



Land at The Willows Lodge, Brasted Hill Road

Biodiversity Method Statement

17/06/2023

Client	Sonny James
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Author	Marcus Fry	Director	17/06/2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

For information relating to the site description and previous ecological survey work, refer to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report ref: 13_990_ReportX02_MF_SJ, dated 08/02/2023.

In summary, the PEA report referred to above concluded that:

- *'Since it is considered that there is no significant risk of potential impacts to bats, mitigation measures are not recommended for bats.*
- *To avoid the seasonal risk of impacts to breeding birds, in relation to the uninhabited dwelling and potentially suitable habitats (i.e. sections of hedgerow and trees), mitigation measures are recommended in this report'.*

1.2 Planning Status

Planning permission ref: 23/00383/FUL has been granted by Sevenoaks District Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), for: *'Demolition of The Willows and erection of a replacement dwelling and detached garage'*.

Of relevance to this report, the following condition has been attached to the consent:

5. *'Prior to the commencement of development (including site clearance), a biodiversity method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The statement shall include the measures detailed in Section 5.1.2 of the PEA report, GreenLink Ecology, February 2023 and will include precautionary working methods to be followed during ground clearance and construction to avoid impacts on badgers, amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and a Toolbox Talk outlining the measures to be followed will be provided to all site staff by the site ecologist, prior to any clearance and demolition works'.*

1.3 Aims of Study

To address condition 5, GreenLink Ecology Ltd. has been commissioned to document appropriate mitigation measures for protected species, to allow the condition to be discharged and facilitate the commencement of development on the site.

2 Mitigation Measures

The following measures have been discussed and agreed to during a site meeting with the landowner and contractors as part of a toolbox talk, to comply with the planning condition.

2.1 Amphibians

Species of amphibian (in particular great crested newt), are considered in this report due to the terminology of the planning condition.

Although historically there appears to have been a pond present on the adjacent property to the south-west, based on the aerial imagery from Google Earth dated September 2021, this is no longer present and the location comprises made/bare ground.

Based on the analysis of aerial images and OS mapping, there are no water bodies (apart from some ditches that may seasonally hold standing water) within circa 500 metres of the site.

Therefore, mitigation measures are not considered necessary for amphibians, although if at any time during the proposals, it becomes apparent that any species of amphibian (in particular great crested newt), is present and at risk of impacts, works will temporarily cease whilst a Natural England licence holder is consulted about how to proceed without the risk of an offence being committed.

2.2 Badger

Badger is considered in this report due to the terminology of the planning condition. There was no evidence of badger recorded during the PEA survey and there was no significant potential identified for the species to be present and at risk of impacts as a result of the proposals.

Therefore, mitigation measures are not considered necessary for badger, although if at any time during the proposals, it becomes apparent that badger is present and at risk of impacts, works will temporarily cease whilst an experienced ecologist is consulted about how to proceed without the risk of an offence being committed.

2.3 Bats

As detailed in the PEA report, it is considered that there is no significant risk of potential impacts to bats and therefore, mitigation measures are not recommended.

However, if at any time during the proposed works, it becomes apparent that bats are present and at risk of impacts, works will temporarily cease whilst an experienced ecologist is consulted about how to proceed without the risk of an offence being committed.

2.4 Breeding Birds

The demolition of the buildings and removal/disturbance of the more established ruderal vegetation/trees will be conducted under the supervision of an experienced ecologist, who will check for the presence/absence of any active birds' nests.

If any active nests are found then works with the potential to impact on the nest will cease and an appropriate buffer zone will be established by the ecologist until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use, as confirmed by the ecologist.

2.5 Hedgehog

Hedgehog is considered in this report due to the terminology of the planning condition. There was no evidence of hedgehog recorded during the PEA survey and there was no significant potential identified for the species to be present and at risk of impacts as a result of the proposals, due to an absence of suitable habitat types.

However, on a precautionary basis the following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- Excavations that could trap and/or injure hedgehogs will not be left uncovered overnight unless unavoidable. If this is the case, exit ramps (e.g. scaffold boards or similar) will be provided;
- Materials with the potential to cause harm to hedgehog, such as chemicals or sharp objects, will not be left overnight in places that can be accessed by the species; and
- Spot checks of the arrangements will be made by an ecologist at certain intervals, to inform the need for remedial measures.

2.6 Reptiles

Reptiles are considered in this report due to the terminology of the planning condition. There was no evidence of reptiles recorded during the PEA survey and there was no significant potential identified for the species of reptile to be present and at risk of impacts as a result of the proposals, since the site is dominated by made/bare ground, with an overall absence of suitable habitats.

However, on a precautionary basis it is recommended that the site clearance works take place during a period of warm/dry weather, to ensure that reptiles (if present) are able to naturally respond to disturbance.

3 Conclusions

To address condition 5, GreenLink Ecology Ltd. was commissioned to document mitigation measures for protected species.

Where relevant, appropriate measures have been discussed and agreed with the site owner/contractors, as detailed in this report and these will be implemented in due course.

This should therefore allow condition 5 to be discharged and facilitate the commencement of development on the site.

4 Disclaimer

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