Darland Academy Phase 2

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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Wrexham AFC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The site is located adjacent to Darland High School, Chester Road, Rosset, Wrexham, Wales and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SJ 37532 57552.
Proposals	The development will include the creation new surface drainage and pitch renovations, installation of permanent irrigation tanks, permanent pump housing, permanent containers for training equipment and boundary treatment.
Scope of this Survey(s)	The purpose of this report is to: • Undertake a desk study to obtain existing information on statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest and relevant records of protected / notable species within the site and its zone of influence • Present the results of an extended UK Habitat Classification Survey, involving a walkover of the site to record habitat types and dominant vegetation, including any invasive species, and; evidence of protected fauna or habitats capable of supporting such species • Evaluate potential ecological receptors on site and within the zone of influence; identify any constraints to the site's development and make any recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or enhancement.
Results and Evaluation	**Designated sites:** River Dee and Bala Lake SAC and Bala Lake RAMSAR are situated 2.9 km east of the site. Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 (Wales) RAMSAR is located approximately 3.5km south-east of the site. No other designated sites were identified within 10 km of the site boundary. Two Wildlife Sites of Wrexham are located within 2km of the site and include Darland Wood and Coxwood. **Habitats**: The site was dominated by modified grassland. The site also comprised hedgerows, other woodland; broadleaved, rural trees, artificial unvegetated unsealed surface and an adjacent ditch. **Protected and notable species**: The site has the potential to support several protected and notable species including bats, nesting birds, badger, amphibians and reptiles. No invasive species were recorded on site.
Recommendations	**Habitats:**

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Should any work be required that will impact the hedgerows, further survey to complete a hedgerow regulations assessment, in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 legislation, will be required.

Badger:

Reasonable Avoidance Measures for badger should be adhered to during the works.
Permanent security fencing should not be installed around the entirety of the site during the operational phase unless it has an accessible gap to facilitate mammal passage for species such as hedgehog and badger.

Bat Activity:

A sensitive lighting plan for bats is required for the duration of the construction phase, and during the operational phases of the development. This should involve construction works being undertaken outside hours of darkness. If this is not possible, construction associated lighting should minimise light spill onto hedgerows, trees and suitable habitats adjacent to the site. The operational design should be developed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 08/8 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK and also minimise light spill onto hedgerows, trees and suitable habitats adjacent to the site.

Bat Roosting:

Impacts to trees are not anticipated as part of the proposed works but should this change, further surveys such as Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for roosting bats, and aerial/nocturnal surveys may be required.

Nesting Birds:

If any pruning works to vegetation such as trees/hedgerows are required these should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March – September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be required to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist 24-48 hours prior to any potentially disturbing works.

Reptiles and Amphibians:

The hedgerows and ditch will be retained to maintain connectivity throughout the site. Due to potential for hibernating reptiles and amphibians, any ground breaking work must be completed outside of hibernation season (November – February inclusive). A PWMS must also be adhered to throughout the works.

Invasive Species:

General precautionary measures to prevent the introduction and spread of INNS should be undertaken.

In the event an invasive species is identified at any point during the works, findings should be reported to a suitably licenced Ecologist.

Hedgehog:

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	Best practice measures adopted during works for badger will also protect any hedgehogs potentially using the site. Refugia on site including brash piles, log piles and debris (bricks, fence panels) are to be hand searched prior to clearance and sheltering wildlife such as hedgehogs moved to a safe location away from the works area. It is recommended that clearance of refugia is undertaken at a time of year when sheltering hedgehogs are most likely to be active, i.e. April to October. **Net Benefit for Biodiversity:** A net benefit for biodivsersity (NBB) report should be completed to compensate and mitigate for onsite losses/ habitat changes and enhance the site for protected/ notable species.
Conclusion	Provided the measures within this report for further survey and mitigation can be adopted, it is anticipated that a design could be brought forward for this site that would be compliant with current local and national biodiversity planning policy.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech Limited (Tetra Tech) was commissioned by Wrexham AFC on 25th June 2025 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Darland Academy Phase 2, hereafter referred to as "the site".

This report has been prepared by Project Ecologist Bronwyn Dennis BSc (Hons) and the conditions pertinent to it are in Appendix A.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The approximately 3.0-hectare (ha) site is located south-east adjacent to Darland High School, Chester Road, Rosset, Wrexham, Wales and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SJ 37532 57552 (Figure 1). It comprises amenity fields, hedgerows, a drainage ditch and a strip of woodland. The ditch is associated with the woodland. The land in the wider area comprises agricultural and pastoral fields to the north, east and south, and residential development to the west. Hedgerows and treelines are also prominent in the local setting.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Darland Academy Phase 2 development will include the creation new surface drainage and pitch renovations, installation of permanent irrigation tanks, permanent pump housing, permanent containers for training equipment and boundary treatment.

1.4 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Undertake a desk study to obtain existing information on statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest and relevant records of protected / notable species within the site and its zone of influence
- Present the results of an extended UK Habitat Classification Survey, involving a walkover of the site to record habitat types and dominant vegetation, including any invasive species, and; evidence of protected fauna or habitats capable of supporting such species
- Evaluate potential ecological receptors on site and within the zone of influence; identify any constraints to the site's development and make any recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or enhancement.

Scientific names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where appropriate) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.

1.5 QUALITY

Our Ecologists follow CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct (CIEEM, 2025), with all surveys completed in accordance with Tetra Tech's Biosecurity Policy (Tetra Tech, 2025).

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All staff have completed Health and Safety training. Risk Assessment Method Statements have been completed and verified prior to the site visit, with Dynamic Risk Assessments completed by all site staff upon arrival at site.

1.6 VALIDITY

This report will be considered to remain valid for 18 months after the date of the site visit, until 8th January 2027, in accordance with (CIEEM, 2019). After this time, it may be appropriate to consult an Ecologist to confirm if an update assessment is required. The recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the habitats present, red line boundary or development proposals upon which this report was based.

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2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 HISTORIC SURVEYS

Previous reports relevant to the site include a retrospective PEA of the adjacent land (Tetra Tech, 2024).

The retrospective PEA was accompanied by a Net Benefit for Biodiversity report (Tetra Tech,2024) and separate Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) documents for great crested newts (Tetra Tech, 2024) and invasive non-native species (Tetra Tech, 2024).

2.2 DESK STUDY

The desktop study comprised two elements:

- A data search obtained from COFNOD on 8th July 2025; and
- Online element including a search using :Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (https://magic.defra.gov.uk) website,
- Ordnance Survey (OS), Aerial Imagery (https://www.bing.com/maps) and
- DataMapWales (Home | DataMapWales (gov.wales)

The geographical extent of the search area was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence. For this site the following search areas were considered appropriate:

- 10 km for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar sites);
- 2 km for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protected or otherwise notable species and non-statutory designated sites of County Importance (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS));
- 2 km for biological records;
- 2 km for granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) for example great crested newts (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*) and bats, and;
- 1 km for ancient woodland and mapped priority habitats (those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, being listed in Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance).

The data search did not cover Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); or Conservation Areas designated for their special architectural and historic interest.

Further information on relevant species / environmental legislation and planning policy can be found in Appendix B.

2.3 FIELD SURVEYS

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The following methodologies have been used to identify the ecological receptors present on or near the site and which are relevant to the proposed development. The field survey was limited to the extents of the provided proposed development boundary. No assessment took place outside of the survey access permission limits.

2.3.1 Habitats

An extended UK Habitat Classification Survey was undertaken on the site on 8th July 2025 by Tetra Tech Consultant Ecologist Bronwyn Dennis BSc (Hons). The weather conditions were dry and clear.

The habitats present on site were mapped in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Professional Edition – Version 2.0 (UK Hab Ltd., 2023), hereafter referred to as 'UKHab'.

The habitats have been classified to a minimum of 'Level 4' (in accordance with UKHab), to identify the presence of any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) listed under the NERC Act 2006. Where habitats occur in multiple areas of the site or are of different condition, additional polygons of the same habitat have been mapped so that their condition may be assessed independently.

The minimum recording unit for habitat is 25 m^2 or 5 m length for linear habitats (such as hedgerows or watercourses). Dominant plant species were recorded for each habitat present using standard nomenclature (Stace, 2019).

2.3.2 Protected and Notable Species

The site was inspected for evidence of, and its potential to support, protected or notable species, especially those listed under the Schedule 2 of the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (W&CA) 1981 (as amended), the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, those given extra protection under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and species included in the Wrexham Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

The presence of some species was determined using standard best practice guidance and are listed below.

Badger

The site was surveyed for evidence of badger *Meles meles* setts or other badger activity such as paths, latrines or signs of foraging. Methodologies used and any setts recorded were classified according to published criteria (Harris, et al., 1989).

Hazel Dormouse

The site was surveyed for its suitability to support hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* based on best practice guidance (Bright, et al., 2006).

Otter

The site was assessed for its suitability to support otter *Lutra lutra* using industry standard survey advice (Chanin, 2003).

Water Vole

Waterbodies within or adjacent to the site were assessed for their suitability to support water vole *Arvicola amphibius* using the industry standard survey advice (Dean, 2016).

Bats

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Roosting Bats – TreesA preliminary assessment of scattered trees within the site was undertaken, and trees were categorised to highlight whether additional assessment is required referring to the categories in Table 1 below. Professional judgement was used to identify trees where features could be obscured by foliage or other branches. If a feature was identified on the tree the tree was categorised as PRF as the tree had at least 1 potential roost feature (PRF) present.

Table 1. Categorisation of Trees

Suitability	Description
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required (FAR) to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one potential roost feature (PRF) present.

Foraging / Commuting Bats

Potential habitat for foraging and commuting bats were assessed on site according to the BCT Guidelines.

Birds

Bird species identified at the time of survey were noted and nesting birds recorded as seen. An assessment of habitats was undertaken to determine the likely value to breeding and foraging birds.

Great Crested Newt & Common Amphibians

The site was appraised for its suitability to support GCN based on guidance outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003) and the *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook* (Langton, et al., 2001). This appraisal also considered waterbodies within 500 m of the site and their potential to be used for breeding newts.

Habitat suitability and evidence of other common amphibians was recorded on site where relevant.

Reptiles

The site was appraised for its suitability to support reptiles using guidance outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003).

Invertebrates

The site's habitats were appraised for suitability to support assemblages of invertebrates and commented on in the report as appropriate.

Other Species

The site was also appraised for its suitability to support other protected or notable fauna with regard to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI, 2013). Evidence of any current or historical presence of such species was recorded.

Invasive Species

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Evidence of species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (as amended) were recorded as seen.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Any absence of desk study records cannot be relied upon to infer absence of a species/habitat as the absence of records may be a result of under-recording within the given search area.

Access to the southern-western field and boundary features was not possible due to maintenance works onsite. The habitats in this area appeared to reflect the type and condition of habitats surveyed in the northern field. However, signs and evidence of protected and/ or invasive species may have been missed during the survey. It is currently understood that the un-surveyed boundary features will not be impacted by the works.

Scattered trees within the site were assessed for bat roosting suitability, but the trees within the woodland were not assessed as the woodland is not due to be impacted by the works.

To determine presence or likely absence of protected species usually requires multiple visits at suitable times of the year. This survey focuses on assessing the potential of the site to support species of note, which are considered to be of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity with reference to those given protection under UK or European wildlife legislation, from only a single visit. This report cannot, therefore, be considered a comprehensive assessment of the ecological interest of the site. However, it does provide an assessment of the ecological interest present on the day the site was visited and highlights areas where further survey work may be recommended.

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3.0 RESULTS & EVALUATION

3.1 PROTECTED SITES

International designated sites identified within 10km and National designated sites identified within 2 km of the proposed development are presented in Table 2 with the designation, qualifying features and proximity from the development site also indicated. Details of local non-designated sites within 2 km and obtained from COFNOD are also included.

Table 2. Statutory and non-Statutory Designated Sites Identified During the Desk Study

Site Name	Designation	Distance and direction from Site	Reasons for designation
Sites of International Importance (within 10 km)			
River Dee and Bala Lake	SAC	2.9 km east	Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*. Annex I habitats present include plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation are also present.
Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid)	RAMSAR	2.9 km east	Ramsar criterion 1: Largest natural lake in Wales, lying deep in a formerly glaciated trough. Ramsar criterion 2: Plant species growing in or beside the lake are mudwort *Limosa aquatica*, six-stamened waterwort *Elatine hexandra*, water sedge *Carex aquatilis* and floating water plantain *Luronium natans*, all of which are scarce in Britain. The latter species is regarded as vulnerable on a global scale. This site is also one of only six sites in Britain for the whitefish or gwyniad *Coregonus lavaretus*; the Welsh population of this fish is genetically distinct. Llyn Tegid is also an unusual habitat for the normally riverine fish grayling *Thymallus thymallus*. The Nationally Rare glutinous snail *Myxas glutinosa* has been rediscovered in the shallow gravels of the lake shore.
Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 (Wales)	RAMSAR	3.5km south-east	A series of 18 sites made up of nutrient-rich open water bodies (meres) with fringing habitats of reed swamp, fen, carr and damp pasture, and peatlands. The landscape features developed in depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets. The wide range of habitats supports nationally important flora and fauna.
Non-Statutory Designated Sites			
Darland Wood	Wildlife Sites for Wrexham	360m north	Two small woodlands joined by a narrow woodland corridor and with a pond in the southern wood. Ground flora is sparse in places but there is a fair overall diversity.
Coxwood	Wildlife Sites for Wrexham	1.9km south	An ancient woodland with a predominantly oak canopy.

Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitats

No ancient woodland parcels were returned from within 1 km of the site.

One parcel of traditional orchards is located 180m west of the site at its closest point. One parcel of lowland fens and reedbeds is located 520 m north-west of the site at its closest point.

3.2 HABITATS

The following habitats, as outlined in Table 3, have been identified through our field assessment, a UKHab map can be found in Figure 5, with detailed Target Notes (TN) and Photographic Plates included in Appendix C, as appropriate.

Table 3. Habitats

Habitat (UKHab Code) (TN)	Result	Importance Assessment
Modified Grassland (g4)	The area comprised frequently mown amenity grassland dominated by perennial rye grass, with abundant annual meadow-grass *Poa annua.* The areas of grassland along the site borders were less well managed and more diverse and included frequent dandelion *Taraxacum agg.,* occasional cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata,* common bent *Agrostis capillaris,* common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris,* false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius,* greater plantain *Plantago major*, red clover *Trifolium pratense,* white clover *Trifolium repens,* Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and rare daisy *Bellis perennis.* Two metal storage containers were present within the grassland.	Common and widespread of Local importance.
Species rich native hedgerows (h2a5) H1 and H2	H1 (TN2) was approximately 2 m height, 1.5 m width and approximately 150m in length. The hedgerow was not uniform throughout and appeared to have a relaxed management regime. The hedgerow was comprised of dominant hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* abundant bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.* and occasional stands of young ash *Fraxinus excelsior,* elder *Sambucus nigra,* hazel *Corylus avellana* and holly *Ilex aquifolium.* The ground flora comprised frequent spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, occasional common nettle *Urtica dioica* and rare common ivy *Hedera helix.* H2 (TN3) was approximately 1.5 m in height and 1.5 m in width. The hedgerow appeared to be frequently managed and was uniform. H2 was comprised of dominant hawthorn, abundant bramble, frequent elder, hazel and elm *Ulmus sp.,* and rare pedunculate oak. The hedgerow base was comprised of rank	A Hedgerow Regulations assessment was not completed as part of this survey. Local importance but common boundary feature in open semi-rural setting.

Habitat (UKHab Code) (TN)	Result	Importance Assessment
	grasses as listed under modified grassland and rare lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*.	
Other woodland; broadleaved (w1g)	The site was bordered by a broadleaved woodland. The trees had a range of age classes but were dominated by mature and semi-mature individuals. The average height was 20-30m. The canopy comprised abundant ash, abundant willow *Salix sp.*, frequent elder, pedunculate oak, sycamore *Acer pseudoplanatusi,* occasional silver birch *Betula pendula* and rare alder *Alnus glutinosa* and hazel. The understorey comprised abundant hawthorn, frequent bramble and rare blackthorn *Prunus spinosa.* The ground flora was predominantly comprised of rank grassland species as mentioned previously with rare hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium.*	Local importance.
Rural trees	Two singular trees were present within the site (TN5 and TN6). TN5 was a mature ash, approximately 30m in height. TN6 was a semi-mature oak, approximately 8m in height.	Local importance.
Artificial Unvegetated Unsealed Surface (u1c)	A compacted aggregate track is present within the site to allow for vehicle access along the modified grassland.	Negligible importance.
Ditch (r1g 50)	One drainage ditch was present adjacent to the site. The ditch was dry at the time of survey, but the survey was undertaken following a period of hot, dry weather. There was limited vegetation present on the banks. Although the ditch falls outside of the work boundary, it is associated with the woodland and contained mammal paths. There was an old mammal path observed during the survey leading out of the ditch and towards the site. However, as this is no longer accessible due the fencing, it is likely that the fencing has caused temporary disturbance to a mammal commuting route.	Local importance.

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3.3 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

Data purchased from COFNOD confirmed the presence of a number of protected and notable species within 2 km of the site. Relevant data are discussed in Table 4 below.

Protected and notable species identified as a receptor for the site are detailed in Table 4.. Further information on relevant species / environmental legislation and planning policy can be found in Appendix B.

Table 4. Species

Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act 1992; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 6.	**Desk Study** 26 records of badger were returned from COFNOD from the past 20 years. The closest record pertained to a field sighting 65 m from the site. **Field Survey** No badger setts were identified within the site during the survey however, several mammal paths were recorded during the survey within the hedgerows and around the ditch. The site was dominated by open modified grassland and is in a highly disturbed area. Therefore, it is unlikely that the site will be used for sett creation. It is likely, however, to be used as part of a wider foraging and commuting resource.	Species is likely to utilise the site for foraging and commuting within/adjacent to the site – local importance.
Hazel Dormouse	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5 & 6; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	**Desk Study** No hazel dormouse records were returned during the desk study within the previous ten years and within 2 km of the site. **Field Survey** There were limited opportunities for hazel dormouse within the site as the site was dominated by modified grassland and lacked connected hedgerows or woodland. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that hazel dormouse are present within the site. Hazel dormice are not considered further within this report.	Species considered unlikely to be present at local level. Species listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.

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Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
Otter	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5 & 6; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	**Desk Study** Seven records of otter were returned from COFNOD from the past 20 years. The closest was located 996 m from site. **Field Survey** No evidence of otter was observed during the survey. One drainage ditch was identified adjacent to the site but was dry at the time of survey. The ditch has previously been recorded as wet (Tetra Tech, 2024) and is considered to be annually dry. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that otter would disperse onto site due to a lack of foraging and commuting opportunities. Otter are not considered further within this report.	Limited habitat within the site and therefore considered unlikely to be present – considered unlikely to be important at local level. Species listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.
Water vole	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	**Desk Study** One record of water vole was returned from COFNOD within the past 20 years. The record was located 1.97km from the site. **Field Survey** No evidence of otter was observed during the survey. One drainage ditch was identified adjacent to the site but was dry at the time of survey. The ditch has previously been recorded as wet (Tetra Tech, 2024) and is considered to be annually dry. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that watervole would disperse onto site due to lack of connectivity, commuting and foraging opportunities. Water vole are not considered further within this report.	Species unlikely to be present within the site – considered unlikely to be important at local level. Species listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.
Bats	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5 & 6;	**Desk Study** Nine records of bats were returned from COFNOD from the past 20 years. Of these, a total of 5 species were recorded including: - Noctule *Nyctalus noctule,* closest recorded 327m from site - Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* closest recorded 327m from site	Species likely to use the site for foraging and commuting however further surveys would be required to confirm species presence and importance.

Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
	Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus,* closest recorded 327m from site - Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus,* closest recorded 1.87km from site - Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentoniid,* closest recorded 1.88km from site **Field Survey** Roosting: No buildings were present within the site. Mature trees were recorded throughout the site. Of theseTN5 and TN6 were noted as FAR (further assessment for bat roosting features required). The trees within the woodland were not assessed. It is currently understood that the onsite trees are not proposed to be impacted directly or indirectly during the works. Foraging and Commuting: During the survey low suitability habitat for foraging and commuting bats was recorded provided by the hedgerows and woodland.	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, Daubenton's and brown long-eared bats are listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	**Desk Study** Six hundred and eighty bird records were returned from COFNOD from the past 20 years. Of these, 89 records pertain to Category 1 and Category 2 species. **Field Survey** The hedgerows and woodland adjacent to the site would provide suitable nesting areas for several common passerine species. The modified grassland is in a heavily disturbed area due to Darland High School and the use of grassland for amenity. Therefore, the grassland habitats within and adjacent to the site would be unsuitable for ground nesting or farmland bird species.	Local importance due to suitability being limited to the scattered trees. A number of species returned during the desk study and potentially present within the site are listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.
GCN and Common Amphibians	*GCN*: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	**Desk Study** Fifteen amphibian records were returned from COFNOD from the past 20 years. - 6 records for GCN were returned. The closest pertained to records of breeding in a pond in 2019, 290 m from the site. - 3 records of common frog *Rana temporaria* were returned, with the closest located 29 0m from the site.	Local importance due to suitability in some areas of the site for common amphibians. GCN and common toad are listed as species listed as a

Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
	Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41. *Other amphibians:* Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	- 4 records of smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* were returned, with the closest located 290 m from the site. - 2 records of palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus* were returned, with the closest located 715 m from site. There is a total of six waterbodies present within 500 m of the site. Of these, fourare located within 250 m. Two of are drainage ditches and two are ponds (Figure 6). One of the ditches is situated adjacent to the site. **Field Survey** The terrestrial habitats within the site were largely unsuitable for terrestrial phase GCN as the site was dominated by frequently managed modified grassland which had a short sward. However, the hedgerows contained ground vegetation suitable for GCN and may form a commuting resource for GCN, with brash and leaf litter below the hedgerow and woodland providing opportunities for shelter and hibernation. The ditch adjacent to the site was dry at the time of survey. The ditch has previously been recorded as wet (Tetra Tech, 2024) and is considered to be annually dry. Therefore, it may be suitable for GCN if it holds water during the GCN breeding season (considered March-June), although it lacked suitable marginal vegetation for egg-laying.	species of principal importance in Wales.
Reptiles	*Smooth snake and sand lizard*: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	**Desk Study** Three grass snake *Natrix helvetica* records were returned by COFNOD within 2 km of the site from the past 10 years. The closest record was located approximately 380 m north-east of the site. **Field Survey** The site had limited suitability for reptiles due to the short sward and managed grassland. The hedgerows, woodland and ditch could provide a commuting resource, with brash and leaf litter beneath the hedgerow and woodland providing opportunities for shelter and hibernation.	Local importance - Suitability in some areas of the site that may provide suitable habitat. Common lizard are listed as a species of principal importance in Wales.

Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
	Adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard: Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.		
Invertebrates	Some invertebrates are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Many invertebrates are also listed as rare and most threatened species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).	**Desk Study** Fifty-six records of Category 1 and Category 2 invertebrates were returned from COFNOD from within the past 10 years. The closest records were located 45 m from site. **Field Survey** The site had suboptimal suitability for invertebrates due to the low plant diversity and intense mowing regime. However, small areas of longer sward including hedgerow bases and boundary features may provide more suitability to support common and widespread invertebrate species.	Local Value for common assemblages of invertebrate species.
Hedgehog	Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	**Desk Study** A total of one hundred and fifty-five records for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were returned from COFNOD from within 2 km of the site within the past 10 years. The closest record was located 330 m south-west of the site. **Field Survey**	Local Importance
Invasive species	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9;	**Desk Study** No records for invasive non-native species (INNS) were returned in the desk study from within the previous 10 years and within 2 km of the site.	N/A

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Species	Legal Protection	Result	Importance Assessment
	The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (as amended); Environmental Protection Act 1990.	**Field Survey** No Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were identified within the site.	

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4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 MITIGATION AND FURTHER SURVEY

All of the works outlined below in Table 5 should be assumed as likely requirements for the pre-planning stage to inform a planning application, unless otherwise stated.

Where species such as bats and great crested newts may potentially be impacted, further surveys are likely to be required to fully inform the proposals, mitigation, and, if necessary, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) to allow actions that would otherwise be illegal.

Table 5. Mitigation and Further Survey / Assessment

Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
Designated sites	Given the distance and lack of pathways between the site and designated sites and the small-scale nature of the works, it is highly unlikely that the works will impact the designated sites identified. However, The Dee Estuary and River Dee SAC are designated European sites protected under the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). These sites are sensitive to nutrient pollution—particularly phosphorus and nitrogen—which can lead to eutrophication, harming aquatic ecosystems and species. NRW advises against granting permission unless phosphorus neutrality is proven. Due to the proposed implementation of irrigation tanks within the site, further Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) may be required to determine potential impacts, subject to use of phosphorus.	Should the proposed development result in any increased phosphorus levels, a HRA screening assessment will be required to determine if the proposed works may have a 'Likely Significant Effect' (LSE) on the SAC potential impacts of the development on nutrient neutrality.	N/A

Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
Habitats	The habitats within the site were common with limited botanical value (dominated by modified grassland). The hedgerows were not assessed for their 'importance' as per the Hedgerow Regulations however the hedgerows may qualify as a habitat of principal importance as per the following definition: "A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less that 20 m wide (Bickmore, 2002). Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2 m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2 m of the centre of the hedgerow. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are covered by this priority habitat, where each UK country can define the list of woody species native to their respective country." Should any hedgerows be impacted as part of the proposed works, further survey to complete a Hedgerow Regulations assessment is required. Should any boundary features that could not be accessed during the survey be impacted, further survey to assess these will be required.	Retention of hedgerows, ditch and woodland. Net benefit for biodiversity report (NBB) to detail mitigation and compensation required for loss of onsite habitats.	The inclusion of wildflower planting within areas of retained grassland, particularly between the base of the hedgerow and the aggregate track, would beneficial resources for invertebrates and in turn bats. A relaxed mowing regime within this area would also provide more cover for commuting reptiles and amphibians within the site. The inclusion of native woody planting along boundary features and in thinner areas of hedgerows to increase the length, width and diversity of existing hedgerows.
Badger	There were several badger records within the wider area and opportunities for foraging within modified grassland, hedgerows, the woodland and the associated ditch. As such transient badgers within the site for foraging and commuting purposes cannot be discounted.	Works should be completed under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS) for badger. These measures include: • Materials and chemicals should be stored within suitability	The inclusion of fruiting plant species (e.g. elder *Sambucus nigra* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*) as part of the development's enhancement measures would create further

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Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
		located site compounds and these should be fenced to ensure that no badgers can obtain access. • It is also recommended that any excavations or trenches created as part of the proposed development are either covered when unattended, created with a shallow angled side, or a plank of wood or similar is placed within the excavations in such a manner as to afford a ready escape route to avoid badger (or any other animal) becoming trapped. • Excavations should be subject to daily checks before works commence. • All site staff should be made aware of the presence and potential presence of protected species as part of site induction material. • Should a protected species or field evidence of a protected species be observed on site, works should pause in this area and the project ecologist must be consulted to provide further survey, guidance or	opportunities for badger foraging across the site.

Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
		revised avoidance and mitigation strategies. Connectivity throughout site should be maintained to allow badger foraging to continue.	
Bats	**Roosting Bats** No trees are due to be impacted as part of the works. If any of the trees within the site and along the site boundary are proposed for removal or the proposed construction is to take place within a canopy and a half's distance of the trees, further bat assessment in line with the with 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) is recommended. This should include a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) to determine suitability for roosting bats. This will inform if any further survey is needed i.e. detailed aerial inspection of the PRFs, as well as presence / absence surveys (i.e., close up endoscopic inspections or nocturnal survey). Should detailed endoscopic surveys (including roped aerial assessment) be required, these will be completed by National Resources Wales (NRW) licenced bat ecologists on trees with sub features that are considered PRF-M or trees that need further assessment (FAR). As the mature trees are likely to provide suitability for a range of bat roosts (including hibernation, maternity and mating) the presence / absence surveys should be spaced out through the season in order to account	Should a bat roost be discovered then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will be required to allow the disturbance or lawful felling of these trees. Retaining connectivity with the use of hedgerows the woodland and other boundary features to maintain commuting and foraging habitats for bats. It is recommended that retained boundary habitats (hedgerows and trees) are protected from disturbance through implementation of a wildlife-friendly lighting scheme for the duration of the construction phase, and during the operational phases of the development. Throughout the remainder of the construction phase, works must be undertaken outside hours of darkness. If this is not possible, construction associated lighting should minimise light spill onto hedgerows, trees and suitable habitats adjacent to the site.	Inclusion of at least two bat boxes on retained trees will form a valuable enhancement for roosting bats. Example of a suitable box: Vincent Pro Bat Box (available at https://www.nhbs.com/vincent-pro-bat-box) or equivalent. Bat boxes should be sited 3-4 m high. The boxes should be high enough to avoid direct illumination, placed out of the way of strong winds and positioned south-east to south-west where they can get sun for part of the day. Once installed, any disturbance including maintenance of a bat box must be done under supervision of a licenced ecologist.

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Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
	for the seasonality of use and the number of survey effort should reflect the season ability of use (with minimum of three surveys depending on the initial PRF assessment). If no signs of bat occupancy are found the tree can be felled using Reasonable Avoidance Measures. **Foraging and Commuting** The site is considered to provide low suitability for commuting and foraging bats. A nighttime bat walkover (NBW) would typically be recommended to determine bat activity levels and species assemblages within the site. However, it is currently understood that the proposed works will be small scale, localised within the modified grassland and should not impact the primary foraging and commuting features within the site i.e. the woodland and hedgerows. Therefore, no further survey is required at this stage. However, should the proposals change to impact the hedgerows or woodland, including increased lighting of these features, a NBW will be required.	The operational design should be be developed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 08/8 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (ILP, 2023) and also minimise light spill onto hedgerows, trees and suitable habitats adjacent to the site.	
Birds	The habitats within the site were noted for their suitability for common passerine species which may nest within trees or hedgerows on site. The onsite trees and adjacent hedgerows are not due to be impacted during the works.	Should any works be required that will impact potential bird nesting habitat (i.e., any tree/hedgerow pruning) should be carried out outside the main bird breeding season (considered to be March to September inclusive).	Provision of two bird boxes within suitable areas (retained trees) on or adjacent to site.

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Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
		It was advised that if this is not possible, then it is recommended that an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) conducts a check for nesting birds of any vegetation / potential nesting features to be cleared on site 24-48 hours in advance of any works commencing. If a nesting bird is identified, the ecologist will advise on suitable working methods and exclusion zones to restrict works and/or vehicular access in the area until the chicks have fledged, or the nest becomes otherwise inactive. Measures will depend on the nature of the works in that area as well as the bird species identified to be nesting.	
GCN and Common Amphibians	No further surveys are recommended providing the ditch, woodland and hedgerows are retained. The grassland habitats within the site were considered suboptimal for terrestrial phase GCN and no ponds were identified within the site. However, the boundary features including hedgerows and woodland are good quality terrestrial habitat, with opportunities for commuting, shelter and hibernation. Furthermore, there is connectivity between the site and waterbodies within 250m.	Retention of hedgerows, woodland, ditch and connectivity throughout the site. A Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) document specific to GCN will also be required. In the unlikely event that a GCN is found during the works, the works must stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further instruction on how to proceed.	Inclusion of a wildlife pond within the design would form a valuable enhancement for several species. Implementation of one hibernacula adjacent to the woodland to provide refuge and shelter for amphibians. This would also provide hibernation habitat. Retention and enhancement planting of hedgerows would

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Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
			form commuting and dispersal corridors for these species.
Reptiles	No further surveys are recommended providing the ditch, woodland and hedgerows are retained. The grassland habitats within the site were considered negligible for this species.	In order to further reduce risks, it is recommended that vegetation clearance is undertaken following a precautionary working method statement (PWMS). During the works period. Contractors must adhere to precautionary methods detailed within the PWMS such as storing materials off the ground and capping any open excavations and dismantling any piles of rubble by hand. If any reptiles are found during the works period, they should be allowed to escape unharmed, and an ecologist contacted for advice. If numerous reptiles are found works should cease and methodology be re-evaluated.	Retention and enhancement planting of hedgerows would form commuting and dispersal corridors for these species. The Implementation of one hibernacula as mentioned above will also enhance the site for reptiles.
Invertebrates	No further surveys are recommended, habitats within the site were common and widespread.	Retention of hedgerows.	Increasing botanical diversity of the retained grassland on site (e.g. wildflower planting) can increase the site suitability for notable invertebrate species. Bug hotels / houses could also be created.
Invasive species	The site should be regularly monitored for invasive non-native species (INNS) during and post construction in order to prevent spread (and therefore an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act).	General precautionary measures to prevent the introduction and spread of INNS should be undertaken (such as clean, check, dry policy for tools and machinery before entering site), as outlined in an associated CEMP.	N/A

Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
		Toolbox talks should be conducted prior to works to ensure the contractors are aware of the potential for invasive species on site. Best working methods, including pollution prevention methods, should be outlined in the CEMP to limit the spread of invasive plant species. In the event an invasive species is identified at any point during the works, findings should be reported to a suitably licenced Ecologist.	
Hedgehog	Species considered likely to be present within the site and may use the site as a foraging and commuting resource. No further surveys considered appropriate.	Best practice measures adopted during works for badger will also protect any hedgehogs potentially using the site. Refugia on site including brash piles, log piles and debris (bricks, fence panels) are to be hand searched prior to clearance and sheltering wildlife such as hedgehogs moved to a safe location away from the works area. It is recommended that clearance of refugia is undertaken at a time of year when sheltering hedgehogs are most likely to be active, i.e. April to October. It is also recommended that security fencing is not installed around the entirety of the site during the operational phase as the fencing may cause habitat fragmentation for species such as hedgehog and badger or may cause the	Inclusion of one hedgehog house and/or brash piles throughout the site would form valuable hibernation and resting habitat for hedgehog.

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Ecological Receptor	Further Survey / Assessment	Mitigation Required	Opportunity for Enhancement
		animals to become trapped within the site. Fencing with an accessible gap for mammal passage could be used if necessary.	

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5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The development proposals are considered to have a negligible impact on the statutory designated sites due to the limited scope and duration of works.

The site has the potential to support a number of protected species including badger, bats, nesting birds, GCN, common amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs.

Key recommendations of the report include:

- Retain existing trees, hedgerow and adjacent ditch line where possible;
- Ecologically important hedgerows are to be retained and protected where possible. If hedgerows are to be removed or damaged, a hedgerow regulation assessment is recommended;
- Complete net benefit for biodiversity for the site;
- Should impacts to the trees, hedgerow and ditch be required to facliitate the works, further surveys will be required, including GLTA for bats;
- Trees with the potential to support roosting bats are recommended to be retained and protected. Should works such as felling, pruning or crown lifting be required, bat surveys and potentially a subsequent EPS licence application (dependant on findings) is likely to be required;
- Works undertaken during the nesting bird season (usually considered to be March to September inclusive) risks disturbing bird nests. Vegetation clearance should be preceded by a nesting bird check; if nesting birds are found, active nests must remain undisturbed in situ;
- Refugia on site including brash piles, log piles and debris (bricks, fence panels) are to be hand searched prior to clearance and sheltering wildlife such as hedgehogs moved to a safe location away from the works area. It is recommended that clearance of refugia is undertaken at a time of year when sheltering hedgehogs are most likely to be active, i.e. April to October;
- A PWMS including good practice measures (such as covering excavations or providing means of escape) is required to prevent impacts on wildlife during the construction phase;
- A sensitive lighting scheme should be developed for the site that minimises disturbance to sensitive ecological receptors (e.g. woodland, trees and bat boxes); and
- Site staff are to be vigilant for invasive species and report any findings immediately.

Provided the measures within this report for further survey and mitigation can be adopted, it is anticipated that a design could be brought forward for this site that would be compliant with current local and national biodiversity planning policy.

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FIGURES

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – International Sites

Figure 3 – National & Local Sites

Figure 4 – Priority Habitats

Figure 5 – UKHab Plan

Figure 6 – Waterbody Location Plan

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Site Location Plan

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

Site boundary

Notes:

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe

Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 1

Revision No. B

22 October 2025

0 25 50 75 100 Meters

Scale 1:2,500 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 337506E 357506N

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International Sites Within 10 km

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

- Site boundary
- Site boundary buffer (10 km)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Ramsar

Data Sources:
Special Areas of Conservation
Ramsar

Notes:
Symbology similar to that used within the MAGIC Application

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe
Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 2
Revision No. B
22 October 2025

0 1 2 3 4 Kilometeres
Scale 1:80,000 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 337533E 357519N

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National and Local Sites Within 2 km

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

- Site boundary
- Site boundary buffer (2 km)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Data Sources:
Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Notes:
Symbology similar to that used within the MAGIC Application

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe

Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 3

Revision No. B

22 October 2025

0 250 500 750 Meters

Scale 1:15,000 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 337533E 357519N

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Priority Habitat

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

- Site boundary
- Site boundary buffer (1km)
- Lowland Fens and Reedbeds
- Traditional Orchards

Notes:

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe

Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 4

Revision No. B

22 October 2025

0 100 200 300 400 Meters

Scale 1:8,500 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 337533E 357519N

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UK Hab Habitats Plan

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

- Site area
- g4 - Modified grassland
- Area not surveyed
- w1g - Other woodland, broadleaved
- Target note

Notes:
Symbology defined by UK Habs. https://ukhab.org/ukhab-documentation/

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe

Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 5

Revision No. A

22 October 2025

0 10 20 30 40 50 Meters

Scale 1:1,250 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 337506E 357491N

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Waterbody Location Plan

Darland Academy Phase 2

Wrexham AFC

Legend

- Site boundary
- Site boundary buffer (250 m)
- Site boundary buffer (500 m)
- Waterbody
- Waterlines

Notes:

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe

Checked by: Bronwyn Dennis

Figure No. 6

Revision No. B

22 October 2025

0 50 100 150 200 Meters

Scale 1:5,000 @A3

British National Grid

NGR: 337533E 357519N

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

APPENDIX B: KEY LEGISLATION

APPENDIX C: TARGET NOTES AND SURVEY DATA

APPENDIX D: WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105-P07 - PHASE 2 WORKS GA

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APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

This Report has been prepared using reasonable skill and care for the sole benefit of Wrexham AFC Limited ("the Client") for the proposed uses stated in the report by Tetra Tech Limited ("Tetra Tech"). Tetra Tech exclude all liability for any other uses and to any other party. The report must not be relied on or reproduced in whole or in part by any other party without the copyright holder's permission.

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The report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections'. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times. No investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather-related conditions. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions. The "shelf life" of the Report will be determined by a number of factors including; its original purpose, the Client's instructions, passage of time, advances in technology and techniques, changes in legislation etc. and therefore may require future re-assessment.

The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

Tetra Tech reserves the right to share this Report and any related materials, surveys, drawings and/or documents at any time with the relevant Local Ecological Records Centre (LERC), any relevant statutory body or any equivalent organisation as Tetra Tech may reasonably require from time-to-time.

The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. Tetra Tech accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors.

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APPENDIX B: KEY LEGISLATION

Habitats Directive

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, or the 'Habitats Directive', is a European Union directive adopted in 1992 in response to the Bern Convention. Its aims are to protect approximately 220 habitats and 1,000 species listed in its several Annexes.

In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed into national law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales, and via the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) in Northern Ireland.

Birds Directive

The EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (791409/EEC) or 'Birds Directive' was introduced to achieve favourable conservation status of all wild bird species across their distribution range. In this context, the most important provision is the identification and classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species, paying particular attention to the protection of wetlands of international importance.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Regulations place a duty on the Secretary of State to propose a list of sites which are important for either habitats or species (listed in Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive respectively) to the European Commission. These sites, if ratified by Ministers, are then designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within six years. Public bodies must also help preserve, maintain and re-establish habitats for wild birds.

The 2018 amendments mainly related to the impact of the *People Over Wind* decision and some implications arising for neighbourhood plan development and a range of other planning tools including Local Development Orders and Permission in Principle – see here for full details:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/note/made

The 2019 amendments related to the EU exit. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change.– see here for full details:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573

The Regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 5.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

This is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in the UK. This legislation is the chief means by which the 'Bern Convention' and the Birds Directive are implemented in the UK. Since it was first introduced, the Act has been amended several times.

The Act makes it an offence to (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) intentionally:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Or to intentionally do the following to a wild bird listed in Schedule 1:

- disturbs any wild bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturbs dependent young of such a bird.

In addition, the Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5;
- interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places; and
- The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals.

Finally, the Act also makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to: intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, or any seed or spore attached to any such wild plant; unless an authorised person, intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8; or sell, offer or expose for sale, or possess (for the purposes of trade), any live or dead wild plant included in Schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from, such a plant.

Following all amendments to the Act, Schedule 5 'Animals which are Protected' contains a total of 154 species of animal, including several mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. Schedule 8 'Plants which are Protected' of the Act, contains 185 species, including higher plants, bryophytes and fungi and lichens. A comprehensive and up-to-date list of these species can be obtained from the JNCC website.

Part 14 of the Act makes unlawful to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant which is listed in Part II of Schedule 9.

It is recommended that plant material of these species is disposed of as bio-hazardous waste, and these plants should not be used in planting schemes.

Environment Protection Act 1990

The Act imposes a classification of soil and other waste containing viable propagules of invasive non-native plant species as controlled waste. This has been applied to Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, with the result that waste containing this species must be disposed of in accordance with the duty of care set out in section 34 of the Act.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The main legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (the 1992 Act). Under the 1992 Act it is an offence to: wilfully kill, injure, take or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; dig for a badger; interfere with a badger sett by, damaging a sett or any part thereof, destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett or disturbing a badger while occupying a sett.

The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as: “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger”.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 41 (S41) of this Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list (in consultation with Natural England) of Habitats and Species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal (e.g. planning) functions. The S41 list includes 65 Habitats of Principal Importance and 1,150 Species of Principal Importance.

Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations were made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 and came into force in 1997. They introduced new arrangements for local planning authorities in England and Wales to protect important hedgerows in the countryside, by controlling their removal through a system of notification. Important hedgerows are defined by complex assessment criteria, which draw on biodiversity features, historical context and the landscape value of the hedgerow.

Birds of Conservation Concern

This is a review of the status of all birds occurring regularly in the United Kingdom. It is regularly updated and is prepared by leading bird conservation organisations, including the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The latest report was produced in 2021 (Eaton *et al*, 2021) and identified 70 red list species, 103 amber species, and 72 green species. The criteria are complex, but generally:

Red list species are those that have shown a decline of the breeding population, non-breeding population or breeding range of more than 50% in the last 25 years.

Amber list species are those that have shown a decline of the breeding population, non-breeding population or breeding range of between 25% and 50% in the last 25 years. Species that have a UK breeding population of less than 300 or a non-breeding population of less than 900 individuals are also included, together with those whose 50% of the population is localised in 10 sites or fewer and those whose 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

Green list species are all regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are green listed.

Global IUCN Red List

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Threatened Species was devised to provide a list of those species that are most at risk of becoming extinct globally. It provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information about threatened taxa around the globe.

The system catalogues threatened species into groups of varying levels of threat, which are: Extinct (EX), Extinct in the Wild (EW), Critically Endangered (CE), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC), Data Deficient (DD), Not Evaluated (NE). Criteria for designation into each of the categories is complex, and consider several principles.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) identify habitat and species conservation priorities at a local level (typically at the County level),and are usually drawn up by a consortium of local Government organisations and conservation charities.

Some LBAP’s may also include Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and/or Species Action Plans (SAP), which are used to guide and inform the local decision making process.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

This Act offers protects a form of protection to all wild species of mammals, irrespective of other legislation, and focussed on animal welfare, rather than conservation.

Unless covered by one of the exceptions, a person is guilty of an offence if he mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

It's application is typically restricted to preventing deliberate harm to wildlife (in general) during construction works etc.

Planning Policy Wales

The national planning policy guidance is found principally in Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (PPW) dated February 2024 (Welsh Government, 2024). The document is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) with the most relevant for ecology being TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Government, 2009), which provides advice on how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. A summary of the main points relevant to the ecological assessment of the development is provided below.

Paragraph 6.4.2 states that local planning authorities, along with other public bodies, as part of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 have a duty to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and help maximise contributions to achieve well-being goals.

Paragraph 6.4.3 states that the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement. Recognising that development needs to take place and some biodiversity may be impacted, the planning system should ensure that overall, there is a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, resulting in enhanced well-being. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to conserve biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. Development plan strategies, policies and development proposals must consider the need to:

- support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity, and the resilience of ecosystems;
- ensure action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for biodiversity and habitats, including the most recent targets set out in the 2022 UN Global Biodiversity Framework;
- ensure statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed and their role at the heart of resilient ecological networks is safeguarded;
- safeguard protected species and species of principal importance and existing biodiversity assets from direct, indirect or cumulative adverse impacts that affect their nature conservation interests and compromise the resilience of ecological networks and the components which underpin them, such as water, air and soil, including peat; and
- secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.

Paragraph 6.4.4 states that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience considerations should be taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. All reasonable steps must be taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems which should be balanced with the wider economic and social needs of business and local communities. Where adverse effects on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated/restored, and as a last resort compensated for, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission.

Paragraph 6.4.5 states that planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, and that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species (not including non-native invasive species), locally or nationally and must work alongside nature and it must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improve, or enable the improvement, of the resilience of ecosystems. A net benefit for biodiversity is the concept that development should leave biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in a significantly better state than before, through securing immediate and long-term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, primarily on or immediately adjacent to the site. The step-wise approach outlined below is the means of demonstrating the steps which have been taken towards securing a net benefit for biodiversity. Planning authorities must also take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following attributes, known as the DECCA Framework. The diversity between and within ecosystems; the extent or scale of ecosystems; the condition and connections between and within ecosystems and the adaptability of ecosystems must be taken into account.

Paragraph 6.4.6 states that planning authorities must also have regard to the list of habitats and species of principal importance under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales Act 2016, the SoNaRR and Area Statement published by NRW and Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act).

Paragraph 6.4.8 states that a proactive and creative approach towards facilitating the delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience outcomes is to be taken in accordance with Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act. Taking reasonable steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their function at plan level and coordinated across regions and sub-regions. The step-wise approach will help decision makers in securing net benefit in biodiversity, with the onus on developers to bring forward proposal in a way which will achieve a net benefit for biodiversity using the step wise approach (refer to Figure 12).

Paragraph 6.4.9 states collaborative arrangements will be required to identify, capture and monitor net benefits for biodiversity across larger areas.

Paragraph 6.4.10 states that the broad framework for implementing the Section 6 Duty, securing net benefit for biodiversity and building resilience through the planning system included addressing the following attributes – Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Adaptability to change.

Paragraph 6.4.11 and 6.4.15 states that planning authorities must follow the step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then

minimized, mitigated and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement delivering a biodiversity benefit to be secured primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact. Proposals in statutory designated sites are, as a matter of principle, unacceptable and must be excluded from site searches. This principle also extends to protected species and habitats which are irreplaceable and must be safeguarded. Each stage of the step-wise approach must be accompanied by a long term management plan of agreed and appropriate avoidance, minimization, mitigation/restoration and compensation measures alongside the agreed enhancements measures.

Paragraph 6.4.12 states that evidence must be provided in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, providing a scheme of enhancements to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity.

Paragraph 6.4.13 states that development proposals must demonstrate how attributes of resilience and connectivity will be improved, as far as this is reasonably practical.

Paragraph 6.4.16 states that pre-application surveys, research and data searches by developers will be necessary to establish the baseline state of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience on site. Potential applicants should not conduct any pre-emptive site clearance work before submitting a planning application. In such cases, habitat status will be presumed to be good in the absence of any evidence to the contrary.

Paragraph 6.4.17 where sites are already allocated in an adopted development plan it may not be possible to following the step-wise approach in a sequential way. However, when plans are to be reviewed then allocations should be considered afresh against the step-wise policy and the present biodiversity condition and role in enhancing ecosystem resilience.

Paragraph 6.4.18 – 6.4.23 states that all designated sites must be able to continue to protect the biodiversity and features for which they were designated and contribute to the resilience of ecosystems at the appropriate scale. This ability should not be compromised by inappropriate development or other activity. Statutorily designated sites must be protected from damage and deterioration, with their important features conserved and enhanced by appropriate management. The contribution of the designated site to wider resilient ecological networks should be recognised and captured as part of a strategic approach to planning policy and decision making. Planning authorities should consider opportunities to restore networks of habitats to a healthy condition identified as a result of undertaking the Green Infrastructure Assessment.

Paragraph 6.4.21 states 'Planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build resilient ecological networks by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for; enhancement must be secured wherever possible'.

Paragraph 6.4.34 states that where peat is identified within proposed developments considerable weight should be given to its protection.

Paragraph 6.4.35 states that statutorily protected species protected under European or UK legislation, or under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are material considerations if a development would result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat, and the range and population of the species should be sustained.

Paragraphs 6.4.37 – 6.4.43 also gives emphasis to the importance of trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodlands. Planning authorities must promote the planting of new trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland as part of new development. Replacement planting shall be at a ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost. Where a woodland or a shelterbelt area is lost the planting rate must be at a minimum of 1600 trees per hectare for broadleaves, and 2500 trees per hectare for conifers.

Paragraph 6.4.44 states that ancient woodland and semi-natural woodlands and individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees and ancient hedgerows are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees, woodlands and hedgerows are to be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deterioration unless very exceptionally there are significant and clearly defined public benefits; this protection must prevent potentially damaging operations and their unnecessary loss. In the case of a site recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, authorities should consider the advice of NRW.'

Related to these Biodiversity and Ecological Network policies, Section 6.2 gives weight to the protection and enhancement of multi-functional green infrastructure, which is important for sustainable management of natural resources. Green infrastructure should be incorporated into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design.

Circular Letter CL-05-04 reaffirmed the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring that designated sites and species of nature conservation importance are protected from damage and deterioration, with their important features conserved by appropriate management. The letter advised that under specific circumstances a pre-commencement condition should be attached to planning consents requiring the applicant to provide the LPA with a copy or their European Protected Species (EPS) Licence (once issued by NRW). The Circular Letter was withdrawn in March 2018 in an attempt to reduce the number of pre-commencement conditions, with LPA's advised to instead use a replacement informative (to be attached to all relevant consent notices) to avoid unnecessary duplication controls of other legislation.

Wrexham Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) identify habitat and species conservation priorities at a local level (typically at the County level) and are usually drawn up by a consortium of local Government organisations and conservation charities.

Some LBAP's may also include Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and/or Species Action Plans (SAP), which are

Development proposals that may have an impact on protected species or designated sites of nature conservation will be required to be supported by a biodiversity statement which must have regard to the County biodiversity

aspiration for conservation, enhancement and restoration of habitats and species.

Where the overall benefits of a development outweigh the conservation interest of a locally protected nature site, mitigation and enhancement measures in or adjacent to these sites should be an integral part of the scheme.

If necessary, measures required to mitigate likely adverse effects on the qualifying features of statutory designated sites should be put in place prior to the commencement of development.

used to guide and inform the local decision-making process. Within the Wrexham LBAP, policies PS2, PS11, EC4 and EC6 pertain to 'Biodiversity and Development'. A summary of these policies is provided below: • **Policy PS2**: Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment • **Policy PS11**: Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature reserves where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced. • **Policy EC4**: Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted. • **Policy EC6**: Development either within or close to	Measures required to offset any likely adverse effects will be secured by planning conditions and/ or planning obligations. Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that are likely to cause significant harm to the qualifying features of internationally and nationally designated sites of nature conservation, priority habitats, priority species, regionally important geodiversity sites, or to species that are under threat.

	sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.	

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APPENDIX C: TARGET NOTES & SURVEY DATA

DARLAND ACADEMY PHASE 2 - 8 JULY 2025

Survey Details	
Surveyor	Bronwyn Dennis
Project Number	784-B074479
Project Name	Darland Academy Phase 2

Temperature (°C)	Cloud Cover	Wind	Precipitation
17°C	20%	2 - Light breeze	No precipitation

TN1

Description

Modified grassland - football pitches. Heavily managed and maintained

Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Perennial rye-grass	*Lolium perenne*	1 - Dominant
Annual meadow-grass	*Poa annua*	2 - Abundant
Dandelion	*Taraxacum agg.*	3 - Frequent
Cock's-foot	*Dactylis glomerata*	4 - Occasional
Common bent	*Agrostis capillaris*	4 - Occasional

Photos



Common ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*	4 - Occasional
False oat-grass	*Arrhenatherum elatius*	4 - Occasional
Greater plantain	*Plantago major*	4 - Occasional
Red clover	*Trifolium pratense*	4 - Occasional
White clover	*Trifolium repens*	4 - Occasional
Yorkshire-fog	*Holcus lanatus*	4 - Occasional
Daisy	*Bellis perennis*	5 - Rare

British National Grid (m): 337607E, 357527N

TN2

Description

Hedgerow 1 2m height 1.5m width

Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	1 - Dominant
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*	2 - Abundant
Spear thistle	*Cirsium vulgare*	3 - Frequent
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	4 - Occasional
Common nettle	*Urtica dioica*	4 - Occasional
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*	4 - Occasional

Photos



Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	4 - Occasional
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	4 - Occasional
Common ivy	*Hedera helix*	5 - Rare
Common ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*	5 - Rare

British National Grid (m): 337603E, 357532N

TN3

Description

Hedgerow 2 1.5m height 1.5m width Uniform

Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	1 - Dominant
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*	2 - Abundant
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*	3 - Frequent
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	3 - Frequent
Elm	*Ulmus sp.*	4 - Occasional
Lords-and-ladies	*Arum maculatum*	5 - Rare
Pedunculate oak	*Quercus robur*	5 - Rare

British National Grid (m): 337620E, 357498N

Photos



TN4

Description

Photos

Mammal path under hedgerow 2 **British National Grid (m):** 337615E, 357457N	

TN5	
Description	**Photos**
Ash - Ivy clad, knot holes. FAR. 25-35m DBH 2.5m **British National Grid (m):** 337636E, 357499N	

TN6	
Description	**Photos**
Oak tree 6-8m heights 1.5m DBH Ivy clad - may obscure PRFs - FAR **British National Grid (m):** 337552E, 357626N	



TN7

Description

Woodland
20-30m height

Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Rank grasses same as prev. at base		
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	2 - Abundant
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	2 - Abundant
Willow	*Salix sp.*	2 - Abundant
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*	3 - Frequent
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*	3 - Frequent
Oak	*Quercus sp.*	3 - Frequent
Sycamore	*Acer pseudoplatanus*	3 - Frequent
Silver birch	*Betula pendula*	4 - Occasional
Alder	*Alnus glutinosa*	5 - Rare
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*	5 - Rare

Photos



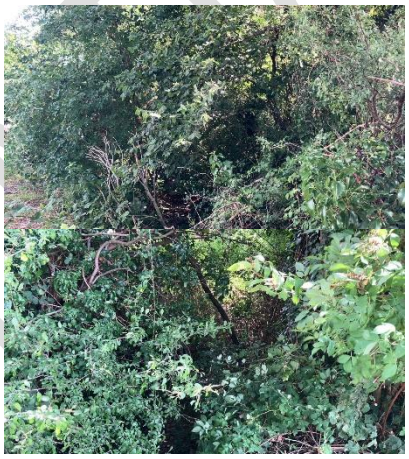




Common ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*	5 - Rare
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	5 - Rare
Hogweed	*Heracleum sphondylium*	5 - Rare

British National Grid (m): 337546E, 357639N

TN8

Description	Photos
Ditch - drainage ditch, looks to be annually dry **British National Grid (m):** 337463E, 357568N	

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APPENDIX D: WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105-P07 - PHASE 2 WORKS GA

CONFIDENTIAL



MILIEU LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Chartered Landscape Architects

Halls Arms Business Centre
Clitheroe Road
Knowle Green
Longridge
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Do NOT Scale From This Drawing.
All dimensions are to be checked on site prior to construction.

The drawing shall only be used for the purpose for which it was prepared. Drawings issued for planning approval shall not be used for the purposes of costing or construction.

NOTES:

> Drawing issued for coordination, to be used for this purpose ONLY.
> All measures and setting out is to be checked on site prior to installation and agreed with LA.
> Drawing to be co-ordinated with the requirements of other disciplines and planning conditions.

1m 5m 10m 15m 20m 30m

NORTH

Rev	Description	Date
P07	Adjusted Pitch Locations	07/10/25
P06	Option for Ph2 Dugout	22/09/25
P05	1ha Boundary	18/08/25
P04	Clouded Area	11/08/25
P03	Updated Central Path	29/07/25
P02	Updated Phase 2 Layout	23/07/25
P01	Information	19/06/25

PURPOSE OF ISSUE
Information

PROJECT
Darland Academy

TITLE
Phase 2 Works GA

CLIENT
Wrexham AFC

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	DATE
-	CF	19/06/25

SCALE (@ A1)	PROJECT NUMBER
1 : 500	25239

DRAWING NUMBER
WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105
S0 P07