Title	**Proposed Demolition of Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Lane, Wrexham, LL11 2NB, and Construction of a New Building – Biodiversity Statement**
Date issued	**19th August 2025**
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Reviewed by	**Max Ellson**
Client	**Wrexham County Borough Council**
Report Version	**C572/ Biodiversity_Statement/ 1.0**

1 Introduction

Background

1.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Lane, Wrexham (Approximate OS Grid Ref. SJ 3357 5137) and construct a new building. This Biodiversity Statement is provided as supporting information to the planning application for the demolition and construction of the new building.

1.2 The ecology survey and reporting requirements have been discussed with Wrexham County Borough Council's (WCBC) Ecology and Biodiversity Officer. It was agreed that a bat Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)/ nesting bird assessment, a Biodiversity Statement and a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) should be submitted with the application. The PRA is provided as a separate standalone report[1]. The PRA should be consulted for details of proposed bat and nesting bird mitigation/ compensation measures. This Biodiversity Statement largely considers enhancement measures only. The GIS is also provided as a separate standalone report[2].

1.3 This Biodiversity Statement includes the following:

1. A brief description and assessment of the existing habitat immediately around the building and within the survey site.
2. Identification of locations and opportunities for potential ecological enhancements.
3. Consideration of the potential for 'off-site' provision particularly within the adjacent open space.
4. Demonstration of how net benefit for biodiversity (and ecosystem resilience) will be secured and maintained. Full details of the recommended ecological enhancements.
5. Avoidance/ mitigation measures with regards trees, nesting birds, Badgers and Hedgehogs.

1.4 This document has been produced by Marches Ecology to provide the above information.

Site Description

1.5 A site visit was undertaken on 2nd June 2025 by Tom Knight of Marches Ecology. The weather during the visit was sunny with 30-50% white cloud cover and a light breeze. One of the purposes of the visit was to broadly characterise the existing ecological resource and

[1] Wildbanks Conservation (2025). *Rhosddu Community Centre, Wrexham – Bat and Bird Survey Report*. Produced on behalf of WCBC.

[2] Marches Ecology (2025a). *Proposed Demolition of Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Lane, Wrexham, LL11 2NB, and Construction of a New Building – Green Infrastructure Statement*. Produced on behalf of WCBC.

vegetation/ habitat within the survey site. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey or other similar ecological survey has not been undertaken. The brief description provided here is based entirely on information collected during the site visit.

1.6 The boundary of the survey site is indicated on *Figure 1*. Target Note locations (numbered 1 to 9) described in the text below are indicated on *Figure 1*; no separate target note descriptions are provided.

1.7 The survey site is located near the corner of Price's Lane and the A5152 Chester Road in Rhosddu, Wrexham. It is an urban location close to the centre of the city. The survey site is within a larger area of open green space which largely comprises amenity grassland with scattered ornamental trees/ shrubs. The green space is predominantly to the north of the survey site. To the south is Price's Lane, on the opposite side of which are residential properties. To the east is the A5152 road, with further residential properties on the opposite side. There are also residential properties to the north of the green space. Prices' Lane allotments are located to the west.

1.8 The existing building is a single-storey structure with a flat roof (*Target Note 1*). The roof is covered in bitumen felt. It has brick elevations and appears to be well-sealed. The building is bounded by tarmac-surfaced foot-ways on all sides. It is currently unoccupied.

1.9 The survey site boundaries are not defined by any fences/ structures. A tarmac surfaced access road leads from Price's Lane to the existing car park, to the south and west of the Community Centre. There are also small areas of amenity grassland within the survey site and to the south of the building. This amenity grassland (*Target Note 2*) had been mown to approximately 0.05 m high at the time of the survey. It contains abundant *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Rye-grass), frequent *Taraxacum officinale* (Dandelion), locally frequent *Bellis perennis* (Daisy), *Trifolium repens* (White Clover), *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow), *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog), *Festuca rubra* (Red Fescue), occasional *Ranunculus repens* (Creeping Buttercup), *Plantago lanceolata* (Ribwort Plantain), *Poa annua* (Annual Meadow-grass), *Poa pratensis* (Smooth Meadow-grass) and a number of other grasses and low-growing ruderals. At one location (*Target Note 3*) there is locally abundant *Carex sylvatica* (Wood-sedge).

1.10 To the east of the existing building there is a similar area of amenity grassland. At this location there is a young *Ulmus* sp. (Elm) tree with an approximate diameter at breast height (dbh) of 0.12 m, and 5-6 m tall (*Target Note 4*).

1.11 To the southeast of the existing building there is a line of semi-mature ornamental trees along a hard surfaced footway (*Target Note 5*). The trees include *Acer platanoides* (Norway Maple), *Prunus avium* (Wild Cherry), *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) and *Sorbus aria* agg. (Whitebeam). These trees generally have an approximate dbh of 0.3 m. There is one Norway Maple within the survey site; the other trees are to the south of the footway and therefore outside the survey site.

1.12 The amenity grassland extends around the immediate north of the existing building. The amenity grassland here (*Target Note 6*) had also been cut to approximately 0.05 m. It is dominated by Perennial Rye-grass with locally abundant Yarrow, frequent Dandelion, Daisy, locally frequent Red Fescue, White Clover, occasional *Hordeum murinum* (Wall Barley), Ribwort Plantain and a small amount of *Geranium pyrenaicum* (Hedgerow Crane's-bill).

1.13 To the immediate northwest of the building, and on the northern edge of the car park, there is a semi-mature Sycamore tree with an approximate dbh of 0.5 m (*Target Note 7*). Just to

the north of this there is also a semi-mature Wild Cherry tree and a young *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan) both of which are just outside the survey site.

1.14 To the west/ southwest of the building there is a car park which is surfaced with tarmac (*Target Note 8*). There are scattered low-growing ruderals, grasses and a few young tree/ shrub seedlings. Other areas of hard-standing within the survey site include various footways. All are surfaced with tarmac.

1.15 Outside the survey site, on all sides, there are further areas of amenity grassland with some small ornamental shrub plantings and scattered semi-mature/ mature trees. The trees include Wild Cherry, Sycamore, *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse-chestnut), *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False Acacia), Norway Maple, *etc*. There are five semi-mature Wild Cherry trees and a *Tilia* sp. (Lime) along the immediate western edge of the car park (*Target Note 9*).



The southern elevation of the main building (*Target Note 1*).



The car park located to the west of the building (*Target Note 8*).



The Sycamore tree at *Target Note 7*.



The amenity grassland and young Elm tree at *Target Note 4*.



The amenity grassland to the north/ northeast of the building (*Target Note 6*).



Some of the Wild Cherry trees by the western side of the car park, just outside the survey site (*Target Note 9*).



The line of trees along the footway to the southeast of the existing building (*Target Note 5*).

Adjacent Open-space

1.16 The adjacent green open-space to the north of the survey site is contiguous with the habitat within the survey site. It is largely characterised by amenity grassland with scattered trees and shrubs, and an ornamental hedge adjacent to the boundary by the A5152 road. There is a broad band of shrubs and trees along the western boundary, by the allotments. There are narrow borders of uncut grassland/ tall ruderals/ patches of scrub particularly around the northern and western sides. Some Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and other bird-boxes were noted in large trees in the northwest corner.



A typical view of the adjacent open greenspace – towards the northern end.



A Starling nest-box at the north-west end of the adjacent greenspace.

The Proposal

1.17 It is proposed to demolish the existing Community Centre and construct a new building for Scouts, *etc*. The new building is shown on three Architecture Works plans as follows:

- 'Indicative Floor Plans', dwg. no. L02 Rev. E, dated 05/09/24.
- 'Indicative Elevations', dwg. no. L03 Rev. C, dated 26/07/24.
- 'Layout Section', dwg. no. L04 Rev. A, dated 28/02/24.

1.18 The proposed building would be constructed using a steel frame with internal block-work and a mixture of composite wall cladding and Norclad Scandinavian Redwood cladding. It would have a shallow pitched roof also constructed using composite cladding.

1.19 The existing building has a single storey and measures approximately 16.6 m by 20.4 m. The proposed building has two storeys and would measure approximately 17.67 m by 31.3 m.

1.20 No further details have been provided on the proposed development.

2 Biodiversity Enhancement

Introduction

2.1 Technical Advice Note 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009)[3] and Wrexham County Borough Council (2011)[4] seek developments to achieve net biodiversity gain. The requirement to secure and maintain net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) (through enhancements) was reinforced in a letter issued by the Chief Planner (Welsh Government) to all planning departments in October 2019. NBB has been defined as '*the concept that development should leave biodiversity and ecosystems in a better state than before, through securing long term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, primarily on site*.' (Pitt 2021)[5]

2.2 This was reiterated in a letter from the Minister for Climate Change to the Heads of Planning dated October 2023. An Annex[6] attached to this letter provided text to update Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government 2024)[7]. Subsequently, Chapter 6 of PPW was updated which provides '*further clarity .... on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step.*'

2.3 WCBC (2011) lists '*examples of how enhancements could be achieved on development sites*'. The options provided include bird-boxes and bat-roosting features. It is proposed to make provision for Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Swift (*Apus apus*) and (roosting) bats. CIEEM (2022) states that '*a key requirement is that the measures put forward are suitable in the local context of the site*'[8]. Both species of bird are known to be present in the area.

2.4 While it is understood that NBB provision should ideally be provided on site it is considered acceptable in this instance to provide the Starling boxes and the (tree-hung) bat-box in the green space to the north and west of the survey site. This area of land is also owned by WCBC and is directly adjacent to the proposed development site.

2.5 The Starling, Swift and various species of bat, including Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are all priority species.

2.6 It is also proposed to plant three *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) trees. This is replacement planting for the tree being lost (rather than solely for enhancement).

[3] Welsh Government (2009). *Planning Policy Wales - Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning*. September 2009.

[4] Wrexham County Borough Council (2011). *Local Planning Guidance Note 32 Biodiversity and Development*. Adopted March 2011.

[5] Pitt, J. (2021). *Development: Nature's new friend? Final Report July 2021*. Produced on behalf of North Wales Wildlife Trust.

[6] *Annex to Heads of Planning Letter Dated 11 October 2023: Addressing the Nature Emergency through the Planning System: Updated National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales*.

[7] Welsh Government (2024). *Planning Policy Wales. Edition 12: February 2024*.

[8] CIEEM (2022). *Welsh Government's Approach to Net Benefits for Biodiversity and the DECCA Framework in the Terrestrial Planning System. CIEEM Briefing Paper September 2022*. CIEEM, Romsey.

Assessment of Required Level of Provision

2.7 Demolition of the existing building followed by construction of a new building can be categorised as a small/ low impact proposal. It is largely surrounded by hard-standing with some areas of amenity grassland. This grassland is of low ecological value. The proposal would result in the loss of a single young tree (at *Target Note 4*). Due to its age this tree is also of low ecological value. The building is not connected to any other habitat types, and is not close to other valued ecological resources. It is assumed that all of the other existing trees would be retained. Some minor pruning work is proposed, for example, to the Sycamore at *Target Note 7*. It is further assumed that all of the existing trees outside the survey site would be retained unaffected.

2.8 The bat PRA report concluded that the existing building is not of particular potential value for (roosting) bats or nesting birds. The loss of this building would not result in a significant impact on any valued ecological resource at this location. No trees (other than the young tree mentioned above) are to be lost. NBB provision '*should be proportional to the extent and impact of development*' (CIEEM 2022). The proposed enhancements will therefore target two priority bird species known to be present in the area as well as providing new roosting opportunities for bats.

Biodiversity Enhancement Recommendations

Starling Nest-boxes

2.9 The Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) is a priority species included on *Section 7* of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* and the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales[9]. Small numbers of Starling were noted using the open space to the north of the site and the Price's Lane allotments during the site visit.

2.10 Six nest-boxes suitable for Starling[10] [11] [12] will be installed on the trees to the west/ northwest of the survey site, near to the boundary with the adjacent allotments. The Wild Cherry trees by the car park (*Target Note 9*) may be used if suitable positions can be found. A decision on the most suitable trees to be used will be made on the day of installation. It is acknowledged that this location is just outside the site boundary, however it is within land controlled by the applicant.

2.11 The nest-boxes would be sited out of reach (though accessible for maintenance), 3 m or more off the ground, with a clear flight-path. All of the nest-boxes would be located somewhere between (facing) north through east; avoiding prevailing winds and direct sunlight where possible. Ideally, they will be located in small groups (on adjacent trees) as Starlings are gregarious birds; 3 m or more apart (*e.g.,* Gunnell, Murphy & Williams (2013)[13]). These nest-boxes will be installed either by, or under the direction of, a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure correct installation.

[9] Johnstone, I.G., Hughes, J., Balmer, D.E., Brenchley, A., Facey, R.J., Lindley, P.J., Noble, D.G. & Taylor, R.C. (2022). Birds of Conservation Concern Wales 4: the population status of birds in Wales. *Milvus*.

[10] https://www.swiftnestboxes.co.uk/index.php/hikashop-menu-for-products-listing/product/44-starling-nest-box

[11] https://www.nhbs.com/3s-schwegler-starling-nest-box

[12] https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-starling-nest-box

[13] Gunnell, K., Murphy, B. & Williams, C. (2013). *Designing for Biodiversity: A Technical Guide for New and Existing Buildings*. Second Edition. RIBA Publishing, London.

Swift Nest-boxes

Specifications

2.12 The Swift (*Apus apus*) is a priority species included on *Section 7* of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* and the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales. It was recorded flying over residential housing near the site during the site visit. It is recommended that ten Swift nest-boxes be installed at 'eaves level' (at least 5 m above the ground) on the north/ north-east side of the new building. There are a range of suitable nest-boxes available[14]. These nest-boxes should be installed in conjunction with the North Wales Wildlife Trust's Swift Conservation Project[15].

2.13 Ben Stammers (Wildlife & People Officer, North Wales Wildlife Trust) has been contacted with regard to installation of the Swift boxes. Ben is responsible for the Wildlife Trust's Swift Conservation Project and has confirmed that they would like to be involved with the Swift box installation at the new building.

2.14 The Swift Conservation Project will advise as to whether internally installed boxes or externally attached bespoke-designed boxes would be most appropriate for this building. This is as yet to be confirmed and as such details of both options are provided here.

Internal Nest-boxes

2.15 The design for internal nest-boxes would be adapted from one of those shown in British Standard (BS) 42021:2022[16] at 'Annex B Installation of integral nest boxes' (pages 15-18). Swift Conservation states that the 'minimum nest place dimensions are 30 cm wide by 40 cm long by 15 to 20 cm high'[17]. However, many commercially available Swift boxes and bricks have smaller dimensions than this. The Swift Conservation Project will advise on an appropriate design and the installation.

2.16 Ben Stammers confirmed that a call attraction system may be required in order to attract Swifts to the boxes once installed. Ben will provide advice as to such requirements once the boxes have been installed.

External Nest-boxes

2.17 It is proposed to use Impeckable nest-boxes[18]. A combination of two four-chamber nest-boxes and a double-chamber nest-box or a single eight-chamber nest-box and a double-chamber nest-box would be used. These boxes can be supplied in Wrexham red livery. The Swift Conservation Project will advise on an appropriate location and the installation.

Location

2.18 The preferred aspect for Swift boxes is generally north (*e.g.*, Swift Conservation (2018)[19]). It is therefore proposed to install the Swift boxes on the north (eastern) elevation of the

[14] https://www.swift-conservation.org/Leaflet_1_Swifts_Nest-boxes_at_Your_Home-small.pdf

[15] https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/our-projects/swift-conservation-project

[16] The British Standards Institution (2023). *BS 42021:2022 – Integral nest boxes – Selection and installation for new developments – Specifications. Incorporating Corrigendum No. 1*.

[17] https://www.swift-conservation.org/Eaves.htm

[18] https://www.swiftnestboxes.co.uk/index.php/hikashop-menu-for-products-listing

[19] Swift Conservation. (2018). *Leaflet 1 – Swift Nest-boxes and Your Home*.

building and/ or possibly the eastern elevation. On the 'Indicative Elevations' plan that is '3. Rear elevation' and the eastern is '2. Side elevation' respectively.

2.19 The Swift boxes/ entrance to the boxes will not be located directly above any windows. The boxes should be at least 50 cm to 1 m apart. The boxes are to be installed by/ under the supervision of North Wales Wildlife Trust's Swift Conservation Project. Ben will advise as to the exact positions at that time.

Bat Roosting Opportunities

2.20 It is proposed to provide an integrated roost feature on the eastern elevation of the new building and install a bat-box suitable for crevice-dwelling species on a tree in the open space to the north of the site. The Bat & Bird Survey Report should be consulted for further details.

Maintenance and Monitoring

2.21 The importance of securing long-term management/ maintenance and monitoring is central to the NBB approach (*e.g.,* CIEEM 2022). This should also be proportional to the scale and impact of the development.

2.22 The Starling nest-boxes will be subject to maintenance annually in November/ December. Bird nest-boxes require annual maintenance as they can become heavily infested with parasites. The nest-boxes will be maintained annually and cleaned if necessary. All maintenance should be carried out when the last bird has left the nest-box; at least October. As such all nest-boxes should be cleaned in late-autumn (late October/ November). At least 2 to 3 weeks should be allowed after fledging before undertaking any cleaning. The *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*, as amended states that cleaning should only be carried out between 1st August and 31st January and that any eggs present should be destroyed immediately. All nest material should be completely removed and disposed of safely along with any other debris. To ensure that parasite build-up is controlled the inside of the nest-box should be cleansed with boiling water. For safety, this should be undertaken with the nest-box located on the ground. Care should be taken when opening nest-boxes as it is possible that they could be inhabited by bees, wasps or even bats.

2.23 Swift boxes do not need to be cleaned out unless they have been used by other species.

2.24 The use of the nest-boxes by Starlings (or any other species) and the use of the Swift nest-boxes will be recorded during the nesting season (March to August inclusive). Starlings typically raise one or two broods a year. Records of nesting birds will be submitted to Cofnod[20] (the Local Environmental Records Centre for North Wales). This recording could be undertaken by the users of the new building. The Swift Conservation Project may also be able to undertake monitoring of the Swift boxes.

[20] https://www.cofnod.org.uk/Home

3 Replacement Tree Planting

3.1 Three *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) trees will be planted in a cluster in the open space to the north of the site. The Silver Birch trees can be sourced from the Woodland Trust[21]. The Woodland Trust website confirms that all of their trees are sourced and grown in the UK.

3.2 If vandalism may be an issue, then larger tree specimens may be required and/ or metal tree guards considered. The trees will need to be staked and fitted with strimmer guards[22].

3.3 The trees should be checked annually by Wrexham County Borough Council. Any losses will be replaced. Some maintenance including possibly watering, may need to be undertaken during establishment.

3.4 The trees will be planted between November and March. They will be planted in accordance with the advice provided by the Woodland Trust[23].

4 Mitigation/ Avoidance Measures

Tree Protection

4.1 Due to the proximity of a number of semi-mature trees around the site temporary tree protection fencing should be installed as necessary. In particular such fencing would be required along the western and southern sides of the existing car park (to, *e.g*. protect the trees at *Target Note 9*), adjacent to the southeastern site boundary (to protect the trees at *Target Note 5*) and along part of the northwestern site boundary (to protect the trees to the north of that at *Target Note 7*). The specification and alignment of temporary protective fencing is detailed in the Arboricultural Report[24].

Nesting Birds

4.2 If the proposed demolition proceeds during the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) including the felling/ pruning of any trees, a precautionary approach should be adopted. All features within, or in close proximity to, the proposed demolition site should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to commencement of any works.

4.3 Should any occupied nests be found at this time or during the works, a buffer zone (determined on the basis of the species concerned and the location of the nest in the context of the surrounding vegetation, but no less than 5 m) would be retained until it can be ascertained that the chicks have left the nest. The buffer zone will be appropriately fenced and signed. This accords with the recommendations of the PRA report.

Badger

4.4 As Badgers are known to be present in the area all site workers should maintain a watching brief for potential setts. Excavator buckets, other plant, pipes, *etc* will all be checked by construction personnel at the start of each day for any trapped animals. All trenches/ deep holes, should any be excavated, will be inspected each morning by construction personnel

[21] https://shop.woodlandtrust.org.uk/silver-birch

[22] https://www.green-tech.co.uk/tree-planting-products/tree-protection-and-shelters/premium-strimmer-guards

[23] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/

[24] Old Oak Tree Care (2025). *Arboricultural Report: Demolition of Existing Community Centre and Replacement with a New Building. Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Lane, Wrexham, LL11 2NB*. Produced on behalf of WCBC.

to check whether any Badgers have become trapped overnight. Should a Badger become trapped in a trench it may attempt to dig itself into the side of the trench and form a temporary sett. Should a trapped Badger be encountered at any time a suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted immediately for advice.

4.5 Should a sett/ large animal hole (or suspected sett) be found during construction the following measures will be enacted:

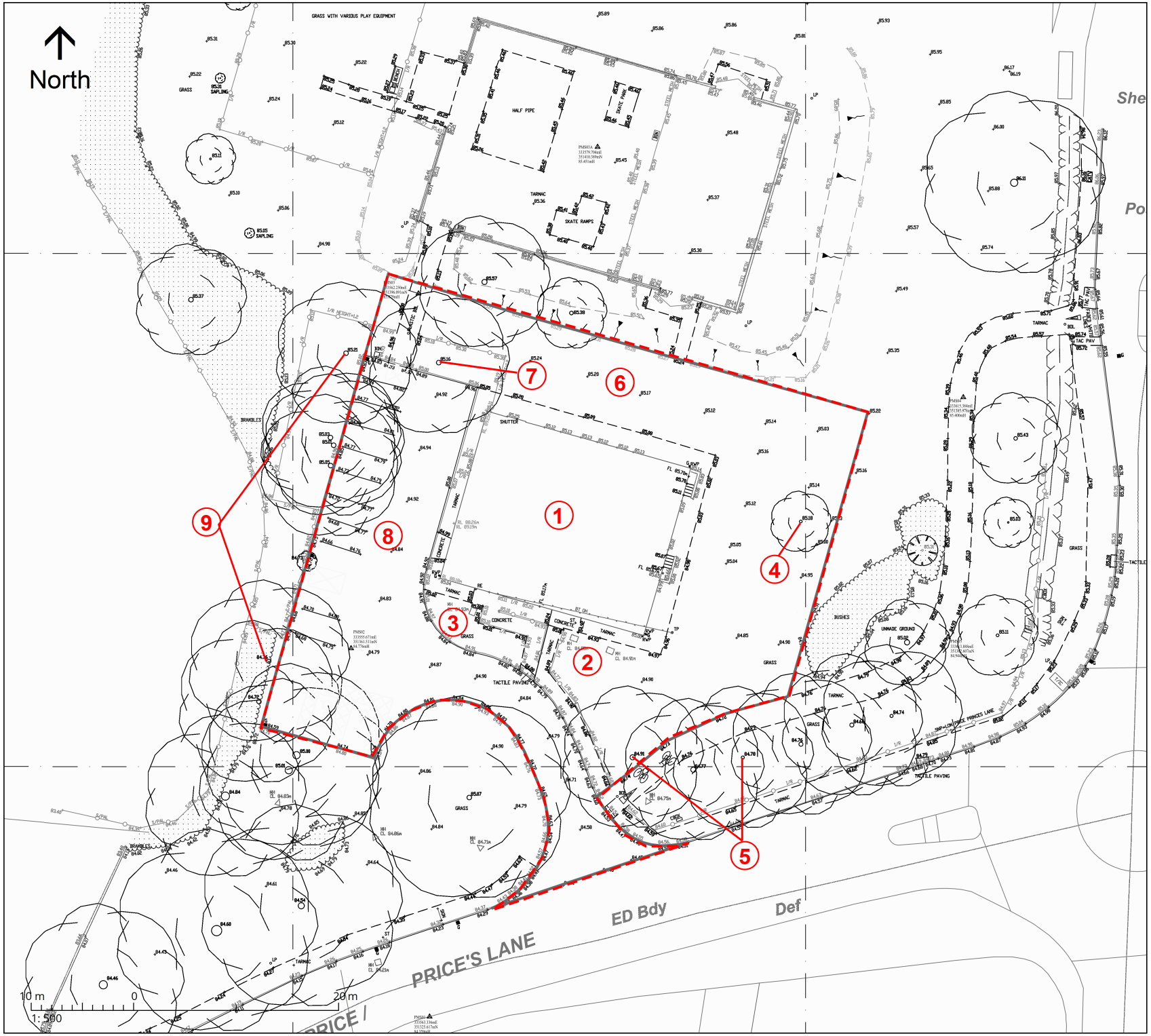
- All work within 30 m of the sett/ animal hole will immediately cease.
- A suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted for advice. The ecologist will need to attend site to confirm the status of the sett/ animal hole.
- The ecologist will identify any further mitigation measures/ licensing that might be required including the installation of temporary protective fencing around the sett.
- Work will not re-commence in this area until the ecologist has confirmed that it is safe to do so.

Hedgehog

4.6 Hedgehogs are known to be present in the area.

4.7 There are no features of potential value for Hedgehogs within the site, although there are in the immediately adjacent area. Due to their known presence a precautionary approach should be adopted.

4.8 All site personnel should maintain a watching brief throughout the works for Hedgehogs. Should any Hedgehogs be found then a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice.



Base mapping provided by the client.

C572 Proposed Demolition of Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Lane, Wrexham, and Construction of a New Building - Biodiversity Statement

***Figure 1* - Target Notes**

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