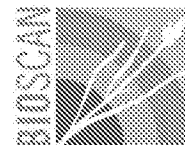


LAND OFF FORD ROAD, ARUNDEL

Ecological Appraisal

June 2019

Bioscan Report No. E1898r1rev1



COMMISSIONED BY
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Written by: Samuel Watson MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

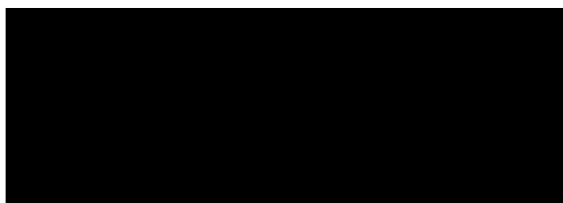
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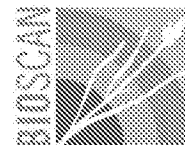
**Land off Ford Road, Arundel
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BIOSCAN (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
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Figure 1: Habitat map

Appendix 1: Biodiversity Checklist

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED ECOLOGICAL ISSUES MATERIAL TO LAND-USE DECISIONS ON THE SITE

Site Name	Land off Ford Road, Arundel
Statutory Site Designations	None within or adjacent to the site
<i>International designations</i>	
<i>National designations</i>	
<i>Local Nature Reserve</i>	
Non-statutory Site Designations	None within or adjacent to the site
<i>Local Wildlife Sites with specific planning policy protection</i>	
<i>Local Wildlife Sites without specific planning policy protection</i>	
<i>Non-statutory nature reserves</i>	
<i>Ancient woodland sites</i>	
Feature designations	
<i>'Important' hedgerows</i>	None identified
Species subject to special protection	
<i>European Protected Species</i>	None identified as resident within the site. Five species of bat, together with <i>Plecotus</i> and <i>Myotis</i> species recorded during the remote detector survey
<i>Species subject to full WCA protection</i>	None identified
<i>Species subject to partial or limited WCA protection (relevant to land-use decisions)</i>	None identified
<i>Badgers</i>	No evidence found
<i>Nesting birds</i>	Yes, in season
Habitats/species with attendant legal obligations	
<i>Species of principal importance</i>	Soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats
<i>Habitats of principal importance</i>	None identified
Other resources of elevated conservation importance	
<i>Nationally rare species</i>	None identified
<i>Nationally scarce species</i>	None identified
<i>Locally rare or uncommon species</i>	None identified
<i>Other species of conservation concern</i>	None identified,
General remarks: A site characterised by a dominance of scrub that has little flora interest. No evidence of any specially protected species being resident within the site has been found and there is limited scope for the site to support such species. The bat activity recorded was dominated by common and soprano pipistrelle bats, with significantly fewer registrations of other species.	

1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Bioscan (UK) Ltd was appointed by Oakford Homes Ltd to carry out an ecological appraisal of a parcel of land known as Land off Ford Road, Arundel (central grid reference TQ012067) which is proposed for development to housing.
- 1.1.2 The site is located close to the centre of Arundel, with Ford Road forming the site's western boundary, beyond which is a cemetery and existing built development. To the south is further existing residential development. To the east and north is well managed amenity open space with the River Arun and A27 beyond these respectively.
- 1.1.3 The Arun District Council Biodiversity Checklist has been completed and is provided at Appendix 1.

1.2 Methods

Desk study

- 1.2.1 In order to obtain archive data relating to the ecological interest present within and surrounding the site, the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) was contacted in May 2017 to request any information they held relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation designations within a 2km search radius of the centre of the site. Protected and/or notable species records were also requested for this search area. This request was supplemented by a search of Bioscan's own in-house archives as well as freely available online resources, such as the government's MAGIC website¹.

Habitat survey

- 1.2.2 A habitat survey of the site was carried out on 26th July 2017, with any incidental observations regarding the flora in the site noted during other visits also recorded. The methodology for the habitat survey was based on the Phase 1 approach as devised by the former Natural Conservancy Council (now Natural England), as updated periodically by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee². This technique provides an inventory of the broad habitat types present within the site and targets areas of more interest or that might benefit from a more detailed survey, if appropriate. Additional detail was provided in the form of representative lists of species compiled for each habitat (an 'extended' Phase 1 survey).

¹ Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside, MAGIC.gov.uk

² JNCC, (2010), *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit*

- 1.2.3 As part of the habitat survey, the extent of any habitats of 'Principal Importance' further to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, (i.e. 'Priority Habitat' types) was also noted, with reference to the qualifying attributes set out by the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG)'s descriptions³.

- 1.2.4 Lastly, throughout the habitat survey, the site was assessed for its potential to support protected or otherwise notable species, with the site also searched for evidence of badgers *Meles meles*, including setts, foraging pits, snagged hair and 'push-throughs'.

Bats - remote detector survey

- 1.2.5 Due to access restrictions imposed by National Grid on access to the site because of its former use in the gas supply network, full access to the site for the bat survey was not possible. In addition, as the site contains dense, impenetrable vegetation in places and lacks the more common 'field with hedgerows' arrangement along which a bat transect survey would typically be focused, it was considered that a remote detector survey, using one detector, would provide the necessary level of data to assess the site's use by bats.
- 1.2.6 As recommended by current survey guidance⁴ for habitats of low suitability for bats, three remote detector surveys were carried out, one in each of spring, summer and autumn. The survey guidance sets out that each survey should cover five consecutive nights when the weather conditions are appropriate for bats. For each of the surveys an Anabat express detector was installed within the site (see Figure 1 for the location of the detector) and set to record from 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise the following morning each night it was in place.
- 1.2.7 The surveys were carried out between; 16th September to 20th September 2017, 17th and 21st May 2018 and 30th July and 3rd August 2018. Note that a survey period ending (e.g.) 20th September would include the time between midnight and sunrise on the 21st.

Other fauna

- 1.2.8 Any incidental observations of other fauna noted during the various survey visits was also recorded.

³ BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) (2008) *UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions*

⁴ Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

2 RESULTS

2.1 Desk study

- 2.1.1 The desk study confirms that no part of the site or land immediately adjacent to it is the subject of a statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. The only statutory designation within the 2km search radius is Arundel Park Site of Specific Scientific Interest which is located c.600m north of the site at its closest point. The citation for the designation states the following –

“Arundel Park is one of the most important sites in the country for invertebrates including a number of rare and notable species. The area has a particularly diverse breeding bird community and is important for overwintering species. The site also includes examples of species-rich chalk grassland containing several plants uncommon in Sussex.”

- 2.1.2 In addition, there are three non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designations within the search area, these are: Binstead Wood Complex LWS – a mixture of ancient and recent woodland, conifer plantation, species rich pasture and old tracks and shaws, which support a very rich and diverse flora; Rewell Wood Complex LWS – a large ancient woodland complex that also contains worked sweet chestnut coppice, conifer plantation, beech plantation and species-rich chalk grassland; and Arun Valley, Watersfield to Arundel LWS - This section of the River Arun and its floodplain forms an extensive tract of wetland habitat, providing an important resource for breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl, as well as dragonflies, water beetles, snails and plants. The unimproved meadows of Watersfield Brooks are also of elevated botanical interest.
- 2.1.3 None of the protected and notable species records provided by the SxBRC are confirmed as being located within the site itself. Notable records located outwith the site boundary include water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, common and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*, and the brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auratus*.

2.2 Habitat survey

- 2.2.1 The following habitats were identified within the site during the habitat survey;
- Scrub
 - Colonising ground
 - Structure
- 2.2.2 Each habitat is mapped on Figure 1, and described in more detail below with reference to the dominant or more notable species identified.

Scrub

- 2.2.3 Much of the site had a gravelled surface assumed to be a legacy of its former use. The vast majority of this had been colonised by self-sown, and often dense, scrub that would appear likely to have developed following the closure of the facility and subsequent cessation of active management. Buddleia *Buddleja davidii* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. dominated the woody component, with Rose-of-Sharon *Hypericum calycinum* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* saplings also present. Below these the ground flora, where present, included species such as ivy *Hedera helix*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvensis*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, prickly sow-thistle *Sonchus asper*, nettle *Urtica dioica*, cleavers *Galium aparine* and enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*.

Colonising ground

- 2.2.4 Where the scrub was absent or yet to form a completely closed canopy on the gravelled parts of the site, a community of ruderal and opportunistic species had developed. This contained species such as Canadian fleabane *Erigeron canadensis*, ivy, nettle, daisy *Bellis perennis*, locally abundant ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, bristly ox-tongue *Helminthotheca echinoides*, thyme-leaved speedwell *Veronica serpyllifolia*, cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, great and broad-leaved willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* and *E. montanum*, and more rarely also common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, dandelion *Taraxacum* agg., barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*, hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* and red valerian *Centranthus ruber*.
- 2.2.5 Those parts of the site with a bitumen surface were less well vegetated compared to the gravelled areas and contained nettle, ivy, bramble, prickly sow-thistle with occasional buddleia and young sycamore.

Structure

- 2.2.6 The only structure within the site was a pre-fabricated metal electricity sub-station.

Bats - remote detector survey

- 2.2.7 The weather conditions during each survey were suitable for bat activity, with bats detected each night the detector was deployed. The results of the remote detector surveys are contained in Table 1 which shows the total number of registrations of each bat species per survey night. Note that each 'registration' equates to a sound file that is up to 15 seconds in length and may contain several individual bat 'calls'. These data therefore provide an indication of the level of bat activity within the site and by which species, and not the number of bats present.
- 2.2.8 In summary, species recorded include; common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctule* and serotine, with *Myotis* and *Plecotus* bats also recorded. The small number of registrations recorded as *NyctEpte* relate

to calls likely to be from either serotine or Leisler's, which are difficult to differentiate to species level. Similarly, registrations listed under *Pipistrellus* species are either common or soprano pipistrelle but the call frequency was at or around 50kHz and so identification to species was not possible.

Table 1 - Total number of bat registrations per night for each species during the remote detector surveys

Date	Common pipistrelle	Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus</i> species	<i>Nathusius'</i> pipistrelle	Noctule	Serotine	NyctEpte	<i>Plecotus</i> species	<i>Myotis</i> species
15/09/2017	5	12	11			8		2	
16/09/2017	10	10			2	5		8	1
17/09/2017	10	14	3	1	1	3		4	1
18/09/2017	4	6	3	1	2			7	1
19/09/2017	13	13	2		3	2		5	3
17/05/2018	8	7			1		1	1	2
18/05/2018	5	9			1			1	
19/05/2018	4	2					3		
20/05/2018	24	12			1			1	2
21/05/2018	12	16			2			1	
30/07/2018	20	15				2		15	
31/07/2018	21	7		1	3	1		4	
01/08/2018	20	15			11	1		5	1
02/08/2018	34	26			3	2		4	3
03/08/2018	44	28			3	4		16	1

2.3 Other fauna

- 2.3.1 No evidence of badgers or any other specially protected species being resident within the site was found during the habitat survey and overall the site was assessed to have limited potential to support such species. In particular the habitats are considered sub-optimal for supporting reptiles due to the dominance of dense scrub. Similarly, the site was considered unlikely to be used by great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and there is no habitat suitable for supporting water vole *Arvicola amphibius*. The only potential protected species constraint identified was nesting birds. Although this was not confirmed at the time of the surveys, it is likely that the site is used by birds for nesting.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Evaluation Methodology

- 3.1.1 While some level of subjectivity is unavoidable when apportioning value to ecological features and resources, certain parameters and points of reference can be used to help ensure consistency. Those used in this appraisal are explained below.
- 3.1.2 Sites already possessing statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations will have been subjected to some form of evaluation process in the past, and their importance defined at a geographical scale (e.g. international, national, local). For these, evaluation will generally reaffirm their qualifying attributes, or in some cases may identify where designation may no longer be appropriate.
- 3.1.3 Factors such as extent, naturalness, rarity, fragility and diversity are all relevant to the determination of ecological value, and for the evaluation of sites and habitat features outside designated sites, these and other criteria as described by Ratcliffe⁵ (1977), may be applied. Ratcliffe's criteria are integral to the procedure for selecting both Sites of Special Scientific Interest and many non-statutory designation systems in the UK, and therefore remain an accepted standard for site evaluation.
- 3.1.4 In applying these criteria, attention may be drawn to the relative scarcity or abundance of features within the survey area and in the wider geographical context. Some criteria are however absolute and not relative to scale. Ancient woodland, for example, is fragile irrespective of whether it is being considered in an international or local context. Similarly, the value of an otherwise poor habitat may be elevated if it is central to the survival of a rare species.
- 3.1.5 Where evaluation is important for the purposes of informing decisions related to land-use planning and development control, the above approach needs to be supplemented by consideration of whether individual species are subject to legal protection⁶, or whether habitats or species are present which have been identified as of 'principal importance' for biodiversity conservation in the UK⁷ (HPI and SPI respectively). Planning authorities have a statutory duty⁸ to have regard to protected species and to further biodiversity objectives and the presence of such resources may therefore be material to the determination of development control decisions⁹.

⁵ Ratcliffe (1977) *A Nature Conservation Review*.

⁶ Principal legislation being the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which consolidates The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), both of which implement the EC Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. Some animals are protected under separate legislation (e.g. the Protection of Badgers Act 1992).

⁷ As published by the Secretary of State further to their duties under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

⁸ Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, supplemented by ODPM Circular 06/2005.

3.1.6 Finally, attention may be drawn to species not necessarily subject to legal protection or identified by Government as a priority for biodiversity conservation, but which nonetheless have an 'unfavourable' conservation status as defined by the Red Data Book system¹⁰ or the Red and Amber lists for birds¹¹, or which are otherwise known to be rare or scarce in a local or regional context.

3.1.7 Scales of comparison varying from international to the context of the local area may be used to define the measure of importance (or value) attached to individual features. The definition of geographic terms can vary, but in this evaluation the geographic frame of reference contained within the CIEEM guidelines¹² is used.

3.2 Evaluation of the study area

3.2.1 The desk study confirms that no part of the study area or the land immediately adjacent to it is the subject of a statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation and none of the records provided by the SxBRC was from within the site itself.

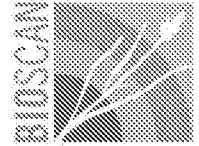
3.2.2 Without exception, none of the habitats or floral species identified within the site is especially rare or afforded statutory protection, and all are readily replicated. Similarly, none of the habitats are identified as a section 41 Priority Habitat. As such, none is considered to have more than very low intrinsic ecological value and their loss as a result of the development would not be considered likely to result in a significant ecological impact at anything beyond the immediate confines of the site itself.

3.2.3 Five species of bat together with *Myotis* and *Plecotus* bats were detected during the remote detector surveys. Of these, soprano pipistrelle and noctule are a Species of Principal Importance. Of the species recorded common and soprano pipistrelle bats were by far the most frequently detected; these being two of the most common species in Britain and as such suggestive of a site that has no greater value to bats than comparative to the wider area. The other species recorded accounted only for a small percentage of the total registrations which likely to represent sporadic use of the site by individual bats that most likely passed through the site and which did not remain within the site for a significant period. Whilst Nathusius' pipistrelle continues to be considered rare in Britain, its known range is thought to be expanding, probably (at least in part) due to advancements in detector technology and an increased understanding of the call parameters of this species. It is frequently detected by Bioscan in southern counties in Britain and its detection within this site is not unexpected nor is not considered to elevate the overall value of the site to bats.

¹⁰ Following the British Red Data books published by the JNCC/RSNC and the Nationally Notable (Nationally Scarce) categorisations recognised by the JNCC

¹¹ Eaton *et al.* (2015) Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108, pp708-746.

¹² CIEEM (2016) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal*, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.



- 3.2.4 No other protected or particularly notable species were recorded during the survey and overall there is limited scope for the site to support such species. It is, however, likely that the site is used by common 'garden' bird species for nesting e.g. dunnock and blue tit, and measures to avoid legislative constraints relating to birds and their nests are therefore provided under section 4 below. Conversely, the site was assessed as unsuitable nesting habitat for bird species more common in open countryside such as skylark and linnet.

4 MITIGATION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENHANCEMENT

4.1 Mitigation and recommendations

Habitats

- 4.1.1 No specific mitigation is assessed to be required in response to impacts on the existing habitats due to the lack of significant floral interest identified and the highly localise significance of any impact that would be generated by their removal.

Bats

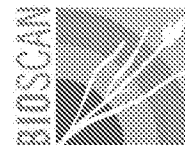
- 4.1.2 Although the survey results suggest that the site is not of high conservation value to bats, in order to ensure that potential impacts of the proposals on bat activity are minimised, it would be recommended to design a lighting scheme for the development that is sensitive to bat activity. This could include using external lighting that has no or a very low UV component and that has light sources (e.g. the LED's) set within a luminary that directs light downwards or can be fitted with a cowl to achieve this, to minimise the extent of light spill on to adjoining, off-site areas. In addition, external lighting could also be sensor controlled (e.g. passive infrared) so that it is only illuminated when required.

Nesting birds

- 4.1.3 In order to avoid legislative constraints relating to nesting birds, it is recommended to carry out any clearance works, such as vegetation removal, outside the bird nesting season, which typically runs from mid-February to August inclusive, although some bird species will nest all year round if conditions are suitable. If the work is programmed for during this period a prior survey by a suitably experienced ecologist would be recommended to identify if any nesting constraint is present at that time. If an active nest was identified within an area to be affected by any works, it is likely that it would have to remain *in situ* and unaffected until such time as a resurvey confirmed that it was no longer in active use, at which point it is likely that it could be removed.

4.2 Enhancements

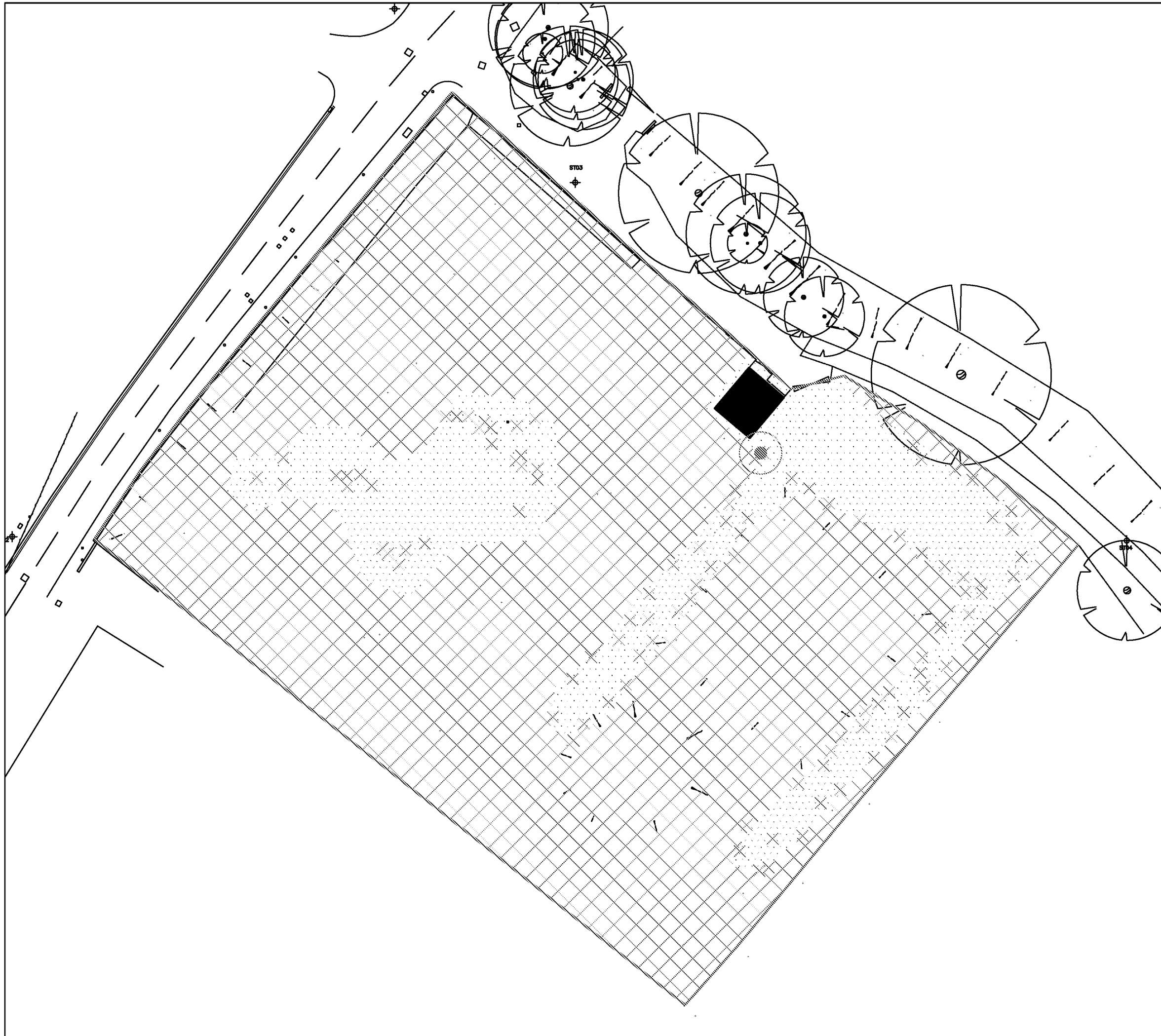
- 4.2.1 In addition to the mitigation and recommendations outlined above, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to encourage development that incorporates measures to enhance biodiversity. The following enhancements are therefore recommended;
- Install two bird boxes within the site as part of the development.
 - Install two bat boxes within the site as part of the development.



- Any non-native or ornamental species should also avoid floral species known or assessed as potentially being invasive such as periwinkle *Vinca* spp and Japanese rose *rosa rugosa*¹³.

¹³

Further information can be found in Natural England's publication - *Horizon-scanning for invasive non-native plants in Great Britain*. Natural England, Sheffield (2011). See also the Plantlife and RHS 2010 guides '*Gardening without harmful invasive plants*' and '*Landscaping without harmful invasive plants*'.



Key

- Site boundary
- Scrub
- Colonising ground
- Structure
- Remote bat detector



DO NOT SCALE

Title
Habitat map

Project	Client
Land off Ford Road, Arundel	Oakford Homes

Drawing No.	Revision	Project No.
Figure 1	A	E1898

Drawn	Checked	Date
SW	SW	May 2019

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Appendix 1

BIODIVERSITY CHECKLIST

Please complete this form having regard to the Biodiversity Checklist Notes, which can be found at:
<http://www.arun.gov.uk/biodiversity-checklist>

If you tick Yes, you must provide supporting information/statement with the application. If you do not the application will be held as invalid until you do so.

Site Address/Application Reference Number:

PAA/134/18

Bats

Gas Works Site
Arundel

YES

NO

Has the site been surveyed for bats?

☒
☐

Are there any structures on site which have the potential to support roosting bats?

☐
☒

Structures with high potential include all agricultural buildings, buildings with weather boarding, tunnels, mines, ice houses, bridges, cliff faces with crevices and woodland. Further guidance can be found in 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines' available from www.bats.org.uk and the Bat Mitigation Guidelines available from:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/bats.aspx>

Are there any trees on the site which have the potential to support roosting bats?*

☐
☒

Trees with high potential to support roosting bats include old and veteran trees and any tree with cracks or crevices. Where appropriate, foraging and commuting routes should be incorporated into the design of the scheme. Further guidance can be found in 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines'

Barn Owls

YES

NO

Has the site been surveyed for barn owls?*

☒
☐

Is there any evidence of barn owls nesting on or near the site or are there suitable nesting areas on the development site?*

☐
☒

Barn owls often nest in farm buildings, dovecotes, bale stacks, hollow trees and a wide variety of derelict buildings. Barn owls require habitat which supports high number of small mammals including pasture, hedgerows and woodland. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/construction-near-protected-areas-and-wildlife>

Breeding birds

YES

NO

Has the site been surveyed for breeding birds?*

☐
☒

Will areas of hedgerow/scrub/woodland/trees or other features likely to be used by nesting birds be affected by the proposal?*

☒
☐

If 'Yes' then mitigation measures to ensure occupied nests are protected should be included with the application.

Badgers

YES

NO

Has the site been surveyed for badgers?*

☒
☐

Is there any evidence of badgers on or near the application site?*

☐
☒

Are badgers commuting through the site to foraging areas?*

☐
☒

Badgers use a wide variety of habitats and setts can be found in hedgerows, woodlands, scrub and field margins. Where appropriate, safe routes to foraging areas should be incorporated into the development proposals. Further information can be found in 'Badgers and Development' available at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/badgers.aspx>

	YES	NO
Dormice		
Has the site been surveyed for dormice?*	☐	☒
Is there suitable habitat for dormice on, or close to the application site?*	☐	☒

Dormice are found in a variety of habitats including ancient semi-natural woodland, scrub, young plantations (both broadleaved and coniferous) and hedgerows. Occasionally they are recorded in gorse scrub, heathland and alder trees in reedbeds.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hazel-dormice-protection-surveys-and-licences>

	YES	NO
Great crested newts		
Has the site been surveyed for great crested newts?*	☐	☒
Is there suitable habitat for great crested newts on, or close to the application site?*	☐	☒

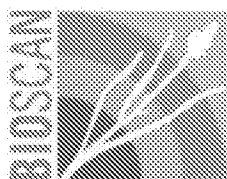
Great crested newts are often recorded in ponds, reedbeds, ditches and mineral workings. Terrestrial habitat used by newts is varied and includes semi-natural grassland, woodland, hedgerows and pasture and are often found in urban sites including gardens. Further guidance on great crested newts can be found in the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines from:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/great-crested-newts-protection-surveys-and-licences>

	YES	NO
Reptiles		
Has the site been surveyed for reptiles?*	☐	☒
Is there suitable habitat on the site for reptiles?*	☐	☒

Reptiles use a variety of habitats including rough grassland, heathland, allotments, scrub, brownfield sites, field margins and abandoned gardens. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reptiles-protection-surveys-and-licences>



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