



THIS METHOD STATEMENT WAS REVISED ON 27/03/22 TO INCORPORATE AN UPDATED PROPOSED LAYOUT DRAWING. THE ORIGINAL PROPOSED LAYOUT DRAWING IS RETAINED WITHIN THE DOCUMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMPARISON; IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN HARDSTANDING OR REMOVAL OF GRASSLAND RESULTING FROM THE REVISION.

THE METHOD FOR WORKING REMAINS THE SAME BECAUSE THE MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO THE ACCESS ROAD FALL WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.

Non-Licensed Precautionary Method Statement for working near protected species

Stonehouse Farm,

Wainscott, Kent. ME3 8EN

1. This method statement offers a precautionary and practical solution to undertake habitat manipulation whilst avoiding the risks of killing or injuring animal species which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and The Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations. The objective: to undertake destructive searches of habitat that has the limited potential of hosting common reptile and amphibian species.
2. This method statement provides safe working practices to minimise the risk to protected species for the duration of construction works so that permanent ecological supervision on site is not required.

Prior to works commencing

All site workers must be made aware of this working method statement.

It should be noted that an avoidance method statement has been deemed appropriate for this site. Without this standardised operating procedure there is potential for negative impact both directly and indirectly to protected species which in the case of common reptiles is punishable by up to £5000 or five years in prison (per offence) and in the case of great crested newt (GCN) is punishable by an unlimited fine and/or a prison sentence.

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Description of the development

The redevelopment of the site comprises the division of the site into 5. No plots and the subsequent conversion of the existing buildings within each plot to residential use with the remainder of the plot comprising garden and areas of hard standing parking with units 1, 3 and 5 gaining new detached double garage blocks set within the areas of garden.

Figure 1: original proposed layout drawing

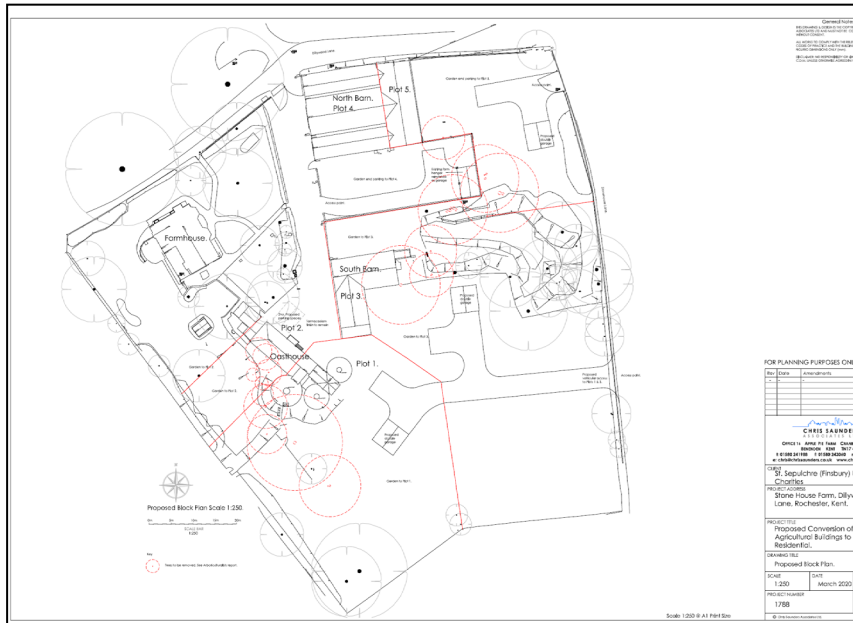
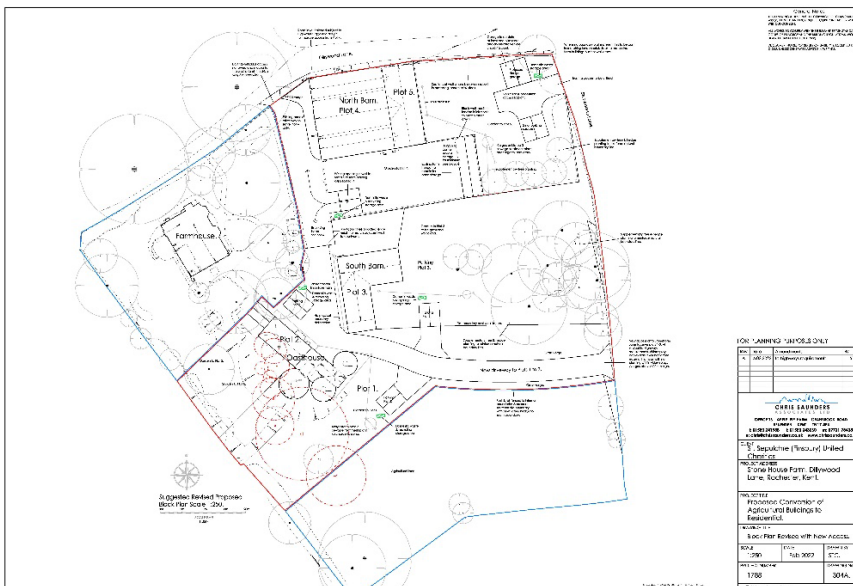


Figure 2: Revised proposed layout drawing



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Ecological Constraints

The footprints of the proposed new garages will result in a loss of B6 Poor, semi improved grassland. A new access route will be created off Stonehouse Lane to service plots 1 and 3 comprising a hard standing driveway. This will also result in losses of approximately 482 sqm of B6 Poor, semi improved grassland habitat.

The semi improved grassland habitats described above have some moderate potential to support common reptile and/or common amphibian species. There is some low potential for GCN to be present but it is considered highly unlikely that GCN will be encountered because:

- there is only one pond with 'poor' habitat suitability for GCN within 500m of the site.
- GCN require a network of ponds to survive.

In addition, 10 trees have been earmarked for removal within plots 1 and 2 and a further 14 from plots 3 and 5. The movement of plant machinery and/or vehicles across the site to facilitate tree removal could again result in protected species injury or mortality.

The habitats as described must be checked for protected species by a suitably qualified and experienced Ecological clerk of Works (EcoW) prior to any ground works and/or vehicular movement in or over these areas. The subsequent works should then be supervised by the EcoW.

All groundworks will follow the working methodology set out below in order to minimise the risk to protected species; and the likelihood of prosecution under wildlife legislation.

Works are to be undertaken during suitable weather (weather conditions: peak air temperature is between 9-20°C only¹).

Steps for vegetation clearance: EcoW and site worker responsibilities

Toolbox Talk

Deliver Toolbox Talk to groundworkers/landscapers

Record attendance of Team.

Identify the habitat piles and grassland for removal/trimming

As far as is reasonably practicable, search the grassland for protected species or evidence of protected species;

Stop work if any protected species are found;

Capture and relocate any other notable fauna to a safe distance from the construction areas.

Strim vegetation

Where the vegetation is taller, strim the selected areas to approximately 10cm (~4") from the ground;

Remove cut vegetation from the cleared areas; A rake may be used; however, disturbance of the ground must be avoided;

Stop work if any protected species are found and consult on site ECoW.

Strim vegetation stage 2

Strim the selected areas to approximately 5cm (~2") from the ground;

Remove cut vegetation from the cleared areas;

A rake may be used; however, the disturbance of the ground must be avoided;

Stop work if any protected species are found and consult on site ECoW.

¹ <https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Reptile-survey-booklet-3mm-leed.pdf>

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Fingertip search of grassland areas.

Search remaining grassland vegetation on site during suitable weather conditions;
Stop work if any protected species are found;
Capture and relocate all other notable fauna to a safe distance.

Habitat destruction if reptile/GCN absent.

During the stages above, if no reptiles or GCN are discovered then all remaining vegetation in the work areas can then be stripped using an excavator under EcoW supervision. This will ensure there is no future colonisation of the area.

The EcoW has full powers to stop on site works in the event that common reptiles or amphibians or GCN are discovered on site.

- If reptiles are discovered then all works will stop and a reptile presence / absence survey will be undertaken to establish species and population dynamics to inform a mitigation plan.
- If GCN are encountered then Natural England will need to be consulted and it is likely that a District Level Licence (DLL) will be required before work can continue.

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On site working practices

To be adhered to for the duration of the construction process following the vegetation clearance works above.

Figure 3: Designated works and storage areas highlighted blue



- Impact of vehicles/machinery on any vegetated areas surrounding the construction area must be minimised by undertaking work from hardstanding (blue shaded area).
- Any site vehicles and plant machinery will be parked on areas of hardstanding highlighted blue or on the existing hardstanding of the entrance driveway.

Reason: To avoid inadvertent harm to protected reptile species.

- All building materials to be stored on pallets or in bags and only on the areas of hardstanding highlighted blue or on the existing hardstanding of the entrance driveway providing there is a minimum 1m distance to any vegetated areas. DO NOT STORE MATERIALS ON VEGETATION OR ON THE EDGE OF HARDSTANDING NEAR TO VEGETATED AREAS.

Reason: to minimise the potential for any stored materials to be used by reptiles or amphibians for refuge or shelter.

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- Works will be restricted to the blue shaded designated work area and the impact of works on adjacent habitats avoided by clear demarcation of said area using barrier tape or barrier fencing as appropriate.

Reason: To allow work to continue without supervision and prevent inadvertent incursion into potential habitats.

- Trenches and other excavations must be backfilled before nightfall or ramps must be left within them to allow wildlife to easily exit. A scaffold board or similar is perfectly suited to the task.
- Trenches must be checked every morning for presence of common reptiles and amphibian and if found these should be retrieved and placed carefully in long grasses in the field margins of the site.
- If GCN are found within the trenches (see photos below) a licenced GCN worker must be contacted so that they can retrieve the GCN and contact Natural England.

Reason: To prevent wildlife becoming trapped overnight and/or causing inadvertent harm to protected species.

- All debris, rubble etc. collected during site clearance should be placed directly into skips or on hardstanding (with at least two metres distance from the nearest vegetation) or immediately removed from the site.

Reason: to avoid creating refugia which might be used by reptiles and other species for refuge or shelter.

Any work which will lead to temporary habitat disruption and reinstatement, such as laying services will need to be carried out under ecological supervision.

Reason: To avoid inadvertent harm to protected species.

GCN IDENTIFICATION.



GCN are large and warty newts; commonly about twice the size of the our other native newt species. The females (left hand photo) tend to be slightly larger and darker than the males (right hand photo). Out of water the male's characteristic dorsal fin is folded over and appears more like a line along the back. If you think you have found one of these in a trench, take a photo and call ECOassistance on the phone number on the title page of this document for advice.