



Heritage Park

A habitat-enhancing residential development leaving a lasting legacy

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In summary:



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Mandy Cartwright
North Wales Officer, The ARC Trust

55
NEW HOMES

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Partnership work has helped drive this project to deliver something special.”

Paul Sinclair
Technical Director for Redrow Homes (NW)

0.8HA NATURE RESERVE

6 PONDS

5 NATIVE AMPHIBIAN SPECIES

SIX-FOLD INCREASE IN GREAT CRESTED NEWT POPULATION

Overview



Redrow's Heritage Park development is positioned just over the Welsh border in the semi-rural setting of Penymynydd, Flintshire. Its two, three and four-bedroom homes certainly chimed with the needs and busy lifestyles of home buyers, with all 55 homes sold within two years of launching.

However, it's not just the high quality homes and new community of residents leaving a lasting legacy.

At the start of its development journey, Heritage Park was immediately identified as occupying an area with rich potential for wildlife and biodiversity habitats – with ecological surveys overseen by The Environment Partnership (TEP) detecting mud snails, ground nesting birds and great crested newts on site, and badgers and bats close by.

The development that followed was inspired and shaped by this natural environment, carefully cultivated to not only help preserve but to encourage wildlife habitats to flourish. This included the launch of White Lion Nature Reserve that adjoins Heritage Park, in partnership with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) Trust, along with the construction of walkways, ponds, meadows and hedgerows.

A significant milestone of Heritage Park's success is proven by ecological advances; for example, records show that the great crested newt population has increased six-fold in the first three years since the development's launch. It's a place where guided walks, species surveys and pond dipping sessions, delivered by the ARC Trust, are now a popular feature within this community setting.

Heritage Park is not only a location to live but a green space haven with immeasurable public benefit.

Location



Heritage Park is located to the north eastern edge of the small Flintshire village of Penymynydd, between the A5104 Mold Road and Penymynydd Road. Spanning around 4.4 hectares, the site is broadly rectangular in shape and relatively flat in topography.

In previous lifetimes the site had been home to an active quarry, later on a pub and also agricultural land. Prior to the development commencing, the land contained the derelict former pub, along with existing trees, hedges, a footpath running through the centre and a large pond.

Along with a collection of new homes and community setting, Redrow's transformation would lead to significantly enhanced landscaping, providing a reserve setting for wildlife to thrive, with new walkways opening up public access to experience this newly shaped environment. Redrow was to develop 2.22 hectares for its collection of family homes, along with providing 0.8 hectares for the ARC Trust to create what eventually became White Lion Nature Reserve. In tandem with Redrow, developer Elan Homes constructed 32 homes on land situated to the south of Mold Road – also part of Heritage Park. A productive partnership approach between Redrow and Elan Homes, operating to the same principle of preserving and enhancing existing natural habitats, was a key hallmark that helped immeasurably to deliver high quality builds and an enhanced landscape.

Construction principles and partnerships

Redrow submitted its plans to develop new family properties, meeting a housing demand, to Flintshire County Council in 2011. Planning approval was granted the following year. Construction was governed by the planning authority's Development Plan for all new builds. This included:

- Ensuring sustainability by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use
- Making the most efficient and practical use of land
- A design that respected existing landscape features
- Enhancing safety and security through the site layout
- Encouraging high standards which respond to the site and surroundings through scale, layout, uses of spaces, materials, external appearance and landscaping
- Providing adequate space around dwellings

All 85 homes were built to Redrow's iconic Heritage Collection specifications, combining characterful Arts and Crafts-inspired external features with modern stylish interiors to provide the best in open plan modern living, carefully designed to suit and enhance family living. High standards of insulation and modern heating systems were included to help homes to achieve a band B rating for energy efficiency. On average, this is 40% better than homes built pre-2002 and 70% better than homes built pre 1990.

Eco features included:

- 75mm of Insulation built into floors and 200mm of insulation supplied into roofs
- High efficiency boilers
- Air tight windows shown to outperform building regulation-specified models by nearly 32%
- Low energy light fittings
- Dual flush toilets to reduce water consumption
- 95.86% of timber used originated from WWF-certified sources

Along with working closely with Flintshire County Council and neighbouring constructors Elan Homes, Redrow also utilised the knowledge and expertise of The Environment Partnership (TEP), which carried out ecological assessments of the site.

TEP's survey was significant in recording the existence of great crested newts in the site's pond. This would help shape the construction that was to follow, with Redrow's build and landscape work carefully orientated so as not to disturb the newt population and the pond evolving into an important feature of the development in its own right. Regular ecological assessments of the site by both TEP and Natural Resources Wales were carried out throughout the entire construction phase at the request of Redrow.

The discovery of great crested newts would also lead to Redrow seeking out a partnership with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) Trust – a national wildlife charity committed to conserving amphibians and reptiles and saving the disappearing habitats on which they depend. The ARC Trust manages more than 80 reserves, each chosen for their significant reptile or amphibian populations. It also provides targeted advice and training for land managers and other key conservation groups.

This relationship would eventually lead to the opening of White Lion Nature Reserve adjoining the housing development – a tranquil environment featuring six man-made ponds, wildflower meadows and hedgerows and walkways cultivated by Redrow with the advice and stewardship of the ARC Trust. In the summer of 2018, all the partners involved in the project were invited to the ceremonious unveiling of a newly-installed information board at the reserve, helping better inform residents and visitors of the increasing abundance of wildlife and biodiversity on site.



Paul Sinclair
Technical Director
for Redrow Homes
(NW)

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It's not very often you would have two separate developers, Natural Resources Wales, an environmental consultancy and amphibian and reptile charity sat round a table discussing a residential development. It's been a real success and partnership work has helped drive this project to deliver something special.

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A place for people, and nature, to thrive

In any development, Redrow has a steadfast commitment, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to uphold three key principles to create a better way to live. These are: Building Responsibly; Thriving Communities; Valuing People.

With Heritage Park, Redrow committed a package of investment, as part of a Section 106 agreement, to the community, including:

- £261,000 towards affordable housing
- £126,000 to benefit local education facilities
- £20,000 on great crested newt mitigation work
- £2,500 on highways improvements

However, it's hoped that Heritage Park's impact on the community will not only be measured by Redrow's initial investments on enhancements but by the longer term footprint and legacy of a newly-created residential development. Somewhere providing high quality, environmentally-considered homes, complemented by new footpaths promoting health and wellbeing and of course, its ever-evolving natural habitats.

White Lion Nature Reserve is now home to five native amphibian species, including the protected great crested newt, as well as the rare mud snail. The six ponds, wildflower meadows and hedgerows also provide homes for a variety of wildlife species such as mammals, birds and invertebrates.

The ARC Trust manages the nature reserve to a standard set by a legal management plan, which includes activities such as meadow cuts and amphibian surveys.

The site is now used by people who live within Heritage Park, as well as the wider community and education establishments. Opportunities such as habitat management, guided walks, species surveys and pond dipping sessions are continuously being delivered by ARC for the local community.

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North Wales
Officer,
The ARC Trust



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ARC is looking forward to working with Redrow on future projects to duplicate the good work already successfully achieved in north east Wales.

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