

Greenscape Environmental Ltd

MR & MRS DOLLAR

**PHASE 1
ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY
AND
METHOD STATEMENT**

**NEW HOUSE FARM
BREADON HEATH
WHITCHURCH
SY13 2LF**

AUGUST 2012

1031 01 001MS

**Inscape
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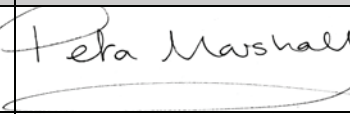
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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1 INSTRUCTION	5
1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	5
2 OBJECTIVES	5
3 SURVEY TYPE - METHODOLOGY	6
3.1 MAMMALS	6
3.2 AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES.....	6
4 SITE DESCRIPTION	7
4.1 LOCATION.....	7
4.2 DESCRIPTION.....	8
4.3 PONDS	9
4.4 EVALUATION OF RESULTS.....	10
4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	10
5 RECOMMENDATIONS	11
5.1 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE METHOD STATEMENT: GCN	11
5.2 ENHANCEMENTS: GCN.....	12
6 OTHER	12
APPENDICES	13
A ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP ABSTRACT	
B BIBLIOGRAPHY	

Executive Summary

Scope of Survey

Greenscape Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Dollar of New House Farm to conduct a survey to determine the presence or absence of protected species and potential for the damage or destruction of habitats of ecological value, prior to the construction of a ménage.

The phase 1 ecological appraisal was undertaken at the site, OS grid reference SJ446 368 on 7th August 2012, by P Marshall BSc(hons) AIEMA, an experienced biologist.

The project involves the creation of a ménage. This will be created by the removal of a section of topsoil and replacement with suitable material for use by equine facilities. The size of this will be 20m x 40m.

The area to be developed is part of a SI pasture used currently for both grazing and training horses.

A pond is situated 79m to the south west of the site. This was assessed for the potential for newts, particularly great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). The pond looks like it has potential for GCN, but has a large population of cyprinid fish. It is managed as an ornamental pond with non-native planting by the land owner. One other pond is 150m from the development area, but due to the habitat between the two sites and the size of development this pond was considered to be of low importance to the project.

No other protected species were recorded in the vicinity of the site.

It is suggested, considering the habitat to be disturbed and lost for the proposed developments that the development can proceed without further survey work for GCN providing a method statement is followed and enhancements are made elsewhere for newts.

An offence is not considered likely as no habitat suitable for newts will be lost and no ponds with potential for newts disturbed or lost.

The clients have agreed that enhancement for amphibians will be made with the creation of a hibernacula.

1 Instruction

Greenscape Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Dollar of New House Farm to conduct a survey to determine the presence or absence of protected species and potential for the damage or destruction of habitats of ecological value, prior to the construction of a ménage.

The phase 1 ecological appraisal was undertaken at the site, OS grid reference SJ446 368 on 7th August 2012, by P Marshall BSc(hons) AIEMA, an experienced biologist.

CCW licence number 27547:OTH:CSAB:2010 bats and 20322:OTH:SA:2010 great crested newts.

Details of surveyors

Name	Membership of associations	
Peta Marshall BSc(hons)	AIEMA	27547:OTH:CSAB:2010 bats Licenses
		20322:OTH:SA:2010 great crested newts

1.1 Project Background

The project involves the creation of a ménage. This will be created by the removal of a section of topsoil and replacement with suitable material for use by equine facilities. The size of this will be 20m x 40m.

2 Objectives

The aim of this type of survey is to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, evidence of use or scope for wildlife and habitats of ecological value on the site and surrounding area, which may be disturbed in the event of development.

This is in accordance with:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) – as listed in:

Schedule 1. Birds protected by special penalties at all times

Schedule 5. Protected animals

Schedule 8. Protected plants

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 – as listed in:

Schedule 2. European protected species of animals

Schedule 4. European protected species of plants

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Summary recommendations have been made outlining reasonable avoidance measures and the associated habitat creation/management required to offset any impacts associated with the proposed development.

3 Survey Type - Methodology

The site and surroundings were subject to a thorough ecological appraisal. Evidence was recorded of use, scope for habitats and any signs of protected species.

3.1 Mammals

Badgers:

Daytime surveys for badgers involve looking for

- Scrapings where badgers have dug for food or used as latrines.
- Signs of a sett, including signs of use such as presence of badger hair
- Tracks and prints.

3.2 Amphibians and reptiles

The assessment of aquatic habitat is based on the Habitat Suitability Index (Oldham *et al* 2000).

A refugia search is conducted for amphibians and reptiles looking under any logs, large stones and other debris.

4 Site Description

4.1 Location

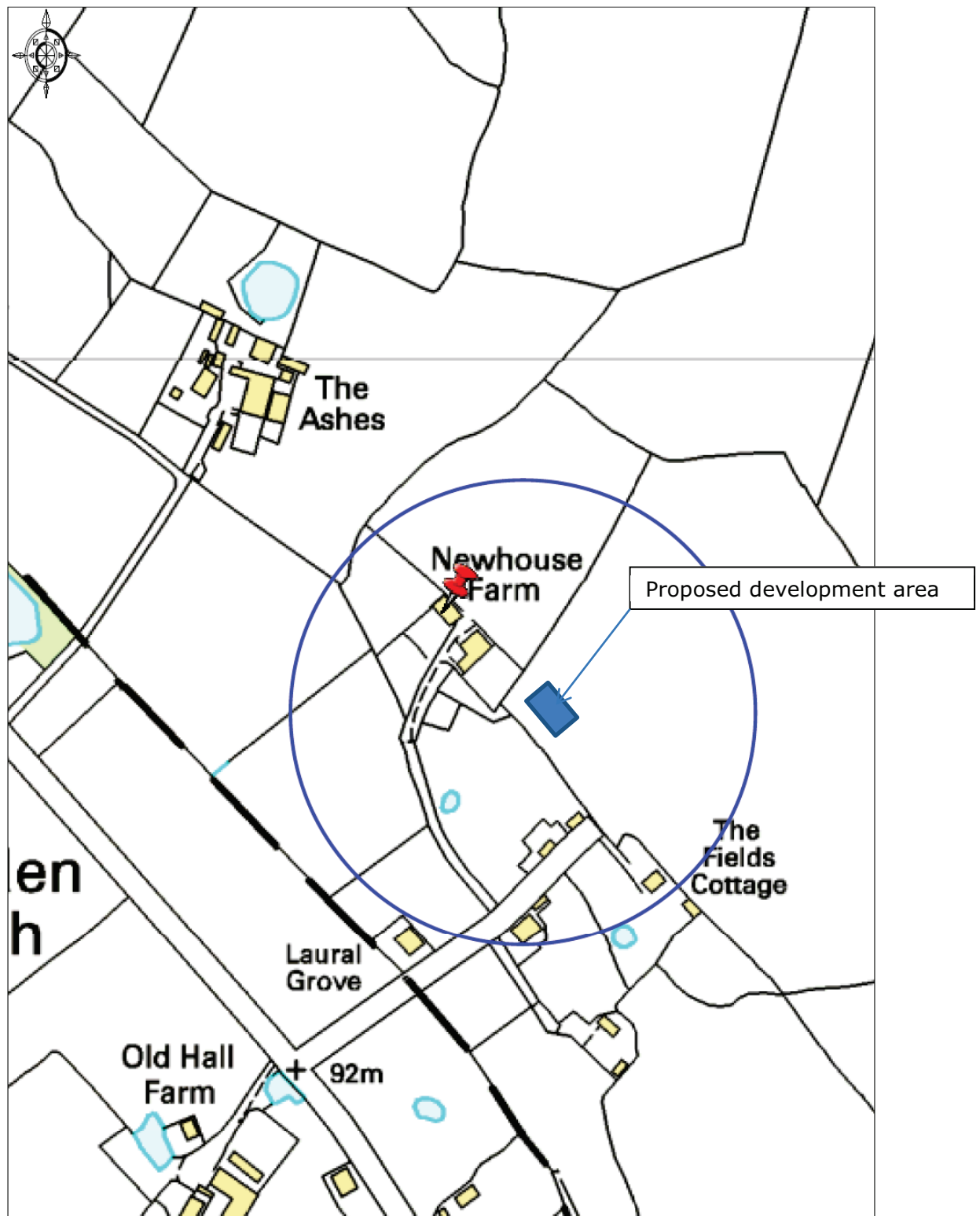


Figure 1: Plan of development area with 150m radius added

4.2 Description

The field is adjacent to an area of hard standing and agricultural buildings. It is SI pasture of low ecological value. A large hedge lies between this and a hay meadow where the closest pond is situated.

Typically the area is kept grazed low to stop overfeeding the ponies.



Figure 2: Typical low grazed land

4.3 Ponds



Figure 3: Pond assessed

A site visit was conducted to assess all the ponds within 250m. However as this is only a small project, the only significant ponds are considered to be those within 150m.

Only one pond falls into this category.

The HSI was calculated as follows.

Pond	Pond 1
Location	1
Pond Area	0.4
Pond performance years	1
Water quality	0.67
Shade	1
Fowl Count	0.67
Fish population	0.01
Pond Count	0.95
Terrestrial Map	0.67
Macrophyte cover	0.6
HSI score	0.48
Assessment	Poor

The immediate habitat around the pond is considered good for the terrestrial phase of newts, but the presence of fish is likely to reduce the potential for this to be a good newt breeding pond.

4.4 Evaluation of Results

Legislation

Great crested newts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- deliberately capture or kill any wild animal of a EPS;
- deliberately disturb any such animal;
- deliberately take or destroy eggs of any such wild animal;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal;
- deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a EPS;
- keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal or plant of a EPS, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal or plant.

A person found guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 (currently £5,000 per offence) on the standard scale, or to both.

The chance of damaging or disturbing a GCN at Newhouse Farm is considered very low.

The development is considered unlikely to remove any terrestrial features used by newts.

The ponds found out of the curtilage of the development site will not be damaged by the development.

The conclusion is that an offence is not going to be committed should this development proceed.

4.5 Concluding remarks

It is suggested, considering the habitat to be disturbed and lost for the proposed developments that the development can proceed without further survey work for GCN providing a method statement is followed and enhancements are made elsewhere for newts.

An offence is not considered likely as no habitat suitable for newts will be lost and no ponds with potential for newts disturbed or lost.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Reasonable avoidance method statement: GCN

1. A copy of this method statement will be kept on site until the development is completed.
2. The site for development is situated as far as possible from ponds and high quality terrestrial habitat. It will be 10m from the hedge row.
3. The plot will be kept mown/grazed low before the development begins.
4. The ecologist will conduct a pre-commencement fingertip check of the ground IMMEDIATELY before works commences.
5. All contractors will be given a toolbox talk about the potential to find GCN or other newt species.
6. If a newt is found then work will STOP immediately and a licence for the disturbance of GCN be sought from Welsh Assembly Government. This will mean the pond(s) will require a complete survey during the following season.
7. Ground works in particular will occur in winter when newts are rarely active above ground.
8. The duration of ground works will be kept as short as possible and completed before the end of February.
9. All work will be conducted during daylight hours as newts are least likely to move during this time.
10. Any heavy machinery will be stored either to the north west of the site as far from pond 1 as possible, stored on the hard standing area by the agricultural buildings.
11. Trenches and other excavations will be backfilled before nightfall or a ramp will be left to allow newts an easy exit.
12. Trenches left open will be covered over with boards to avoid newts falling into them.
13. Any trenches left open will be visually inspected each morning before work commences.
14. Stored material will be raised to reduce the potential they might act as a temporary resting place. (e.g. stored on pallets).
15. Rubble and waste will be placed directly into a skip or other storage unit to be removed from the site (e.g. tractor trailer) so that temporary resting places are not created.
16. If a newt is found when the ecologist is not on the site he/she will be contacted immediately to aid with its repositioning and to consider the necessity for a licence. Repositioning a GCN without a licence would constitute an offence.

5.2 Enhancements: GCN

17. The topsoil will be spread on the site, and in particular used to create a small hibernacula to the east of the ménage.
18. A further hibernacula will be created using logs (doubling as a potential jump for equestrian use). The designs of these will be based on the guidance from Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.

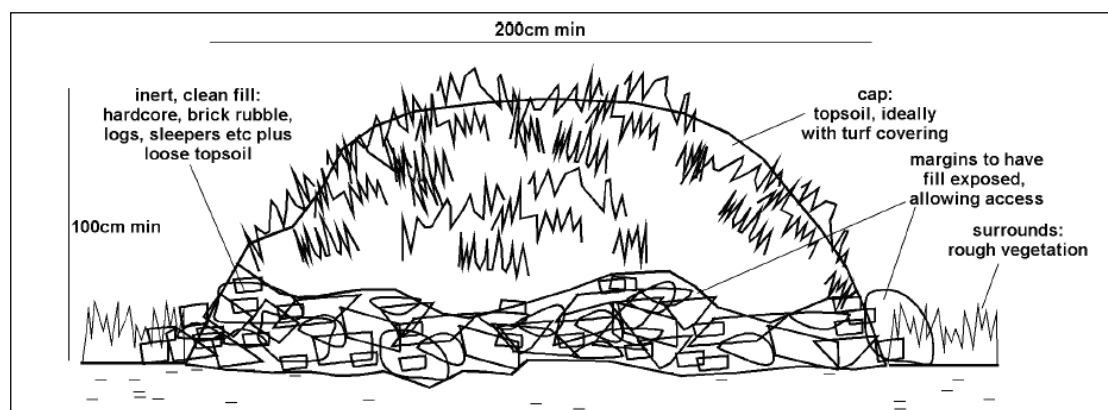


Figure 4: Design for hibernacula

6 Other

- This report may not be reproduced other than in full. The report should be read in its entirety.
- Questions arising from the survey report should be directed to the author of this report, who will be pleased to clarify any technical issues raised.
- Whilst the surveyors make every reasonable effort, Greenscape Environmental Ltd cannot guarantee that all protected species have been identified and survey results are definitive.
- Reports are considered valid for 2 years after which time further survey information may be required.
- Greenscape Environmental Ltd can provide advice and support for recommendations and planning conditions.

Appendices

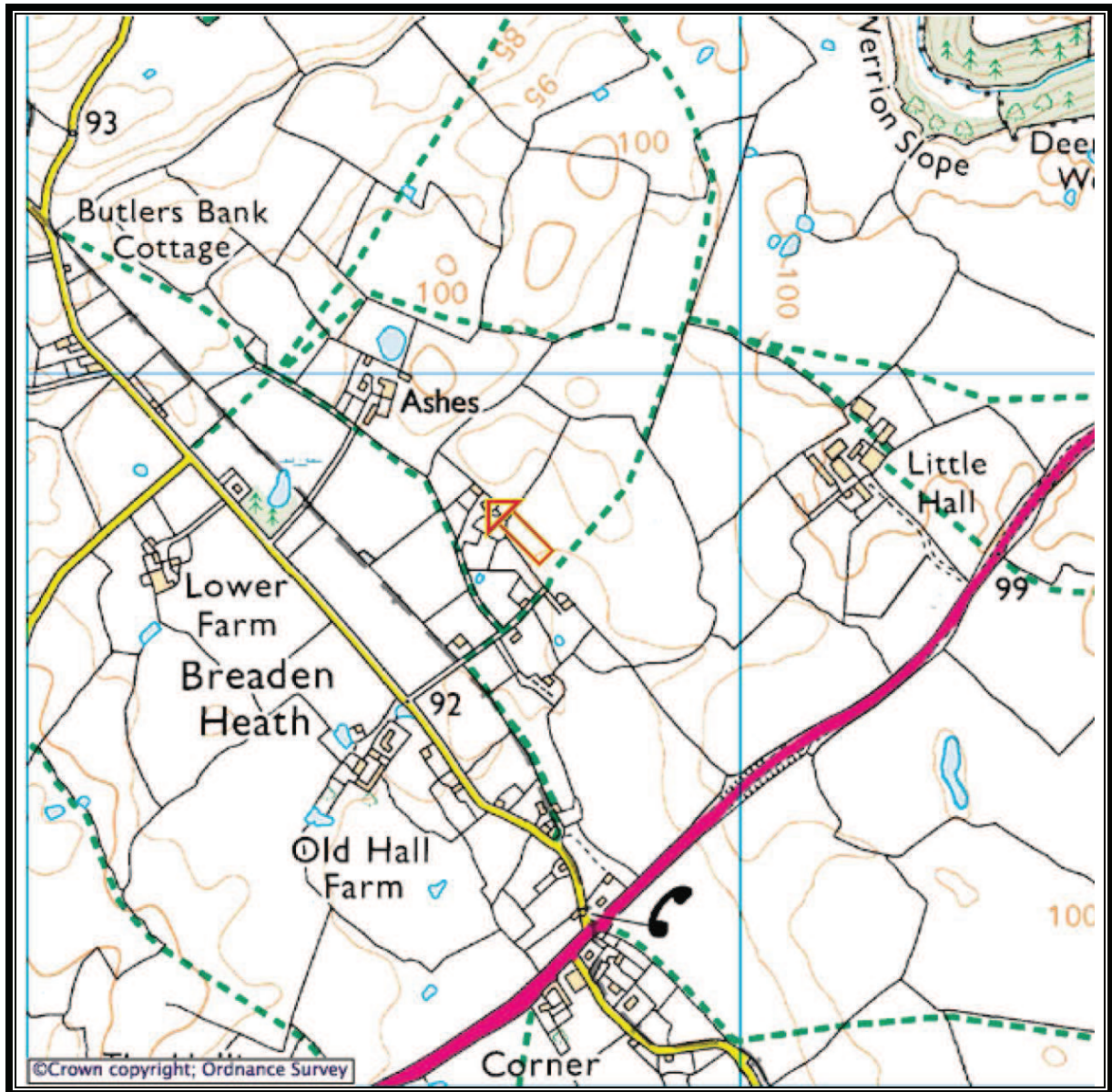
A Ordnance Survey Map Abstract

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B Bibliography

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A Ordnance Survey Map Abstract



Ordnance survey map for New House Farm from Streetmap.co.uk

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