



PRECAUTIONARY METHOD OF WORKING

PROPOSED EXTERNAL PRE-FABRICATED , SINGLE STOREY TIMBER CLAD OFFICE

'Baroda', Merton Avenue, Chandlers Ford, SO53 1EP
Planning Permission Reference: F/23/95483

Branksome Care Ltd

TEMPLE FORD DESIGN architects
Suite K Anchor House, School Lane, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4DY

1.0 Executive Summary

This Precautionary Method of Working (PMW) has been prepared by Temple ford Design to discharge Condition 4 of the full planning permission reference F/23/95483 for the erection of a new single storey external office.

The PMW sets out details of the potential impacts of construction on the biodiversity interest of the site.

Measures to avoid impacts on protected and notable species are detailed including recommendations related to precautionary site clearance, timing of works and general good practice measures.

A method statement for the protection of nocturnal mammals, and birds potentially present has been included.

Roles and responsibilities of site personnel are detailed.

If all recommendations within this PMW are followed, the habitats and species present on the site will be protected from construction activities throughout the construction period.

2.0 Introduction

Planning Permission has been granted, subject to conditions and notes, for the addition of an external, single-storey office at 'Baroda', 34 Merton Avenue, Chander Ford.

'Baroda' is a Care Home and is located on the southern side of Merton Avenue. It is a large, detached property within a residential area.

This PMW has been prepared for the to discharge Condition 4 of the Planning Permission:

Condition 4

Prior to commencement of development, a precautionary working method for small animals and breeding/nesting birds shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This working method shall then be adhered to in full.

Reason: To ensure protection of species during construction and in accordance with Eastleigh Borough Local Plan policy DM11

This document contains details of measures to be implemented during construction in order to avoid and minimise impacts on protected and notable species present on the development site to comply with legislation. The PMW is intended to cover the construction phase only and mitigation measures related directly to construction activities.

3.0 Construction Mitigation Measures

3.1 Risk Assessment & Mitigation Measures

A summary of the key construction mitigation measures has been provided in Table 1.

Activity	Ecological Receptor	Protection Measures
Timing of the Works	Nocturnal Fauna	Construction activities will be restricted to the normal working day (7am – 7pm) to avoid any unnecessary disturbance to nocturnal animals. There will be no site night lighting.
Site Visits and Reporting	All	This document must be available to all site personnel to provide the appropriate procedure for working within this area to minimise disturbance on site and the risk of inadvertently harming wildlife.
Site Preparation	All	Heras fencing (or similar) will be installed around the perimeter of the construction zone to prevent any vehicle or construction encroachment onto habitats of ecological value.
	Fauna	Immediately prior to construction works, the site manager will carry out a finger-tip search of the area for vulnerable species. This will include turning over and removing any objects or debris within the area.
Vegetation Clearance	Birds	Where areas of potential bird nesting habitat, such as scrub, require removal, site clearance will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) wherever feasible. If avoiding the bird nesting season is not possible, areas of vegetation will be carefully checked by a suitably qualified ecologist on site prior to removal. An Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) will be able to identify any nesting birds and advise of appropriate safe working distances to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation. Active nests will be left undisturbed until young have fledged, as advised by an SQE.
	Fauna	A scheme of progressive vegetation clearance to ensure that future works areas are clear of small mammals prior to ground excavations.
Tree Protection		Refer to Gwydion Howell drawing: GH23113a.b TCP TS AMS TPPlan 34 Merdon Avenue SO53 1EP.
Noise	Fauna	Working hours should be restricted to the normal working day (7am – 7pm).

Storage	All	Due to the inquisitive nature of wildlife, any machinery used should be made safe or temporarily fenced off when not in use.
Excavations	All	Trenches or open excavations will be covered at the end of each working day, or include a means of escape such as a sloping ramp that may fall in. Any temporarily exposed open pipe systems or ducts will be capped at the end of each working day in such a way as to prevent wildlife from gaining access.
	Rabbits	Works should comply with the Wild Mammals Act (2006).
Lighting	Nocturnal Wildlife	Any nocturnal lighting will be minimal and low level, and specifically avoid illumination of mature trees and associated wildlife habitats.

3.2 General Good Practice Mitigation Measures

The following section details general good practise measures which will be adopted during the construction process. It will be the responsibility of the site manager to ensure that all staff are inducted and made aware of these recommendations.

Dust Generation

Generation of dust will be mitigated by wetting down and/or the use of screening if appropriate. This will avoid impacts of dust deposition on retained hedgerows.

Excavations & Trenches

All excavations and trenches will either be covered at night or include an escape ramp to prevent nocturnal species such as badger and hedgehog from becoming trapped. This could be in the form of a roughened plank of wood. The trenches/pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no badgers or other species have been trapped.

Open Pipework

Open pipework larger than 150mm outside diameter will be blanked off at the end of each working day to avoid nocturnal mammals entering the pipes and potentially becoming trapped or injured.

Materials and Hazardous Waste

All chemicals and hazardous materials and waste will be stored in-line with best practice guidelines, ensuring they are secure and cannot be accessed by roaming animals. No materials will be stored within the root protection zones of retained hedgerows.

Sympathetic Working Practices

- Store materials away from areas of retained vegetation which are considered suitable for reptiles (e.g. hedgerows);

- Should it be necessary to store materials such as topsoil on site then the stockpile should be smoothed to prevent access by faunal species into potential cavities; and
- Site personnel should simply demonstrate awareness when working and moving materials.
- Should an animal be found, it should be gently moved, for example in a clean bucket, to a suitable location within habitat well away from the working area.

4.0 Working Method Statements for Protected Species

4.1 Nocturnal Mammal Method Statement

Background

A pre-construction check will be carried out no more than 48 hours prior to the start of works on site. The results of all pre-commencement checks will be reported to the Local Planning Authority Ecologist by use of a site note, alongside any potential proposals to address further mitigation requirements that may arise.

Method Statement

Mammals will continue to have access to the retained habitat (i.e. hedgerows and adjacent vegetation) and will be able to forage in this area throughout the construction process;

Excavations and trenches will either be covered at night or include an escape ramp to prevent nocturnal mammals from becoming trapped; and,

Necessary security lighting will be directional to limit light spill and will be switched on for a limited period of time to provide dark periods, allowing nocturnal mammals to continue to forage and commute across the site.

4.2 Reptile Method Statement

In order to avoid impacts on reptiles potentially present on site, the following precautions will be undertaken:

Vegetation requiring removal which is considered suitable for reptiles (i.e. scrub, grassland, vegetation) will be hand searched by the site manager. This will involve carefully checking within and underneath any suitable refugia such as leaf piles, logs, tree trunks, small mammal burrows and rubble.

Handling of reptiles by a site manager (rather than a trained ecologist) is not recommended.

Animals should be allowed to move away on their own and not be handled other than by an ecologist. This is especially true for slow worms and common lizards, which can shed their tails if not handled correctly, leaving them open to infection and possible death. Adders must never be handled by untrained personnel due to risk of being bitten. Grass snakes produce a foul-smelling discharge (which is difficult to wash off) as a defence mechanism.

If more than two reptiles are found on site, the LPA ecologist must be notified and a suitably qualified ecological consultant must be called in for advice.

In addition to hand searching vegetation and refugia which are suitable for reptiles, as they can be quite elusive and difficult to catch, a two-stage process for cutting is usually used. The first cut is usually done at 30 cm and then after 24 hours, vegetation can be cut down to the ground.

The direction of cutting must be done from the far edge of the vegetation to be removed towards an area of retained vegetation so that animals have a chance to move to a place of safety on their own. This must only be done during the active reptile season (late April-June and late August-September).

4.3 Nesting Bird Method Statement

In order to avoid impacts on birds present on site, the following precautions will be undertaken:

Any scrub, hedge or tree management/removal both during and post-construction should be undertaken outside the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive) or following a precautionary nesting bird survey by an SQE to ensure compliance with legal obligations.

If scrub, hedgerow or tree management/removal occurs during the breeding bird season, then the SQE will remain on site to check all potential nesting areas for birds before works are to be undertaken on site.

If active bird nests are identified during the survey, a buffer zone should be set up by the SQE around the nest until all young birds have fledged and left the area.

4.4 Hedgehog Method Statement

The limited impact of the vegetation clearance means that there is minimal threat to any populations present but rather harm or disturbance to individual/small numbers of hedgehogs that may be present in areas to be lost/disturbed, particularly in winter during hibernation.

No surveys for hedgehogs have been carried out. Whilst it is highly unlikely that hedgehogs will be present in areas of vegetation clearance, the precautionary working approach below should be adhered to, particularly where contractors encounter potential hibernacula.

The following working practices are to be followed in areas with potential for hedgehog refugia and/or hibernacula:

- The removal of refugia and/or hibernacula including log/brash piles, tipped debris, piles of car tyres, compost piles should be carried out under the supervision of an SQE.
- Contractors/site operatives are not to use alternative access points other than those previously agreed.
- No vehicles will be used in the vicinity of any refugia.
- Should contractors be working within areas previously cleared of vegetation, then there should be no work outside of the cleared area.

5.0 Protected Species Legislation

5.1 Birds

Impact

The current legislation makes it a criminal offence to disturb nesting birds. The nesting season is generally assumed to be from mid-February to 31st August, however this can vary depending on the season, weather, species and location.

Mitigation

During these months a careful inspection must be made before work commences and works must be postponed if active nests are found.

5.2 Trees

Impact

If a tree is exposed to construction traffic and close to the footprint of a new building, it can be damaged in a variety of ways which can be permanent, and if extensive, fatal:

- Damage to the trunk and crown;
- Cutting roots;
- Soil compaction;
- Smothering roots;
- Exposure to the elements

Mitigation

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was undertaken by Gwydion Howell in November 2023, reference GH23113a.b TCP TS AMS TPPlan 34 Merdon Avenue SO53 1EP and must be followed.

The trees have been inspected visually only. No investigation has been carried out into their internal condition.

The report does not concern the possible influence of tree root activity on the proposed final development. Further investigations can be made and will be recommended where necessary.

No trees are proposed for removal. Where trees are to be retained, tree protection areas will be fenced using an approved fencing system. Protective fences are to comply with BS 5837 2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The fencing is to have all weather notices attached, marked as 'Tree Protection Area – Keep Out'.

No materials are to be stored in this area and no activity to take place.

Care should be taken storing materials whose accidental spillage could damage protected trees due to the topography of the site. Such materials should be stored and handled away from the root protection area.

5.3 Reptiles

There are six reptile species native to Britain. These include common (or viviparous lizard) (*Lacerta vivipara*), slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), adder (or viper) (*Vipera berus*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*). The latter two species are rare and confined to particular areas of England and Wales.

Under UK law all native reptile species have some degree of protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) provides further protection for the species of European importance; smooth snake and sand lizard.

Sand lizard and smooth snake receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This prohibits the deliberate killing, injuring or taking (capture, etc.); possession; disturbance and destruction of breeding, resting and sheltering places; sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy.

The four widespread species; common lizard, slow-worm, grass snake and adder receive protection under Section 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) but in so far as part of sub-section 9(1) only; which prohibits the intentional killing and injuring and trade (sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy).

5.4 Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are protected by British law under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it illegal to kill or capture them using certain methods. Similar protection exists in Northern Ireland under Schedule 6 & 7 of the Wildlife Order 1985. They are also protected in Britain under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), prohibiting cruelty and mistreatment.

They're listed as a Species of Principle Importance in England under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41, in Wales under the Environment Act 2016, and in Scotland under the Nature Conservation Act 2004. Similarly, hedgehogs are on the Priority Species List for Northern Ireland.

These laws make hedgehogs a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) during the planning process.