

ecological support,
management and solutions



3 Swans Walk

Phase I Ecological Survey

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd was commissioned by Tina Stallard to conduct a Phase I Survey of the 3 Swans Walk property and associated grounds. This survey was required to identify any ecological impacts that may arise from the proposed demolition of the existing property to make way for a new family dwelling. This document has been prepared in order to ensure the proposed development fully complies with nature conservation legislation and policy where applicable.

This survey takes no account of seasonal variation and fluctuations in the presence of any species noted that might take up residence following this report. Lack of signs of a particular species does not confirm its absence, merely that there was no indication of its presence during the time of survey.

Data contained within this report will be valid for 24 months, after which the advice of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist must be sought as surveys may require updating if the proposed works have not been undertaken.

1.2 Scope

A Phase I Survey is the first step in assessing the potential ecological effects (or lack of) of a proposed development, and determines whether or not Phase II Surveys are required. Phase II surveys then determine the presence/likely absence of protected species so that appropriate avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures can be implemented as required. The objectives of this survey were as follows:

- Identify current land use and habitat types
- Identify any priority habitats
- Assess the ecological value of the site
- Identify any signs of protected species and potential features that may support them
- Identify all relevant legislation and policy
- Make recommendations for further survey work as appropriate
- Make recommendations for appropriate enhancements

1.3 Proposed Development

The development proposals involves the demolition of the bungalow on site to make way for a new, larger energy efficient family dwelling.

1.4 Site Location

The site is located within the Swan Walk cul-de-sac off of Salters Lane on Hayling Island (Grid Reference SZ 73037 99248) (**Figure 1**). Swan Walk is located along the southern boundary with neighbouring properties at the eastern and western edge of the site

and waters associated with Chichester Harbour to the north. Across the water to the north the landscape is comprised of expanses of agricultural land, bounded by hedgerows, woodland and Tournembury Golf Course. Whilst to the south it is dominated by residential development. As a result the surrounding setting is a mixture of both rural and residential characteristics.

Figure 1. Location of the site (Google Maps, 2015).



2.0 LEGISLATION & POLICY

One of the aims of this report is to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with relevant Planning Policy and nature conservation legislation. This section details the policy and legislation with which the development would need to comply.

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 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.

2.1.2 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).

2.1.3 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.

2.1.3 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

This places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of a development.

2.2 Policy

The development would seek to comply with relevant Planning Policy at a local, regional and national level.

2.2.1 National Planning Policy and Framework (2012)

This sets out the Government's vision for biodiversity in England. It states that the planning system should maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Key principles of the framework include the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity, the

preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats and ecological networks and the recovery of priority species populations, including sections on legally protected species.

2.2.2 Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011)

Part of the 'Vision for Havant Borough in 2026' is to protect and enhance biodiversity. Similarly policy 'CS11: Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough' states that planning permission will only be granted when development protects habitats and features of biological interest and prevents the fragmentation of existing habitats.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk Based Search

A search using online resources was carried out to ascertain the proximity of nearby designated sites.

3.2 Phase I Survey

The initial walk over survey was carried out by Tristanna Cornwell BSc (Hons) of ecosupport Ltd on the 7th August 2015. This incorporated a visual assessment of the site and the surrounding landscape, loosely following the methodology outlined within the Joint Nature Conservation Committees (JNCC) *Phase I habitat survey handbook* (2003). The habitats present were described, paying particular attention to their potential to support protected species.

3.3 Assessment of Building to Support Roosting Bats

An assessment of dwelling to be impacted by the proposals, was made to determine the likelihood of supporting bats and to provide information as to whether additional surveys would be required. The exterior was examined for any suitable features, which bats may utilize as a roost site or to gain access to a roost site, using 8 x 42 Avian Trekker binoculars and a high-powered torch. Similarly access was gained into the loft space allowing an internal inspection to take place. A high powered torch was used to examine whether it was suitable for roosting bats and to search for signs of (i.e. droppings, feeding remains) and/or bats themselves. The survey was carried out in accordance with *Bat surveys: Good practice guidelines 2nd edition* published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2012).

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Desk Based Search

Chichester Harbour, which is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is situated directly to the north of the site. The features for which the harbour was designated a SAC include sandbanks which are covered by sea water at all times, estuaries, mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide and coastal lagoons. Internationally important wetland types and internationally important numbers of waterbirds were the Ramsar qualifying features. Similarly internationally important numbers of wintering waterbirds, migratory birds and breeding seabirds were the factors that lead to the site being classified as a SPA (Chichester Harbour Conservancy, 2014). The extensive intertidal mudflats are the feeding grounds for internationally important numbers of Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) numbers are of European importance. Unimproved permanent pasture provides alternative feeding sites for the geese and major high tide wader roosts. Some of this pasture is floristically rich being a Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) sward with scarce species such as Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) and Adder's Tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*).

4.2 Phase I Habitat Survey

The following habitat types were identified on site:

Managed Amenity Grassland: The garden at the rear of the property was dominated by amenity grassland which had been continually managed due to its purpose as a garden area (**Figure 2**). Common grasses were recorded along with Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*) and Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*). Along the bottom edge of the site, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) were also noted.

Figure 2. Rear of 3 Swan Walk showing the large garden dominated by amenity grassland.



Scattered Trees: A single Apple tree (*Malus domestica*) was noted in the rear garden along with a number of Oak (*Quercus Sp.*) trees located just outside of the site boundary adjacent to the Chichester Harbour water.

Ornamental Shrubs: Also evident in **Figure 2**, a number of ornamental shrubs were identified within the rear garden and at the front of the property. These have been introduced for aesthetic purposes.

Hardstanding: A hard standing driveway is located at the front of the property (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Front elevation of 3 Swans Walk showing the driveway and ornamental planting.



Building: 3 Swans Walk is a bungalow of brick construction with machine cut concrete tiles utilised on the pitched roof. It was considered to be in a good state of repair.

4.3 Assessment of Building to Support Roosting Bats

Due to the relatively modern construction of the property and the style of roofing tiles employed no features were identified externally which were considered likely to support roosting bats (i.e. all soffits were tight to the wall, all roofing tiles were intact with no visible gaps between them and the end row of tiles were blocked by an eave filler comb preventing access into the internals of the loft space).

A thorough investigation of the loft space was able to take place with all areas accessible. Internally no evidence of bats or bats themselves was identified although a low number of rodent droppings were found. The bitumen underlining was intact with no visible tears or gaps. Although daylight was seen entering the loft space at the eaves the external assessment found that this was due to the end gap which was blocked by the filler comb. This was in good condition and completely intact.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 Desk Based Search

It is considered unlikely that this development will have an impact upon Chichester Harbour. It will not result in an increase in recreational pressure, as the development will see the bungalow replaced by a single dwelling thus there will be no increase in local population. The development will be situated in the southern extent of the site on the approximate location of the existing footprint. Although this will reduce the risk of direct impacts during demolition and construction depending on factors, such as weather conditions, there may be the risk of pollution incidents or run off into the designated site.

5.2 Phase I Survey

Managed Amenity Grassland: Reptiles require open habitats with a deep and diverse vegetation structure where sunlight reaches ground level and scrub and grass tussocks are preferable (Edgar et al., 2010). The structure of the managed lawn is not considered suitable to support populations of reptiles. Therefore no further survey effort is recommended.

Although the floral species present are common and widespread and are therefore not of any intrinsic botanical value, the amenity grassland is a good example of a species rich lawn, therefore as much of this area should be retained as possible. Current proposals show that the location of the new dwelling is in a similar location to that of the existing, therefore this should be possible.

Scattered Trees: The Apple tree was considered to provide negligible potential for roosting bats. As a result no further Phase II work is recommended. It did however provide habitat for nesting birds although no nests were recorded.

Ornamental Shrubs: The species utilised are of an ornamental nature and are considered to be of negligible value.

Hardstanding: This aspect of the site is considered to possess negligible value for ecology.

5.3 Assessment of Building to Support Roosting Bats

As no access opportunities were identified into the loft space it is considered highly unlikely that bats are gaining access into, and therefore roosting within, the loft void. In support of this no evidence of bats and/or bats themselves were identified. Similarly no external features were identified that were considered suitable to support roosting bats. As a result the building was classified as holding negligible potential, in line with BCT guidance, and therefore no further Phase II work is recommended.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENCHANCEMENTS

6.1 Proximity of Chichester Harbour

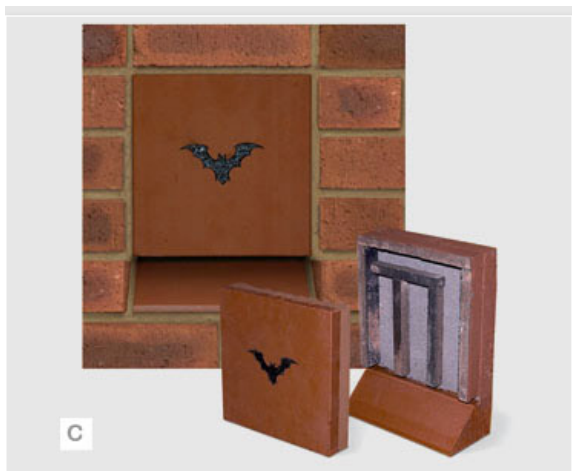
Works should be subject to and will adhere to a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will detail measures of avoidance of indirect impacts on the designated sites (either through runoff or noise etc.) This will lessen the risk of pollution incidents and will minimise any risks to the designated site and associated features.

6.2 Bats

Although it is considered highly unlikely that roosting bats will be impacted by proposals, it is considered likely that commuting and foraging will utilize the site. Lighting associated with the development should be sympathetic of this. The time when lighting is utilised should be limited to provide maintain dark periods for as long as possible. This can be ensured by fitting with sensor-controlled lighting.

In the interest of promoting ecology and to keep in line with National and Local policy it is recommended that a bat box is integrated within the new dwelling. The Bat Box C design (**Figure 4**) has been designed specifically for crevice dwelling bat species such as the Common and Soprano Pipistrelles.

Figure 4. Bat Box C available from IBSTOCK.



Inline with Natural England guidance (2015) roofing felt should be utilised as apposed to Breathable Roof Membrane (BRM) as there is considerable evidence to suggest that BRM poses a threat to bats occupying loft voids due to entanglement of bats in the fibres (Natural England, 2015).

6.3 Nesting Birds

As the Apple tree on site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds, if it requires removal this should take place prior to or after the bird-nesting season (March – August inclusive). If this is not possible then a check by a suitably qualified ecologist

should precede removal. If any nests are found then a 3 metre buffer will be left and the nest deemed inactive by the ecologist.

As an enhancement, a bird box should be erected on site.

6.4 Native Planting

This development provides the ideal opportunity to introduce some native species on site therefore as a general enhancement, in line with the CIEEM guidance (2012), any proposed planting should aim for a 70:30 ratio in favour of native species over non-natives and ornamentals. Ideally fruit bearing trees, providing food sources for birds and small mammals during the autumn and winter and nest sites during the spring and summer, should be utilised. Species that should be considered include:

- Hawthorn
- Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Shrubs to be considered within the landscape planting include:

- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)

7.0 CONCLUSION

The site is considered to be of low ecological value. The building is not considered to hold potential for roosting bats. Similarly no other habitats or features were identified that were considered to possess potential for further protected species. As a result no further Phase II work has been recommended. The proximity of Chichester Harbour has been highlighted along with a proposed measure, the production of a CEMP, to ensure that no negative impacts arise from this development.

8.0 REFERENCES

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