

10 November 2021

Our ref: 213257/ARB

Mr A Girdler
Loddon Property Limited
45 Albert Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 7AW

Dear Mr Girdler

27 GRAVEL HILL, EMMER GREEN

Introduction

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out an ecological survey of the above site on Tuesday 6 July 2021. The purpose of the surveys was to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to record any evidence of protected species so that appropriate and proportionate mitigation could be provided. A series of photographs and annotated site plans have been attached for reference.

The re-development proposals are to construct two new properties with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings and clearance of some of the garden vegetation. The existing boundary vegetation and established trees will be retained and protected during the works.

Methodology

Baseline Data

Baseline ecological data was obtained from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) for the site and a 2 km study area. As certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was also consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated. In addition, a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

During the initial walk-over survey, particular attention was paid to record the presence of badgers, bats and herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) that may be using the site or present in adjacent habitats, in accordance with the following survey methodologies:

Badgers

Badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts are protected by the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*, under which it is an offence to harm badgers or their setts. A sett is defined as "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger". Natural England has provided the following guidance on the interpretation of current use:

A sett is defined as such (and thus protected) as long as signs indicative of 'current use' are present. Thus, a sett remains protected by the Act until such times as the signs (i.e. 'field signs') have deteriorated or decayed to such an extent that they indicate that the sett is no longer in 'current use'.

A thorough survey of the whole site and adjacent habitats, where access was available, was carried out. Particular attention was paid to dense areas of vegetation to check for any evidence of badger activity, which is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- presence of holes with evidence of badger, such as footprints, discarded hair, etc.;
- presence of dung pits and latrines;
- presence of well-used runs with subsidiary evidence of badger activity; and
- presence of other indications of badger activity, such as signs of foraging and footprints.

Bats

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats, or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹. A thorough internal and external examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any potential access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces were checked for any evidence of bats.

In addition, a careful inspection of each tree on the site was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground.

Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Negligible** – negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
- **Low** – a tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
- **Moderate** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
- **High** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also utilised to record any bat calls during the survey.

Herpetofauna

Amphibians

All amphibian species have some level of protection under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking, and intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a 'place used for shelter or protection' is prohibited, as is the destruction of these places.

Reptiles

All reptile species are protected at some level under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The more common species of reptiles, which include slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are protected by the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* by part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). This means that they are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injuring (but not 'taking') and against sale and transporting for sale.

An assessment of the site was carried out to determine its suitability for herpetofauna by recording the habitats present. In addition, any natural/artificial refugia present on the site was lifted to check for any sheltering animals or evidence of animals, such as sloughs (shed skins).

Other Wildlife

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

Results

Baseline Data

A summary of the baseline data obtained from TVERC has been provided and detailed in Table 1; please note, due to copyright, a copy of the report cannot be reproduced but can be requested by the Local Planning Authority².

There are no statutory ecological designated sites located on or directly adjacent to the site, with the nearest being the Clayfield Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 1.2 km to the east of the site. The nearest non-statutory designated site is the Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau Conservation Target Area (CTA), located approximately 0.06 km to the west of the site. Although there are no records of protected species on the site itself, there are a number within the 2 km study area. Further details of designated sites and protected species are provided in Table 1.

According to the Multi-agency Website, there are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest HPI is an area of Deciduous Woodland, also noted as National Forest Inventory Broadleaved Woodland, located approximately 0.1 km to the south of the site.

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 2003, being dominated by the existing property, with associated hardstanding and previously well-maintained garden.

² TVERC data is subject to copyright and therefore cannot be passed on to any third parties.

Table 1: Summary of Data Search Results (TVERC)

Statutory Designated Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction from site
Clayfield Copse	LNR	1.2 km to the E
Non-Statutory Designated Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction from site
Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau	CTA	0.06 km to the W
Furzeplat	LWS	0.1 km to the S
Hemdean Bottom	LWS	0.24 km to the SW
Reading Golf Course (East)	LWS	0.33 km to the N
Highdown Wood	LWS	0.54 km to the S
Chambers Copse	PLWS	0.81 km to the NE
Reading Golf Course (West)	LWS	0.84 km to the NW
Rotherfield Way Copse	LWS	0.9 km to the SE
Blackhouse Wood	LWS	1.62 km to the W
The Warren Woodlands Complex	LWS	1.7 km to the SSW
Pages Shaw	PLWS	1.74 km to the W
Protected/notable Species		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance of most recent record
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.17 km to the NE
Long-eared Bat species (<i>Plecotus sp.</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.17 km to the NE
Eurasian Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	Badgers Act (1992)	0.20 km to the NNW
Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>)	Protected Species	0.22 km to the SE
Red Kite (<i>Milvus milvus</i>)	Protected Species	0.22 km to the SE
Noctule Bat (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.28 km to the E
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.28 km to the E
Small Blue (<i>Cupido minimus</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	0.28 km to the SE
Small Heath (<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>)	Priority Species	0.28 km to the SE
Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	Priority Species	0.28 km to the SE
Unidentified Bat (<i>Myotis sp.</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.29 km to the E
Stag Beetle (<i>Lucanus cervus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species (against sale) & Priority Species	0.32 km to the SSE
Brown Long-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.4 km to the S
Daubenton's Bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.40 km to the S
Natterer's Bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.40 km to the S
Whiskered Bat (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.40 km to the S
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	Priority Species	0.70 km to the S
Honey-buzzard (<i>Pernis apivorus</i>)	Protected Species	0.71 km to the WSW
Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)	Protected Species	0.71 km to the WSW
Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)	Protected Species	0.71 km to the WSW
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	Priority Species	0.72 km to the ESE
Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>)	Protected Species (against sale)	0.72 km to the NE
Common Toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>)	Protected Species (against sale) & Priority Species	0.72 km to the NE

Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	Priority Species	0.80 km to the S
Common Crossbill (<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Hawfinch (<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>)	Priority Species	0.80 km to the S
Lesser Redpoll (<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>)	Priority Species	0.80 km to the S
Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>)	Protected Species	0.80 km to the S
Ring Ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>)	Priority Species	0.8 km to the S
Spotted Flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>)	Priority Species	0.80 km to the S
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	Priority Species	0.80 km to the S
Blood-vein (<i>Timandra comae</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Brown-spot Pinion (<i>Agrochola litura</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Grey Dagger (<i>Acronicta psi</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Hornet Robberfly (<i>Asilus crabroniformis</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Mottled Rustic (<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Mouse Moth (<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Oak Hook-tip (<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Small Emerald (<i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Small Square-spot (<i>Diarsia rubi</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Spinach (<i>Eulithis mellinata</i>)	Priority Species	0.86 km to the NE
Lesser Noctule (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.91 km to the S
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.91 km to the S
Pipistrelle Bat species (<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.98 km to the NE
Firecrest (<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>)	Protected Species	1.02 km to the ENE
Hobby (<i>Falco subbuteo</i>)	Protected Species	1.02 km to the ENE
Linnet (<i>Linaria cannabina</i>)	Priority Species	1.02 km to the ENE
Marsh Tit (<i>Poecile palustris</i>)	Priority Species	1.02 km to the ENE
Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>)	Priority Species	1.02 km to the ENE
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the ESE
Beaded Chestnut (<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Brindled Beauty (<i>Lycia hirtaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Green-brindled Crescent (<i>Allophyas oxyacanthae</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Knot Grass (<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Powdered Quaker (<i>Orthosia gracilis</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Rustic (<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
White Ermine (<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>)	Priority Species	1.03 km to the NE
Bats (<i>Vespertilionidae</i>)	Protected Species	1.12 km to the ENE
Bats (<i>Chiroptera</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	1.19 km to the WNW
Cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>)	Priority Species	1.21 km to the SE

Serotine (<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	1.28 km to the ENE
Wall (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>)	Priority Species	1.28 km to the ESE
Slow-worm (<i>Anguis fragilis</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.28 km to the SSE
August Thorn (<i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet (<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Deep-brown Dart (<i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Dot Moth (<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Double Dart (<i>Graphiphora augur</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Dusky Brocade (<i>Apamea remissa</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Dusky Thorn (<i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Ear Moth (<i>Amphipoea oculea</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Figure of Eight (<i>Diloba caeruleocephala</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Garden Dart (<i>Euxoa nigricans</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Garden Tiger (<i>Arctia caja</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Ghost Moth (<i>Hepialus humuli</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Heath Rustic (<i>Xestia agathina</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Lackey (<i>Malacosoma neustria</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Large Nutmeg (<i>Apamea anceps</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Olive Crescent (<i>Trisateles emortualis</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Rosy Rustic (<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
September Thorn (<i>Ennomos erosaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Shaded Broad-bar (<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Small Phoenix (<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Sprawler (<i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Streak (<i>Chesias legatella</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
V-Moth (<i>Macaria wauaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the S
Polecat (<i>Mustela putorius</i>)	Priority Species	1.41 km to the WSW
Purple Emperor (<i>Apatura iris</i>)	Protected Species	1.48 km to the NE
Red-shanked Carder-bee (<i>Bombus rudinaris</i>)	Priority Species	1.53 km to the ENE
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	Priority Species	1.53 km to the ENE
White-letter Hairstreak (<i>Satyrus w-album</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.55 km to the ENE
Western Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	1.58 km to the NE
Avocet (<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>)	Protected Species	1.80 km to the S
Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.80 km to the S
Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	Protected Species	1.80 km to the S
Reed Bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	Priority Species	1.80 km to the S
Hazel Dormouse (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	1.92 km to the NW
Smooth Newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species (against sale)	2.00 km to the S
Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)	Priority Species	2.01 km to the ENE
Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	Protected Species	2.80 km to the S
Protected/notable Species (Coarse Resolution)		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance of most recent record

Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	Protected Species	10 km
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NB: All distances are calculated from the centre of the site, National Grid Reference: SU 710768

European Protected Species = species listed under *The Habitats Directive* Annexes II and IV.

Protected Species = species listed under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* Schedules 1, 5 and 8.

Priority Species = species listed under the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* Section 41.

LNR = Local Nature Reserve; CTA = Conservation Target Area; LWS = Local Wildlife Site; PLWS = Proposed Local Wildlife Site

Site Description (Photographs 1-4)

The site is located off Gravel Hill in Emmer Green, Reading, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 710768 and covers approximately 0.2 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing bungalow and garden shed, set within a garden. It is bordered by Gravel Hill to the south, with residential properties and associated gardens to all other sides.

The bungalow was of masonry construction with painted pebble-dash rendering on the upper two-thirds of the walls. The roof was pitched and hipped roof with engineered tiles. The timber soffits and fascias were well-sealed. There was a single roof space present, which was unlined with the tiles attached directly onto the wooden battens. The garden shed was of corrugated metal sheeting, with a pitched felt lined roof and no separate roof void present.

Some clearance works had been completed on site, with areas of bare earth, remnant lawns, ornamental planting, hedging and individual trees also present. Species recorded within the remnant lawns were typical of amenity grassland and included perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.). Due to the lack of recent management false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), docks (*Rumex* spp.), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) were also recorded. Ornamental planting and boundary vegetation included cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), conifers (*Cupressaceae* spp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*), broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), periwinkle (*Vinca* sp.) and bamboo (*Pleioblastus* sp.). Species within the hedgerow alongside Gravel Hill included yew (*Taxus baccata*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). There were a few individual semi-mature trees present, which included beech and oak (*Quercus* sp.).

Badgers

No evidence of badger or their setts was recorded on or adjacent to the site. A few mammal runs were recorded but only fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and deer (*Cervidae* sp.) hair was found.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during the thorough internal and external inspection of the buildings. Although the property is no longer occupied, it was generally in good condition, with the roof tiles well-aligned and the timber soffits/fascias well-sealed, with no obvious access points for bats recorded. Internally the roof space was restricted in size and found to be dusty and cobwebbed throughout. The visual inspection was facilitated by the lack of any membrane, with the undersides of the tiles clearly visible. The garden shed was assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities for bats given its construction type, lacking any separate roof voids and/or crevice dwelling opportunities.

The site itself, being a residential plot located in a residential area, provides limited foraging opportunities for bats. The majority of the trees recorded on the site, either due to their age and species and lacking obvious PRFs were assessed to provide **negligible** or **low** roosting opportunities for bats. **N.B. The majority of the established vegetation and the established trees are scheduled to be retained and protected.**

Herpetofauna

There were no ponds on-site and therefore no breeding opportunities for amphibians. The site, being a residential plot (with a degree of site clearance completed) located in a residential area, does not provide suitable terrestrial habitat for any species of herpetofauna. In addition, despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna was found sheltering under any refugia lifted. TVERC returned no nearby records for any species, with the nearest amphibians being common frog and common toad, located over 700 m away and the nearest reptile being slow-worm located over 1.2 km away.

Other Wildlife

Apart from fox and deer already mentioned and a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The re-development proposals are to construct three new properties with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings and clearance of some of the garden vegetation. The existing boundary vegetation and established trees will be retained and protected during the works. There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded.

Although there are considered to be no ecological constraints to the proposals, a series of generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021³.

A thorough examination of the existing buildings was completed, with all potential access points and/or roosting opportunities fully inspected for evidence of bats. The attic space of the bungalow was fully accessed and unlined, allowing a thorough inspection and, therefore, there are considered to be no constraints to the survey findings. Although no evidence of bats was recorded and no further surveys are considered necessary, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Therefore, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

All mammals are protected under the *Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996* and, therefore, prior to any site works a check should be made to make sure there are no active fox earths present on the site. The use of an animal repellent, such as Scoot, can be used to facilitate this.

In order to protect any vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'. The retention of these features will maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by local wildlife.

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

As part of the proposals, soft landscaping will be carried out. Where any new planting is proposed it should aim to use native species, but where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife can be used. In particular, flowering plants will be of benefit to invertebrate species and shrubs and trees may provide nesting opportunities for birds once they become established.

Any new boundary treatment should be designed to promote permeability of the site to minimise fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site, for example by strengthening/enhancing the existing boundary vegetation, planting up a series of new hedgerows and/or installing post and rail fences. These measures will strengthen habitat connectivity and provide additional foraging habitat, cover and nesting opportunities. If close boarded fences are required for security reasons these should be minimised and raised slightly off the ground (c. 150-200 mm) to allow animals to pass underneath.

The site could be further enhanced by providing roosting and nesting opportunities for bats and birds by installing a series of bat and bird boxes on suitable vegetation to be retained and/or in suitable locations on the new build. Any boxes installed will be positioned in accordance with good practice.

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. Although the site currently experiences some light spillage from on-site sources, neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution and not directed onto any bird/bat boxes installed.

The recommendations provided above try to pre-empt any issues that may arise as well as provide some mitigation and enhancement measures. I trust this is of interest to you and provides the Local Planning Authority with enough information to determine the application but let me know if further clarification is required.

Yours sincerely



Alan Beaumont
BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM
Class Licences CL08 and CL18

Encl. Photograph Record Sheet (Drg. No. 213257/01)



Photograph 1: Showing the front of the bungalow.



Photograph 2: Showing the well-sealed timber soffits/fascias.



Photograph 3: Showing the unlined roof space, found to be dusty and cobwebbed throughout.



Photograph 4: Showing the garden, with areas of recently cleared vegetation and remnant amenity grassland.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT			
27 Gravel Hill Emmer Green			
TITLE			
Photograph Record Sheet			
 AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: 01235 536042 F: 01235 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk			
Scale	Date 10.11.21	Drg No.	Re v.
NTS	Drawn KC	Chkd. ARB	213257/01