials after each working day; all stored material (such as bricks, blocks and timber) should be kept off the ground using baulks of timber or in skips or bins. Efforts should be made to ensure that there are no piles of loose materials which are very likely to attract reptiles.
- Aggregates which may be required on the site (such as sand) must be stored in bags and not left loose in heaps or piles. All delivered materials should where possible be stored on areas of hard standing and raised off the ground on timbers or similar.
- Common reptiles must not normally be disturbed from their place of shelter during the winter months November–March because when hibernating because any movement would cause significant disturbance and possibly death. Therefore no significant disturbance of the garden should take place during the winter months. It would be acceptable to carefully demolish the cottage down to ground level during this period as long as no excavations are undertaken and no movement of existing piles or material are undertaken.
- Removal and excavation of any soil should take place prior to hibernation (before the end of October in any given year or following hibernation in the latter weeks of March, weather dependent).
- In the scenario that any reptiles were found then they will need to be carefully removed to a suitable area as close to the site as possible. In this case that will probably mean to the bottom of the garden
- If significant numbers of reptiles are identified during the demolition/construction process then all works should cease until further advice has been obtained. If large numbers were encountered then it may mean that some amphibian style reptile fencing will need to be erected. This would mean ring fencing the development area and this does have the risk of fencing the animals inside the construction area.

A hand-drawn site plan of the Mount Pleasant property. The plan shows a central rectangular area labeled 'Mount Pleasant' which contains an 'existing dwelling' and a 'garden area'. This central area is enclosed by a 'stone boundary wall - max. 1.20m high.' and a 'stone boundary wall approx. 2.30m high'. To the north of the property is 'Heatherdale' and to the south is 'Pleasant View'. To the east is 'Pen-rhiw'. The plan includes various elevation points (e.g., 49.81, 49.73, 48.95, 48.25, 47.05, 45.54, 45.88, 46.26, 47.06, 48.45, 49.35, 50.19, 49.75, 49.87, 50.29, 50.38, 49.62, 49.66) and labels for 'road', 'footpath', 'shed', and 'concrete post & timber panel fence to boundary - approx. 1.80m high.'.



## **Appendix 2 – Site Photos**

### **1. East elevation**



### **2. Rank grassland in the garden with stone side wall**

