

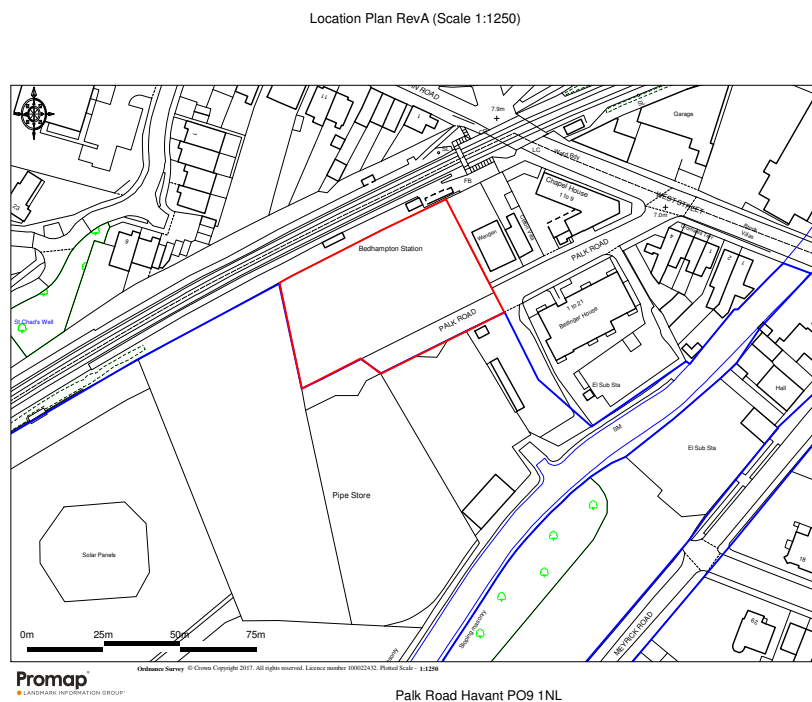


Palk Road, Havant Ecology Update

Introduction & Background

The site known as land adjacent, Wengen, Palk Road, Havant, PO9 1NL (**Fig 1**) was granted outline permission in 2015 (APP/15/00447) for 'Change of use to open storage (B8 use), the addition of two portacabins and associated hard standing'.

Figure 1. Redline boundary of the site.



The application is again for the change of use for B8 storage, but this time on a temporary basis (previously a permanent permission) and without any restrictions on who can use the land removed.

Relevant Legislation and Policy

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

This transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)

This Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

NERC Act

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity when planning or undertaking activities. Section 41 of the Act lists species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework*.

Methods

The updated walkover survey was undertaken by Adam Jessop on the 23rd January 2017. Identification of suitable habitats and features to support protected species was undertaken during the initial Phase I walk over survey. This was carried out through a visual assessment of the site following the methodology outlined within the Joint Nature Conservation Committees (JNCC) *Phase I Habitat Survey Handbook* (2010).

Summary of Previous Works

The previous outline application was supported by the following ecology surveys and reports:

- Extended Phase I Habitat and Reptile Survey (Ecosupport, April 2015) – Identified the dominant habitats on site to be semi-improved grassland, scrub and hard standing used as horse pasture. Due to the presence of suitable reptile habitat, a presence / likely absence survey was set up which identified a low population of Slow Worms (*Anguis fragilis*).
- Reptile Capture (Ecosupport, July 2015) - After establishing a population of Slow Worms was present on site, due to the nature of the proposals an ex situ relocation method was required where by the population was moved to a nearby receptor area of Meyrick road. In total 59 Slow Worms were captured from the site and the capture operation was completed with a supervised destructive search stripping the site down to bare ground.

Updated Survey Results

Habitats

Due to the period of time that has elapsed from when the site was stripped, it has been recolonised by tall semi improved grassland and tall ruderal (**Fig 2**) (although the species composition can now be considered more indicative of those found on disturbed ground).

Figure 2. Areas of recolonized grassland and tall ruderal on site.



Many of the species previously present on site have re-established including Cocks Foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), False Oat Grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotjeca echioides*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Horse Tail (*Equisetum* spp), Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*), Wild Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Dock (*Rumex* spp), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Common Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) and Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*).

Reptiles

Despite the fact the habitats on site have re-established to the point where they superficially appear to be suitable for reptiles again, given that the exclusion fence erected along the northern boundary (the only area where there is any suitable reptile habitat linked to the site) is still intact (although some areas have become slightly overgrown by Bramble), it is considered the site will not support any reptiles. No further survey work is therefore considered necessary.

Nesting Birds

No significant areas of scrub have developed on site which can be considered large enough to be suitable for breeding or nesting birds. The site is therefore considered to be of **Negligible** value for these species and no further pre commencement actions are considered necessary.

Invasive Species

No evidence of species listed as invasive within Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were noted on site at the time of the survey. The results of this assessment however should not be considered thorough and reliable due to the time of year the updated survey was undertaken.

Conclusion

Based on the nature of the habitats on site and the previously works that have been undertaken on site, it is not considered necessary to undertake any further ecology surveys in support of this revised application.

Kind regards

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