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Biodiversity Enhancement Method Statement

March 2025

Tilbrook Mill Kennels, High Street, Tilbrook, Huntingdon PE28 0LH

Planning Ref: 24/00591/FUL

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This Biodiversity Enhancement Method Statement report has been produced by Seagrave Developments Ltd. to support the redevelopment and change of use of site from boarding kennels (sui generis) to residential (C3) comprising the erection of 5no. dwellinghouses (1no. 3 bed, 3no. 4 bed, and 1no. 5 bed), provision of modified vehicular access, landscaping and ancillary development.

This document outlines mitigation for protected species of fauna and flora as well as targeted enhancement measures. It also includes the correct management and remedial responsibilities, should they be necessary. It will be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council with regards to condition 17 of the approved planning application 2024/2443/FULL which is as follows:
"In line with the Ecological Survey by AA Environmental Limited (AAe) dated 2nd September 2022 and the Bat survey August 2022, prior to the demolition of building B1 a European Protected Species Licence will need to be obtained from Natural England, and any works undertaken in accordance with this licence. No development above slab level shall take place until a Biodiversity Method Statement which provides details of how the recommendations contained in the Ecological Survey by AA Environmental Limited (AAe) dated 2nd September 2022 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 prescribed mitigation measures described within this document will be issued to relevant works contractors to ensure that they are carried out in full.

1.2 Background to the Proposed Development

The site is located at Tilbrook Mill Kennels, High Street, Tilbrook, Huntingdon PE28 0LH. The central grid reference for the site is TL 069693 and covers approximately 0.4 of a hectare. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

The site currently comprises 5no. kennels with well-maintained grass areas previously used as exercise paddocks. The proposed development includes the demolition of these kennels, the construction of 5no. new residential plots (see Figure 2), and all associated hard and soft landscaping works. The existing access into the site will be retained.



Figure 1. A site location plan (extent of site outlined in red).



Figure 2. Proposed site plan for the residential development.

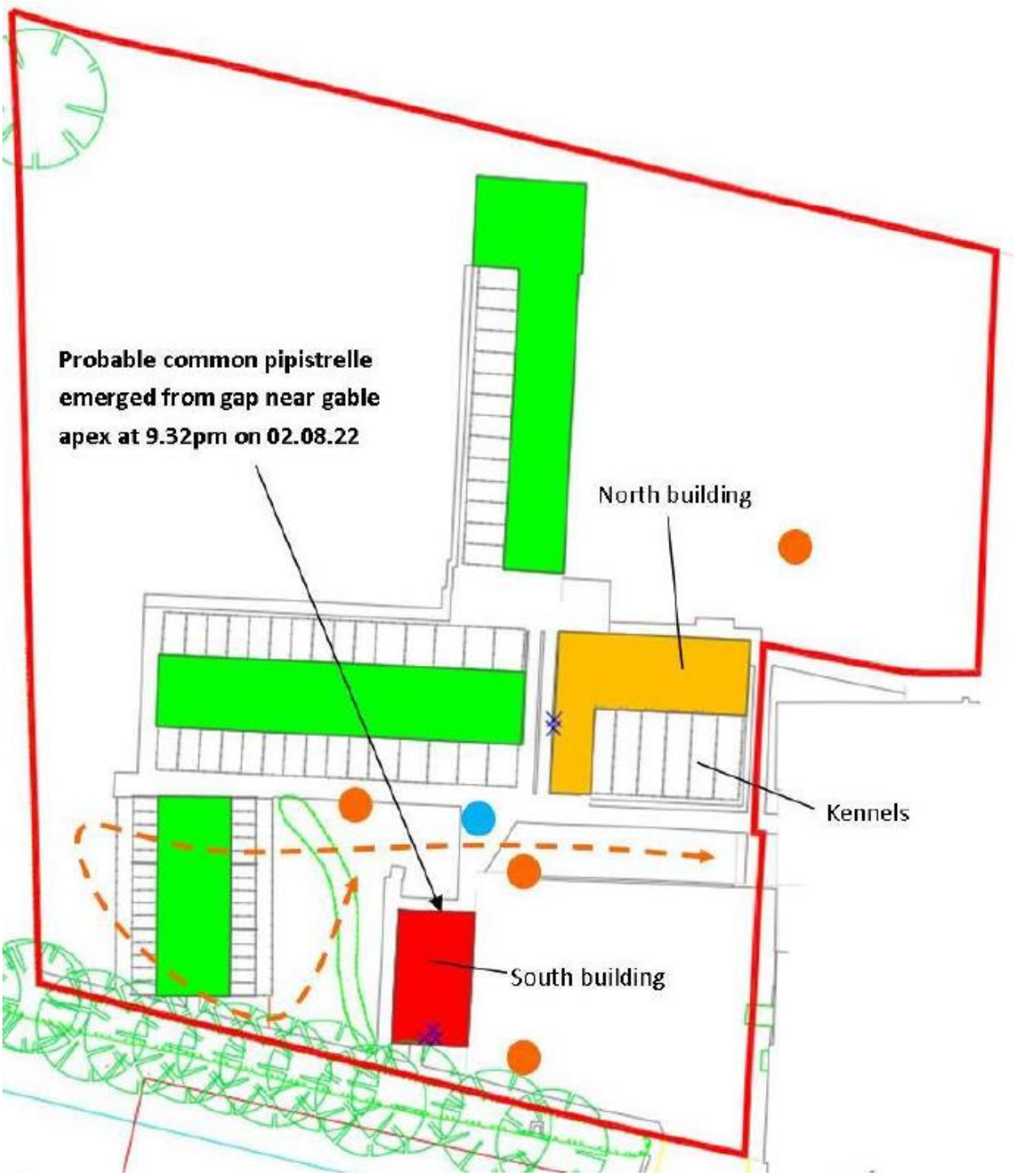


Figure 3. Additional Bat Survey Annotated Plan (Red building; confirmed bat roost. Orange building; no droppings found internally but very low roof access, unable to access. Droppings found externally.)

2 Demolition / Construction Phase Mitigation Measures

2.1 Bats

The original additional bat surveys (completed August 2022) confirmed that there is a bat roost in the Southernmost existing building (see figure 3, depicted in red). As this is due to be demolished along with the other kennels, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) application to Natural England will be submitted via Philip Irving, Ecological Consultant. He will also undertake two new bat surveys with the 13th May 2025 and 10th June 2025 booked in as provisional dates, due to the originals now being outdated for the application.

In order to provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats during demolition and construction works, 2no. bat boxes (2no. Schwegler type 2F or similar) will be installed onto suitable trees within the site.



Figure 4. Schwegler type 2F bat box

Prior to the demolition works, the Southernmost existing building will be carefully re-checked by a licensed bat worker / accredited agent for any roosting bats. The removal of the roof covering will be carried out under the supervision of a licensed bat worker / accredited agent and carried

out under a soft strip protocol. Although there are considered to be no seasonal constraints the works will not be completed if the day-time temperature drops below 6°C to avoid encountering bats in a state of torpor.

- All site operatives will be given a toolbox talk on the possibility of encountering bats and the legal protection they and their roosts are afforded. The Toolbox Talk (Appendix A) is included at the end of this method statement.
- Initial works will be carried out with great care. All roof covering will be lifted and removed by hand, lifting each panel and checking underneath before being stacked or discarded., as bats sometimes cling the underside of materials.
- A similar soft strip of other features that the bats can utilise for roosting (such as lead flashing and soffits/fascias) will be completed.

Should any bats be encountered during this initial check and soft strip, they will be caught by hand by the licensed bat worker/accredited agent and placed in a bat bag. The bat will then be placed in one of the bat boxes already installed on site. The box will have the hole loosely blocked with a piece of cloth to prevent premature flight, which will be removed at dusk to allow any bats to move off after dark. The box will be checked the following day for any bats. Should any injured or severely underweight bats be located, remedial measures will be taken, including seeking appropriate care of the bat and providing additional food in the form of mealworms.

2.2 Nesting Birds

All species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Site clearance will where possible be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season which in general runs from March to August inclusive. Where this is not possible, a check will be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

2.3 Vegetation Protection

To protect any established vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused by the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches will be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should confirm to current industry best practice BS 3998:2010 ‘Tree Work – Recommendations’.

3 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

3.1 Enhancements for Bats

To provide enhanced/replacement roosting opportunities for bats once the works have been completed, four multichambered bat boxes (RSPB Burford Bat Box, or equivalent) will be installed at suitable locations on the new site, within existing and retained trees and tall shrubbery where practicable. These will be installed in accordance with BCT guidance; in sunny aspects facing

South and West to provide a range of warm conditions. The boxes will be installed as high as possible to avoid predators such as cats, they will be sheltered from strong winds, and away from artificial light sources.



Figure 5. RSPB Burford Bat Box

3.2 Enhancements for Nesting Birds

To provide a net positive benefit for birds within the development, the installation of 2no. swallow boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat. The multichambered “Schwegler 1SP Nest Box - Sparrow Terrace” bird boxes (see Figure 5) would be suitable. These will be installed in accordance with RSPB guidance; the bird boxes will be positioned facing North or East and approximately 3m above ground level. They will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.



Figure 6. Schwegler 1SP Nest Box - Sparrow Terrace

3.3 Planting Enhancements

To provide a net positive benefit for general wildlife within the development, a soft landscaping scheme and planting schedule has been produced by Seagrave Developments for planting to the front and rear of the new plots. Though Seagrave Developments will aim to use native species, where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife will be used. Flowering plants will be prioritised. The shrub species' names, size, total numbers and specific locations are detailed on the attached Soft Landscaping Plan (Appendix B). Multiple new Field Maple and Common Oak trees are to be installed and established in rear gardens as well.

3.4 Boundary Treatment Enhancements

The proposed boundary treatment will be designed to promote permeability of the site, to minimise fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site. Seagrave Developments will retain the existing post and rail fencing around the perimeter of the site as per the approved site plan, strengthen and enhance the existing boundary vegetation by planting new hedgerows. Where close-board fencing is required for security, these will be minimised and raised slightly off the ground (150-200mm) to allow animals to pass underneath.

3.5 Lighting Enhancements

Any new lighting to be introduced will be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution and will not be directed onto any bird/bat boxes installed.

4 Post-Construction Management Plan

4.1 Roosting Bats and Breeding Birds

Bat boxes should only be maintained by a suitably qualified/licensed ecologist, as they may support roosting bats. Sparrow terraces and the Barn Owl nest box should be emptied of nesting material in winter (legally between 1st September and 31st January) to prevent the build-up of parasites. Be aware that Barn Owls with second broods may be using the box into October / November and cleaning should not take place until the birds have fledged.

Appendix A: Encountering Bats Toolbox Talk

AAe
Environmental Consultants

TOOLBOX TALK:
BATS

Key Contacts

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX

Tel: 01235 536042

Did you know?

- Bats are the worlds only flying mammal.
- There are 17 species of bat known to be breeding in the UK, 6 of which are endangered or rare and 6 are classed as vulnerable.
- Bats can be found across the country in urban and rural locations.
- They are often sighted at dusk as they leave their roost, flying around hedgerows, woodland and waterbodies, feeding on insects.
- Throughout the year bats will often change their roost, depending upon the season.
- Usually a pregnant female will only have one baby a year, this makes colonies vulnerable to population decline.
- During the winter bats hibernate and may not wake up, even if disturbed. Therefore it's important not to work on sites with bats during these months.
- Bats may not use the same roost throughout the year, however they are legally protected with or without a bat occupying them.

Identification

- You may find bats in any number of places, they tend to prefer dark, quiet spots with good shelter, such as holes and cracks in trees, roofs and walls of buildings, under bridges, old tunnels and in caves.
- Signs of bat presence include discarded moth wings, staining around crevices and small mouse like droppings which crumble easily.

Legislation

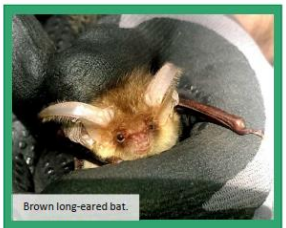
- All bats and their roosts are protected by UK and European Law. This makes it **illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats** or obstruct access to, damage or destroy their roosts and protects important feeding areas from damage or disturbance.
- Under law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Site Controls

- There is always a **risk** that bats, as they move between different roost sites and occupy new roosts, could be encountered during site works.
- **If any bats are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**

1. If bats are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately** with any bat left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
2. If any injured bats are found during the works AAe would care for them and where possible be released in the same location once recovered.
3. During works staff must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with bats.
4. Any roof tiles will be lifted straight up, rather than being rolled over, minimising the risk of harming bats which may be sheltering underneath.
5. Areas must be fully checked for any bats or their evidence prior to filling any gaps and repointing any brickwork.
6. Any lighting must be installed must avoid illuminating vegetation and or bat boxes/access points.

These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You're not expected to be able to identify bats or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**


Brown long-eared bat.


Lesser horseshoe bat in rail tunnel.


Common pipistrelle bat.

Appendix B: Soft Landscaping Plan

