BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY SCREENING STATEMENT

Applicant: Mr Jack Depear
Site: Land adjacent to The Poplars, 164 North Road, Gedney Hill, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 0NS

Proposal: Retrospective siting and residential occupation of a mobile home to provide accommodation for the applicant's father, together with the formation of a vehicular access, enabling care and support to be provided by family members residing at the adjoining dwelling.

1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

It provides proportionate information concerning the previous and current character of the application site, the development already undertaken and ordinary biodiversity and ecological considerations.

The application site comprises land adjacent to The Poplars and forms part of a wider landholding within the applicant's ownership.

2. Previous site characteristics

Before the mobile home and associated works were introduced, the application site predominantly comprised part of a managed grass paddock adjoining North Road.

The grassland was relatively uniform in appearance and of limited structural diversity.

The principal area affected by the development was not known to contain:

- **buildings;**

Southfork Farm, Seadyke Bank, Murrow, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4SD
T: 07891175649 E: info.alexandradesign@gmail.com W: www.alexandradesign.co.uk

- **ponds;**
- **watercourses;**
- **ditches within the development footprint;**
- **mature trees within the footprint of the mobile home; or**
- **other obvious specialist habitat features.**

Established trees and vegetation were present mainly around parts of the site boundaries.

3. Development undertaken

The retrospective development comprises:

- **the siting and residential occupation of a mobile home;**
- **associated tarmacked and hard-surfaced areas;**
- **parking and manoeuvring areas;**
- **a vehicular access from North Road; and**
- **the retention of surrounding grassland, trees and boundary vegetation.**

Part of the former grass paddock is now occupied by the mobile home and associated surfaced areas.

The remaining land within and adjoining the application site continues to comprise grassland and established boundary vegetation.

4. Habitat considerations

The part of the site directly affected by the development previously comprised managed grassland.

Although vegetated land can provide some ecological function, the affected area was comparatively uniform and lacked the structural and botanical diversity generally associated with habitats of greater ecological value.

The tarmacked areas, hardstanding and footprint of the mobile home now provide negligible direct habitat value.

However, the wider grass paddock remains, and the principal boundary features capable of offering greater ecological value have been retained.

These include:

- **existing trees;**
- **boundary planting;**
- **grassed areas surrounding the development; and**
- **vegetation capable of providing shelter, foraging and movement opportunities for wildlife.**

5. Trees and boundary vegetation

No established trees are understood to have been removed to facilitate the siting of the mobile home.

The trees and boundary vegetation shown on the submitted plans have been retained.

These features continue to contribute to:

- **potential bird nesting habitat;**
- **wildlife movement and connectivity;**
- **shelter and foraging opportunities;**
- **visual screening; and**
- **the landscape character of the site.**

No further removal of established trees or boundary vegetation is proposed as part of this application.

Any future vegetation management should avoid the active bird-nesting season unless the vegetation has first been checked by a suitably competent person.

6. Protected-species considerations

The mobile home and associated works have been present for approximately three years.

There is no known evidence available to the applicant or planning agent indicating that the area directly occupied by the mobile home and hardstanding previously contained a protected-species breeding site or resting place.

The development did not involve:

- **demolition or conversion of an existing building;**
- **removal of mature trees;**
- **removal of established hedgerows or substantial boundary vegetation;**

Alexandra Design
Southfork Farm, Seadyke Bank, Murrow, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4SD
T: 07891175649 E: info.alexandradesign@gmail.com W: www.alexandradesign.co.uk

- **infilling of a pond; or**
- **works to a watercourse.**

The retained trees, boundary vegetation and surrounding grassed areas remain available for use by wildlife.

Should the Council identify a specific concern arising from ecological records, a nearby designated site or a particular habitat feature, the applicant will respond proportionately to that identified issue.

7. Biodiversity Net Gain

The application is retrospective and made under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply to retrospective planning permissions made under section 73A.

Accordingly, the application is not required to provide a statutory biodiversity metric, 10% net gain calculation or Biodiversity Gain Plan.

This statement instead addresses ordinary ecological considerations relevant to the planning application.

8. Biodiversity enhancements

Although statutory BNG does not apply, proportionate biodiversity enhancements can be provided where reasonably necessary.

Suitable measures could include:

- **installation of a bird nesting box on a retained tree;**
- **installation of a bat box in a suitable position;**
- **continued retention and management of existing boundary vegetation;**
- **use of native or wildlife-friendly planting;**
- **avoidance of unnecessary external lighting directed towards trees and vegetation; and**
- **retention of grassed areas around the mobile home.**

Any necessary enhancement could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

9. Conclusion

The application site previously comprised part of a managed grass paddock with relatively limited structural diversity.

The retrospective development has resulted in the occupation of part of the site by a mobile home, tarmacked areas and associated access and parking.

The wider grass paddock remains, and the established trees and boundary vegetation have been retained.

The development did not involve the demolition of buildings, removal of mature trees, removal of established boundary vegetation, infilling of ponds or works to watercourses.

On the information available, the retrospective development is not considered to have resulted in the loss of any obvious habitat feature of significant ecological value.

The retained vegetation continues to provide ecological function, and proportionate biodiversity enhancements can be secured if required.