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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:
Gwersyllt Park Cricket Club, Park Wall Road, Gwersyllt, Wrexham LL114DA

Client:
Gwersyllt Cricket Club

Survey date:
20/03/2026

Project:
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Wrexham County Borough Council. This proposal can be described as:

Covered outdoor facilities.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion

Executive Summary

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Tables 1, 3 & 4 of this report.

Key Findings
- The planning application must be accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement to detail how the site is maintaining biodiversity and include recommendations to further enhance the site biodiversity. - Trees with PRF-I's require compensation for lost features which should be installed prior to tree felling works, and works should be carried out under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS). - Any tree removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. - Precautionary working measures will be followed to ensure that nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, badgers and hedgehogs are not harmed by the works. - In the unlikely event that a protected animal is found during construction, all works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist must be contacted.

Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.

Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

No biological records data search had been authorised at the time of writing this report. This report should be updated once this has been obtained.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) for ground flora, and as such the accuracy of botanical assessment and condition assessment data may be limited in terms of species visible and ground conditions at the time of survey.

Results, Impacts and Recommendations

Site Location and Landscape Context

Table 1: Site location and landscape context

Site Location
The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 32182 54098 and has an area of approximately 0.3ha comprising other woodland; broadleaved, artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and modified grassland. The surrounding landscape is a continuation of dense woodland to the north which extends east and west into the wider landscape. There are ponds within this woodland which offer drinking and foraging opportunity for a variety of wildlife. The land to the south is predominantly urban residential development with associated scattered green spaces.
Priority Habitats and Designated Sites
Summary of Survey Findings Priority Habitats There are 7 priority habitats located within 2 km of the site. These comprise lowland fens and reedbeds, open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, traditional orchards, lowland dry acid grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures, lowland meadows and unknown. The closest priority habitat comprises lowland fens and reedbeds, located ~175 m S of the site. The site is considered suitably connected to local priority habitats via dense woodland to the north, northwest and northeast. There is a linear parcel of woodland off site to the south which acts as a pathway connecting the site to amenity grassland parcels and hedge and tree lined agricultural fields to the south. The immediate southern landscape is dominated by residential settlements with associated vegetated gardens. Designated Sites There are 2 statutory sites within 2 km of the site. These are listed below: *Table 1a: Statutory sites within 2km of the site.*

Designation	Reason for designation	Distance from site
Llay Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A valuable lowland raised bog habitat. It is a critical ecosystem supporting various Sphagnum moss species characteristic of waterlogged peatlands.	1.1km N
Alyn Waters Local Nature Reserve	The site consists of wet woodland dominated by alder, ash/oak woodland, and neutral grassland. The site contains suitable habitat for badger, ground nesting birds and roosting bats.	675m NE

The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Llay Bog however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation.

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity disrupting barriers.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Amber Williams BSc (Hons) MSc MPhil, Consultant Ecologist.

Table 2: Survey weather conditions

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
20/03/2026	10	70	95	10.2	None

Table 3: Habitats and flora

Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations
This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Onsite habitats

Summary of Survey Findings

<u>Other woodland; broadleaved (w1g)</u>
There is a dense woodland parcel dominating the site. The parcel contains broadleaved species with an understory dominated by bramble. Trees situated to the northwestern aspect of the parcel are ivy clad. There is a presence of fly tipping within the habitat. There are brash piles situated to the southern parcel. Just north of the woodland, outside of the development boundary is a clearing. The willow species within the woodland appearing scrub like and dense. There was a presence of standing deadwood within the canopies and fallen deadwood on the woodland floor.

Table 3a: Other woodland; broadleaved species abundance.

Abundance	Species

Dominant	Hawthorn *(Crataegus monogyna)*, goat willow *(Salix caprea)*, bramble *(Rubus fruticosus)*, cleavers *(Galium aparine)*, wood avens *(Geum urbanum)*
Abundant	Silver birch *(Betula pendula)*, rowan *(Sorbus aucuparia)*, common nettle *(Urtica dioica)*, cow parsley *(Anthriscus sylvestris)*, broad-leaved dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*, smooth sow-thistle *(Sonchus oleraceus)*
Frequent	Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)*, yorkshire-fog *(Holcus lanatus)*, elder *(Sambucus nigra)*
Occasional	Sycamore *(Acer pseudoplatanus)*, lords-and-ladies *(Arum maculatum)*
Rare	English oak *(Quercus robur)*, hart's-tongue *(Asplenium scolopendrium)*, red campion *(Silene dioica)*, broom *(Cytisus scoparius)*

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c)

Situated to the southwestern aspect of the site boundary is a parcel of land with a gravel stone substrate. Vegetation in this habitat accounts for ~10% of the overall parcel.

Table 3b: Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Perennial rye-grass *(Lolium perenne)*
Abundant	Weld *(Reseda luteola)*, sycamore *(sapling) (Acer pseudoplatanus)*, dandelion *(Taraxacum)*
Frequent	Broad-leaved dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*
Occasional	Smooth sow-thistle *(Sonchus oleraceus)*

Modified grassland (g4)

The grassland is situated to the southern site boundary and has a sward height of ~20cm. The parcel does not appear subject to strict regular management as is apparent within the surrounding grassland comprising the cricket club. There is scorch marks situated to the eastern aspect of the habitat parcel as a result of burning brash piles.

Table 3c: Modified grassland species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Bramble sp. *(Rubus sp.)*, smooth sow-thistle *(Sonchus oleraceus)*, yorkshire-fog *(Holcus lanatus)*
Abundant	White clover *(Trifolium repens)*, perennial rye-grass *(Lolium perenne)*, broad-leaved dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*, wavy bitter-cress *(Cardamine flexuosa)*
Frequent	Creeping buttercup *(Ranunculus repens)*, red fescues *(Festuca rubra)*, red dead-nettle *(Lamium purpureum)*
Occasional	Common vetch *(Vicia sativa)*, lesser celandine *(Ficaria verna)*, cow parsley *(Anthriscus sylvestris)*, petty spurge *(Euphorbia peplus)*, daisy *(Bellis perennis)*
Rare	Dove's-foot crane's-bill *(Geranium molle)*, garlic mustard *(Alliaria petiolata)*, common ragwort *(Jacobaea vulgaris)*

Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of woodland. This could lead to a net loss in biodiversity at the site.

Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.

- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.

A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, outlining best practice measures delineate the construction zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and habitat damage during construction.

Green Infrastructure Assessment
Planning Policy Wales (2024) requires all developments within Wales to conduct a Green Infrastructure Assessment to deliver Net Biodiversity Benefit and maintain biodiversity during development. Therefore, the planning application must be accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement to detail how the site is maintaining biodiversity and include recommendations to further enhance the site biodiversity.

Invasive / Non-native species

Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site, but, given seasonal limitations and the sites wider context, may be visible at other times of year.

Impacts

None

Recommendations

None.

Fauna

Table 4: Fauna

Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Roosting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

Local EPSL records cannot be established without biological records data from COFNOD.

There were no buildings within the site boundary. As such there are no roosting features on site associated with buildings.

Trees situated to the northwest of the woodland parcel were ivy clad with vegetation dominating the majority of the height of the trunks. The ivy was dense enough to provide temporary refuge for bats during foraging bouts.

T1 description	*Photographs*

Summary T1 is a goat willow (*Salix caprea)* situated to the south of the woodland parcel at National Grid Reference SJ321540. The tree was extra-large based on diameter at breast height (DBH).			
PRF ref	***Type of PRF***	***Condition/description/suitability***	***Photograph(s)***
PRF-1	Callice roll	Calice roll located approximately 3m from ground level on southern aspect of stem (south facing). Feature measures approximately ~10cm height by 20cm width. The feature did not have a sufficient depth or appear to lead to further cavities to provide roosting opportunity for regular sheltered roosting. The feature may provide shelter for low numbers of bats or individual bats on a transient basis during foraging bouts. Therefore, the feature is considered PRF-I.	

Impacts

There are no foreseen impacts to bats roosting within buildings as a result of the proposed development.
Trees that are ivy clad and T1 will be felled to facilitate the development. This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present within the identified features and could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.

Recommendations

As per Tables 6.3 and 7.1 of the Bat Survey Guidelines (2023) trees with PRF-I's only do not require further survey effort, however compensation for lost features should be installed prior to tree felling works, and works should be carried out under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS). The PWMS includes:

- Prior to any PRF removal, suitable compensation should be provided onsite (i.e. bat boxes in appropriate locations)
- An inspection of any features to be carried out by the arborist under supervision of the ground-based ecologist on site
- Any identified PRF-I feature(s) will be soft felled in conjunction with an experienced arborist. This will involve sections of the tree with the PRF to be cut away and lowered to the ground and inspected by a licenced ecologist
- Any PRFs felled will be left in-situ on the ground within a 10m exclusion zone for 24 hours
- In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of three bat boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats.
The bat boxes will be mounted onto mature trees retained at the site. Suitable bat boxes include Habibat Bat Box, Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box or similar alternative brand.
Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of woodland and understory scrub. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the woodland extends beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites.

Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of small areas of woodland but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats.
The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.

Recommendations

No further surveys are required regarding foraging bats.
A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2

Amphibians

Summary of Survey Findings

Local EPSL records and GCN licence returns cannot be established without biological records data from COFNOD.

No ponds are located on, or adjacent to, the site.

There are two ponds within 500m of the site, both situated ~460m north within the dense woodland associated with the site. As such, the ponds are considered suitable connected to the site.

Woodland understory on site may provide foraging and sheltering opportunities for amphibians. No hibernation opportunities were identified on-site.

Impacts

When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in the loss or significant disturbance of 0.168ha of woodland. If great crested newts are present within the ponds ~460m to the north of the site, when completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a **Green risk score**, which states: **Offence Highly Unlikely**.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low-level risk of impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the amphibian hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible.
- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The site could be enhanced for amphibians post-development through creation of amphibian hibernacula using rubble and logs from site clearance. Information on how to construct a hibernaculum can be found here: https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum

Reptiles

Summary of Survey Findings

Local EPSL records cannot be established without biological records data from COFNOD.

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging, commuting, and refuge opportunities for reptiles. The woodland provides elevated value for reptiles as these habitats provide a suitable structure for refuge, whilst also providing foraging and commuting opportunities. The site has good connectivity to further suitable reptile habitat in the wider landscape via woodland that extends far into the north. Brash piles were also identified on site which offer hibernation opportunities.

Impacts

Woodland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.

Recommendations

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Birds

Summary of Survey Findings

The following bird species were heard during the survey:

- Great tit
- Wood pigeon
- Wren
- Chiffchaff
- Robin
- Crow
- Blackbird
- Magpie

Multiple birds' nest were identified within trees within the woodland subject to removal. The nests did not appear active at the time of survey. The woodland provides a substantial resource of nesting opportunities and nest building resources.

The site does not host habitats or resources to support barn owls or populations of overwintering birds.

Impacts

The proposed development could result in the destruction or disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests if present during the woodland removal.

Recommendations

Any tree removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged or until an ecologist has deemed the nest no longer active.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of a minimum of four bird boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g.
Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees)
Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees)
Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees)
Or a similar alternative brand.
Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. Woodland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low level risk of impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where badger setts could be present.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities for badgers.

Riparian animals

Summary of Survey Findings

Local EPSL records cannot be established without biological records data from COFNOD.

There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.

Impacts

None foreseen.

Recommendations

None required.

Hazel dormouse

Summary of Survey Findings

Local EPSL records cannot be established without biological records data from COFNOD.

Though a dense woodland is present on site, the understory does not provide consistent suitable vegetational shelter to protect dormice from predator during commuting bouts. Therefore, hazel dormice are likely to be absent from the development site.

Impacts

Mixed woodland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local dormouse populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of dormice, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low level risk of impacts to dormice, further dormouse surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the dormouse hibernation season (November to March) insofar as is possible.

- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where dormice could be present.

In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of dormouse is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Invertebrates

Summary of Survey Findings

The site is not considered suitable to support a protected and/or notable assemblage of invertebrates. The habitats present on-site, including grassland and woodland, likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter.

Impacts

Woodland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally

Recommendations

None required.

Suggested Biodiversity Enhancements

The site could be further enhanced via the provision of insect hotels, log piles or deadwood will further enhance the site for invertebrates. Planting native wildflowers or wildflower turf would provide foraging opportunities for invertebrates.

Other e.g. small mammals

Summary of Survey Findings

The woodland on site provides optimal foraging, commuting and refuge opportunities for small mammals such as hedgehogs.

Impacts

Woodland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

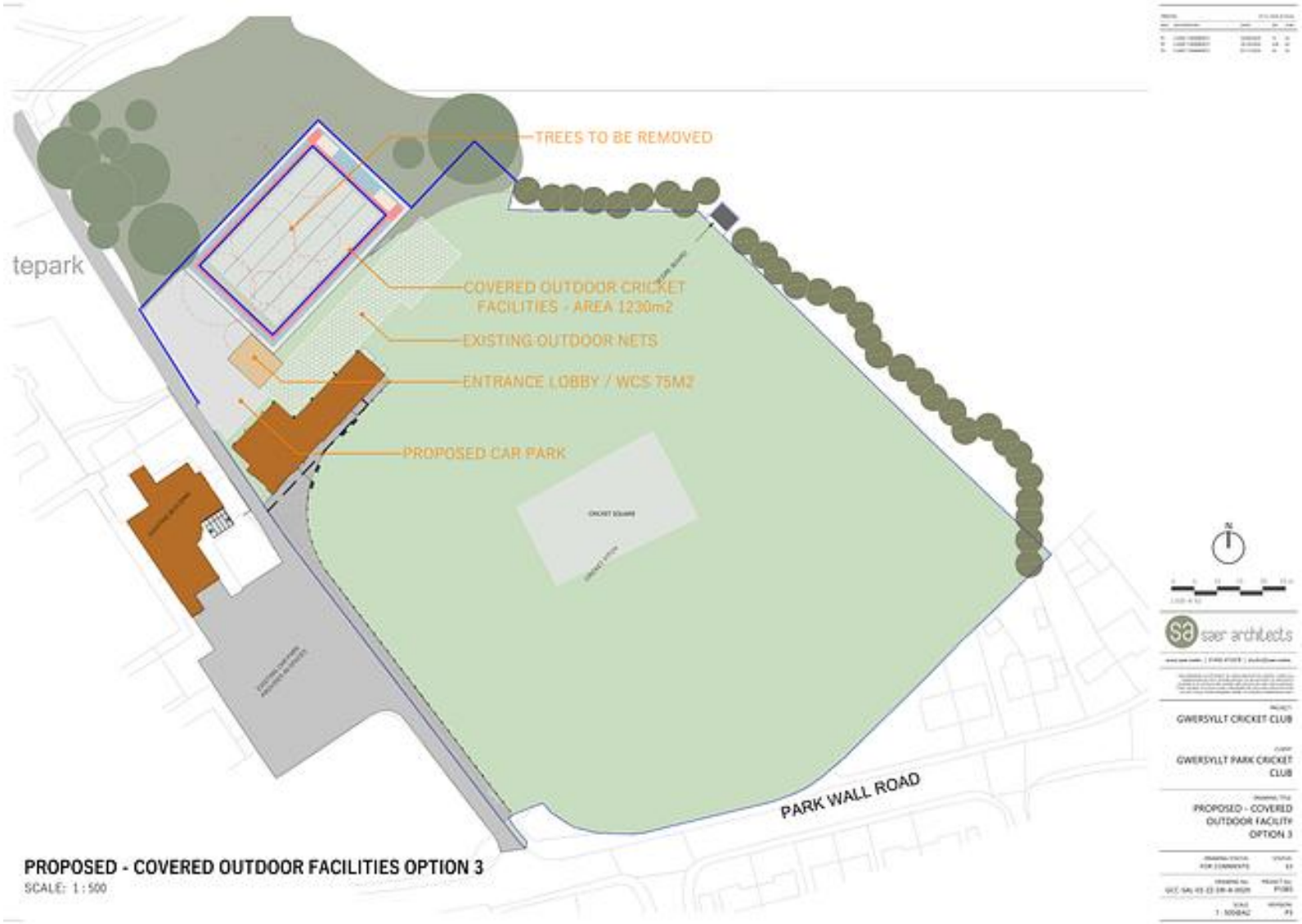
Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any areas of scrub or dense vegetation should be first searched by hand before clearing.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Site Photographs



Photo 1: Other woodland; broadleaved



Photo 2: Other woodland; broadleaved - Ivy clad trees to the northwestern aspect.



Photo 3: Other woodland; broadleaved - brash piles



Photo 4: Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface



Photo 5: Modified grassland



Photo 6: Modified grassland - scorch marks



Photo 7: Example of birds nest identified within woodland.

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Version Control

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