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DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS 11 AND 32
OF PLANNING APPROVAL P2023/0369:
SAFE REPTILE CLEARANCE
METHODOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT
PLAN, HEOL CRWYS, CWMAFAN.

On behalf of

CJ CONSTRUCTION (WALES) LTD

June 2024

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We confirm that in preparing this Report we have exercised reasonable skill and care, taking into account the project objectives, the agreed scope of the work and prevailing site conditions.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Clearance Methodology
3. Enhancements to the Retained Area
4. Management Plan
5. References

Figures:

Figure 1: Site with Area of Reptile Capture Locations Identified

Figure 2: Proposals map for reptile enhancement at Heol Crwys

Appendices

Appendix 1: Reptile Hibernacula Design (After Design Manual For Roads And Bridges
(2011))

Appendix 2: Management Plan Timetable

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Hawkeswood Ecology has been instructed by CJ Construction (Wales) Ltd to prepare a Reptile Clearance Methodology relating to land at Heol Crwys, Cwmafan to discharge conditions 11 and 32 of Planning Approval decision Notice 2023/0369. The approximate Grid reference of the Site SS 782 925. The Site is being developed for residential purposes with demolition of existing buildings and replacement by new.
- 1.2 The conditions relate to the safe clearance of vegetation from the Site in respect of reptiles and to the management of the Site for a fifteen year period.
- 1.3 Condition 11 states: *Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby approved, a management plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority that sets out the area to be enhanced and maintained for the reptiles that are moved on site. This plan should cover the management of the site for a minimum of 15years and retained as such thereafter.*
- 1.4 Condition 32 states that *The vegetation clearance should be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Notes for working with Reptiles at Heol Crwys, Cwmafan (Hawkeswood Ecology).*
- 1.5 This document formalises the Vegetation Clearance Strategy, discharging Condition 32, and offers a fifteen year management plan for the retained area of the Site which will enhance its value for reptiles.
- 1.6 Reptile presence/absence surveys were undertaken in 2022 covering accessible areas of the Site and it was found to support slow worm and common lizard. The report '*Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Protected Species Survey, Heol Crwys, Cwmafan. Hawkeswood Ecology, October 2022*' should be read in conjunction with this methodology.
- 1.7 The Site consists of the existing built environment and amenity grassland with a dense bramble scrub adjacent to it. At the bottom of a steep slope is a small area of poor semi-improved grassland forming a mosaic with bramble and woody scrub. This area produced good numbers of slow worm although smaller numbers were recorded elsewhere across the Site. The Site and where animals were found in survey is shown in Figure 1.
- 1.8 The highest density of animals and all common lizards recorded were found in the poor semi-improved grassland/scrub at south east of the Site where no development is proposed. Other than this, small numbers of slow worm, normally single animals, were recorded around the bramble/grassland interface at the top of the slope.

- 1.9 The proposals will largely affect the already developed area with some incursions into the bramble dominated areas, mainly for the construction of two new properties on Heol Jiwbili.
- 1.10 Given the relatively small area supporting reptiles and the potential to enhance the retained area of the Site to better support reptiles it is proposed to provide reptile fencing for the working area and develop the undeveloped Site to increase its value for reptiles. Once the development is complete, the reptile fencing will be removed allowing animals to access the whole Site area.

2. SAFE CLEARANCE METHODOLOGY: TO DISCHARGE CONDITION 32

- 2.1 An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECW) will be appointed for the lifetime of the project
- 2.2 The development line will be clearly marked on the ground either by barrier tape or rope. Any vegetation on the construction side of the barrier will be carefully cleared using handheld equipment.
- 2.3 Initial vegetation clearance works will consist of cutting above ground vegetation and can be undertaken at any time of year. The initial vegetation removal will be by brush-cutter/trimmer and consist of two phases. The first cut will reduce the height of the vegetation to ~10cm. A second cut will reduce the vegetation height to ground level. The initial cut will allow a closer inspection of the cut area by the operator for animals (or obvious above ground hibernacula if undertaken before end February) before clearance to ground level takes place. If the operator has concerns about any features the ECW will be called to Site to offer advice.
- 2.4 Works will only be undertaken suitable weather conditions ensuring the animals are active. Temperatures should be above 10°C in preferably sunny conditions, works will not commence until 10.00am at the earliest. This will allow any animals present to warm up and become active following cooler night time temperatures.
- 2.5 The vegetation should be cleared towards the retained areas of bramble. The works will be undertaken slowly and the ground ahead regularly inspected for the presence of animals by the operator who will be informed of requirements and given instruction prior to works commencement by the ECW. This allows any animals that may be present to leave under cover of the remaining vegetation. Any animals found by the operator should be moved to the retained area.
- 2.6 The vegetation will not be cut lower than 15 centimetres in the first instance. This clearance can be undertaken at any time of year but preferably during the winter months outside the bird breeding season.
- 2.7 Only following this stage will earthmoving machinery be allowed to work the Site surface. A 360 or similar machine should drag the surface clear of vegetation and remove any potential hibernation areas.
- 2.8 One way reptile proof fencing will be erected to isolate the development areas to prevent animals moving onto the Site during the demolition and construction works. As well as reptile fencing the use of Herras fencing to prevent intrusion by vehicles or contractors is recommended where terrain allows. Specifications for suitable reptile proof fencing are shown in Appendix 1.

3 ENHANCEMENTS TO THE RETAINED AREA AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (15 YEARS): TO DISCHARGE CONDITION 11

- 3.1 The Site construction zone is roughly the same as the existing building footprint, one section of dense bramble is to be cleared to allow construction of housing on Heol Jiwbili. The majority of the existing areas of natural interest on Site are to be retained, including the area where most reptiles were found in the east of the Site.
- 3.2 Figure 2 shows the proposals for initial reptile enhancement works at the Site. These consist of:
- Clearance of bramble to the rear of the housing, to be controlled annually;
 - Areas of bramble to be cut back bi-annually in areas where terrain allows safe access;
 - Provision of hibernacula for reptiles.
- 3.3 Note, all activates shown on Figure 2 are to approximate boundaries. Locations will be confirmed by the ECW during works to ensure the most suitable outcomes are achieved.
- 3.4 In addition, the area of semi-improved grassland carrying the majority of slow worms found in survey will be monitored for scrub encroachment. If necessary areas will be selected for cutting to prevent the grassland becoming rank and dominated by tall herbs.
- 3.5 Three hibernacula based on features quoted in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, HMSO 2011 (DMRB), and shown in Appendix 1 will be constructed across the receptor area in appropriate locations. The locations will be determined on Site by the ECW.
- 3.6 A Management Plan Timetable is given in Appendix 2. This will be informed by regular monitoring and may require updating as the process progresses.

4 REFERENCES

Froglife, 1999, '*Reptile Survey, an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*', Froglife Advice Sheet 10, Froglife, Halesworth.

NAARS, 2008, '*Survey Pack*', The Herpetological Trust.

Gent. T. & Gibson, S. (2003) *Herpetofauna Workers Manual*, JNCC

Highways Agency (updated 2011), *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 10, Part 4- Nature Conservation, Section 7, - Advice in Relation to Reptiles and Roads*, Highways Agency

Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (1998) *Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: Maintaining Best Practice and lawful standards. HGBI advisory notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs)*. HGBI, c/o Froglife, Halesworth. Unpubl.

**FIGURE 1:
SITE WITH AREA OF REPTILE CAPTURE LOCATIONS IDENTIFIED**

Figure 1: Site with area of Reptile capture Locations Identified

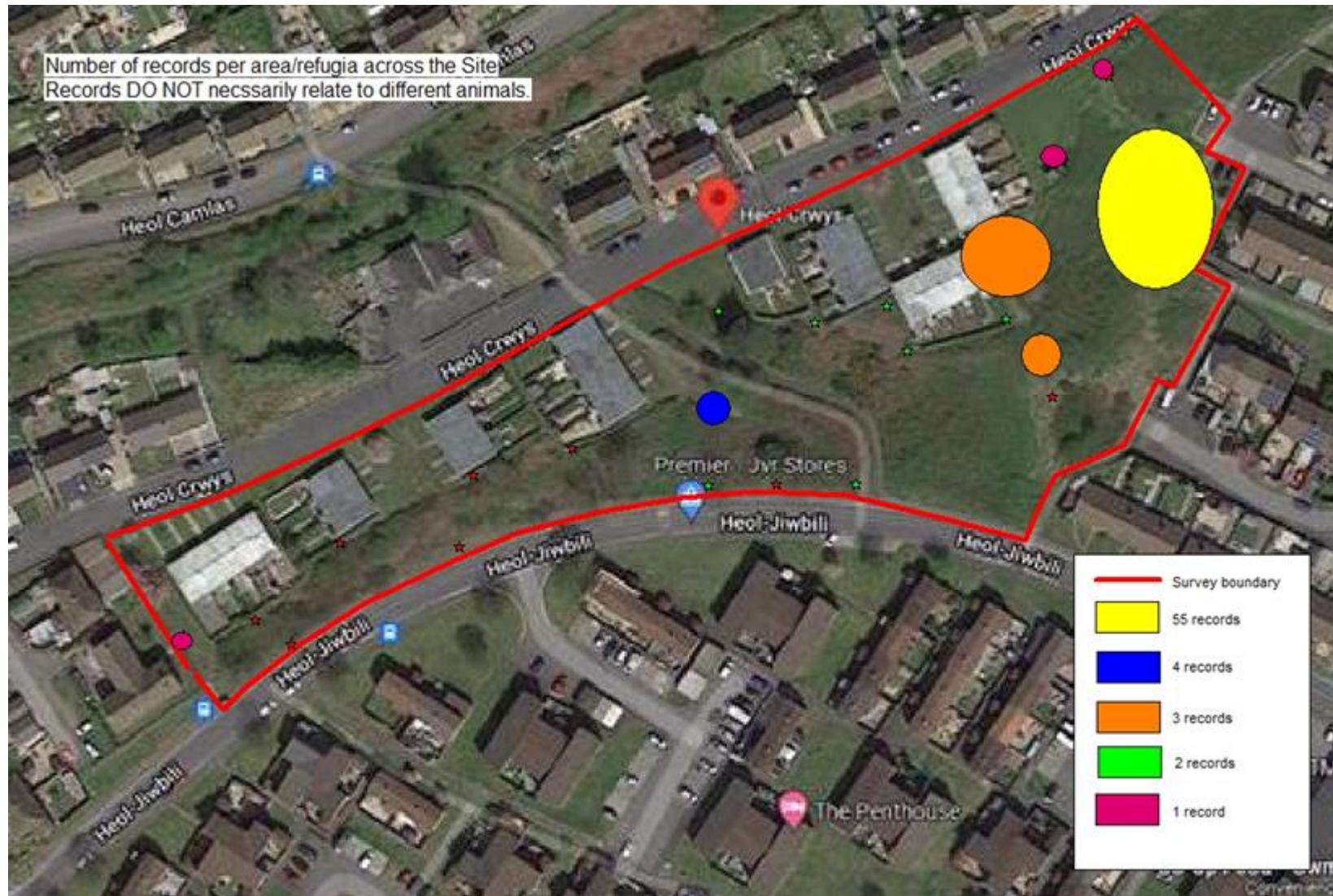


FIGURE 2
PROPOSALS MAP FOR REPTILE ENHANCEMENT AT HEOL CRWYS
(CONDITION 32)

Discharge of Conditions 11 and 32, P2023/0369, Heol Crwys, Cwmafaon.
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2024



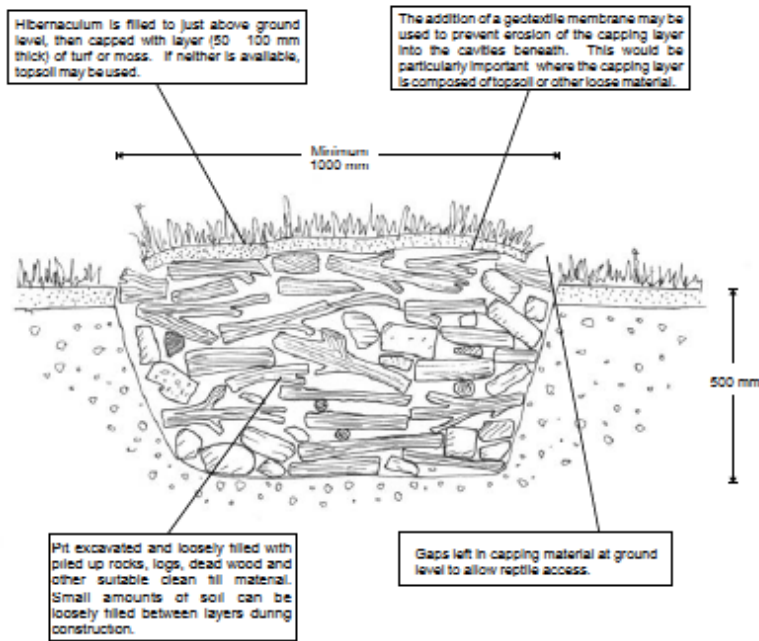
APPENDIX 1
REPTILE HIBERNACULA DESIGN
(AFTER DESIGN MANUAL FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES (2011))

ANNEX D HIBERNACULA DESIGN

VOLUME 10 SECTION 4
PART 1 / IIA 116/05

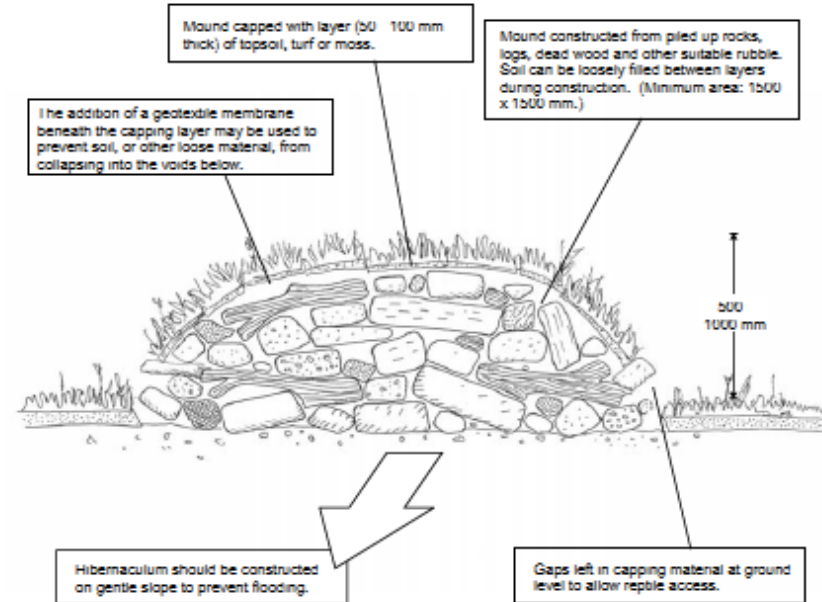
Hibernaculum on free-draining ground

Where ground conditions allow, the hibernaculum should be incorporated into a shallow pit. This design is more likely to remain frost-free, and will be less obtrusive and thus unlikely to be subject to interference.



Hibernaculum on impermeable ground

Where ground conditions are impermeable, then an 'above-ground' or mounded design should be utilised in order to prevent the hibernaculum from flooding. This design should also be used if it is not possible to excavate a pit for any other reason.



APPENDIX 2
MANAGEMENT PLAN AND TIMETABLE (CONDITION 11)

Discharge of Conditions 11 and 32, P2023/0369, Heol Crwys, Cwmafaon.
Hawkeswood Ecology – June 2024

YEAR/ PROJECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cutting bramble to rear of properties	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Bi-annual cut of selected bramble areas introduced		x		x		x		x		x		x		x		
Construction of hibernacula	x															
Monitoring grassland for scrub/tall herb encroachment					x					x					x	
Cutting selected areas of grassland						x					x					x
Site monitoring					x					x					x	

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Hawkeswood Ecology is an Ecological Consultancy based in South Wales offering a wide range of expertise in ecological assessment for a broad range of clients.

