Ecological Construction Environmental Management Plan (E-CEMP)

Durham Road, Sunderland

January 2024

Final Report

Report Prepared For:		**Project Ref:**	ECN21 169
Almscliffe Dhesi Developments LTD		**Prepared By:**	Alex Douglas BSc MSc CIEEM Qualifying
		Reviewed By:	Thomas R. Wilson BSc MSc Qualifying Member of CIEEM
		Authorised By:	Claire Snowball BSc MSc MCIEEM
		Date:	23rd January 2024

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Ecological Consultants

Document Control

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Field Investigations and Data

Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work. Where any data supplied by the client or from other sources have been used it has been assumed that the information is correct. No responsibility can be accepted by EcoNorth Ltd for inaccuracies in the data supplied by any other party.

Declaration of Compliance

"The information which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed within this document are our true and professional bona fide opinions."

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EcoNorth Ltd
11 Enterprise Court
Cramlington
Northumberland
NE23 1LZ

E: enquiries@econorth.co.uk
T: 01670 735 547
W: www.econorth.co.uk

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Summary

EcoNorth Ltd was commissioned by Almscliffe Dhesi Developments Ltd. via Inform Surveying Ltd. to produce an Ecological Construction Environmental Management Plan (E-CEMP) for the consented demolition of the former Farringdon Hall Police Station, and construction of a new retail park at Durham Road, Sunderland. The site comprises a large derelict building that was formerly a police station, and is surrounded by hardstanding, amenity grassland and a mixture of dense scrub and introduced ornamental shrub. A small patch of immature semi-natural broadleaved woodland is present to the south of the site.

Key ecological constraints of the site and works have been defined, and avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified through the documents submitted in support of the planning application. This E-CEMP sets out key working practices for the project to protect the ecological interests of the site and adjacent areas, with reference to current best working standards and previous project documentation.

Prior to the commencement of works, this E-CEMP will be submitted to and agreed to in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

EcoNorth were commissioned by Almscliffe Dhesi Developments Ltd. (herafter referred to as the client) to prepare an Ecological Construction Environmental Management Plan (E-CEMP) for the demolition and construction phases of the consented new retail development, with works set to commence in January 2024. This plan will focus on the protection of the ecological interests of the site and associated features and is informed by the recommended mitigation measures set out in section 7.1 of the approved Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoNorth 2022) and bat mitigation license issued by Natural England.

1.2 Scope of this Document

This E-CEMP has been developed to fulfil the requirements of Planning Condition 19 attached to application reference 22/00781/FU4, which states the E-CEMP should include:

a) risk assessment of potentially damaging demolition and construction activities

b) identification of biodiversity protection zones

c) practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements), including avoiding accidental entrapment of badger and hedgehog and measures to avoid direct impacts on nesting birds in structures or vegetation

d) the location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features

e) the times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works

f) responsible persons and lines of communication

g) the role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person

h) use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

According to Condition 19: “No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works and vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.”, and: “The CEMP (Biodiversity) should be informed by the recommended mitigation measures set out in section 7.1 of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoNorth 2022) and the measures included in any mitigation licence issued by Natural England (the requirements of which should take precedent). The CEMP (Biodiversity) should also be designed to complement the DCETMP required pursuant to Condition 3. The approved CEMP (Biodiversity) shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the demolition and construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA.”

The planned works comprise:

- soft stripping of the former 4-storey police station and associated cells and communal areas (where health and safety considerations allow)
- removal of asbestos-containing materials
- demolition of all structures
- removal of remaining slab to 300mm, foundations up to 1 metre and clearance of all deleterious materials
- construction of a new retail park on the site containing shop units and associated parking.

These works have potential to impact the surrounding environment, and this E-CEMP sets out protective measures to be implemented throughout the works period. The E-CEMP takes into account recommendations made within the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcoNorth 2022) and associated technical ecological reports submitted with the planning application.

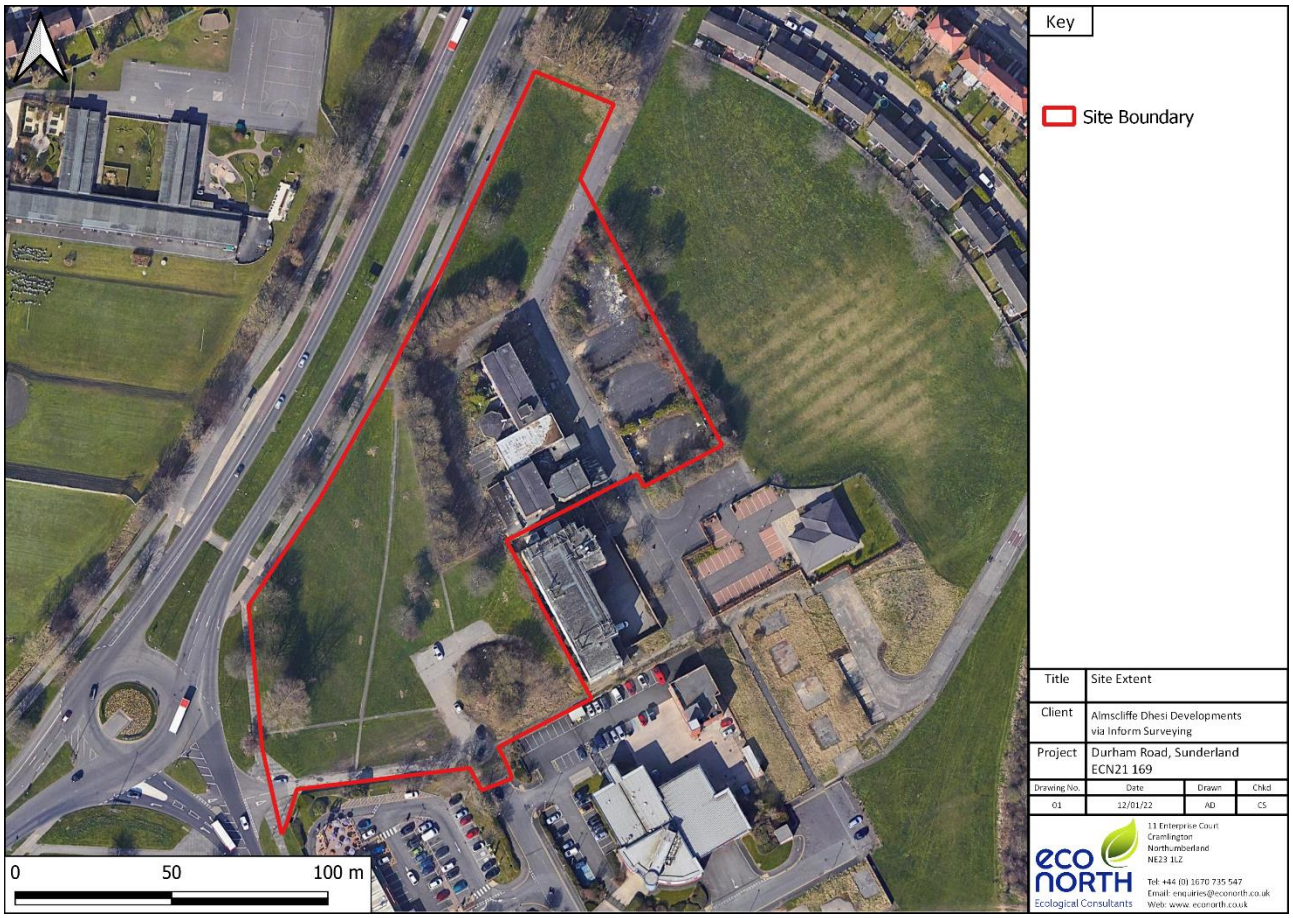
Once approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the E-CEMP will be adhered to and strictly implemented througout works during the construction period, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the LPA. This E-CEMP covers points a-h set out in Planning Condition 19, as detailed above.

2.0 Site Details

2.1 Site Context

The site lies approximately 3.5km southwest of Sunderland City Centre in a suburban area bordering the southern edge of Durham Road/A690. The site primarily comprises amenity grassland and hardstanding, and contains a multi-storey disused police station in a state of disrepair, following significant vandalism and a series of arson attacks. Silksworth Lakes lie approximately 150m southeast of the site boundary. Housing dominates the areas to the north, south and west, while Sunderland Freshwater Angling Club, Sunderland Athletic Club and Lakeside Park lie between 300-350m southeast. Figure 1 identifies the location and extent of the development site.

Figure 1: Indicative Site Location and Boundary



2.2 Nature of the Proposals

It is proposed to redevelop the site and construct five small and one large retail unit, as shown in Figure 2 below. The construction works are planned to include the demolition of all current structures and conversion of current amenity grassland (and smaller areas of other habitats) to hardstanding, built development, and more limited landscaped/grass verges. According to current proposals, a substantial landscape buffer zone to the north and biodiversity offsetting will be implemented.

Figure 2: Development Proposals

2.3 Baseline Conditions

2.3.1 Designated Sites

No statutory and three non-statutory sites designated for environmental importance were identified within 2km of the site boundary. Newport Dene and Tunstall Hill Sites of Nature Conservation Importance lie 1.23km and 1.4km east respectively of the site boundary, and are designated for their locally important base-rich woodland and wildlife corridors. Newport Railway Cutting Site of Nature Conservation Importance lies 1.27km southeast and is designated for its locally important wildlife corridor and Magnesian Limestone Grassland.

There will be no impacts on any of the current designated sites within 2km of the site based on the type and location of the works proposed and the nature of the intervening habitats, with no protective measures required as part of the development in relation to such sites.

2.3.2 Habitats

The site is dominated by sealed-surface developed land and modified grassland, with smaller areas of dense scrub, ruderal/ephemeral communities and a stand of young broadleaved woodland to the south. Lines of

trees and hedges, and scattered trees are also present. For further information on current site habitats, please refer to the site Biodiversity Management and Montioring Plan Report (EcoNorth 2023).

2.3.3 Protected and Notable Species

The potential presence of protected and notable species within the site and a suitable buffer zone were considered through the pre-planning works, to ensure potential impacts upon such species were appropriately addressed. Species considered to have the potential to utilize the site, and the key results of field surveys undertaken in support of the planning application are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of Protected and Notable Species Survey Results

Ecological Feature	Presence on Site	Ecological Value
Bats	One confirmed roost of 7 common pipistrelle and two potential roosts of single common pipistrelle were identified within the old police building during nocturnal bat activity surveys. Additionally, several features with a high suitability for bat roosting were located during the initial site visit, and habitats within the site provide moderate quality foraging and commuting opportunities. Mitigation will be required during demolition, as detailed in the license granted by Natural England	Parish
Birds	Locally common species my nest within trees, hedgerows and the old police building, and there are a variety of potential foraging opportunities within the site and wider area. During nesting bird season mitigation will be required. Due to the nesting behaviours of Feral Pigeons, it is recommended that mitigation is required outside of the standard nesting bird season.	Low - local
Badger	No signs of badger were recorded during the site surveys, though the species is known to be present within the wider area. Due to the levels of disturbance and suboptimal foraging habitats, regular badger presence is not considered to be likely.	Low
Hedgehog	Hedgehog are known to be present in the local area and have the potential to utilse the site at times throughout the year	Low - local
Invasive non-native Plants	Stands of cotoneaster and montbretia – both Schedule 9 invasive non-natives – were identified on the site, and will require appropriate avoidance and mitigation during the works period. Montbretia was present in hedgerows opposite the police station and cotoneaster was recorded across the site.	N/A

The potential presence of otter, water vole, reptiles and red squirrel were considered through the assessment however, the lack of suitable habitat within or adjacent to the site is considered to preclude any potential impacts upon these species, which are therefore not considered in this E-CEMP.

Two waterbodies were identified within 500m of the site, the closer of which is Silksworth Lake (c.200m southeast), which is used for fishing, minimizing the likelihood of the species being present; this fact, combined with the distance between the site and the nearest waterbodies, and the nature of the intervening habitats (which include a series of busy roads) makes it highly unlikely the species would be present on site or affected by the works. For this reason, great crested newt are also not considered further in this document.

3.0 Risk Assessment and Control Measures

3.1 Assessment of Risks to Ecological Features

A range of site-specific risks have been identified in relation to the planned construction works - some of which are common to multiple ecological receptors, while some are relevant to specific features. Key construction works with the potential for adverse ecological effects (in the absence of mitigation / control measures) comprise:

- Site mobilisation works, including establishing the site compound
- Soft stripping (asbestos removal) and demolition of the old police building
- Clearance of wider site, including woodland blocks, hedges, lines of trees and planned hardcore stockpile location to the rear of the police building
- Construction of new buildings and car park, though as these works will occur post-demolition/site clearance, impacts are considered likely to be lessened.

Key identified risks resulting from the above operations include:

- Vegetation removal
- Use of artificial lighting
- Movements of soil / materials, including sediment runoff and excess dust release
- Release of fuels / oils or other construction related chemicals
- Introduction or spread of invasive non-native species
- Harm or disturbance of protected or notable species

3.2 Control Measures to be Implemented

Control measures and mitigation for the above risks can be found in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Risk Control and Mitigation Table

Risk	Relevant Key Receptors	Control Measures	Rationale
Harm or disturbance of habitats and protected species during site set up	Woodland blocks Trees and Hedgerows	Pre-works toolbox talk for contractors Ecological impacts minimal as habitat to be removed anyway as part of proposed landscape plans, but any removal of vegetation that could house protected fauna should be inspected by a suitably qualified ECoW before felling	Toolbox talk and pre-felling inspection by ECoW will ensure no trees currently housing protected fauna are damaged or disturbed (e.g. bird nests), and that no invasive species are spread
Harm or disturbance of protected species during soft strip and demolition of old police building	Bats Birds	**All demolition works will take place under granted bat mitigation license 2023-66642-EPS-MIT** Pre-works toolbox talk for contractors Completion of pre-start checking surveys by ECoW, as far as practicable while staying a safe distance from asbestos/unsafe sections of the building ECoW presence during key works Works to cease and the ECoW to be consultaed in the event of any evidence of nesting activity being recorded in the structure Watching brief by contractors throughout the works	Toolbox talk and checking surveys (as far as practicable while staying a safe distance from asbestos within the building), prior to demolition works will minimise risk of harm or disturbance of protected species. ECoW will remain present during works to be on standby should any bats, birds or other protected species be disturbed or harmed, and to advise contractors where needed

Risk	Relevant Key Receptors	Control Measures	Rationale
Harm or disturbance of protected species during vegetation clearance	Birds Mammals	Pre-works toolbox talk for contractors Removal of vegetation that could house nesting birds should be inspected by a suitably qualified ECoW before felling/removal, if completed during the breeding season Vegetation works preferentially undertaken outside of the nesting bird season i.e. completed between October and February inclusive Watching brief for mammals during vegetation clearance works year-round	Checking surveys prior to works will ensure no active bird nests are present within the relevant area, with a watching brief undertaken by contractors year-round for protected and notable mammals

Risk	Relevant Key Receptors	Control Measures	Rationale
General works disturbance or harm	Protected and notable species	Pre-start checking surveys by ECoW as far as practicable while staying a safe distance from asbestos within the building, particularly before soft strip, demolition, plant movement or works in new areas	Identification of key receptors prior to works commencing allows stand off distances to be built in and risks to such species minimised
Introduction or spread of invasive non-native species	Habitats	Plant to be subject to appropriate wash down measures prior to entering site Implementation of an appropriate biosecurity protocol during the works Removal of Schedule 9 species by an appropriate licensed contractor, with arisings treated as controlled waste	By having all plant thoroughly washed down prior to entering site, the risk of such species being introduced or spread is minimised Removal of existing Scheule 9 species from the site minimises the risk of further spread during or following the works

Risk	Relevant Key Receptors	Control Measures	Rationale
Release of environmentally harmful fuels, oils or other chemicals	Habitats Protected and notable species	Following of best practice pollution prevention methods Refuelling of plant / vehicles only in designated areas Spill kits available on site at all times Minimum 30m stand off between all chemical use and surface run-off drains All chemicals (& empty containers) to be kept in locked boxes over 30m from surface run-off drains when not in use	Spillages will be contained terrestrially and won't be transferred to water environment Best practice methods minimise risk of pollution or adverse effects upon ecological receptors
Disturbance of protected species by on-site lighting	Nocturnal species, particularly bats	Use of artificial lighting will be kept to a minimum, with lighting only used at the time it is necessary and remaining limited to specific areas as required	Unnatural lighting can adversely affect nocturnal species – minimisation of artificial lighting will reduce potential for negative impact

Risk	Relevant Key Receptors	Control Measures	Rationale
Entrapment / harm of wildlife	Protected and notable species	All excavations to be covered overnight, or plank at no more than 45° installed, or one side cut to no more than a 45° angle to provide wildlife with a safe exit route All excavations to be checked for wildlife prior to works commencing each morning	Covering or closing such features minimises the risk of wildlife being trapped, while daily checks address the residual risk of species being harmed or entombed

4.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Communication

4.1 Key Roles

It is ultimately the responsibility of the site owner and project managers responsible for employing contractors completing the works to ensure the measures presented in this document are implemented. Table 3 indicates who is responsible for the completion of specific activities relating to the works.

Table 3: Responsibility for Key Tasks as Part of the E-CEMP

Task	Responsibility
Implementation of all measures contained within the E-CEMP	Site owner and Project Managers responsible for provision of contractors to undertake the works
Ecological site monitoring for protected species, including pre-start surveys	Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) / Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE)
Production of Natural England license applications and monitoring of license compliance	SQE
On-going watching brief for protected species	All contractors undertaking works on site

4.2 Communications

The Principal Contractor, as appointed by the Client, will ensure that all project staff comply with the requirements of this E-CEMP, and will be responsible for communicating the requirements of the document to all staff, contractors and sub-contractors as required. The Principal Contractor will also be responsible for liasing with project team members and the ECoW on environmental / ecological issues.

4.3 Role of the ECoW

An ECoW will be appointed to monitor compliance with the E-CEMP and associated requirements of the planning consent throughout the construction period. At this stage of the project, the ECoW is expected to be provided by EcoNorth Ltd, with any individual acting in the role of ECoW having the following qualifications or experience:

- The ECoW will hold a current valid CSCS card and be suitably experienced at working on construction sites and communicating with construction stage teams.
- The ECoW will hold a valid ecological or environmental degree and / or suitable equivalent experience and will hold membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecoogy and / or Environmental Management and/or the Association of Ecology and Environmental Clerk of Works (AEECOW)
- The ECoW will have suitable experience and knowledge of species and habitats which are relevant to this site.

A range of staff within EcoNorth Ltd hold this range of qualifications and experience; details of staff qualifications can be found on the company website Team - EcoNorth.

The ECoW is responsible for monitoring compliance with the E-CEMP, identifying ecological issues and providing contractors, supervisors and developers with advice and updates on impact mitigation, compensation or prevention measures, supervising sensitive works, and ensuring that toolbox talks are provided to contractors where necessary.

The ECoW should attend site on a routine basis and identify operations (in association with site managers) which require specific attendance; these will include but not be limited to:

- Pre-start checking surveys prior to any clearance works starting on site
- Pre-start inductions/toolbox talks required as part of the Natural England license for works with the potential to affect roosting bats
- Ongoing checking surveys prior to clearance works moving into each new area
- Monitoring works on any key ecological receptors identified, such as active bird nests.

The ECoW will provide feedback to the site manager(s) on site during each visit, including any notes on compliance with the E-CEMP and the identification of key requirements should any issues arise or features such as active nests be recorded.

4.4 Biodiversity Protection Zones

All plant / vehicles will remain a minimum of 5m from the edge of root protection zones (RPZ) of trees to be retained at all times, to minimise risk of incidental incursion of plant or construction into this area and damage of the tree. These areas will be clearly demarcated by the contractor if necessary, through the use of appropriate barriers for safety and environmental protection, which will ensure there are no vehicle movements or stockpiling of materials within the relevant RPZ of retained trees.

Any changes to engineering drawings etc. will immediately be passed on to the LPA and any other relevant organisartions as required.

5. References

- EcoNorth (2022). *EcIA & BNG Report: Durham Road Sunderland*.
- EcoNorth (2023). *Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan: Durham Road Sunderland*.