ECOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT

DEMOLITION AND DISMANTLING WORKS

at

CAMLEY STREET NATURAL PARK

Prepared for London Borough of Camden Planning Department
by London Wildlife Trust

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1.0 London Wildlife Trust – organisation summary

London Wildlife Trust (LWT) is a registered charity founded in 1981, dedicated to protecting the capital's wildlife and wild spaces, and engaging Londoners in nature through community engagement, education, access to our nature reserves and campaigning. Our role is becoming ever more important in a city facing climate change, economic recession and a growing population, where people are increasingly disconnected from their natural environment. Our vision is a city rich in biodiversity, where all people treasure wildlife and natural spaces and where access to quality natural green space is a right for all. LWT has a strong history of community engagement projects that target disadvantaged groups and those under-represented in conservation such as young offenders, mental health service users and people with disabilities.

2.0 Introduction

This method statement has been prepared by London Wildlife Trust to set out the "precautionary working approach" to be adopted during the demolition works as required by condition 7 in the Planning Consent reference 2017/6011/P granted by Camden Council on 29th March 2018 which states:

> *"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 amphibians and 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 license from Natural England, evidence of which should be submitted to the Local Authority.*

Reason: To ensure the development contributes towards the protection and creation of habitats and valuable areas for biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of the London Plan (2016) and Policies A3 and CC2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 "

3.0 Background

London Wildlife Trust propose to construct a new visitor centre (class D1) with associated ancillary visitors Café (Class A1) and associated landscaping works.

An Ecological Appraisal of the site was prepared by London Wildlife Trust in October 2017 the report concluded that no protected species were identified during the survey. However, the potential for the site to support protected species was assessed as follows:

- Bats are considered present

- Breeding birds are considered present
- Amphibians are considered present
- Stag beetle is considered negligible

The populations of any species on site were thought to be highly unlikely to exceed local value due to the size of the site, its relative isolation, and it's very urban context.

3.1 Bats

The Ecological Appraisal recommended the need for a bat survey. A further bat survey of the site was completed in January 2018 by Essex Ecology Services Ltd. The survey concluded that there was no evidence to suggest use by bats, that the adjacent trees did not have bat roost potential and did not anticipate any significant impacts upon use of the site by foraging or commuting bats since the reserve to the south of the buildings will remain unchanged. The report recommended that, during the demolition, the section of wall on the rear of the large building, near to the hole in the eaves, should be stripped under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist and should signs of use as a bat roost be found then further survey work and a license obtained to allow the work to be completed.

3.2 Breeding Birds

A breeding bird survey was recommended if building demolition or tree and ornamental shrubbery clearance works take place during the months of March-August. The survey must be undertaken no more than 48hours prior to demolition. The demolition works are programmed to be done during September 2018. There is therefore no need to undertake a breeding bird survey.

3.3 Amphibians

Common frog, common toad and smooth newt are known to be present on site using the ponds and other suitable terrestrial habitats on site including several log piles and garden flower pots and the pond helps to sustain amphibian populations breeding on site.

Where proposed works will require the demolition of buildings or the clearance of vegetation with the potential to support amphibians a qualified ecologist is required to ensure that amphibians are moved prior to works being undertaken. If amphibians are found during demolition or clearance works, the works must stop immediately and a qualified ecologist should be consulted to move them to a safe location.

3.4 Stag beetles

Lesser stag beetle is known to be present on site; they are relatively widespread across London. Stag beetle has been recorded locally but these are actually likely to be lesser stag beetle, as the former is very rarely found in central London.

Both are saproxylic beetles and remain as larva within dead wood for many years. This dead wood is typically near or below ground level but can occasionally be inside large dead tree trunks higher up. Impacts on trees within the development are minimal but without appropriate mitigation populations of saproxylic beetles could be subject to a minimal negative impact.

3.5 Other non-protected species

Based on the current information the proposed development is likely to have the following impacts on other non-protected species of note:

Loss of vegetation and fungi species is expected to be entirely of species that are common throughout the reserve and London as a whole. No London notable or rare species are expected to be lost. Within the context of the site they are of minimal negative impact.

No invertebrate survey has been undertaken in recent years so details of invertebrate species present are unknown. However, considering the typical habitats it can be expected that invertebrate species typical of these habitats in this part of London will form the bulk if not the entirety of the invertebrate fauna. That said entomological surveys regularly reveal some nationally scarce species at many sites in London mainly because rarities have been defined from relatively few records (invertebrates, apart from butterflies, are highly under-recorded). In a few cases some rare species have become more common in recent decades. The presence of bare soil may support rarer digger wasps and mining bees. However, most of the invertebrate species found on site are likely to be present elsewhere within the reserve. Current proposals are therefore expected to have a minimal negative impact on invertebrates.

Non-breeding birds are typically mobile species; some may lose habitat for non- breeding activities such as cover, roost space, food resources etc., and they may be subject disturbance from demolition and construction. Current proposals are expected to have a minimal negative impact on non-breeding birds.

No mammal survey has been undertaken although species known to be present on site are grey squirrel, red fox, brown rat, and house mouse, all of which are very common. None are expected to receive permanent due to the proposed works, although house mouse and brown rat populations will be temporarily affected by demolition and construction. In this respect the proposals are expected to have a minimal positive impact on mammals.

In the unlikely event that other protected species are found during demolition, construction or clearance works, the works must stop immediately and a qualified ecologist should be consulted.

4.0 Scope of Works

This method statement has been prepared to fulfil the planning condition. The Method Statement describes the measures that will be implemented to ensure that the works mitigate the impact on amphibians and bats. The implementation of the method statement will allow the demolition works to proceed responsibly.
The demolition works include:

- **Existing Visitor Centre**: a timber framed single storey building including overhanging roof over raised deck structure beneath; as detailed in photos and in location as shown on drawing EX01, DEM01 and DEM02 (approximately 165m2).
- **Volunteers Room**: single storey building including overhanging roof over raised deck structure beneath; as detailed in photos and in location as shown on drawing EX01, DEM01 and DEM02 (approximately 48m2).
- **Outbuildings:** single storey shed building; as detailed in photos and in location as shown on drawing EX01, DEM01 and DEM02 (approximately 4m2) 2nr single storey buildings connected with overhanging roof structure; as detailed in photos and in location as shown on drawing EX01, DEM01 and DEM02 (approximately 28m2).
- **Raised decking / walkways timber structures with associated balustrades, access ramps and steps**; currently providing access between buildings (approximately 50m2).
- **Disconnection and isolation of utility supplies.**

5.0 Method Statement

5.1 Avoidance / protection measures

The measures described below will be implemented to ensure that potential effects on bats and amphibians identified can be further mitigated and or avoided. The measures will ensure that:

- Suitable amphibian habitat on site (the pond and wildlife garden) are fully protected throughout site preparation and construction;
- The section of wall and roof on the rear of the large building, near to the hole in the eaves, will be exposed and stripped under the supervision of a licenced bat ecologist;
- The works are carried out responsibly;
- Harm to individual animals is avoided by preventing animals entering suitable terrestrial habitats within the construction zone.

5.2 Amphibian barrier and removal

Prior to demolition an amphibian fence will be erected round the construction area as shown in Appendix A to provide a physical barrier between the works and suitable habitat for amphibians. The fence will remain in place for the entire development. Prior to demolition the construction / working area will be actively searched by a qualified ecologist for amphibians. Any individuals found will be removed from the construction / working area and placed outside of the physical barrier. This will minimise the potential for amphibians being encountered during the demolition of the buildings, however, it will not be possible to search directly under the buildings so additional measures expressed below (section D) will be undertaken during demolition to minimise any impacts on amphibians. The specification of the amphibian fencing will be as follows:

- Fencing will be made of UV stabilised polythene sheeting with a five year life expectancy;
- It will be staked into the ground and countersunk into the soil to 10cm to prevent any amphibians from digging underneath it and gaining access to the construction / working area. The fence will be about 90cm high to prevent any amphibian from traversing it;
- The amphibian fencing will be checked at weekly intervals throughout construction to ensure there are no gaps or it has fallen down;
- Any gaps or openings in the amphibian fencing identified during the weekly checks will be repaired, ideally the same day;
- The hoarding will be removed only on completion of operations within the construction / working area and only once all stored material and equipment not required for the removal has been removed.

5.3 Construction hoarding / barrier

Due to the site layout and the locations of habitats that need protection the use of construction hoarding is a precautionary measure focussed on providing a physical barrier between the works and the identified habitats to prevent disturbance and damages of those habitats, to prevent construction operations from encroaching beyond

the immediate vicinity of the works and to exclude larger animals from the working area along the boundary with potential habitats. The construction / working areas for all phases of work, and the hoarding locations are shown in the Appendix. The construction / working area will be clearly identified and demarcated with a construction hoarding to separate the construction zone from the nature reserve prior to the commencement of any ground works or construction. All construction and associated works including material storage will be carried out only within the protected construction zone behind the hoarding. The specification of the hoarding will be as follows:

- Hoarding will be made of a solid material such as chipboard or similar that will prevent any amphibians moving across the working area while allowing movement around the boundary.
- Hoarding will be at least 1m in height to prevent animals climbing into the site.
- Hoarding will be dug into the ground to a depth of at least 100m and the soil compacted around the hoarding base to create a firm seal that will prevent small mammals and other animals passing.
- Hoarding panels will be installed at a perpendicular angle to the ground and fastened securely together to ensure no gaps between panels.
- The hoarding will be checked at weekly intervals throughout construction to ensure there are no gaps.
- Any gaps or openings in the hoarding identified during the weekly checks will be repaired the, ideally the same day.
- The hoarding will be removed only on completion of operations within the construction zone and only once all stored material and equipment not required for the hoarding removal has been removed.

5.4 Timing of works

The removal of the buildings will be undertaken between March and October, in suitable weather conditions (night time temperatures above 5°C), when amphibians will be active. Although the likelihood of amphibians hibernating beneath the buildings is considered to be very low, removal of the buildings during the time when amphibians are active will eliminate any risk of hibernating animals being disturbed.

5.5 Ecological supervision

Removal of buildings:

The removal of the buildings will be carried out under the supervision of an experienced ecologist and where necessary licensed bat ecologist.

5.6 Amphibian measures

The skirting boards around the base of the buildings will be removed by hand prior to removal of the building. The supervising ecologist will then inspect the void beneath the building using a torch to identify features within which animals could shelter.

Any accessible features that cannot be visually inspected will be hand searched by the ecologist prior to disturbance. Any amphibians found will be moved by the ecologist to a protected area.

If there are any features beneath the building that cannot be inspected prior to its removal, then the ecologist will direct the 'soft' demolition of the building in stages to ensure that any features revealed can be inspected prior to disturbance.

Any material arising from the building demolition / removal will be promptly removed from site to avoid creating stock piled material beneath which amphibians could shelter.

5.7 Bat measures

Interim Bat boxes a suitable bat box will be placed in a tree near the works, as a precautionary measure in case any bats are discovered during the demolition. The box will be sited between 3 – 6m in a suitable tree as specified by the bat ecologist. The tree selected will remain in situ after the works have been completed.

Sensitive areas of the building, determined by the bat ecologist are to be removed by hand. In the unlikely event that a bat is discovered during the work then it will be removed by the onsite bat ecologist and placed in an interim bat box.

5.8 Lighting

Due to the timing of the demolition works the need for lighting the works is not anticipated.

If it is necessary to use temporary lighting then the following measures will be adopted:

Restrict use to the minimum amount required to meet health and safety requirements

To use focused lighting to avoid illuminating bat roosts and to keep lighting below the horizontal plane

To avoid additional light spill into the protected area

Limit the times lights are using adaptive lighting where feasible

5.9 Site staff ecological inductions

Prior to starting work, all site construction staff will be given a toolbox talk by the project ecologist. Staff will be made aware of the potential presence of bats and amphibians within the site. They will be notified that the work is being undertaken in strict accordance with the Amphibian Method Statement, and what the key measures of

the method statement are. They will also be briefed on how to recognise common British amphibian species and what action should be taken in the unlikely event that any amphibians are encountered during the works.
The site manager will retain contact details for the project ecologist who will be available at short notice to respond to any queries regarding bats or amphibians.

Appendix: Hoarding plan and amphibian fence plan