

Discharge of Ecology Conditions

317-319 Finchley Road



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Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

This report has been produced by Jim Phillips, Managing Director of Ethos Environmental Planning, a qualified ecologist and full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. It provides information to discharge planning condition 33 of an approved planning permission at 317-319 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6EP (ref: 2016/2910/P). The planning condition is:

Condition 33:

Prior to commencement of works a method statement for a precautionary working approach to demolition and construction should be submitted to the Local Authority and approved in writing. This shall include approaches to mitigate the impact on bats, including impact of lighting during works. All site operatives must be made aware of the possible presence of protected species during works. If any protected species or signs of protected species are found, works should stop immediately and an ecologist should be contacted. The applicant may need to apply for a protected species licence from Natural England, evidence of which should be submitted to the Local Authority.

1.2 Baseline ecology assessment

An Ecological Appraisal and Bat Roost Inspection (October 2016), was approved as part of the planning permission. This made the following recommendations in relation to bats:

As a precautionary approach, a supervised 'soft strip' of the building is recommended. This will involve the careful removal by hand of lifted lead, slates and any other potential bat roost features under the supervision of a licenced bat ecologist prior to demolition. Prior to this activity it is recommended that the demolition contractors receive a 'tool box' talk on bats from the supervisory ecologist. If in the unlikely event that bats are found during the 'soft strip' process, then works must stop immediately and the supervisory ecologist consulted. In this scenario, further works including three bat emergence/return to roost surveys will be required during the peak bat activity season of May to September, with at least two surveys between May to August (inclusive), in order to support a Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licence application.

Although the site is found within a well-lit area, it is good practice with respect to Secured by Design to minimise any additional light spill from the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that lighting with a low UV content is used, with lighting hooded, shielded or cowed to reduce light spill. If security lighting is required, then it is recommended that this has a timer incorporated within it to limit the period the light is on.

2.0 Working method statement for bats

The existing building on site will be demolished using the following precautionary method statement for bats:

1. A pre-commencement bat survey of the building will be made by the retained bat expert 24 hours before works commence;
2. Before any works commencing, the retained bat expert shall brief any site contractors on the presence of bat species, the legal implications of their presence and the appropriate procedures and control measures to be put in place;
3. The demolition will commence following steps outlined during the tool box talk and will be executed by suitably inducted demolition contractors under the supervision of the bat expert;
4. A controlled strip of the roof ridge tiles as well as small sections of the roof by the roofing contractor under the direct supervision of the bat expert will be implemented. The roof tiles will be removed by hand in areas of bat interest if required (gently levered, lifted vertically and undersides inspected);
5. If any bats are encountered works will immediately stop and the bat expert shall consult with the authorities. The bat expert will attempt to rescue torpid bats and hold them in accordance with the Bat Workers Manual in a suitable handling box for release in the evening;
6. The end point of the demolition is the inspection of all wall tops and exposed cavities by the Ecologist using a powerful torch and endoscope. If stripping of the remaining parts of the building does not proceed on the same day, exposed cavities that may provide a roost location will be plugged immediately with suitable available material such as fibreglass loft insulation, having first checked that no bats are present within the cavities;
7. The bat expert will remain on site until these works are completed. Should the demolition be interrupted overnight the format will need to be repeated immediately before the demolition can continue on the following day;
8. If a bat is discovered at other, unsupervised times, work will cease immediately and the bat expert will be called for advice. This advice will include leaving the bat to disperse of its own accord, or wait for the licensed handler to move the bat. Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats and this will be reinforced during toolbox talks and by the charge hand on site;
9. Should any evidence of recent bat occupation be found (eg. feeding signs, droppings) then works will cease and the ecologist will contact Natural England. In this event, it is likely that bat emergence surveys would be required at an appropriate time of year (May – August) to determine the status of the roost and any requirements for protected species licensing.

3.0 Control of lighting

The provision of external site lighting required as part of the site compound will be positioned to avoid direct lighting of the building prior to demolition. Once the building is demolished, lighting will be positioned to face into the site and provide lighting to key entrance points. The lighting will avoid light spill onto areas outside of the site compound, and will be directional, which will minimise light spill beyond the site itself.