

**LAND AT FONTWELL AVENUE, ESTERGATE,
CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX, PO20 3RU**

ECOLOGICAL DESK STUDY SURVEY

July 2013



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Figure 1 Site location

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A suitably qualified ecologist was commissioned by Furse Landscape Architects Ltd to undertake a desk study to inform the potential for ecological constraints at the proposed development at Fontwell Avenue, Eastergate, Chichester, West Sussex. The nearest post code for the site is PO20 3RU. The grid reference of the site is: SU 94538 05815.

The purpose of the desk study survey was to:

- identify the major habitats present
- identify potential for legally protected species to be present
- recommend additional ecological surveys likely to be required.

- 1.1 No site visit was undertaken.

- 1.2 The report was commissioned to support a planning application for the development of 3 detached houses. The site currently comprises of a small parcel of un-managed land dominated by common ruderal vegetation. The site is located in the small village of Eastergate adjacent to the A29.

The habitat features on site are as follows:

- scattered trees – the site contains a small number of trees on the site boundary with common ruderal vegetation such as bramble within the central area. The trees and bramble have the potential to support a small number of breeding birds. The site is dominated by common ruderal vegetation of all plant species that are common and widespread, no notable species were identified during the survey
- water bodies – there are no water bodies or water courses at the site
- buildings – there are no buildings within the site boundary

2. DESKTOP STUDY

Desk Study Survey and Consultations

2.1 The desk study survey involved conducting database searches for statutory and non-statutory designated sites, legally protected species and features of interest within and immediately surrounding the site in a 2 kilometres (km) search radius, which was centred on the site (i.e. NGR: SU 94538 05815). The baseline conditions were based on a review of existing available information including:

- Nature on the Map (Natural England website)
- MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) website
- Ordnance Survey mapping (to identify potentially notable habitats)
- Aerial photography (e.g. Google mapping)
- NBN Gateway (National Biodiversity Network) website
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)

Local Biodiversity Records

2.2 A desk study review of available biodiversity records from the National Biodiversity records for the site, and surrounding areas was used to provide additional background information for the survey. This desk study review is reported in the following sections of this report, and priority species noted in the county are listed.

2.3 The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) was used to assess the presence of notable species within the environs of the site. This data provides information on particular species and an indication of whether or not a species has been recorded within the proximity of the site. The following species and groups of animals have been identified within 2 km SU73 grid square that encompasses this area.

2.4 No Protected species or habitats were identified at the time of the desk study survey.

Birds

- 2.5 The following notable bird species have been identified in the area: barn owl (*Tyto alba*), common to woodland edges; king fisher (*Alcedo atthis*), corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), and hobby (*Falco subbutio*). No notable bird species were identified during the survey.

Invertebrates

- 2.6 The NBN Gateway holds records of invertebrates within 2 km of the site, although no notable invertebrates were identified during the survey. The site lies within an urban setting and is isolated from important habitats within the greater area, such as marginal aquatic vegetation, woodlands, heath and grassland etc.

Badgers

- 2.7 NBN Gateway holds no records of badgers within 2 km of the site. The urbanised setting of the site is completely unsuitable for badgers. It is a small isolated piece of un-managed land, bounded by residential dwellings on all sides lacking suitable features for successful breeding and foraging. Badgers are normally associated with open and wooded countryside (see Figure 1).

Mammals

- 2.8 Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) are the only protected mammals which have been recorded within 2 km, although it is not anticipated the proposed development will result in negative impacts on local populations as their activities are generally confined to river corridors water course and occasionally ponds .

Bats

- 2.9 NBN Gateway holds records of Chiroptera species within 2 km of the site although the site has low potential for supporting bat species as it lacks suitable habitat features such as mature trees and older buildings associated with roosting bats. The site is devoid of linear features such as hedgerows, water courses or tree lines used for foraging and is a small isolated piece of ground in an urbanised setting. Therefore bats are not considered to be at risk from the proposed development nor will the development result in the loss of suitable foraging habitat (see Figure 1).

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 2.10 Adder (*Vipera berus*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) have been recorded within 2 km of the site, although it is not anticipated that the site is utilised by either of the above species, due to the lack of suitable breeding and foraging habitat and the lack of connectivity with suitable habitats. The presence of numerous anthropogenic barriers bounding the site make it fragmented and isolated, furthermore reptiles require a mosaic of habitats to include rough grasses and gravelly areas with basking banks to raise their body temperature. Therefore it is not considered that either of the above species is at risk from the proposed development.
- 2.11 Ponds are required for species such as reptiles and amphibians, slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*), smooth newt (*Triturus vulgaris*), pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*) and the common toad (*Bufo bufo*). The desk study survey did not identify any suitable habitat for reptiles or amphibians which has connectivity with the site.
- 2.12 A review of maps on the MAGIC¹ and Nature on the Map websites shows that the general area around the site does not bear any habitats of significant ecological value, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). From the review of the aerial photography, there are no suitable ponds within 250 metres of the site that might harbour protected species such as great crested newt.
- 2.13 Due to the lack of suitable habitat at the site, it is considered that impacts from development on the species and habitats listed above are likely to be minimal.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

Statutory Sites

- 2.14 There are no Statutory Designated Sites for nature conservation such as Sites of Scientific Importance, Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas located within 2 km of the site. It is not anticipated the proposed development will result in negative impacts upon statutory sites

¹ www.magic.go.uk

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 2.15 There are a number of known non-statutory sites within 2 km of the site, all UK Biological Action Plan (UKBAP) priority habitats. They include Habitat Action Plan Woodland, Lowland Meadows and Lowland Calcareous Grassland, the closest being 1 km to the south west. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will result in negative impacts upon the non-statutory sites within the area.

Invasive species

- 2.16 No invasive species were noted from the available site aerial photography and Google images during the desk study survey.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

- 3.1 The loss of a parcel of low ecological value un-managed land does not constitute a significant impact therefore minimal mitigation is required. The inclusion of bat and bird boxes should be considered within the proposed development where possible. Exact locations will be decided by an ecologist at a later date further to discussions with the architect and after the review of intended lighting schemes proposed for the site. Bat boxes for the site should include; Schwegler 2FR bat tubes and Wall-mounted bat boxes to be attached and incorporated into the buildings. Bird boxes for the site should include a mixture of open fronted, tunnel fronted and multipurpose designs. Further recommendations include swift boxes for the building. Any vegetation clearance at the site should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, March to August inclusive; if this is not possible then it should be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist. If active nests are found a 10 m buffer should be adhered to until the young have fledged the nest.

Enhancement Measures

- 3.2 Although mitigation is not considered to be a requirement for most protected species due to the lack of notable habitat, any landscaping to be carried out at the site should include indigenous and/or locally important vegetation to encourage biodiversity at a local level.

4. CONCLUSIONS

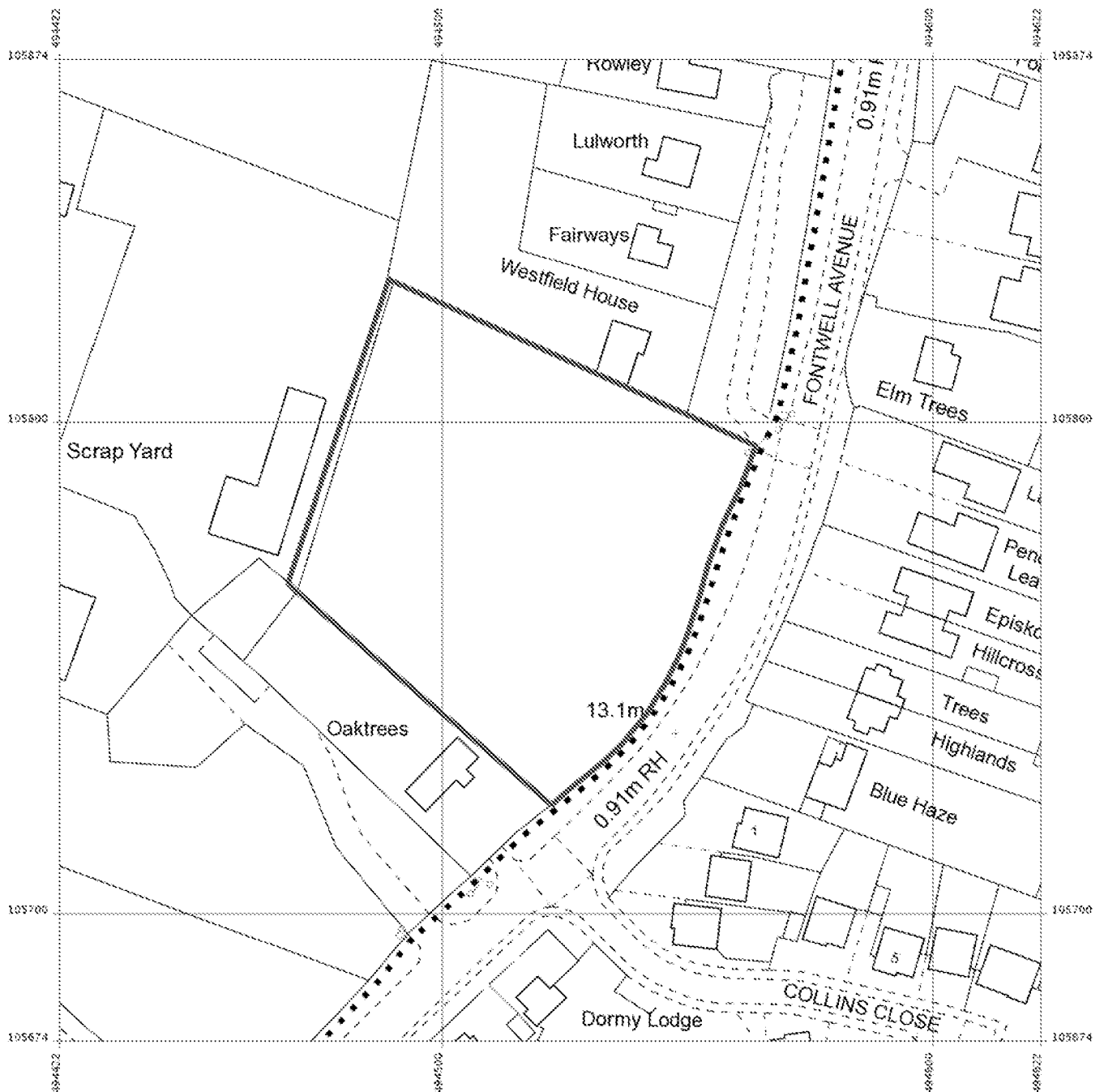
- 4.1 Furse Landscape Architects Ltd was appointed to carry out an ecological survey of the site. This was carried out in accordance with the standard definitions produced by the Nature Conservancy Council.
- 4.2 With the desk study survey having been carried out, and with no ecologically valuable habitat or protected species identified, it is considered that the ecological value of the site is low. It should not, therefore, present a barrier, on ecological grounds, to the planning application for the proposed development. Mitigation in the form of bat and bird boxes and native planting would adequately offset the loss of this small parcel of un-managed land.

REFERENCES

IEA. (1995). Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment. Chapman and Hall.

Nature Conservation Committee (1990). Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit. NCC

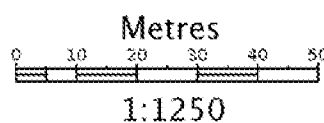
Appendix:



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FONTWELL AVENUE
CHICHESTER
PO20 3RU

Supplied by: Stanfords
Reference: OI437805
Centre coordinates: 494522 105774

FIG 1