



Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS)

Basin Bungalow, Leicestershire

March 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Brown & Co was commissioned by Pete Sheppard in January 2025 to produce a Reasonable Avoidance Measure (RAMMS) for terrestrial mammals (e.g otter, water vole, badger and hedgehog) and herpetofauna (e.g reptile & amphibians), in reference to the proposed works at land at Basin Bridge Bungalow, Hinckley Lane, Higham On The Hill, Nuneaton, Leicestershire, CV13 6JJ (National Grid Reference: SP 39586 95489)—hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’.

The RAMMS aim to discharge potential risks to the targeted species following the outputs of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken on the Site in March 2023, which noted potential for terrestrial mammals and reptiles to be impacted by the proposed works.

Proposed works include the proposed demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling and associated access features.

1.2 Site description

The Site is an approximately 0.71 ha flat parcel of land northwest of the village of Hickley (See Figure 1). The Site was dominated by modified grassland with areas of scattered scrub and tall forbs. A building lies to the north of the Site and a hardstanding access road along the west within the Site boundaries.



Figure 1 – Site location (redline), showing the wider local landscape (© 2024 Microsoft Corporation, © 2024 Maxar, ©CNES (2024) Distribution Airbus DS).

Imagery taken from Bing Aerial March 2024.

2. Protection & Relevant Legislation

2.1 Amphibians

Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, injure or take.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any breeding site, structure or place used for shelter or protection.
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange or offer for sale or exchange a live or any part of.

Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), Palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*) common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*) are protected under the the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), but only against trade i.e. sale, barter, exchange, transport for sale, or advertise for sale or to buy). It's not an offence to collect or possess these species.

2.2 Otter

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended) Section 43 of part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species as listed on schedule 2:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species.
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species.

- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species.
- Deliberately takes or destroy the eggs of such an animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute this activity).

2.3 Badger

Badger (*Meles meles*) are protected under the Protection of Badger Act 1992. Under this legislation it is an offence to (or intend to, or to be reckless as to whether your actions would have these consequences):

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempts to do so).
- Damage or destroy any part of a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Obstruct access to a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

2.4 Water Vole

Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from.
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal.

- Publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

2.5 Hedgehog

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Under this legislation it is an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail, or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with the intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

2.6 Reptile

Common and widespread reptiles, such as Adder (*Vipera berus*), Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*), Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) and Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*), are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from.
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal.
- Publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Smooth Snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) also receive stricter legal protection under Section 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is not illegal to disturb or damage their habitats. However, the reptiles themselves are protected, so any works to damage their habitat could risk causing undue harm to reptiles and hence could be illegal. These species are very geographically

isolated within England, being strongly associated with rare habitats such as sandy heathland and dunes, thus, these species are not expected to be present within the Site or the surrounding area—these species are not considered further in this report.

3. Approach

This RAMMS outlines various avoidance, protection and mitigation measures and precautions to be put in place throughout the various work phases of the proposed project, aiming to discharge and minimise potential risks in regard to committing offences related to great crested newt, hazel dormouse, and reptiles. A variety of best-practice guidance, governmental and non-governmental advice, and scientific literature was employed to support the outlined measures in the context of project specific information and the results of the initial survey of the Site.

All personnel required to conduct works within the project area and/or immediately adjacent land should be fully familiarised with the outputs of this document prior to commencing any project activities. Any uncertainties regarding outlined outputs should be addressed by immediately seeking advice from the project ecologist before commencing works. A record of personnel to have reviewed this RAMMS should be retained by the Site manager.

If the scope of works significantly change, such as a lengthening of project duration or an alteration to the redline footprint of the works, the measures outlined in this document are considered invalid and should not be adopted. In this scenario, the project ecologist should be contacted immediately, and the outputs reviewed and amended accordingly.

4. Species Assessment

4.1 Great Crested Newts

No freshwater ponds were identified within 250 m of the Site boundary, and the nearby canal are generally considered to provide sub-optimal breeding habitat for GCN. However, the Site itself does provide some foraging and refuge opportunities for GCN, with field hedgerows providing connectivity to other suitable habitats in the area. Onsite habitats are only considered a risk in terms of being a potential commuting habitat for great crested newt.

4.1.2 Avoidance, Protection, and Mitigation Measures

The following measures should be employed to discharge risks to great crested newt:

- Immediately prior to works a suitably qualified ecologist should attend the Site to conduct a check for signs of great crested newt occupancy. If individual great crested newt are located **all works must stop** and advice from the project ecologist sought before proceeding.
- No works should be undertaken between sunset and sunrise to avoid risks to commuting great crested newt and other nocturnal fauna.
- Excavations should be avoided where possible or covered when not being worked upon. Unavoidable excavations should not be left partially or fully open and exposed between sunset and sunrise, and an appropriate means of escape for trapped fauna provided, e.g. ramps no steeper than 45 degrees.
- Creation of or alteration of any material piles such as collections of brash should be avoided where possible. If such features are deemed to be suitable shelters or resting sites for great crested newt, further survey input may be required before proceeding.

4.2 Common Otter

A record of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) was returned by the local records search from the canal adjacent to the Site with no major dispersal barriers present. The Site's proximity to the canal means that the possibility of individuals being on Site and harmed by site clearance and construction is potential.

4.2.1 Avoidance, Protection, and Mitigation Measures

The following measures should be employed to discharge risks to common otter:

- If otter are recorded within the works area or within 50 m **all works must stop** and advice from the project ecologist sought before proceeding.
- Any excavations, including deep trenches or holes that will be left overnight, must be covered, or fitted with suitable ramps to allow otters a means of escape. Open pipework will be blocked off at the end of each day to ensure that animals do not enter and become trapped.
- Excessive mechanical noise from project equipment and/or vehicles should be avoided where possible so as to minimise disturbance to adjacent otter suitable habitat.

4.3 Badger

Badger are known to be locally present and the habitats within the Site and surrounding area, e.g hedgerows and open agricultural land, are suitable for badger and therefore there is a possibility that badger would commute and forage within the Site. As such, to avoid potential harm and injury to these species during the project, further mitigation measures and a precautionary approach are provided.

- Immediately prior to works a suitably qualified ecologist should attend the Site to conduct a check for active badger setts. If such setts are located **all works must stop** and advice from the project ecologist sought before proceeding.

4.4 Water Vole

Local records show water vole is locally present along the Ashby canal, adjacent to the Site. The existing bungalow is located roughly 30 m from the canal bank and the proposed new property will be located roughly 25 m from the canal bank. Therefore, there is a chance that water vole could be impacted by the proposed works. As such, to avoid potential harm and injury to these species during the project, further mitigation measures and a precautionary approach are provided.

- No development will occur within 5 m buffer zone of the canal bank to avoid damage or disturbance to any water vole burrows that may be present along the canal adjacent to the Site.
- The zone will be clearly demarcated with fencing, or similar, through which vehicles or personnel cannot be easily passed through.

4.5 Hedgehog

- Any refugia with potential to be used by hedgehog, such as vegetation piles and scrub, should be avoided by the works. If individual hedgehog are encountered within the works area, all works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted before proceeding.
- Works ramps should not exceed 45 degrees steepness. No trapping of hedgehog should occur within the new fenced enclosure. Any trenches/excavations to be covered overnight or a means of escape for fauna provided.

4.6 Reptile

Habitats within the Site and surrounding, e.g. bare ground and scrub, were considered suitable for basking, commuting, and foraging reptile (common and widespread species). As such, to avoid potential harm and injury to these species during the project, further mitigation measures and a precautionary approach are provided.

Common and widespread reptile species disperse easily, can be gregarious, and often occupy disturbed habitats and artificial land types. As such, all onsite personnel should employ the following precautionary measures:

- Basking areas, such as open ground and short vegetation habitats, should be regularly checked for individual reptiles. Peak times to consider for reptile basking behaviour are between 08:30-11:00 am, and between 16:00-18:00 pm.
- Significant caution should be taken when moving equipment, materials, and/or general debris within the Site or within adjacent areas; reptiles will often shelter or sleep beneath such features and may be injured by vigorous movement.
- Key movement corridors such as adjacent scrub should be avoided by Site personnel where possible and remain unobstructed throughout the project.

4.3.2 *Avoidance, Protection, and Mitigation Measures*

The following measures should be employed to discharge risks to reptile:

- Works should proceed between October and March during the hibernation/dormancy period where reptiles are less active and less likely to be within the works area or adjacent habitat. If this is not possible, immediately prior to works a suitably qualified ecologist should attend the Site to conduct a check for individual reptile. The project ecologist should remove any reptile within the works area to a designated receptor area away from the risk of injury.

- Excavations should be avoided where possible or covered when not being worked upon. Unavoidable excavations should not be left partially or fully open and exposed, and an appropriate means of escape for trapped fauna provided, e.g. ramps no steeper than 45 degrees.
- Creation of or alteration of any material piles such as collections of brash should be avoided where possible.

4.4 General Species Protection Measures

The following measures should be employed to discharge general risks to fauna:

- Access route(s) on and off of the Site for personnel and vehicles (if required) should be agreed with the project ecologist prior to works commencement. Such routes should take the shortest distance possible across the Site and between the Site and the public roadway access to the south.
- Works area should be clearly defined before commencement and throughout the project phases.
- Where appropriate, barriers should be installed to protect adjacent habitat stands; potentially this could be appropriate for specific project phases.
- Dust generation and spreading should be avoided throughout all project phases.
- Fuel considerations to avoid leakage and pollution of the local environment:
 - All equipment, machinery and/or plant used in the scope of the proposed works should be fitted with fuel drip trays where possible.
 - All storing of fuel and re-fuelling of equipment, machinery and/or plant should take place with the use of drip-capture devices.
 - All onsite personnel should have access to spill mitigation devices for other equipment capable of leaking fuel or oil.

- Avoidance of artificial lighting after dusk to minimise potential impacts to nocturnal fauna—lighting scheme to be in line with guidance set-out in Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023).