PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

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Hayhurst Road, Whalley
Clitheroe
Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy

(TEP Report Ref: 4744.002)
October 2014
Version 1.0

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Written:	Checked:	Approved:
KS	DCS	DCS

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DRAWINGS

G4744.001 Phase 1 Habitat Map showing pond location

G4744.002 Measures and capture

BHWL203/01/01/A Material Layout Design (showing dispersal corridor and newt measures)

SUMMARY

1. Bellway Homes propose the construction of a housing development on Hayhurst Road, Whalley.

2. This report details the potential impacts on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of great crested newts Triturus cristatus (GCN) in the area and the measures that will be taken to ensure the FCS is maintained.

3. The application site comprises predominantly grassland with occasional trees and scrub along the margins.

4. A GCN population was identified in 2011 between 10 metres and 85 metres from the application boundary.

5. Amphibian surveys will be undertaken in 2015, following which a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be sought from Natural England. This will detail the methods that will be used to remove and exclude GCN from the construction site and also the enhancements that will take place in compensation for lost terrestrial habitat.

6. This strategy outlines proposed mitigation measures and is based upon GCN survey data from 2011.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TEP was commissioned in September 2014 by Bellway Homes to produce a great crested newt Triturus cristatus (GCN) Mitigation Strategy to allow discharge of ecological planning condition 7 (Appeal Decision reference APP/T2350/A/11/214940).

1.2 This strategy is based upon amphibian surveys undertaken in 2011 and will be reviewed following the completion of surveys programmed for 2015.

1.3 A baseline ecological appraisal in September 2010 (TEP Doc. Ref. 2573.001) identified three water bodies within 250m of the site. One pond (identified as Field Pond) was approximately 80m from the application boundary and two ponds (identified as Garden Pond A and B) in the garden of 27 Hayhurst Road. The location of the ponds is shown in Appendix A.

1.4 All ponds were revisited in September 2014 and confirmed as being present.

1.5 Ecologist Angie McEwan undertook a GCN Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (ARG 2010) 1st September assessment of the ponds, followed by netting and made recommendations regarding the requirement for future surveys.

1.6 Amphibian surveys were undertaken in spring/summer 2011, which identified the presence of a medium sized population, peak count being 16 (peak count above ten and less than 100) of GCN in Garden Pond A and small sized population in Field Pond and Garden Pond B.

1.7 The pond dipping exercise also recorded GCN larvae in Garden Pond A.

1.8 This report has been prepared to provide details of potential negative impacts on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of GCN and of measures that will be taken to mitigate for these.

1.9 This has informed the reserved matters planning application for the site and an application for a European Protected Species (EPS) development licence, under which work could be legally carried out with regard to GCN. A GCN Method Statement for submission to Natural England will be completed following completion of surveys in 2015. Mitigation measures will be updated to take account of any change (if any) in the GCN ponds.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

2.1 The Phase 1 habitat survey, carried out on 6th September 2010, describes the proposed development site as follows:

2.2 The following habitats are present within, or adjoining, the site:

- Tall ruderal vegetation;
- Scattered trees;
- Semi-improved grassland; and
- Dense and scattered scrub.

2.3 The application site comprises predominantly neutral semi-improved grassland (TN1). Species present include Yorkshire fog (Holcus lanatus), perennial rye grass (Lolium perenne) and rough meadow grass (Poa trivialis).

2.4 Scattered sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and occasional oak (Quercus robur) trees are found along the northern boundary of the application site. A small broadleaved plantation lies adjacent to the north boundary.

2.5 A small area of scrub and tall ruderals is located on the east boundary and is fenced off from the rest of the application site. Sparse areas of tall ruderals have grown up along fence lines on the south and west boundaries.

3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 The proposed development will not result in the loss of any ponds and therefore will not have an impact on breeding opportunities for GCN.

3.2 A medium sized population of great crested newts is present between 10 and 250m of the site, and the development will result in the loss of a small area of core and terrestrial habitat.

3.3 The field pond is considered to be sub-optimal for newt breading as there is little open water. The garden ponds are sub-optimal for long term viability of the breeding population due to their small size and location in a private garden. However, the garden ponds appear to provide key breeding habitat for this isolated population. The population appears to be isolated due to the lack of other ponds and presence of barriers such as roads. This however, makes the function of the field pond all the more important to sustain the population.

3.4 During development works, clearance of vegetation offering refuge potential for GCN will be limited to small patches of scrub and tall ruderal herb, as the majority of the site is species poor semi-improved grassland that is cut regularly. The removal of the small patches of scrub will result in the loss of temporary shelter for amphibians, but these features are unlikely to be suitable for hibernation.

3.5 Construction would put newts at risk of death or injury if they were to enter the site during construction works. Construction would result in the loss of low quality foraging habitat (species poor semi-improved grassland which is cut frequently). Development of the site would also impede dispersal of amphibians between the field pond and the garden ponds, as dispersal would be restricted to the gardens of properties along Limefield Avenue if the open field was no longer accessible.

3.6 There is unlikely to be any post-development interference. The field pond is very difficult to access for health and safety reasons and is not in publicly accessible land. The garden ponds are already in private ownership. None of the ponds will be affected by the development of the site.

3.7 No other impacts are anticipated.

4.0 MITIGATION

4.1 As GCN were found during the surveys mentioned above, the following measures are proposed. These measures will be reviewed following the completion of amphibian surveys in 2015 and will be subject to the granting of a Natural England European Protected Species Licence (EPSL):

Exclusion

4.2 To avoid injury or harm to GCN during site clearance and construction works, amphibians will be captured and excluded across the footprint of the development site. Amphibians will be released into the receptor site established to the north of the site.

4.3 Vertical fencing will be installed around the perimeter of the site and traps will be installed at 5m intervals around the internal side of this perimeter fence. Refuge tiles will be used to supplement the trapping. Two internal vertical drift fences will be installed inside the site, which will have traps installed on both sides at 5m intervals (average trap density will be 80/ha).

4.4 Grass will be cut to 150mm above ground level, if it had not been previously cropped prior to the onset of trapping, at least 25 days after the onset of trapping. Tall ruderal and scrub vegetation will be cut to 300mm above ground level. On completion of trapping, grass and ruderal vegetation be cut to ground level and scrub will be removed.

4.5 A minimum period of 60 days trapping is anticipated. However, as the site is of low structural diversity and approximately 50% lies beyond 150m from the garden ponds, it is anticipated that very low captures will be recorded in the western half of the site. In this event, Natural England will be consulted with regards to the potential for early closure of traps in this part of the site. Installation of newt fencing and traps will be done under ecological watching brief and in suitable weather conditions at an appropriate time of year.

4.6 Any GCN or other amphibians, trapped will be placed outside the development area at a suitable location to be identified prior to licensing. The proposed receptor site lies adjacent to the north boundary of the application site, extending from the edge of the existing gardens to the east of the site to the railway embankment to the west of the site. The receptor site has no designated conservation status and the land is currently unallocated on the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan.

4.7 On completion of trapping, the pitfall traps and drift fencing will be removed under ecological watching brief. All holes will be in-filled to prevent GCN and other animals being inadvertently trapped. Fencing will only be removed in suitable weather conditions and at an appropriate time of the year. The perimeter amphibian exclusion fence will remain in place for the duration of the construction period to ensure newts do not re-enter the site. The detailed fencing strategy will be finalised as part of the Natural England licence application.

4.8 On full completion of the development the perimeter amphibian exclusion fence will be removed. As above, this will be done under ecological watching brief and in suitable weather conditions at an appropriate time of year.

Compensation

4.9 The proposed development will not result in the loss of any waterbodies; therefore there is no requirement to create any additional aquatic habitat.

4.10 Currently the receptor site comprises species poor semi-improved grassland. On the northern perimeter of the site corridor will be created on the north boundary to buffer the receptor site and a dispersal corridor will be created in the east of the site to promote amphibian dispersal Drawing BHWL/203/01/. The receptor site will provide new species-rich native hedgerow planting, wildflower grassland, scrub and refuge features. The green corridor will provide additional shrub and scrub structured planting and grassland habitats suitable for amphibian foraging, temporary shelter and dispersal. The amphibian dispersal corridor will provide new hedgerow and scrub planting beneath retained trees.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The development proposals for the site will not result in the loss of or damage to, waterbodies.

5.2 The proposed development has the potential to result in the loss of some foraging habitat.

5.3 Although the development will result in the loss of potential core and intermediate terrestrial habitat, breeding habitat in the area will not be affected.

5.4 This mitigation strategy will be reviewed following surveys in 2015 and used to inform the EPSL Method Statement required by Natural England as part of the licensing process.

5.5 The implementation of the above measures will ensure the Favourable Conservation Status of GCN in the area is maintained.

6.0 REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

English Nature (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Froglife (2001) Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook. Froglife, Suffolk

Ribble Valley Borough Council. 1999. *District Wide Local Plan*. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/download/57/districtwide_local_plan. [Accessed 16 October 14].

APPENDIX A
PHOTOGRAPHS
4744.004 Photographs of Ponds

1.

Field boundary looking north.

2.

Photo showing Field pond currently overgrown.

3.

Field pond looking north .

4

Garden of Limefield Avenue.

5

Garden of Limefield Avenue looking north with field in background.

6

Garden Pond A near house.

7

Garden of Limefield Avenue..

Revision	Description	Amended by	Date

TEP
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Project

Hayhurst Road Whalley

Title

Photographs of Newt Survey

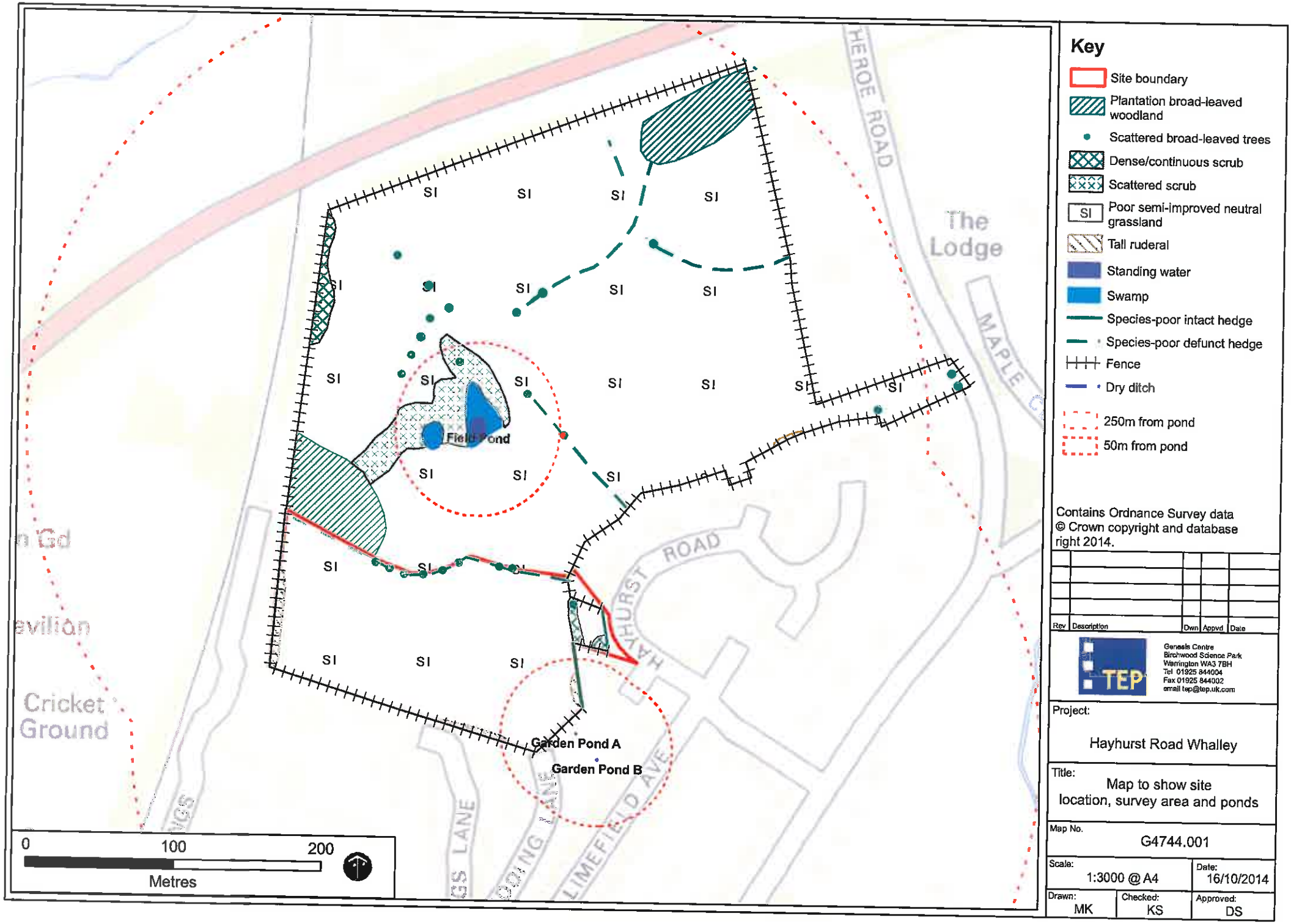
Drwg No	
	4744.004
Scale: N/A	Date: 03/07/14
Drawn by: LG	Checked by: DCS / Authorised: DCS

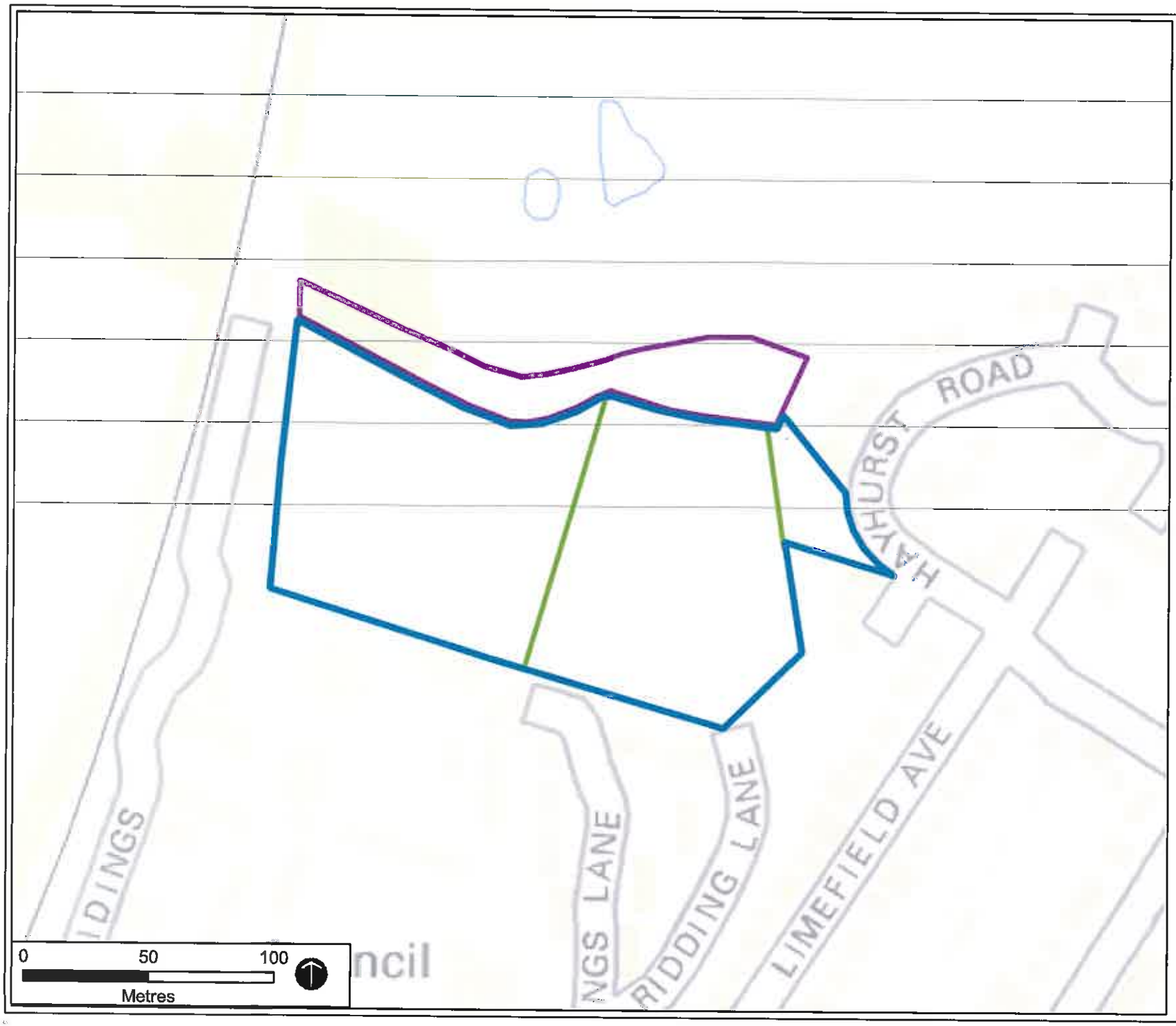
DRAWINGS

G4744.001 Phase 1 Habitat Map Showing Pond Location

G4744.002 Measures and Capture

BHWL203/01/A Bellway Layout Drawing


Key
Site boundary
Plantation broad-leaved woodland
Scattered broad-leaved trees
Dense/continuous scrub
Scattered scrub
SI
Poor semi-improved neutral grassland
Tall ruderal
Standing water
Swamp
Species-poor intact hedge
Species-poor defunct hedge
Fence
Dry ditch
250m from pond
50m from pond
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014.
Rev
Description
Dwn
Appvd
Date
Genesis Centre
Birchwood Science Park
Warrington WA3 7BH
Tel 01925 844004
Fax 01925 844002
email tep@tep.uk.com
TEP
Project:
Hayhurst Road Whalley
Title:
Map to show site location, survey area and ponds
Map No.
G4744.001
Scale:
1:3000 @ A4
Date:
16/10/2014
Drawn:
MK
Checked:
KS
Approved:
DS
Field Pond
Garden Pond A
Garden Pond B
HEROE ROAD
The Lodge
MAPLE
HAYHURST ROAD
LIMEFIELD AVE
Cricket Ground
0
100
200
Metres



Key

- Vertical perimeter fence (traps internally @ 5m)
- Vertical drift fence (traps both sides @ 5m)
- Receptor site boundary

Rev	Description	Dwn	Appvd	Date

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Project:
Hayhurst Road Whalley

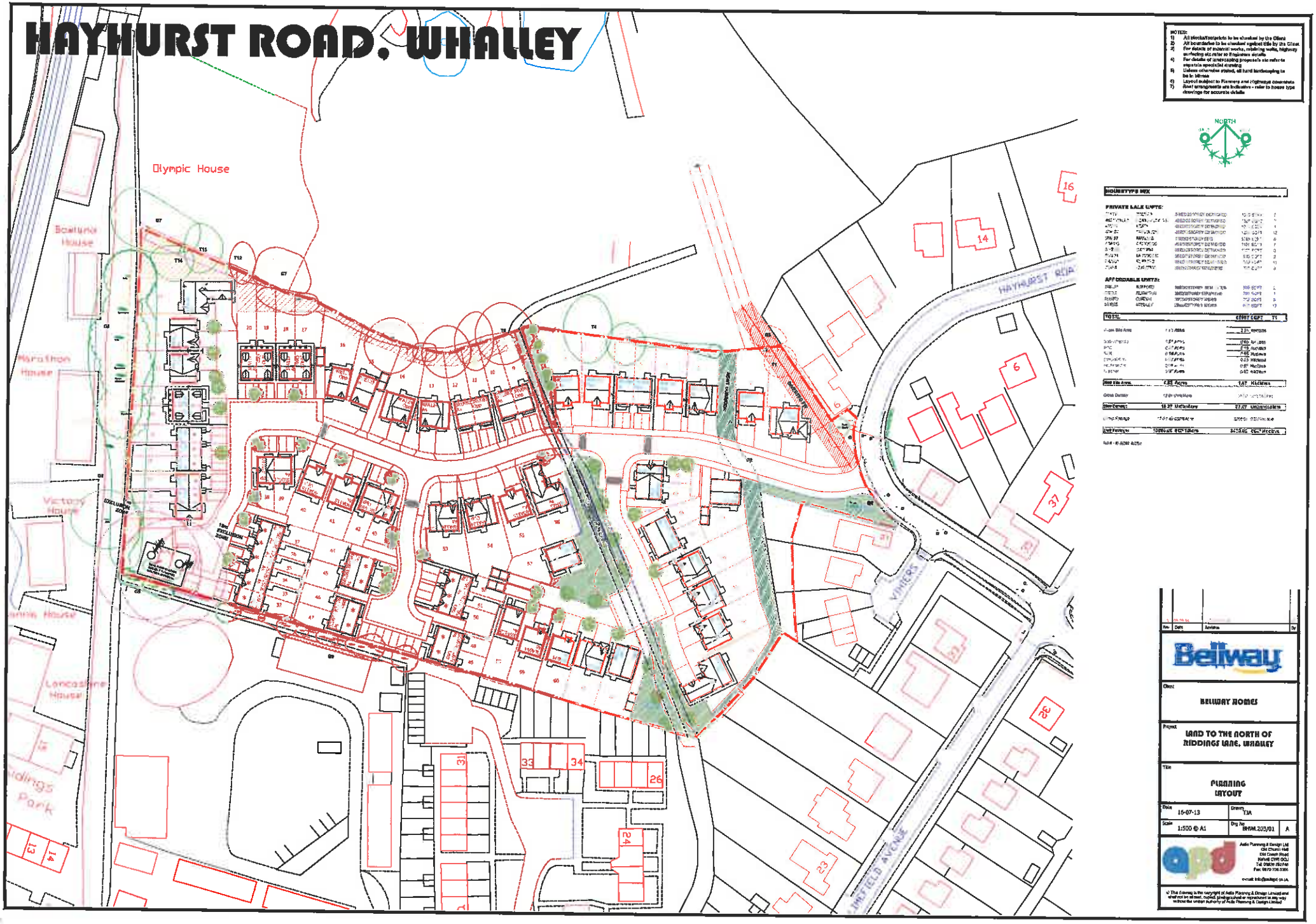
Title:
Measures and capture

Map No.
G4744.002

Scale:	Date:
1:2000 @ A4	16/10/2014

Drawn:	Checked:	Approved:
MK	KS	DS

HAYHURST ROAD, WHALLEY



NOTES:
1) All blocks/footprints to be checked by the Client
2) All boundaries to be checked against title by the Client
3) For details of material works, retaining walls, highway surfacing etc refer to Engineers details
4) For details of landscaping proposals also refer to separate specialist drawing
5) Unless otherwise stated, all hard landscaping to be in bitmac
6) Layout subject to Planning and Highways comments
7) Roof arrangements are indicative - refer to house type drawings for accurate details

HOUSETYPE MIX

PRIVATE SALE UNITS:

AFFORDABLE UNITS:

TOTAL

Bellway	
Client	BELLWAY HOMES
Project	LAND TO THE NORTH OF RIDDINGS LANE, WHALLEY
Title	PLANNING LAYOUT
Date	16-07-13
Drawn	TJA
Scale	1:500 @ A1
Dwg No	BHWL203/01
Rev	A