

10.01.2025

RE: Land At Welcomb Street, Manchester. APPLICATION NO:- 139997/FO/2024. Planning Condition 28. Precautionary Working Method Statement (RAMS).

I have been asked to respond to the planning condition below:

“28) Prior to the commencement of development (including ground works and vegetation clearance), a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for hedgehog and other wildlife covering the site clearance and construction phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority for that phase. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved measures.”.

Mammals – Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement

Hedgehog

Legislation and toolbox talk

A toolbox talk will be provided by the ecologist in respect of Hedgehog legislation. Hedgehogs are protected by British law under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it illegal to kill or capture them. They are listed as a Species of Principle Importance in England under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41.

The toolbox talk will always be given to all site operatives and be laminated and provided within the site office to all site operatives.

Methodology

The method for the removal of vegetation shall be overseen by the supervising ecologist whom shall watch and record the gradual removal of these features. The ecologist will be responsible for a prestart site walkover and detailed check for small mammals and the supervision of feature removal. The site walkover shall examine any vegetation and any other suitable habitat that may be used as hibernation nests.

A suitable receptor site shall be identified prior to any works being carried out and the ecologist will be responsible for the actual removal of any animals from the site.

Following the removal of potential habitat that could be used by hedgehog on the site, protective fencing will be installed that ensure animals can't access the site. This shall require the fence to be installed to the ground level with no gaps and be sufficiently robust that animals cannot break through it.

Material storage shall discourage hedgehogs taking to the storage by the following means:

- All storage to be off ground for example the use of elevated stillages

- No tipping of rubbish and a clean site policy to be used
- All material storage to be checked daily by the site manager or appointed representative for the presence of small mammals
- Any netting brought onto site shall be stored off ground and in locked containers to avoid entanglement of animals

General avoidance measures shall consist of:

- No works would be carried out at the site between sunrise and sunset.
- Noise and vehicle movements at the site will always be kept to a minimum
- Where any trenches or other excavations are to be left open overnight, these would be fitted with mammal ramps or would have the sides battered to form a slope to allow animals to escape
- A tidy works area would be maintained during construction and any hazardous substances would be fenced off to remove any animal hazards from the site

Monitoring

- The site shall be monitored at regular intervals by the ecologist to record compliance or otherwise with this RAMS.
- Such monitoring will specifically occur during the spring flush periods (if applicable).

Badger

1. A further badger walkover survey of the entire site would be carried two weeks prior to the start of works to ensure that there are no new badger setts.
2. If new setts are found a revised method statement will need to be produced and works may need to be carried out under license from Natural England.

Measures to Limit Disturbance

1. A suitably qualified badger ecologist would be appointed to oversee the compliance of development with this report recommendation.
2. A copy of the Method Statement will be kept at the site office and will be attached to the site notice board. The developer shall appoint an ecologist who will fully instruct operatives on the requirements of this Method Statement.
3. During the development, there should be no need to disturb the areas where field signs have been found. Therefore, no machinery would be permitted in this area. No excavations would be permitted in this area unless under supervision. Workers would be permitted to use hand tools in this area for example to erect the boundary fencing.
4. If it became apparent that works would result in damage to any badger tunnels then works would immediately stop and a badger disturbance license would be sort from Natural England
5. As badger are nocturnal, no works would be carried out at the site between sunrise and sunset.
6. No works would be carried out within 30m of the badger sett (if found).

7. No overnight lighting to be used.

8. Noise and vehicle movements at the site will always be kept to a minimum and a clean site policy will be monitored by the ecologist.

Measures to Avoid Injury to Badgers

1. Where any trenches or other excavations are to be left open overnight these would be fitted with mammal ramps or would have the sides battered to form a slope to allow badgers to escape.

2. A tidy works area would be maintained during construction and any hazardous substances would be fenced off to remove any badger hazards from the site

Amphibians

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM's):

The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM) are to be implemented:

1) Prior to commencing works at the site, a suitably experienced ecologist should be appointed by the landowner and / or main contractor to ensure that the RAM are successfully implemented throughout development.

2) The RAM will be implemented as deemed appropriate by the Appointed Ecologist. A copy of this report and supporting materials such as 'Amphibian ID Sheets' and 'on call' Ecologist contact details should be kept on the site and be available to refer to during site works.

3) Prior to any site works starting the developer/contractors should attend an ecological site induction, where the implications arising from the presence of amphibians in the local area and the need to implement the RAM detailed in this report should be fully detailed by the Appointed Ecologist.

4) Winter hibernation/dormancy period for amphibians is generally accepted to run from November to February/March, with hibernation/dormancy for individual amphibians usually commencing following the first hard winter frost. Consequently, any work which is likely to result in the disturbance of a potential amphibian hibernation site should not be scheduled or undertaken during this period or during any periods of cold or frosty weather outside of this period when amphibians are likely to be hibernating/dormant. Should such works be required the Appointed Ecologist will formulate and implement appropriate measures to minimise the risks to hibernating amphibians.

5) Where practicable, the duration/timing of the works and implementation of RAM should encompass the period when most amphibians are considered likely to be at their breeding sites. Consequently, the risk of amphibians being adversely impacted by the works will be minimised.

6) Before any vegetation clearance and/or ground disturbance works commence at the site, the extent of works should be agreed by the appointed ecologist and the contractor.

7) The contractor and the appointed ecologist should work together to ensure that trees and hedgerows that are required to be retained in the area of works should be protected from direct impact and severance or asphyxiation of root systems. Any ground disturbance works should only take place at a minimum distance from individual trees. Staged cutting of vegetation (to a height of 15cm for a short period of time before fully removing to allow amphibians to escape) is required.

8) Terrestrial habitat protection measures, including the use of exclusion zones, should be implemented as deemed appropriate.

Birds

- It is highly recommended that the tree and ground works are undertaken outside the breeding bird season but if they are undertaken within the breeding season then a breeding bird survey will be required.
- Since ecological consensus indicates the potential start of the bird breeding season to be during the start of February to August precautionary breeding bird surveys shall be undertaken on the morning of each day that tree works are ongoing to inform the planning condition above. The appointed contractor will be responsible for arranging this activity
- This shall take the form of dawn observations that shall examine avian behaviour such as songbird identification, nest building, territory defence/holding, courtship displays, adults visiting nest sites, or adults carrying foetal sacs. An assessment shall be made as to the behaviour being classed as non-breeding (for example song), probable breeding and or confirmed breeding behaviour
- Recommendations shall be made where behaviour is breeding related that shall compromise the establishment of a Precautionary Zone and no arboricultural works shall commence until breeding has ceased
- A written report shall be compiled following the dawn observations indicating which birds have been identified on site and whether the behaviour is classed as breeding or not. The report shall confirm which trees can be removed without contravention of Wildlife legislation. The report will be compiled and issued to the client for formal planning condition discharge.

Bats

A series of bat surveys were undertaken during the optimal period in summer 2024 (Bat Surveys report dated 31.07.2024) and approved as part of the planning application. No bats were found to be roosting in the building. As a result, no measures are required to mitigate the effects of development on bats and there is no requirement for an EPS license (derogation or low impact) from Natural England.

Prior to the demolition of B5 and B1 a class licensed ecologist will undertake on site checks for bats. There is a requirement for this as demolition may breach UK/EU legislation because bats may have taken up a roost site since the surveys were carried out, particularly if the demolition of B5 (high potential) is carried out after May 1st 2025.

Please do let me know if there is anything further, I can assist you with.



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