



ENVIRONMENT

Redhouse Estates Limited
Vicar's Croft, Conery Lan
Whatton

Ecological Construction Method
Statement (Biodiversity)

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March 2024

DOCUMENT ISSUE RECORD

Document Number:	VCW-BWB-ZZ-XX-RP-LE-0002_ECMS
BWB Reference:	232723-Ecological Construction Method Statement (Biodiversity)

Revision	Date of Issue	Status	Author:	Checked:	Approved:
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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Ecological Construction Method Statement (Biodiversity) (ECMS) has been produced on behalf of Redhouse Estates Ltd ('the Client') in respect of the proposed redevelopment of a barn, located at Vicar's Croft, Conery Lane, Whatton, Nottinghamshire ('the Site').
- 1.2 This ECMS is based upon previous survey and reporting conducted by Rachel Hacking Ecology (2020) and BWB Consulting Ltd (2023).
- 1.3 This ECMS has been produced to address 'planning condition 20' associated with planning application reference 21/01894/FUL, which states:

"Prior to the commencement of development an ecological construction method statement incorporating reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs), shall be submitted to and approved writing by the Local Planning Authority. It shall thereafter be implemented during the entire construction phase and shall include standard good practice points and those supplied by the consultant ecologist (including the relocation of the vacant owl box).

[To comply with Policy 17 (Biodiversity) of the Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and to comply with policies 1 (Development Requirements) and 38 (Non-Designated Biodiversity Assets and the Wider Ecological Network) of the Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies]."

- 1.4 It also includes a Method Statement to allow discharge of planning condition 10 which states:

"The conversion works shall only take place outside the month of September to avoid the bird nesting season. In the event that works are required to take place within this period, as advocated in the supporting ecological survey, all features with nesting potential must be checked by a suitably experienced ecologist within 48 hours prior to the removal of these features. Should the ecologist identify evidence of an active nest the nest and adjacent habitats/structures will be retained and buffered from disturbance until such a time as the ecologist confirms the chicks to have fledged or the nest is no longer in active use. The findings of the ecologist and details of commencement of works must in such instance be submitted to the Borough Council."

The Project

- 1.5 The redevelopment comprises the conversion of the existing barn to form a new dwelling with domestic curtilage. The steel-frame, brick walls and existing slab floor in the barn will be retained wherever possible, with a new external steel frame erected outside of the current barn with a new external façade of brickwork, timber cladding, doors and windows. The roof will also be replaced.
- 1.6 The current proposals are for construction to commence in Spring 2024, with an anticipated duration of 9-10 months. Site clearance is expected to be minimal, with the

exception of a small number of self-seeded whips to allow for ground levelling and the majority of the construction work will take place within and immediately adjacent to the existing footprint of the barn.

Location

- 1.7 The Site is located at Vicars Croft, Conery Lane, Whatton, centred at National Grid reference 473139, 338169.
- 1.8 The approximate location of the Site is shown below in **Figure 1.1**. The red line boundary presented in Figure 1.1 is indicative and not true to scale.



Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan

Existing Site - Habitats

- 1.9 The existing barn is formed of a brick-built structure with a corrugated metal barrel roof. It has an open canopy section at the north end, used for the storage of machinery, and a small lean-to building/shelter at the southern end. There were several large wooden sliding doors.

- 1.10 The habitats surrounding the barn comprised primarily bare ground, with areas of modified grassland and scattered trees and scrub around the perimeters.

Existing Site - Species

- 1.11 The barn was considered to have potential for roosting bats and nesting birds.
- 1.12 A single common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat was found to be roosting within a crevice between the roof and wall top of the lean-to.
- 1.13 No other protected or notable species were considered likely to be present.
- 1.14 An owl box was located within the main section of the barn, although this showed no evidence of use and there were no obvious access points for owls into this part of the building.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Table 2.1 shows the potential risks during the construction phase and the proposed control measures. Control measures will be discussed in greater detail further into the report.

Table 2.1: Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Significant Hazard	Pre-control Likelihood	Pre-control Severity	Control Measures	Post-control Likelihood	Post-control Severity	Risk
Bats						
Risk of direct harm to bats present within their roost and/o damage to roos	4	4	Appropriate licensing and mitigation will be in place before any works	2	4	8
Risk of foraging and commuting bats disturbed during night works	2	4	Avoidance of any lightworks on the Biodiversity Protection Zones	1	4	4
Nesting Birds						
Risk to breeding birds during any vegetation clearance including ground clearance	3	4	Conduct clearance and building demolition works only completed following nesting bird survey by ecologist	1	4	4
Retained Habitats						
Damage to retained habitat from, e.g., movement of plant, storage of materials, excavations, etc	2	3	Installation of exclusion fencing to ensure root protection zones observed. No storage of materials, equipment, or plant within this zone. Best practice guidelines to be followed to ensure pollution prevention measures are adhered to.	1	3	3
Key:						
Low Risk		Moderate Risk		High Risk		

3. MEASURES TO AVOID OR REDUCE IMPACTS DURING SITE CLEARANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

3.1 The following impacts and associated mitigation measures are relevant and protected or notable species identified to be present at the Site or potentially present at the Site which could be impacted by the Site clearance and vegetation clearance works.

Habitats

3.2 The habitats to be retained within the Site include the northern boundary hedgerow and the existing coniferous trees adjacent to the current Site access.

3.3 The retained habitats will be fenced where reasonably practicable using Heras fencing or similar which will remain in place for the duration of the construction works at the Site. An example of the fencing to be installed is shown in **Figure 3.1** below.

3.4 No works will take place within these zones, and they will not be entered at any time by personnel, plant, or equipment. There will be no vegetation clearance within these zones without the supervision of an Ecologist and no storage of any materials.

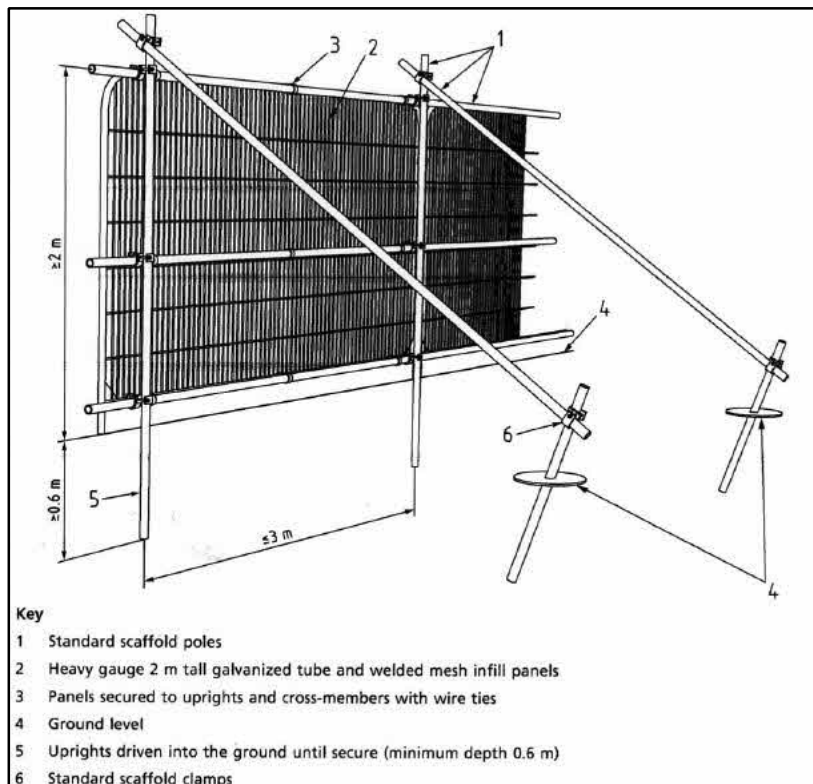


Figure 3.1: Example Protection Fencing

3.5 Best practice guidelines will be followed to ensure pollution prevention measures are always adhered to which should include a dust management plan produced by the contractor. This should include the provision of dedicated plant and equipment refuelling areas on hard standings away from existing habitats, wheel washing facilities,

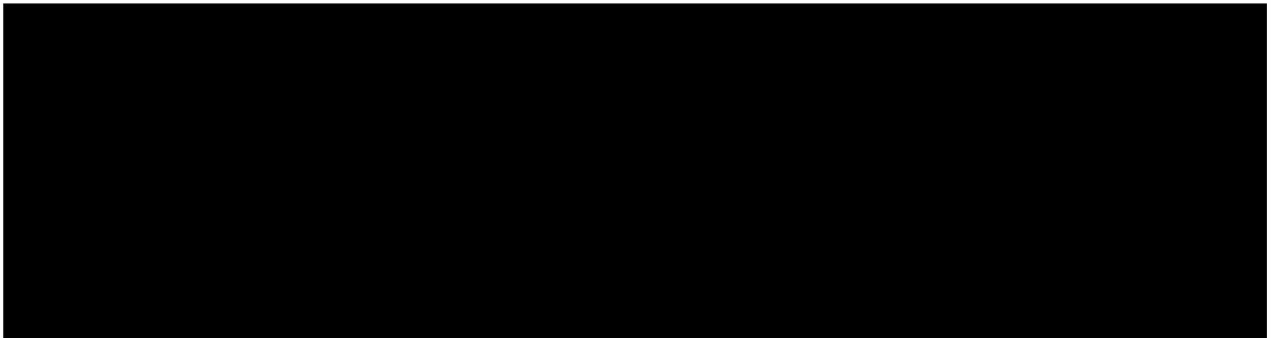
the use of machinery with the lowest noise levels practical for the required task, suppression of dust, and appropriate storage of all materials, particularly any chemicals required.

Bats

- 3.6 A confirmed common pipistrelle day roost is present within the lean-to on the south-east side of the building. The roost is located within a single rooting feature, between the roof and wall-top and there was no evidence to suggest a larger roost was present. A Natural England licence will be obtained prior to the work in this section of the building, which is due to be towards the end of the construction period. Due to its isolation from the main barn and the absence of any other roosts, it is considered that construction in the main barn can continue as planned, with a Precautionary Method of Working provided in **Appendix 1** to ensure legal compliance.
- 3.7 Any lighting utilised during the construction phase of the development or post-development should follow best practice guidelines outlined in Bats and Artificial Light at Night (2023). This will include ensuring there is no light spill over 0.2lux on roosting features and potential foraging habitats, including the retained hedgerow and trees and any new hedgerows or trees, to maintain suitable foraging and commuting routes.

Nesting birds

- 3.8 A Precautionary Method of Working has been provided in **Appendix 2** to outline the measures that will be taken to protect nesting birds during the construction phase.
- 3.9 Although work is commenced to start in April, which is within the bird nesting period, no construction work will be undertaken until a nesting bird survey has been completed by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE).
- 3.10 Active nests found at any time will remain unaffected, with an appropriate species-specific buffer around the nest until all chicks have fledged.



4. POST-DEVELOPMENT BIODIVERSITY PROVISIONS

- 4.1 The scheme will incorporate a number of measures to enhance biodiversity within the context of the Site, as detailed below.
- 4.2 Prior to the onset of construction, the ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to all contractors outlining the protective measures for habitats, bats and birds.

Habitats

- 4.3 The completed development will include a new paved driveway -landscaped seating/patio areas adjacent to the main doorways, and landscaped garden areas to the remainder of the area. Structural landscaping will comprise a mix of native trees, hedgerow and shrubs, with the exact species agreed between the ecologist and landscape architect.

Bats

- 4.4 As part of the licensing requirements for the known bat roost, replacement roosting features suitable for pipistrelle bats will be provided. Given the low conservation status of the roost and the small number of bats present (one individual bat) bat boxes will be sufficient to ensure the favourable conservation status of this species.
- 4.5 Bat boxes can be attached to the adjacent retained building and the retail storage/vehicle shed in the north-west corner. A total of three bat boxes are proposed, utilising woodcrete materials due to their longer lifespan. Schwegler 2F or similar boxes will be positioned south or south-west facing, over 2m in height and with an unobstructed flight route. These will be micro-sited by the ecologist.
- 4.6 No potential access points for bats are anticipated within the newly constructed building itself.

Nesting Birds

- 4.7 A mixture of bird boxes will be provided within the post-development scheme. These will be north or north-east facing, with clear flight lines and away from potential perches for predators. At least one box with a 26mm entrance hole, one box with a 32mm entrance hole and one open-fronted box will be installed to cater for the common garden species known to be present.
- 4.8 At least one house sparrow terrace will also be installed on the retained buildings within the Site.
- 4.9 The existing owl box will be relocated to the retained storage/vehicular building. The box will be micro-sited by the ecologist and will be located so as to be away from potential disturbance and with clear flight lines. The condition of the box will be checked prior to its relocation and if required, a replacement box will be used.

5. REFERENCES

British Standards Institution (2013) BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development. BSI Standards Ltd, London.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night – Guidance Note 08/23.

Rachel Hacking Ecology (2020) Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey at Vicars Croft, Conery Lane, Whatton, Nottingham.

Appendix 1: Precautionary Method of Working – Bats

PRECAUTIONARY METHOD OF WORKING: BATS

Purpose and Objectives

This PMW has been produced to provide guidance during the work in the lean-to (north-west), before a Bat Mitigation Licence is in place to ensure work is undertaken in such a manner as to minimise the chances of an offence being committed under UK or European legislation.

This PMW does not cover any work to the lean-to, which will be covered under the aforementioned licence, once this is in place.

It is considered that due to the nature of the works and the status and location of the bat roost, the initial work can commence following a PMW, as the works are not likely to contravene legislation.

Prevention of Harm to Bats and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The measures below should be adhered to at all times during the intervention during any site preparation. The ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to any on-Site contractors prior to the onset of works to ensure the contents are understood.

Prior to any work starting onsite, all construction personnel will sign to confirm that they have read and understood this PMW.

Work must not take place within the vicinity of the bat roost location to minimise disturbance. Work on the side of the building where the roost is located (western elevation of lean-to on south-east of building) should be planned such that any storage or disposal of materials is not directly beneath or adjacent to the roost and passage of materials, machinery, or other vehicles adjacent to the roosting location is minimised. Protective fencing should be installed in this location to prevent accidental transgression. The lean-to should not be used as regular access.

Works should utilise machines with the lowest level of noise/vibration.

Any lighting installed must not directly illuminate the bat roosting feature or the habitats immediately adjacent to it.

Should bats be discovered at any point during the development, all works must cease immediately, and the ecologists listed below should be contacted in the first instance.

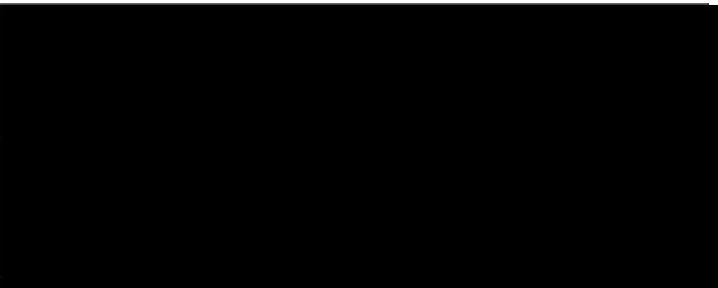
Contractors are prohibited from handling bats discovered during the development process, unless it is necessary to preserve the life of the bat, and any bats discovered must be left in-situ where practicably possible and a licenced ecologist consulted on any further action. In the unlikely event that a bat must be handled, gloves must be worn.

In the event of discovery of an injured bat the local bat group or the Bat Conservation Trust should be contacted immediately for advice. The Bat Conservation Trust Bat Helpline can be contacted on 0345 1300 228 in the case of an emergency query in relation to an injured or grounded bat.

A hard copy of this Precautionary Method of Works will be available at all times on Site.

Ecologist Contact Details

The ecologist's contact details should be retained with this precautionary method of works on Site at all times, and an ecologist should be contacted as above with any queries relating to bats on Site.

Sarah Stone (Associate Ecologist)	
Chris Grocock (Principal Ecologist)	

Appendix 2: Precautionary Method of Working – Nesting Birds

PRECAUTIONARY METHOD OF WORKING: NESTING BIRDS

Purpose and Objectives

Condition 10 of planning permission 21/01894/FUL requires a nesting bird survey to be undertaken prior to any demolition or construction work undertaken during the nesting bird season. As works are proposed to commence in April 2024, this survey will be required. Habitats suitable for nesting birds will not be affected, with the exception of the building, which will form the basis of the methods detailed below.

This Method Statement sets out the steps that will be taken, in order that the Local Planning Authority can discharge this condition.

All nesting birds, their eggs and nests receive protection from harm when they are in use under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Survey Methodology

A Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) will attend the Site within the 48 hours prior to the commencement of works. They will have binoculars available for use, as appropriate.

The SQE will attend in the morning, as this is the time when most nesting behaviour of common garden species likely to be present at this Site is observed. They will walk the Site, including inside the buildings, to look for potential nests. They will then spend a period of time observing the building and surrounding habitat for signs of nesting, such as carrying nesting material, singing or pairs of birds. Any potential areas of interest will be investigated, with the SQE also listening for alarm calling. This will be repeated for other areas of the building not visible from the first vantage point, until all areas of the building have been observed. The SQE will spend at least 30 minutes observing each section.

If any active nests are found, these will be highlighted to the contractors. The SQE will mark the nesting location on Site, using appropriate materials, such as hazard tape or spray paint. An appropriate buffer zone will be assigned, based on the species present, their potential access/exit points and the nature of the work in that area. Works within the buffer and/or directly affecting the nest will only be undertaken once the ecologist has confirmed that the nest is no longer active. This will be done by repeating the survey process outlined above.

