



**INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES METHOD STATEMENT
(IPSMS)**

for

JAPANESE KNOTWEED

for

LAND AT HOMEFARM, TREWITHEM, GRAMPOUND RD, CORNWALL

July 2023



Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd

Admiralty House, 2 Bank Place,
Falmouth, Cornwall. TR11 4AT

Email: info@whealgreynecology.co.uk

Web: www.whealgreynecology.co.uk

Tel: 01326 761092 | 07773375230

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES METHOD STATEMENT (IPSMS) FOR LAND AT HOMEFARM, TREWITHEN, GRAMPOUND ROAD, CORNWALL

OS Grid Ref: SW 9148 4768

Walkover field surveys: 5th January 2023 and 7th June 2023

IPSMS assessment date: 3rd July 2023

Surveyor: Matt Thurlow (Hons) MSc ACIEEM

Report Author: Matt Thurlow (Hons) MSc ACIEEM

Filename & issue number: IPSMS_Land at Homefarm, Trewithen, Cornwall_Final 1

Report No: 22-249/TE/Land at Homefarm, Trewithen, Cornwall_IPSMS

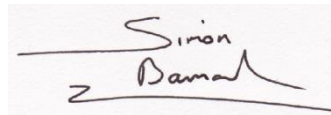
Report for: Trewithen Estate

Report completed: 18th July 2023

Report Sign off

Document checked and approved for issue by: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM

Signature:



Date: 20th July 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. INTRODUCTION	4
2.1. Background	4
2.2. Purpose of an invasive non-native plant species method statement.....	5
2.3. Caveats and limitations to assessment	5
2.4. Summary of surveyors' experience	5
3. LOCATIONS AND EXTENT OF JAPANESE KNOTWEED.....	6
3.1. Initial survey 5th January 2023	6
3.2. Site visit 7 th June 2023.....	6
4. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	7
4.1. Avoidance	7
4.2. General site precautions.....	7
4.3. Pre-construction actions.....	7
4.4. Mid work actions.....	8
4.5. Work completion.....	9
5. LEGISLATION.....	10
APPENDIX 1. Proposed site plans	12
APPENDIX 2. Additional Legislation	13

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Background

Wheal Grey Ecology were instructed by Ms Constance Gregory, of Llewlylyn Harker Lowe, on behalf of the client the Trewithen Estate to create an Invasive Plant Species Method Statement as part of a wider Management Plan for Japanese Knotweed on land at Homefarm, Trewithen, Grampound Rd, Cornwall. This method statement is being prepared in response to Condition 5 of the planning approval notice for PA23/01998 which states: ‘*The development hereby permitted shall proceed in accordance with the Summary of Mitigation section set out within the submitted Summary of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report for land at Home Farm, prepared by Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd ecological consultants dated 16 January 2023.*’ This method statement is to enable an initial phase of works to demolish an existing barn and create a new Gardeners maintenance depot, see Appendix 1 for initial phase of works layout and overall site plan as provided by Ms Constance Gregory on behalf of the client labelled ‘P12-Gardeners' Depot’ and ‘P03-Proposed Layout Key low res’.

This method statement was recommended as initial works on the site are in proximity to several stands of Japanese Knotweed which were found to be present in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken on 5th January 2023 by Wheal Grey Ecology, see figure 1. The PEA conducted by Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd was in relation to the redevelopment of the site known as Homefarm, the overall proposed plans labelled ‘P03-Proposed Layout Key low res’ can be found in Appendix 1. As Japanese Knotweed rhizomes can spread up for 7m underground this plant could be growing into areas of the site that are likely to be travelled over and disturbed to access the initial works areas, the visible stands of this plant will be present in areas to be directly disturbed/cleared by the works.

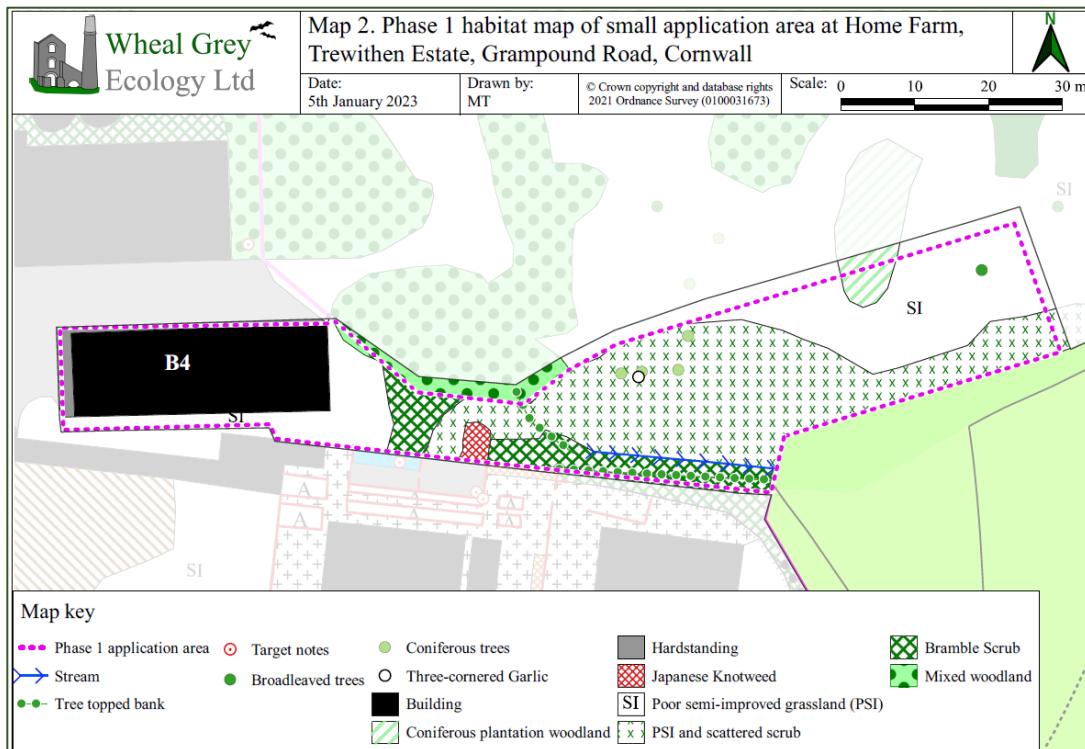


Figure 1. Extract from the phase 1 habitat map of the location of the initial phase of works at Homefarm, Trewithen, Cornwall

2.2. Purpose of an invasive non-native plant species method statement

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are non-native species that have the ability to spread rapidly and become dominant in an area or ecosystem, causing adverse ecological, environmental and economic impacts. Examples of the negative effects caused by invasive non-native species include; economic cost, structural damage, environmental degradation, aesthetic degradation, biodiversity loss, loss of land function, access restrictions and increased risk to human and animal health and safety.

This method statement is intended to prevent the spread of INNS listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and countryside Act 1981 (as amended) as a result of the initial phase of works and to prevent INNS being spread further into the surrounding site or into the wild surrounding the site as a result of this initial phase of works. Japanese Knotweed can cause damage to building foundations and footpaths/pavements which may have future economic and safety ramifications for the site. You do not have to remove or report the presence of Japanese Knotweed from/on your land, but you could be prosecuted or given a community protection notice for causing a nuisance if you allow it to spread onto anyone else's property.

2.3. Caveats and limitations to assessment

This method statement is based on the current condition of the site at the time the walkover survey/s were carried out and the proposed site plans provided.

2.4. Summary of surveyors' experience

Matthew Thurlow

Matthew Thurlow is a trained field surveyor with over four years' experience conducting Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys, Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, and a variety of protected and non-protected phase two species surveys and watching brief work specifically for the identification and removal of Japanese Knotweed on a wide scale of sites. He holds a Bachelor's Degree and a Masters in Conservation Biodiversity.

3. LOCATIONS AND EXTENT OF JAPANESE KNOTWEED

3.1. Initial survey 5th January 2023

During the initial walkover conducted in January 2023 multiple stands of Japanese Knotweed were observed; in particular a large area was recorded in close proximity to a brick wall and the proposed access route to the new Gardener's depot, see figure 1 and photo 1.



Photo 1. Japanese Knotweed canes in
January 2023

3.2. Site visit 7th June 2023

During the site visit in June 2023 it was confirmed that active Japanese Knotweed was present in close proximity to the initial phase of works and a new young shoot was observed, see highlighted in photo 2 below of the same stand of Japanese Knotweed but in June.



Photo 2. Active Japanese Knotweed growth in June 2023
in the same location as photographed above

4. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In this instance, ahead of the full Japanese Knotweed Management plan being prepared for the wider site, this method statement is intended to enable the initial phase of works to commence and state how the initial phase of works can be safely conducted by avoiding disturbing the Japanese Knotweed.

4.1. Avoidance

In this instance avoiding the Japanese Knotweed and potentially contaminated soil will not be possible during the entire project or entire works to build the Gardener's depot. However, it can be avoided during the initial phase of the construction of the Gardener's depot but work vehicles will need to travel within 7 metres of the nearest visible plant. Commonly a 7 metre exclusion zone would be established from the nearest visible stem, however after a site visit and assessing the location of the most recent growth of Japanese Knotweed this will not be practical to create or maintain. This is due to the presence of mature trees restricting other routes of access from the north and the presence of a brick wall to the south.

4.2. General site precautions

Works on site should be planned to avoid the area of Japanese Knotweed and the potentially contaminated soil within 7m of the nearest visible stem. If this is not possible the movement of vehicles past the location of Japanese Knotweed should be minimised, where possible, to reduce the risk of any contaminated soil being disturbed.

An exclusion zone should be created using Heras fencing around the visible stands of Japanese Knotweed to indicate the location of the Japanese Knotweed and to prevent any works vehicles or works directly impacting this plant. A 7m contaminated soil zone should then be established from the base of the Heras fencing using industry standard 'Bog mats' which are designed to prevent soft substrates/soil from being cut up and churned up by plant machinery which could then track the soil across the site. These bog mats should be retained in place for the entire time that work vehicles need to travel past this location up until the point there the plant can be safely excavated as part of the wider Japanese Knotweed Management Plan.

The chance of accidentally spreading the visible Japanese Knotweed stems is low considering the locations of the work. However, as rhizomes can extend underground for up to 7 metres from an existing visible plant and a piece of this rhizome as small as 1cm can establish a whole new plant this method statement should be followed. All soil within 7 metres of the plants should also therefore be treated as potentially contaminated material unless otherwise proven. To further reduce the risk of this occurring an area of hardstanding near to the works location but away from the small watercourse should be designated as a 'washing down zone', the hardstanding to the west is recommended for this. This is intended to be a safe location where any vehicles that breach the bog mats and disturb the potentially contaminated soil can be washed off with very little chance of any plant material being able to take root. Any washed off soil and plant material should be collected and deposited within the fenced off area of Japanese Knotweed to be later dealt with within the wider management plan.

4.3. Pre-construction actions

Prior to any works commencing on site within 7 metres of any Japanese Knotweed the following steps must be followed:

- Erect Heras fencing in a barrier around the visible Japanese Knotweed stems – this fencing should create a 1metre buffer from any visible Japanese Knotweed stems, the fencing must not directly damage or break the stems, this should be erected under the guidance of a suitably qualified ecologist;
 - This fencing should be erected using standard footpads/blocks with no ground penetration necessary,
 - Signage should be attached to the Heras fencing indicating its purpose and highlight the hazard,
- Bog Mats should be laid from directly underneath the line of the Heras fencing extending out to the recommended 7m exclusion zone where works vehicles will travel, this is intended to prevent any of the soil in this area from being broken up and tracked across the works areas,
 - If possible the bog mats should overlap each other to reduce the chance of contaminate soil being picked up between the mats,
 - The bog mats could then be pegged in place to ensure they do not move, this should pose minimal risk to disturbing contaminated soil,
- Designate an area of hardstanding near to the works area but away from the small watercourse as a ‘washing down zone’ where any contaminated vehicles or bog mats can be safely washed down with a low risk of any washed off plant material taking root,
 - The area of hardstanding to the west is recommended for this,
- The routes of access for any works vehicles within 7m of the fencing should be clearly designated and followed during the works,
- A designated route to the nearby area of hardstanding designated as the ‘washing down zone’ from this exclusion zone should also be covered with an impermeable barrier, ideally more bog mats, for any contaminated vehicles to safely travel over,
- The fencing and bog matting should be checked daily ahead of the days works to ensure it is still in place and no gaps have appeared through which contaminated soil could be picked up by vehicles.
 - The bog matting should be checked regularly throughout the day as well to ensure it has not moved as a result of the works during the day.

4.4. Mid work actions

During works the weather and ground conditions may cause bog mats to slip or work vehicles may unintentionally disturb soil or the Heras fencing, if this should occur the following actions should be taken:

- Should bog mats slip and work vehicles tyres or tracks come into contact with the soil the vehicle in question should slowly travel over the designated covered access route to the nearby designated ‘washing down zone’ away from the small watercourse so that any of the potentially contaminated soil can be washed off,
- The washed off soil should be collected and then deposited within the fenced off area of Japanese Knotweed as this is a known area of contaminated soil which will then be managed in accordance with the site wide Japanese Knotweed management plan,
- Once the tyres and/or tracks and the upper surfaces of the bog mats are clear of any soil the bog mats should be repositioned and secured into its original position so that works can safely continue,
- At the end of each day if works vehicles are stored off-site the tyres/tracks should be carefully checked and any soil washed off within the designated ‘washing down zone’ and collected and deposited as described above.

4.5. Work completion

Upon completion of the initial phase of works or at the point where works need to directly impact soil that is possibly contaminated with Japanese Knotweed the site wide Japanese Knotweed Management plan must be in place.

The removal of the Heras fencing and bog mats should be done carefully to ensure no parts of the plant or any contaminated soil is attached to this equipment so that it is not carried off site, the following steps should be taken:

- Ensure works vehicles area outside of the contaminated soil zone and have no more need to travel through the contaminated soil zone,
 - These vehicles should be washed off in the designated 'washing down zone',
- The bog mats should be lifted carefully and checked for any attached soil; if any soil is present the bog mat should be carefully taken to the 'washing down zone' to be washed off,
- Any washed off soil or plant material should be collected and deposited into the area where the Japanese Knotweed is already present as described above,
- Due to potential growth during the works the removal of the Heras fencing should also be done carefully to ensure no parts of the plant have grown through the fencing which could then be broken off and transported off site.

5. LEGISLATION

Under UK Law, Japanese Knotweed is legally classed as a controlled plant under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 114 (2) (WCA 1981). It is not illegal for you to have Japanese Knotweed on your property, but it is against UK law to cause or allow the plant to spread in the wild. It is legal to have Japanese Knotweed on your property but you can be prosecuted or given a community protection notice for causing a nuisance if you allow it to spread onto anyone else's property.

The EPA 1990 is supported by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which states that 'if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence'. The EPA 1990 sets out the appropriate methods of removing, transporting and disposing of 'controlled waste', defining this as any soil or plant materials contaminated with Japanese Knotweed that you discard, or are planning on discarding. The Act makes it an offence to deposit any contaminated soil in an irresponsible fashion. Offenders may face a £5000 fine and/or 6 months imprisonment, or 2 years and/or an unlimited fine on indictment.

Please see additional legislation in Appendix 2.

References

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-japanese-knotweed-from-spreading>

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/plant-fungi-species/japanese-knotweed>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

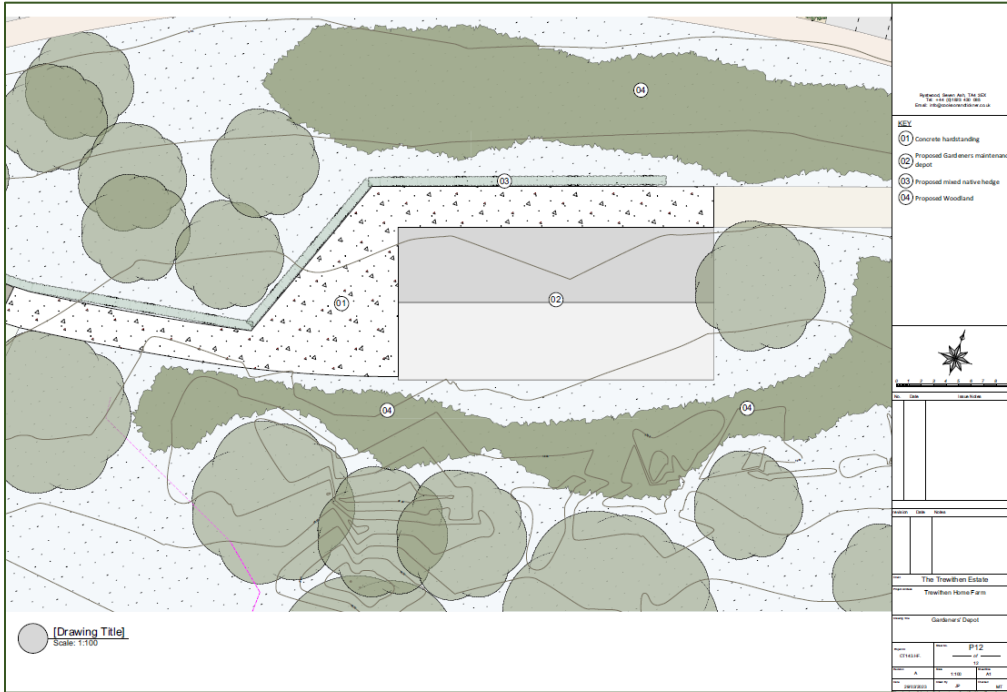
<https://insideecology.com/2017/08/23/invasive-non-native-species-uk-japanese-knotweed/>

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/>

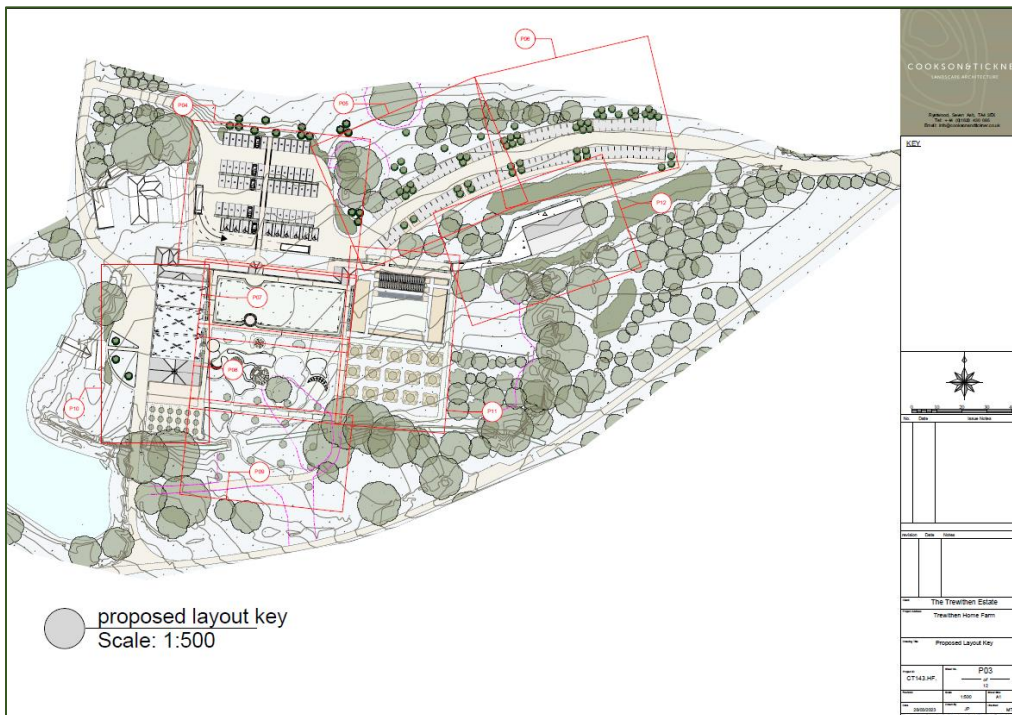
Japanese Knotweed Guidance for identification & control, Cornwall and Devon Knotweed Forum,
Cornwall County Council.

APPENDIX 1. Proposed site plans

P12-Gardeners' Depot



P03-Proposed Layout Key low res



APPENDIX 2. Additional Legislation

Japanese knotweed new legislation

Under new Japanese knotweed legislation, Homeowners failing to control Japanese Knotweed on their property can be prosecuted and fined up to £2,500. This is due to new Home Office rules and regulations relating to anti-social behaviour being introduced in 2014 that include new laws around Knotweed amongst other invasive species such as the Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

These new Japanese knotweed laws have been added to pre-existing laws relating to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, and join older legislation such as the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Japanese knotweed anti-social behaviour law

In 2014, a decision was made to include the negligent cultivation of invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed into the remit of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. Under the powers of this act police and local council authorities have the power to issue individuals and businesses with Community Protection Notices.

These notices are only reserved for those who persistently or continually act in a way that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.

This notice could require the recipient to make reasonable efforts to remove the knotweed from their property or prevent the knotweed from returning. Failure to meet the requirements of this notice, without a reasonable excuse, could be treated as a criminal offence making the recipient liable to a fixed penalty notice or prosecution, which could lead to a further hefty fine.