

**Field off Mill Lane,
Langstone,
Havant,
PO9 1RX**

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL
APPRAISAL**



SEPTEMBER 2024

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Prepared by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultant Chartered Ecologist Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of field off Mill Lane, Langstone, Havant, PO9 1RX (GR:SU714049).

The survey area was systematically walked and surveyed according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours by Dr.Jonty Denton on the 29th September 2024. Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised system for classifying and mapping semi-natural vegetation and wildlife habitats in Great Britain. Vegetation is mapped in terms of standard habitat types as defined in the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010).

The site comprises hard-standing, amenity grassland and shrubberies.

The Provisional Roost Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Proposals

Creation of flood defence bank along eastern edge of paddock.

Introduction

This section details the methods used during the Phase 1 survey undertaken of the site.

METHODS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methods

The survey area was systematically walked, and habitats mapped according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours on 29th September 2024. . Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised system for classifying and mapping semi-natural vegetation and wildlife habitats in Great Britain. Vegetation is mapped in terms of standard habitat types as defined in the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010).

In addition, habitats were appraised for their suitability to support protected or notable (UK Biodiversity Action Plan/Species of Principle Importance [S41]) species, e.g. breeding birds, badgers, bats, herptiles, stag beetle, that might be affected by the proposed development; in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment' (IEA, 1995).

Phase 1 Bat Survey Methods

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

The Phase 1 Bat Survey was carried out and comprised of a daytime walkover of the site, internally and externally, to record evidence of any protected bat species.

Details of the survey methods are given below.

The property was investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas such as gaps or holes between wooden cladding, roof tiles, fascias and soffits and to record direct evidence of bat presence such as droppings and urine staining. This was followed by a detailed investigation of all accessible internal spaces to record evidence of bat roosting activity such as

droppings, feeding remains, live animals, corpses, urine staining and fur staining. The building was assessed as to its suitability for supporting roosting bats. The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Bat Conservation, (2023) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines* 4th edition).

The details of the assessment criteria used to determine the ecological value of on-site attributes is outlined below. During the Phase 1 survey the assessment criteria are based on the potential for the site to support the species considered. However, in many cases Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm presence /absence of any bat species and hence the importance of a population at the site, therefore the assessment of value should be considered as provisional.

Where possible, a provisional assessment of potential will be made although this may well require Phase 2 surveys to confirm status.

High Potential- High potential buildings are those that have features highly suitable for use by roosting bats, including gaps around soffits, hanging tiles, extensive roof spaces etc. High potential buildings are often, but not always, buildings of more historic construction. Further Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Moderate Potential- Buildings which have a moderate number of features that may be utilised by bats for roosting, these may include loose fascias, roof spaces etc. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

Low Potential- Low potential buildings are those that provide limited bat roosting potential although some features that may be utilised by bats may be present. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

No/Negligible Potential – These are buildings that are extremely unlikely to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features. Further Phase 2 surveys are unlikely to be required for buildings with negligible potential.

Phase 1 Survey Equipment

During the Phase 1 survey the surveyor was equipped with 10 x 42 close focus binoculars and a high-powered torch.

RESULTS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results

Background Data Search

A desk-based assessment was carried out using the DEFRA MagicMap website <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> to identify all designated sites within 5km of the site and all other designated sites and protected species within 2km.

A search was made for information on statutory designated sites (often internationally and nationally important sites for ecology) and non-statutory designated sites (often important in a local context) within 1 km of the site boundary.

Sites with Statutory Designations

The plot lies immediately north of Chichester and Langstone Harbour Ramsar Site and Langstone harbour SSSI.

The site lies *within* the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone as defined by DEFRA 2017.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site situated to the south of Mill Lane in Langstone to the north of the harbour. The site comprises open semi-improved pasture flanked by mixed native hedgerow, ornamental hedge and seasonal ditch with saline influence below a derelict seawall (See figure 1).

It is flanked to the north and east by detached properties with mature gardens.



Figure 1. Site location. Courtesy of Google images

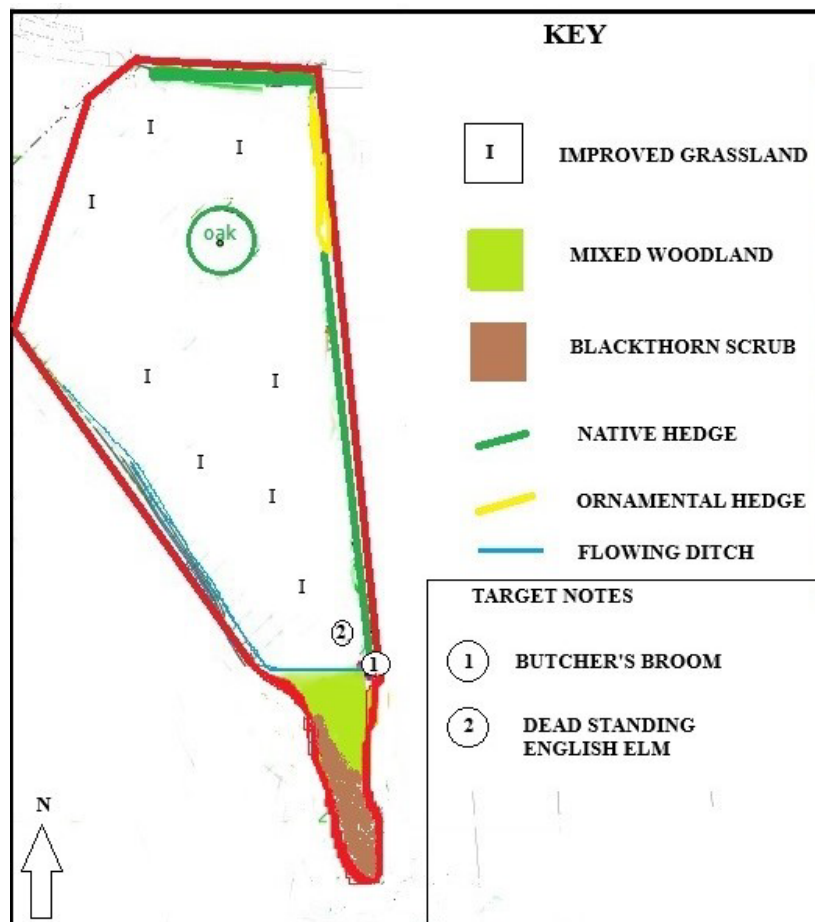


Figure 2. Habitat map



Figure 3. Looking north along line of proposed seawall.



Figure 4. Looking south along driveway line of proposed seawall.



Figure 5. Looking northwest along ditch demarking west edge of site



Figure 6. Looking south at ornamental pond

PROTECTED HABITATS

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) Priority Habitats are also Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) listed under The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 41 (NERC S41). These habitats do not receive statutory protection, but the S41 list is intended to provide guidance to decision-makers, e.g. those representing public bodies and local/regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act to ‘...have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions’.

The site is adjacent to the Langstone harbour SAC and SSSI. The nearest woodland is 222m to the north of the site.

The land to the south includes coastal saltmarsh and mudflats.

The field is included in the priority habitats inventory as coastal grazing marsh. It is species poor pasture with perennial rye-grass, creeping bent and cock's-foot dominant with herbs are scarce with hogweed, meadow buttercup, ground ivy, white dead-nettle and smooth sow-thistle. A list of vascular plants recorded from the site and adjacent seawall is shown in appendix 1.

The western half of the site is included in the intertidal substrate foreshore priority habitat

The northern hedge is dominated by English elm with and sycamore. There is a buckthorn to the east of the gate and abundant ivy in the understorey.

The Eastern hedge line is gappy with sections of manicured *x leylandii*, and cherry plum. Elm is dominant along the south end with three dead standing trees and fresh suckering into the field (see figure 2 target note 2).. It is abundant in the small copse immediately to the south of the field with ash and dog rose with abundant ivy in the understorey. This runs into a large blackthorn clump which extends down to the east of the abandoned concrete slipway

There is a clump of butcher's broom at the south end of the hedge line (See target note 1 on figure 2).

The ditch along the south and west edges of the site has saline influence with sea couch and scurvygrass.

The bank beyond is much more species rich with yarrow, wild carrot, Mugwort, St. John's wort and ox-eye daisy. hedge bedstraw, common fleabane, in abundance.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Reptiles

All native British reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) from killing and injury. Sand Lizards and Smooth Snakes also receive additional protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2010 from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. All native UK reptiles are UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

The site has negligible potential for common reptiles in the absence of any structured habitats.

Amphibians

Great Crested Newts are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2010 from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. In addition Great Crested Newts and Common Toads are UK BAP Priority species and SPI.

According to MagicMap, the nearest GCN returns are over 2km to the southeast, on Hayling Island. There are no ponds marked within 500m of the site on the OS map. Common Frog and Common Toad (UKBAP/SPI) may occur in the wider area.

Badgers

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to interfere with their setts; such as by the use of heavy machinery nearby.

No evidence of Badgers (holes, dung pits or push-throughs under fences) was found within the survey area, and there is no sign of any sett activity in the surrounding gardens or woodland.

Breeding Birds

All wild birds are protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, from damage or destruction of their nest whilst in use or construction, some birds listed on Schedule 1 receive additional protection from disturbance during nesting.

The site is adjacent to the Important Bird Area (Langstone Harbour).

The peripheral shrubs have potential for nesting birds. The harbour is internationally important for wintering birds and disturbance from any works must be considered.

Bats

Bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and also receive additional protection via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2017) from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. It is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place used for shelter or protection" whether or not bats are present at the time or not. Barbastelle Bats, Bechstein's Bat, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat are also UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

Phase 1 Bat Survey Results

According to MagicMap, no protected species licences have been issued for Bats within 1km of the site.

Bats – trees

There are no large trees on site with any bat potential.

Bats – building

There are no buildings on or adjacent to the site.

EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Protected Habitats

A small sites metric (Arther *et al* 2022) was used to calculate biodiversity net gain (see attached xls spreadsheet).

Protected Species

Reptiles and amphibians

The site has negligible potential for reptiles in absence of structured habitats and sheltered refugia.

There was no sign of any amphibian activity in the ornamental ponds.

Badgers

No badger activity was detected on site. Badgers occur in the wider area and good building practice should be followed (such as placing boards over holes or trenches overnight) to prevent animals being harmed during site works.

Phase 1 Bat Survey

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

The site has negligible potential for roosting bats and the works would not impact foraging bats.

Breeding Birds

The oak tree and peripheral hedges have potential for nesting birds.

Any removal of vegetation and structures should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which is typically 1st March to 31st August.

If any works occur within the breeding bird season the shrub layer and trees should be checked, ideally by an ecologist, and if any nesting birds are found there is a legal obligation to protect the affected area with a buffer zone of 10m until after the young have fledged.

Wintering birds

The timing of works to minimise impacts on the SSSI should follow the principles put in place for works on the remainder of the seawall works to the southeast, especially the piling activity.

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APPENDIX 1. Plant species list

LD =locally dominant, F= frequent, O= occasional, R= rare P=planted

			paddock	Seawall
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	very common		F
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	very common	LD	
<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	Marsh Foxtail	common	O	
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort	very common		F
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	Spear-leaved Orache	very common	R	
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	very common	O	O
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	very common	F	
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	Common Centaury	common	R	
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	very common	R	F
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	very common	O	
<i>Cochlearia anglica</i>	English Scurvygrass	Local	O	O
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	very common	R	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	very common	R	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	very common	LD	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	very common	LD	
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild Carrot	common	R	F
<i>Elytrigia atherica</i>	Sea Couch	Local	O	
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	very common	F	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	very common	R	R
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge Bedstraw	very common		F
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	common	O	
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	common	R	
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris	common	R	
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	very common	O	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	very common	LD	
<i>Picris echinoides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue	very common	F	F
<i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>	Burnet-saxifrage	common	O	
<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar	common	P	
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	very common	O	
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	Cherry Plum	common	LD	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	very common		LD
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Common Fleabane	common	O	F
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	common	R	
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	very common	O	O
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	very common	O	O
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Buckthorn	common	R	
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	very common	O	
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg</i>	a bramble	very common	F	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	very common	O	
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	very common	O	F
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's-broom	local	R	
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	very common	R	F
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet	very common		F
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle	very common	O	O

<i>Symphytum spp.</i>	Comfrey	Very common	R	
<i>Taraxacum SPP</i>	a dandelion	common	O	
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	very common	P	
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	English Elm	common	LD	LD
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	very common	O	O
<i>X Cupressocyparis leylandii</i>	Leyland Cypress	very common	P	