

ONE HORTON HEATH

One Horton Heath

Chalcroft Demolition: Barn Owl Method Statement

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

This Method Statement (MS) relates to the protection of barn owl *Tyto alba* during demolition works associated with the One Horton Heath development. As such, it should be read in conjunction with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for Chalcroft Farm, Burnetts Lane – One Horton Heath (Feb 2022).

1.2 PLANNING CONDITION

The Pre-commencement condition for Building A6 at Chalcroft Farm, part of the One Horton Heath development, states:

No works for Building A6 shall take place (including any demolition, ground works, site clearance) until a method statement for the protection of barn owls has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the method statement shall include the:

- a) *Purpose and objectives of the proposed works*
- b) *Detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) necessary to avoid the killing, injury or disturbance of barn owls;*
- c) *Extent and location of proposed works shown on appropriate scale maps and plans;*
- d) *Timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of construction;*
- e) *Persons responsible for implementing the works;*

The works should be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

The agreed works shall be fully implemented during the course of any construction works and any mitigation measures thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development

1.3 LEGISLATION

Barn owls are protected as a rare breeding bird on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to disturb the active nests of barn owls, this includes when they are making a nest, occupying a nest or have chicks still dependent on the nest for survival. Barn owls can breed at any time of the year in the UK, although the main nesting season is March to August. Any offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is punishable by up to a £5000 fine per individual animal impacted and up to 6 months in prison.

It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or take (handle) any wild barn owl.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy any wild barn owl nest whilst in use.
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild barn owl egg.
- Have in one's possession or control a wild barn owl (dead or alive), or egg (unless one can show that it was obtained legally).
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild barn owl whilst it is 'building' a nest or whilst it is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependent young of wild barn owls.

It is important to note that barn owls are only protected against disturbance whilst at or near a nest containing eggs or young. There is no legal definition of 'near' but Natural England advice¹ states that this normally approximates to within the same building or just outside or, in the case of a tree nest, within approximately 30 metres. There is also no legal definition of 'disturbance', but the same advice states that:

"...what disturbs barn owls is the unexpected. Thus, normal, frequent and regular human, animal or machinery activity within the same building as an occupied nest may not be disturbing to the birds. Conversely, any unexpected prolonged and/or noisy work within the building or close by may be extremely disturbing to the birds and pose a major threat to breeding success."

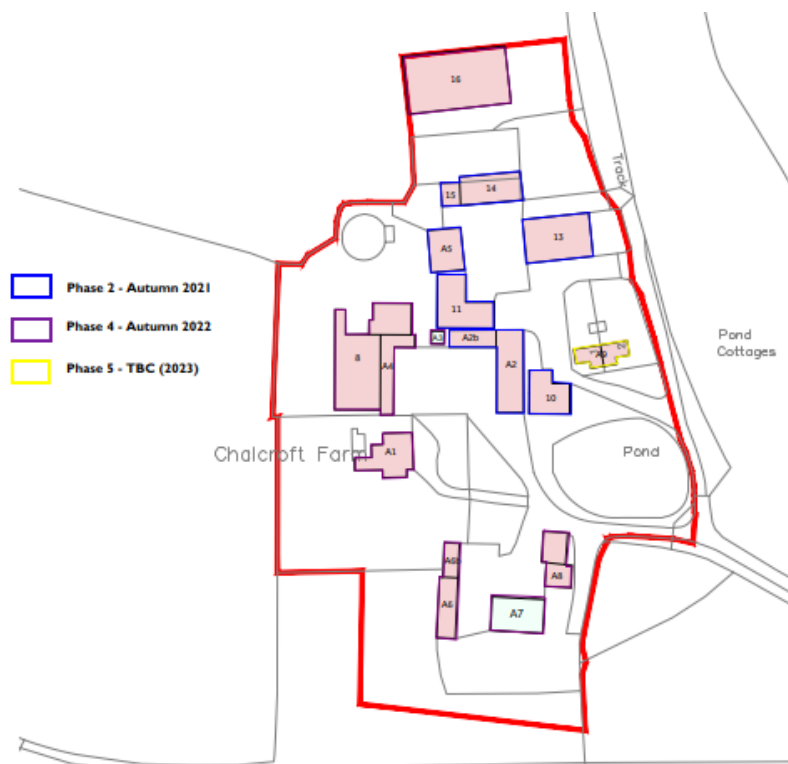
¹ Barn owls on site - A guide for developers and planners – English Nature (now Natural England) – 2002.

1.4 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSED WORKS

In March 2018 Eastleigh Borough Council acquired a 310 acre development area at Horton Heath. The Council foresees the scheme providing residential, commercial, educational and recreational facilities along with an improved infrastructure network. Eastleigh Borough Council are land owner and developer with an obligation to deliver within certain parameters. The project team responsible for delivering the scheme is One Horton Heath and are directly employed by the Council. Demolition works of the Chalcroft Farm buildings and associated buildings are required to facilitate the One Horton Heath development.

1.5 EXTENT AND LOCATION OF PROPOSED WORKS SHOWN ON APPROPRIATE SCALE MAPS AND PLANS

The Chalcroft Farm buildings and proposed demolition phasing are shown on Figure 1 below. Building A6, where previously barn owl have been recorded, and Building A7 also considered potentially suitable for barn owl, are proposed for demolition in Autumn 2022.



**Figure 1:
and**

**Location of Chalcroft Farm buildings
phasing**

The demolition location has historically been associated with commercial and agricultural use. The area within the designated working area is predominately hardstanding with some small pockets of grass or low level scrub.

The works will be accessed via existing track off Burnetts Lane. The working areas will be secured by physical barriers such as Heras panels which will also provide sufficient protection for individuals not associated with the works, surrounding hedgerows/trees and the pond.

Buildings A6 and A6b are stables, described as a single storey structure with a combination of timber framed and brickwork elements. The roof is partially covered with corrugated metal and the remainder in slate.

Building A7 is a Cart Shed: comprising a two storeys timber-framed building with brickwork to the cable ends and back wall finished with a slated roof. The lean-to is erected against the back wall and is of timber frame construction under a corrugated asbestos cement roof.

The works are described as:

A6 & A6b Stables

- *Soft strip of roof and cladding*
- *Demolished remaining building to ground level*
- *Salvage the existing floor*

A7 Cart Shed

- Remove Asbestos roof covering on lean to
- Soft strip of roof covering and cladding
- Disassemble timber structure
- Disassemble brick work

The primary demolition works will be carried out in four stages:

- Enabling Works
 - Ecologist to inspect for nesting birds, bats and reptiles
 - Principal contractor to position welfare unit, signage and site fencing
 - Site Inductions and tool box talks
- Asbestos & Soft Strip
 - Under Ecologist Supervision as required
 - Hand tools only to be used
 - Remove any residual items and furniture from buildings
 - Remove asbestos sheeting from roofs and sidings
 - Remove residual asbestos containing materials
 - Remove remaining roof materials and cladding as required (non-asbestos)
 - Arisings to be sorted into waste streams and removed from site as required
- Hard demolition
 - To commence only when the Ecologist has deemed building and surrounding area free from nesting birds, reptiles and bats
 - Excavator with hydraulic attachments likely to be used
 - Dismantle remaining building to ground level.
 - Retain ground floor slab and/or foundations
 - Backfill voids with surrounding material
 - Arisings to be sorted into waste streams and removed from site as required
- Site Tidy
 - Remaining waste removed from site
 - Remove all machinery from site
 - Remove site fencing, signage and welfare unit

1.6 DETAILED DESIGN(S) AND/OR WORKING METHOD(S) NECESSARY TO AVOID THE KILLING, INJURY OR DISTURBANCE OF BARN OWLS

A precautionary method of working will be engaged to avoid harm to all nesting birds as follows:

- In general, vegetation will be cut back over the winter period prior to the demolition as part of wider estate management;
- The Ecologist will provide a tool box talk for site operatives prior to works commencing;
- Prior to commencement the Ecologist will undertake a check of vegetation and buildings for active birds' nests;
- Demolition will not commence until the Ecologist has declared the working area free of nesting birds;

- If an active nest is found within the working area it will be left in situ until the chicks have fledged.

To compensate for the loss of nesting habitat bird nest boxes have been erected within the wider One Horton Heath site to the south and south west, during the period prior to demolition.

Roosting barn owl have been recorded in Building A6 and the site presents suitable potential nesting habitat within the southern buildings, particularly buildings A6 and A7. Barn owl are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and therefore, in addition to the protection afforded to all active birds' nests from destruction, barn owls are also protected from disturbance whilst nesting.

No evidence of recent nesting has been recorded within the buildings proposed for demolition, however owl pellets and 'whitewash' (droppings) probably of this species were observed in A6 on a recent bat inspection on 8th June 2022: no barn owl were present and no evidence of breeding recorded.

In 2020, a replacement bat box was erected in the parkland to the south of Chalcroft Farm and was used by barn owl that year: but in 2021 this box was used by breeding stock dove. In winter 2021/22, this box was removed and two replacement boxes erected on the south west boundary of the site – see figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Location of replacement barn owl boxes

Precautionary Method of Working

1. Buildings 6 and 7 will be subject to dusk and dawn bat surveys in July and August 2022. Surveyors will be briefed on the possible presence of barn owl in advance: if barn owl are using these buildings then they will be observed as they are active at dawn and dusk. Surveyors will use ladders where possible to inspect buildings. If barn owl are observed in the buildings, surveyors will leave the location so as to not disturb the birds. A licensed barn owl surveyor will be contacted if further intrusive survey is required.
2. Prior to demolition works taking place on the buildings, the Ecologist will undertake a dusk survey check of the buildings during the preceding dusk to note whether any barn owls enter/leave the buildings.
3. Demolition of the buildings should occur outside the normal barn owl breeding season which is March to August. Ideally, the buildings will be demolished in October.
4. Any work to buildings where bat roosts are present cannot proceed until an appropriate licence is obtained from Natural England. Appropriate timings for works to take place will be specified within the relevant bat licence application. Works should be avoided during the bat hibernation season as bats are sensitive to disturbance during this period (November - February).
5. An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be present or contactable during the demolition of Buildings A6 and A7.
6. In the unlikely event of a barn owl or barn owl nest being present prior to demolition, or during demolition, advice will be sought from the ECoW and works will cease until an appropriate way forward is agreed.
7. Monitoring of the new barn owl nest boxes will be undertaken in years 1, 2 and 5 post works during March to August.

1.7 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, DEMONSTRATING THAT WORKS ARE ALIGNED WITH THE PROPOSED PHASING OF CONSTRUCTION

The timetable of works is as follows:

Task	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sept-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Spring 23	Spring 24	Spring 27
Bat/barn owl surveys								
Pre-demolition inspection for barn owl								
Demolition of Buildings A6 and A7								
Barn owl box monitoring								

1.8 PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WORKS

The following personnel are responsible for implementing the works:

- Lead Ecologist: Niall Machin, Johns Associates 07736 154324 nmachin@johnsassociates.co.uk
- Lead Bat/Barn Owl Survey Ecologist: Ellie Hack ehack@johnsassociates.co.uk
- Client contact:
- Demolition contact:

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