Green
Environmental
Consultants

THE OLD FOX
25 FOX STREET
GREAT GRANSDEN
SANDY
SG19 3AA

BIODIVERSITY METHOD STATEMENT

December 2024

for:

Martin Hewett

Report number: 1593/3

Green Environmental Consultants Ltd

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[redacted]

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BIODIVERSITY METHOD STATEMENT

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24/01235/HHFUL

BIODIVERSITY METHOD STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report and Background

This report has been prepared by Green Environmental Consultants Limited on behalf of Mr Martin Hewett and relates to a small plot within the garden of the Old Fox, 25 Fox Street, Great Gransden, Sandy, SG19 3AA, at Ordnance Survey grid reference TL 27102 56018; ///puff.call.chitchat.

The project is to provide a new garden outbuilding attached to an existing small brick building. The out-building is to be located within the mature garden of number 25 Fox Street, and partially located on existing hard-standing. As the project is modest, the impact area is confined within a small area of garden adjacent to the existing outbuilding and on one boundary.

This Biodiversity Method Statement (BMS) addresses the requirements of Condition 5 of planning permission 24/01235/HHFUL. Condition 5 states:

> '*No development above slab level shall take place until a Biodiversity Method Statement, which provides details of how all the recommendations and enhancements (sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.4) contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment received by the Local Planning Authority on 11/07/2024 will be carried out, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include but not be limited to; specification, location, timing, an implementation programme, maintenance, and monitoring. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details*.'

The report is written by Jacqui Green BSc (Hons), MSc, CEcol, FCIEEM who has considerable experience in compiling such documents.

1.2 Aims of the Biodiversity Method Statement

This BMS seeks to protect and enhance on-site biodiversity in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and in accordance with Condition 5 of the planning permission. This will be achieved by implementing the development in accordance with the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures set out in sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment, namely:

1. Reasonable Risk Avoidance Measures for birds, bats and Great Crested Newts.
2. Appropriate lighting mitigation.
3. Enhancements. None were recommended, as being unnecessary in a mature garden, and the outbuilding being unsuitable for integrated or external boxes. But suggestions are included within this document for implementation if desired.

2 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES METHODOLOGY

2.1 Site Clearance and Construction Phase Working Practices

2.1.1 Protected Species

A copy of this report should be retained on Site during the course of the clearance and construction work. All Site operatives should be made aware of its contents where it is relevant to the tasks they are undertaking.

Prior to the commencement of work each day, a brief site walkover and check of excavations will be undertaken by construction personnel to ensure no protected species have entered the construction site overnight.

Bats

The existing outbuilding was considered to have nil to negligible potential for bats, but care should be taken when accessing the roof tiles or internally.

Should protected species (primarily bats, Great Crested Newts) be found during site clearance or construction, work will stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist (SQE) will be contacted immediately for advice. Protected species should not be handled unless they are an immediate and unavoidable danger*. If this arises, then the ecologist should be contacted immediately, and the animal secured in a secure ventilated container and stored in a shady location prior to release by the ecologist. [*Bats should only ever be handled with gloves, taking care not injure the animal but also to avoid being bitten].

Great Crested Newts

The project is covered by a District Level Licence which derogates offences to this protected species. Nevertheless care should be taken and any potential places of shelter searched carefully by hand. If any animals are found they may be moved to a place of safety further away in the garden. If multiple animals are found the project ecologist should be contacted for advice.

Note:- any sightings and/or moving of Great Crested Newts must be recorded as this information must be supplied to Natural England at the end of the project.

2.1.2 Other Biodiversity Species

All species of bird are offered protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 when nesting or preparing nests (typically, but not exclusively between March and August inclusive). As such, removal of vegetation should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season (so, between September and February inclusive) so as to avoid disturbing or destroying active nests. Should this time frame be unfeasible, it is recommended that prior to the commencement of works, a nesting bird check is carried out by the SQE (although checks at all times of year are recommended). If active nests are observed, vegetation will need to be left alone until the SQE is satisfied that the young have successfully fledged. As with vegetation clearance, any works to buildings should consider the potential for nesting birds to be present, and appropriate timing applied. The building should be checked prior to works commencing to establish if birds are making regular visits to it. If nesting activity is present, then works should be suspended until after young birds have fledged.

Where grass is present, it will be maintained as short-mown throughout the pre-works period to ensure that it does not become a favourable habitat for species that may later be

harmed. When strimming longer vegetation, extreme care should be taken not to harm Hedgehogs and amphibians, and in all cases, the area should be checked before cutting commences. Once cut short, these areas should be maintained as short swards.

2.1.3 Clearance of Debris and Timber and Rubble Piles

During the clearance of materials around the Site such as debris, timber and rubble piles, care should be taken by checking these before moving to ensure that wildlife is not seeking refuge or hibernating (particularly Hedgehogs). Ideally, piles of stones/logs should be dismantled by hand rather than by machine. Dismantling should not be undertaken during winter when it is suspected the Hedgehogs or Great Crested Newts might be present.

It is advisable that only building products to be used immediately are brought and stored on the site. If building products need to be stored e.g., overnight or for a few days, they should be stored on palettes or retained in bags on palettes to ensure that refuges are not created that will attract wildlife. Where possible, they should be placed on hard standings.

All excavations created during construction should be filled in and finished on the same day so as not to leave traps into which animals might fall. If this is unavoidable, then an escape route must be provided from the hole, which can be in the form of a ramp; or the hole is entirely covered by a heavy sheet or slab flush to the surrounding ground and without holes at the sides so to exclude amphibians from crawling beneath.

Security and work floodlighting should only be used where necessary to avoid any potential detrimental impacts during construction on commuting bats. These lights should not continually illuminate boundary vegetation during hours of darkness. The principles outlined below and set out in the Institute of Lighting Professional's Guidance Note should also be applied to construction phase lighting.

2.2 Scheme Lighting

Although it is understood that no new external lighting is proposed, the following is included in case there is any intention at a later date, to add security or footpath lighting.

The general principles of external lighting can be summarised as follows:

To ensure detrimental lighting impacts on bats using the Site are avoided, there will be limited increased light spillage onto the surrounding boundary habitats. Lighting will be restricted to the lowest level of illumination required for safety and security and only where needed. The following measures will be implemented within the lighting scheme:

- New column-mounted luminaires, lighting bollards, and wall-mounted luminaires should be selected, sited, and angled such that they do not spill unnecessary light onto areas where illumination is not required so that there is no significant increased light trespass on to existing nocturnally dark habitats where bats forage and commute.
- Ensure new LED luminaires have dimming capability, a warm white spectrum (ideally less than 2700, but below 3500 Kelvin) with peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm and with no UV output.
- Where security lamps are used, these should use a trigger to illuminate them (e.g., passive infra-red detector) and switch off after a short period (ideally 1 minute), rather than remaining on all night, and generally, lights should be switched off when not required.

Further guidance is available in Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (ILP 2023)[1].

3 ENHANCEMENTS

3.1 Boxes

The new and retained outbuildings are not suitable for boxes, but if desired a single bird box might be attached to a mature tree elsewhere in the garden. A cavity box with 28mm or 32mm hole would be suitable, attached away from branches (to protect from cats).

3.2 Insect Hotels

A small insect hotel could be provided in a sunny, south facing, location, attached to a fence or similar structure. Insect hotels are available from many specialist (eg www.nhbs.com) and generalist (eg National Trust) websites or garden centres.

3.3 Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are likely to be present in the mature gardens of Fox Street and neighbouring areas. Secure boundary fencing prohibits movement between gardens which is critical for their survival. Although the boundaries are already fenced, it is recommended that the opportunity be taken to investigate locations for provision of Hedgehog holes in these fences (except along road boundaries). They only need to be 13 x 13 cm holes, at ground level. Where appropriate, adjacent neighbours should be approached to agree to Hedgehog corridor hole provision.

4 TIMESCALES

Work is projected to commence in January 2025. This is within the period recommended for avoidance of ground works where hibernating animals might be present. However, on the advice of the project ecologist, piles of stored materials near the existing out-building and within or close to the construction area have already been removed, thus eliminating this potential issue. No hibernating animals (at ground level or bats) are anticipated to be present. However, should any be encountered, the advice at 2.1.1, to contact a Suitably Qualified Ecologist, applies.

Given the small scale of the development and consequent short timescale, a detailed timetable is not required for this project.

The suggested enhancements do not require maintenance or monitoring.

1 Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023). *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*. Guidance Note GN08/23.