

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

One Horton Heath Reptile Method Statement

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to discharge Condition 6 of the full planning application (F/20/88879) Demolition of buildings at Fir Tree Farm (Davies Farm), Foxholes Cottage and garages at Foxholes Farm Cottage and outlines a methodology to be followed prior to and during demolition works to ensure every reasonable practical measure has been taken to avoid the risk of direct harm to reptiles in the unlikely event that they are present in the working area.

Condition 6 states;

No development shall take place (including any demolition, ground works, site clearance) until a method statement for the protection of reptiles 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 for the proposed works;*
- b) detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) necessary to avoid the killing, injury or disturbance of reptiles;*
- 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 shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid the killing, injury or disturbance of protected species in accordance with legal requirements.

All reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (UK Government, 1981), making it illegal to intentionally kill or injure a common reptile.

All buildings listed under the full planning application (F/20/88879) will be demolished (Figure 1). A very small population of common reptiles were recorded in the marshy grassland habitat to the south (outside of the boundary of the proposed works) of building 22 (Foxholes Cottage) and it was considered possible that reptiles could also be present within suitable vegetation around buildings 21a/b (Foxholes Farm Cottage garages) and building 29 (Fir Tree Farm) therefore, a precautionary approach will be taken during the demolition works of these buildings.

The works are considered to be of very low risk in terms of both the likelihood of encountering reptiles and the severity of any potential impacts during the works as the habitats within the works areas are limited to small areas of low suitability habitat. These effects will be temporary and no loss of reptile habitat is proposed.

1.1 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A Bat and Bird Mitigation Strategy has been produced by Johns Associates, December 2020 to provide the baseline ecological data, consideration of impacts and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures associated with the permitted full planning application (F/20/88879). This method statement should be read in conjunction with this document and delivers the mitigation measures described within section 4.3 to avoid direct harm to reptiles during initial vegetation clearance works.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 TIMING OF WORKS

Vegetation clearance works should be carried out within the active season for reptiles (March-October inclusive) to avoid the disturbance of hibernating animals which are unable to move away from the development area.

No removal of suitable refuge habitat will be undertaken when overnight temperatures are consistently (for five consecutive nights) below 5°C, to remove the risk of disturbing hibernating reptiles.

2.2 PRE-DEMOLITION PHASE

An ecological toolbox talk will be delivered prior to any works.

Prior to the commencement of works the working footprint will be agreed and demarcated on site to include vehicle access areas, material storage, skip and materials handling areas associated with the demolition works. This working footprint will be minimised and designed with the contractor to avoid any unnecessary impacts on suitable reptile habitats.

Where suitable habitats are present within the agreed works area, a two phased cut of any habitat considered it be suitable for reptiles, such as tussocky grass, will be conducted to prepare the working area. The first cut will be to approximately 30cm in order to encourage any reptiles present to move out of the area. The area will then be left to settle and a subsequent cut to 15cm will follow. A suitably qualified ecologist will lift and remove any potential reptile refugia from within the working area.

The vegetation will be maintained in an unsuitable condition for the duration of works.

2.3 DEMOLITION PHASE

Prior to the movement of any machinery into the working area, a check by a suitably qualified ecologist will be carried out to ensure no animals are likely to be harmed. Wherever possible demolition machinery will work from areas of hard standing adjacent to the buildings and then move onto the building base as the demolition progresses.

2.4 RESPONSE

If reptiles are found at any stage of the demolition works, they will be encouraged to move off of their own accord into the surrounding retained habitat.

3 CONCLUSION

Demolition works of all buildings will require minimal ground or vegetation disturbance. No removal of suitable reptile habitat is anticipated, and no grassland, trees or hedgerows will be removed as part of the proposals as these are outside of the site boundaries and not necessary to facilitate the works.

The measures detailed in this document will ensure the protection and continued conservation of the reptile populations on Site.

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Figure 1 Site Locations

