

Dakota Hotel- Manchester Airport

Mr Andrew Gardner, Company Director at Envirotech attended the above site both for the surveys to support the planning application ecology report in January 2024 and for a pre-start inspection walkover on 29th August 2024.

The risk of use of the hard standing areas of the site by amphibians and small mammals is negligible. The majority of the site comprises a carpark.

There are areas of the site boundary which comprise woodland/ dense scrub and grassland. The following condition has been suggested to cover risk to amphibians and small mammals, and the following reasonable avoidance measures specifically apply to the vegetated areas of the site.

We note there are no suitable amphibians breeding ponds in proximity to the site and habitat fragmentation for small mammals in the local area is very high.

Suggested condition 4 states

4) Prior to any site clearance or earthworks a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for amphibians and small mammals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason - To ensure the protection of habitat of species that are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or as subsequently amended and to comply with policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy

Key habitats of potential value to amphibians and small mammals will be protected and retained alongside the development. No breeding sites will be significantly affected. The final design of the development will allow for continued use by amphibians and small mammals and will not result in any appreciable effect on the conservation status of these populations.

The risk of harm to individual amphibians and mammals is low without mitigation and will be reduced to a negligible level through the precautions and mitigation measures outlined in this Method Statement.

Potential impacts are summarised in Table 1.



	Individual amphibians	Potential habitat for amphibians
Pre- and mid-construction	Capture within trenches and other hazards created during construction Harm from removal of topsoil and disruption to site edge habitats Harm from movement of stored materials Harm from vehicle movements Obstruction of dispersal within, to or from site	Loss of dispersal habitat Loss of resting places (refuge habitat) Creation of dispersal barriers
Post- construction	Capture within drains etc Reduced dispersal ability via barriers, possibly resulting in “stranding” away from core habitat Disturbance Increased mortality risk from traffic movements	Reduced amount and quality of dispersal habitat Reduced amount and quality of resting place habitat Increase in dispersal barriers (walls, fences, buildings, kerbs, etc)

Table 1- *Potential impacts*

Avoidance/ mitigation measures are summarised in Table 2.

Avoidance measure/ precaution	Rationale
General avoidance measure: Time of year of site preparation and main construction works Work involving substantial damage to the ground surface (e.g. topsoil stripping, ground level raising) ideally to occur between 1st October and 15th March. Outside this period a check of the site should be undertaken prior to ground works commencing. Any amphibians or small mammals found to be moved to the site boundary and released.	The risk of harm to individual amphibians and small mammals is highest when they would be moving across the terrestrial habitat. This is most likely in summer, and all activity would be at night. Over the hibernation period (typically October to March), amphibians will be less active on the site, and therefore not at risk from groundworks affecting the hard standing areas.
Potential resting places in edge habitats Edge habitats where there is long vegetation not to be developed to be protected from construction activities, and retained through the development. Where long vegetation is to be developed, vegetation to be strimmed to a height of 4inches, arising's removed then strimmed to ground level after 7 days.	There is a very low risk that amphibians and small mammals would occupy areas of short vegetation
Storage of construction materials Wherever practical, materials due to be stored on the ground will instead be stored in skips, on lorries, on pallets or raised off the ground via another method. Where off-ground storage is not feasible (e.g. because of large volumes), materials will be stored on site for the minimum amount of time possible; wherever possible/practical, materials will also be placed on sheeting (e.g. geotextile, tarpaulin, plastic or hessian) with an overlap along the margins	Amphibians and small mammals may be at risk from movement of stored materials. This is only a risk when the amphibians and small mammals would be actively moving across the site at night.
Topsoiling and bunding All transport of topsoil, spreading of topsoil and bunding to be done during daylight hours only All materials used in topsoiling and bunding (soil, aggregate, etc) to be landscaped to final state as soon as possible after spreading (i.e. reducing the exposure of voids or loose material that would later be filled, compacted, turfed and/or re-surfaced). As far as possible, minimise the creation potential refuges in the area being worked.	Amphibians and small mammals may be at risk if topsoiling and bunding create potential refuges, in which they could then take shelter and be subsequently harmed if the area is re-worked. This risk is simply minimised by (a) reducing the incidental creation of potential refuges, and (b) reducing the period during which the works will take place.
Excavations and ground-level built structures Trenches or any other hole in the ground with the capacity to trap amphibians will be (a) back-filled before darkness, or (b) covered before darkness, or (c) created with a gently sloping edge or ramp to allow amphibians to climb out. Building of structures at ground level will aim to ensure that during construction there are minimal gaps where amphibians or small mammals could enter and become trapped; such structures will be completed as soon as feasible.	Amphibians or small mammals may become trapped in excavations (e.g. trenches) or in/under partially built structures. This is only a risk when the amphibians would be actively moving across the site at night. This measure applies mainly to footings and service trenches with vertical sides, since they have been known to trap amphibians and small mammals at other sites.

Table 2- Avoidance/ Mitigation of Potential impacts

Working practices

The following points should be noted and will need to be incorporated into the construction program.

- Before works commence, the works manager and key construction staff & contractors will be given a brief presentation on how to identify amphibians and small mammals, and the implications for works at the site.
- Key information will be provided to construction staff and contractors in their induction.
- Before works commence, the site manager and/or other appropriate staff will read and sign a copy of this Method Statement to indicate that they will comply with its recommendations.
- A copy of this Method Statement will be kept in the site office until works are complete.
- Envirotechs contact details will be held at the site office, for use in the highly unlikely event that any amphibians are discovered during the works (see recommended procedure below).
- Waste materials arising from construction works are to be removed from site or stored above ground as soon as possible.
- When transporting materials, they are to be lifted rather than dragged.
- If there is unseasonably warm, wet weather, the chances of amphibians using the site will increase, and so extra precautions may be necessary.