

**WINDMILL FARM COTTAGES, MONKEY LANE,
COLEMORE, ALTON, HAMPSHIRE GU34 3PY**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL PRELIMINARY STUDY
FOR
REPLACEMENT DWELLING AND CHANGE OF USE OF
AGRICULTURAL LAND**

**On behalf of
REMONY MOSER**

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REV:

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides a preliminary study of the potential landscape and visual issues associated with the demolition of an existing relatively modern and unexceptional house at Windmill Farm Cottages, and its replacement with a single storey property on an area of redundant agricultural land immediately to its south. As the site is located within the South Downs National Park (SDNP), it and the surrounding area are afforded the highest level of landscape protection. At present the site is largely overgrown with brambles but is bounded on the western and southern sides by a row of very prominent, mature, oak trees with an understorey of overgrown native hedge plants, growing on a low roadside bank. There is an existing access gate into the site from the lane in the south-east corner. The eastern boundary comprises a post and wire fence bordering an agricultural field. Much of the northern boundary is composed of a row of mid-aged domestic conifers. The existing house, No. 1 Windmill Farm Cottages, adjoins its neighbour via the garages, but essentially appears as a detached property. The garden is unexceptional and largely laid to lawn and is shaded by the house and overhanging trees. The findings of this study will be used to provide a landscape led route for the development of the replacement dwelling and will offer considerable enhancements to the landscape and biodiversity.

1.2 For this report, the policy context is taken from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) and the South Downs National Park Local Plan (2019). The baseline landscape character has been taken from Natural England National Character Area Profile (NCA): 130. Hampshire Downs (2014) and the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2020).

2. LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 Originally published in March 2012, with subsequent revisions in July 2018 and most recently in June 2019, the NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. In terms of the protection given to designated landscapes Section 15, paragraph 172, states:

Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

2.1.2 Also of relevance to this project is Section 12. Achieving Well-designed Places, specifically paragraph 127, which states:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

2.1.3 As the site and surrounding area are located within the SDNP, which confers a national statutory landscape designation onto the landscape, the value of the landscape is *High*, which means that it is

a ‘valued landscape’ under Section 15, Paragraph 170, Bullet Point a), of the NPPF. This is a fundamental consideration in the landscape and visual appraisals and in the decision making process.

2.2 SOUTH DOWNS LOCAL PLAN

2.2.1 Adopted in 2019, the South Downs Local Plan replaced the former district and borough local plans which covered the SDNP. The Core Policies provide a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for the SDNP for the period up to 2033 to ensure that any proposed development is of a high standard and is compatible with the character and visual qualities of the area.

2.2.2 In addition to Strategic Policies SD2 (ecosystem services), SD8 (dark night skies) and SD30 (replacement dwellings), mentioned in the preapplication response from the SDNP, policy SD4 (landscape character) is of key importance. Adhering to the requirement of the policy will be important in ensuring that the development proposals can demonstrate that the proposals conserve and enhance landscape character and the visual character of the site and its surroundings.

STRATEGIC POLICY SD4: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance landscape character by demonstrating that:

- a) They are informed by landscape character, reflecting the context and type of landscape in which the development is located;*
 - b) The design, layout and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape and seascape character features which contribute to the distinctive character, pattern and evolution of the landscape;*
 - c) They will safeguard the experiential and amenity qualities of the landscape; and*
 - d) Where planting is considered appropriate, it is consistent with local character, enhances biodiversity, contributes to the delivery of GI and uses native species, unless there are appropriate and justified reasons to select non-native species.*
- 2. Where development proposals are within designed landscapes, or the setting of designed landscapes, (including historic parkscapes and those on the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens) they should be based on a demonstrable understanding of the design principles of the landscape and should be complementary to it.**
- 3. The settlement pattern and individual identity of settlements and the integrity of predominantly open and undeveloped land between settlements will not be undermined.**

4. Green and blue corridors will be safeguarded. Development proposals should identify and take opportunities to create and connect green and blue corridors.

5. The restoration of landscapes where features have been lost or degraded will be supported where it contributes positively to landscape character.

3. BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY

3.1 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

3.1.1 The site is located on a parcel of land which forms part of Windmill at the junction of Colemore Lane and Monkey Lane, south-east of the village of Colemore. The site is located on the eastern edge of the Hampshire Downs NCA 130 at an elevation of 226m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), dropping away to the east to allow extensive views across the surrounding countryside. To the west and south the high ground extends well beyond the site and its environs. In its wider context the site lies close to the towns of Alton and Petersfield, to the north and south-east respectively.

3.1.2 The site is currently redundant agricultural land. To the north are Windmill Farm Cottages and Bramble Cottage, with Windmill Farm further north along Colemore Lane; to the east is a large undulating field which slopes down to Windmill Copse. To the south, beyond the road junction is Upper Blackdown Farm and; west beyond Colemore Lane, are extensive agricultural fields in a gently undulating downland landscape. On site vegetation is an extensive area of unmanaged brambles and saplings, but the western and southern boundaries are dominated by mature oaks with some declining ash, with an understorey of overgrown hedging plants growing on a low hedge bank. All are at present unmanaged. Part of the northern boundary with Windmill Farm Cottages has been planted with Leyland cypress hedging, which is unmanaged and forms an incongruous feature in the landscape. Several large silver birch in the garden of 2, Windmill Farm Cottages form prominent features in the setting of the site. In the wider landscape, English oak trees and mature hedges dominate in the slightly acidic clay soils which overly the chalk of the downland. These trees restrict intervisibility, even in winter.

3.1.3 The entire study area falls within the South Downs National Park, which confers a national landscape designation onto the area for the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty including landform, geology, biodiversity, landscape features and human settlement. Of particular relevance to this project are the unique qualities and characteristics of the SDNP as identified in the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment.

3.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.2.1 The following Landscape Character Assessments have been used to establish the baseline character of study area:

- NCA: 130. Hampshire Downs.

- South Downs Landscape Character Assessment.

3.2.2 For this study, the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment has been used to help establish the site's unique landscape character as well as to determine its contribution to the landscape character and/or elements or features which define the wider landscape.

3.2.3 Only information pertaining to the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA) in which the site is located has been listed. Due to the extent of individual LCTs and LCAs, some of the listed information may not be wholly relevant to the site and surrounding landscape.

SOUTH DOWNS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

3.2.4 In August 2020 the updated South Downs National Park Landscape Character Assessment was made available in an interactive and web-based platform. The assessment was produced by Land Use Consultants and establishes the identity of the SDNP and provides a summary of the main influences on the contemporary landscape character. The Landscape Character Assessment also provides detailed information on the key issues and management requirements relevant to the SDNP's LCT and LCA. The site falls within LCT C: Clay Plateau, specifically LCA C1: Froxfield Plateau.

LCT C: CLAY PLATEAU (LCA C1: FROXFIELD PLATEAU)

Key Characteristics

- *Chalk overlain by shallow continuous clay capping resulting in lower fertility slightly acidic loamy soils.*
- *Elevated gently undulating countryside of mixed pastoral and arable farmland with significant blocks of woodland.*
- *Varying enclosure – open and exposed in higher plateau areas with long views, with a more enclosed landscape in relation to woodland cover.*
- *Notable woodland cover including surviving ancient woodland together with smaller clumps of post – 1800 plantation, many of which originated as game coverts. Oak is a key species in hedgerows and woodland.*
- *Varied field pattern which consists of modern field amalgamation of earlier irregular enclosure during the 17th and 18th century, with occasional blocks of earlier assarts and later regular field patterns from 19th century enclosure.*
- *Limited settlement comprising dispersed farmsteads and occasional small nucleated villages/hamlets with church spires forming distinctive landscape features.*
- *Presence of round barrows indicative of a Bronze Age ritual landscape.*
- *Roads are typically narrow, little used lanes bordered by wide verges and ditches.*

- ***Footpaths and bridleways provide further links and access.***
- ***Small scale historic parkland landscapes, some relating to a history of hunting.***
- ***An elevated landscape with a strong sense of remoteness, stillness and dark skies. The type, alongside parts of LCT A, B and D contains some of the highest and most remote parts of the National Park.***

Physical Landscape

This landscape type is found on the elevated chalk upland of the Hampshire Downs. The extensive deposits of clay-with-flints that overlies the chalk differentiates it from other areas of downland within the South Downs National Park.

The acidic clay capping gives rise to lower fertility slightly acidic loamy soils resulting in a landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farmland, and blocks of woodland. Fields are defined by woodland edges and hedgerows. Oak is dominant in woodland, hedgerows and as a hedgerow tree species. There is evidence of more heathy vegetation occurring in relation to acidic soils with bracken in hedgerows.

LCA C1: FROXFIELD PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries

This character area comprises the broad elevated plateau of continuous clay capped chalk located to the west of the Selborne Hangers. To the north and north-west the character area extends beyond the National Park boundary. There are views from the edges of this plateau over surrounding landscapes, particularly from the eastern edge of the plateau over the landscapes of the Greensand and Weald.

3.3 PRELIMINARY VISUAL STUDY

3.3.1 The clay plateau on which the site is located provided the ideal soil types for the oak dominated hedgerows, copses and trees belts, which form a key feature of the character area. In addition to the gently rolling elevated landscape, the tree cover restricts intervisibility and often provides a mature setting for the farmsteads and individual houses which are a feature of this part of the Hampshire Downs. To the east the land drops away, allowing long, but often filtered, views of a woodland/farmland mosaic with interconnecting dense field boundary hedges and tree belts.

3.3.2 There are views from the lowland vale back towards the Downs which are often dominated by ridgeline oak trees, amongst which residential properties and farm buildings are nestled. This gives the built form an air of subservience to the natural environment and the more prominent landscape characteristics.

3.3.3 Preliminary Representative Photographs



VP1 View south along Colemore Lane passing the site. Mature oak trees dominate the view. No.1 Windmill Farm Cottages (left in the photograph) is a distracting feature along the lane. The proposed site is beyond the cottage and further from the road, which will reduce its visibility to road users and walkers in the vicinity.



VP2 View east from the site, showing the overgrown nature of the site and the views out across the rolling vale to the east.



VP3 View west from the footpath crossing the field adjacent to the site at a considerably lower elevation. The skyline is dominated by oak trees with, from left to right: Upper Blackdown Farm; the site; Windmill Farm Cottages, and Bramble Cottage along the ridge, but all subservient to the trees. Even in winter the buildings are not prominent. The single storey dwelling proposed will have a lower visual presence than the existing buildings.

3.4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL RECEPTORS

LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

3.4.1 The following landscape receptors have been identified as being aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development and will be assessed prior to submission of a planning application:

- The established landscape components which define the landscape in which the site is located.
- The unique qualities and characteristics of the SDNP and in particular the Clay Plateau.
- Existing on-site and boundary vegetation and its importance in respect of the site itself, as well as part of the wider area.

VISUAL RECEPTORS

3.4.2 The following visual receptors locations have been identified as having potential intervisibility with the proposed development and will be assessed prior to submission of a planning application:

- Colemore Lane.
- Monkey Lane.

- Lane between Five Ash Farm and Slade Farm.
- Bridleway Colemore and Priors Dean 055/7/1.
- Footpaths Colemore and Priors Dean 055/8/2 and 055/3/1.
- Nearby residential properties at 2, Windmill Farm Cottages and Bramble Cottage.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The key considerations when determining the acceptability of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals are the receptors that will be potentially affected by the development and how far any effects are/can be mitigated. Of particular importance to the consideration of the development's overall effect is whether a residential development at the site will adversely affect the character of the local area, in particular the unique character of the Clay Plateau as well as the wider landscape of the SDNP, and whether any effects can be mitigated.

4.2 Key mitigating factors to be considered are the established containment of the site provided by the dense boundary hedging and oak standards, as well as the low density residential and agricultural built form to the west and east.

4.3 The following recommendations are made to ensure that the application follows the landscape led principles of development in the SDNP and to ensure that visual effects are minimalised and that the development can produce significant enhancements.

4.4 Documents to be submitted with the application:

- Survey of trees and hedging around site boundaries and production of Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This will determine the constraints to development resulting from the trees and hedging and determine the construction exclusion zones.
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), to determine the acceptability of the proposals in relation to landscape character, features and elements and the visual effects on key receptors (people) in the landscape. This to include an assessment of potential effects throughout the year (seasonality) and both potential day and night-time effects. The LVA will make recommendations to limit, as far as possible, the landscape and visual effects of the development and recommend mitigation and enhancement.
- Provide a landscape mitigation and landscape and biodiversity enhancement strategy, to address the following issues:
 - a. Retention, management and enhancement of the lane-side boundary hedging and trees to fill gaps, manage existing plants and introduce the next generation of oak standards.
 - b. Remove the row of conifers between 1, Windmill Farm Cottages and the site.

- c. After the removal of 1, Windmill Farm Cottages, plant the former garden area as a native species copse based on coppice hazel and oak standards typical of the area with suitable ground flora.
- d. Outside the Root Protection Areas of the trees and the garden boundary, construct a traditional upland conservation pond in the south-west part of the site.
- e. If deemed necessary from the findings of the LVA, plant a mixed native hedge along the field boundary of the site.
- f. Provide an implementation and management strategy for the site to include existing and proposed planting and features.

5. REFERENCES

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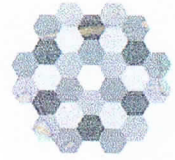
<<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/landscape-design-conservation/south-downs-landscape-character->

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

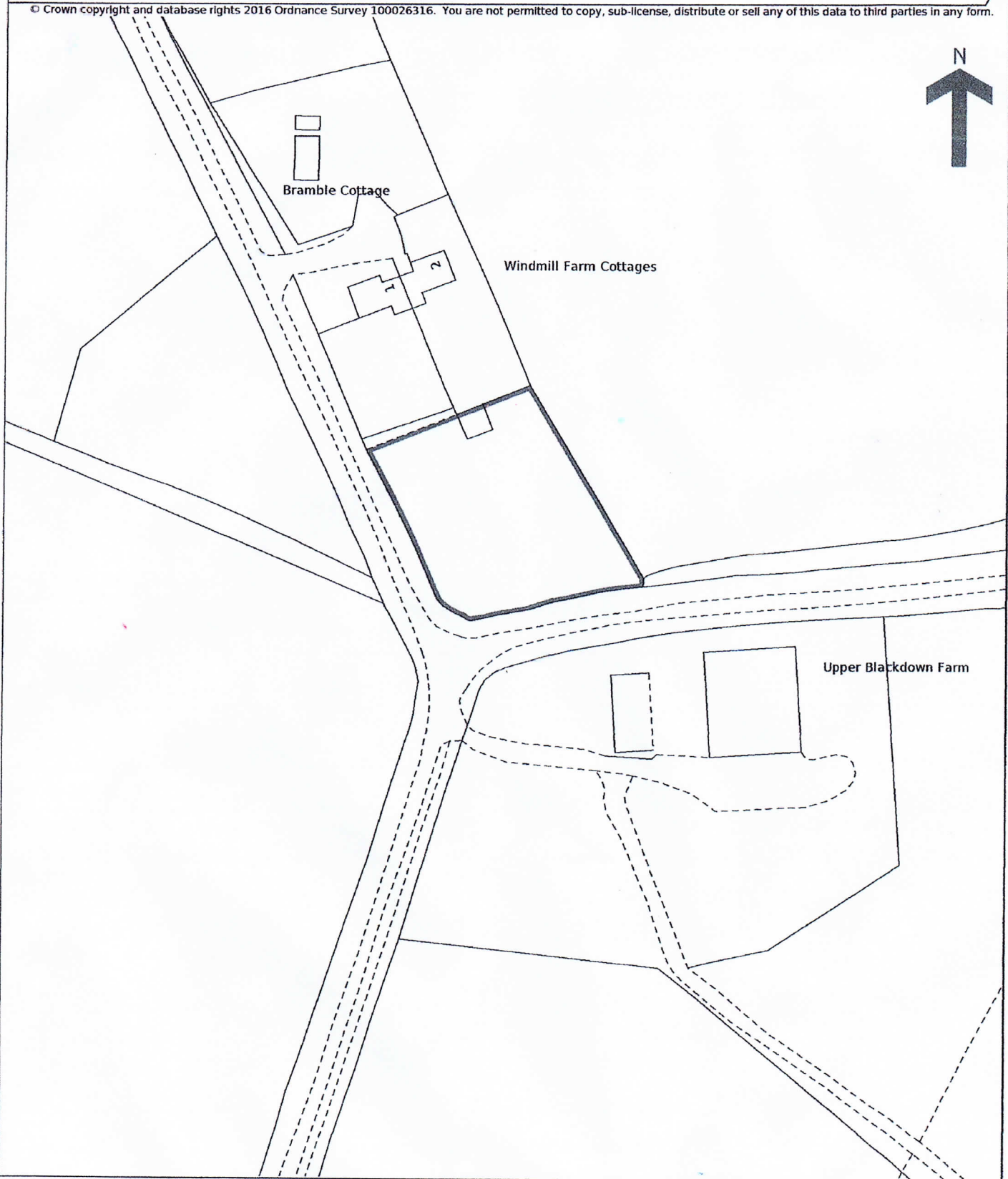
SITE LOCATION AND DRAFT LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

HM Land Registry
Official copy of
caution plan

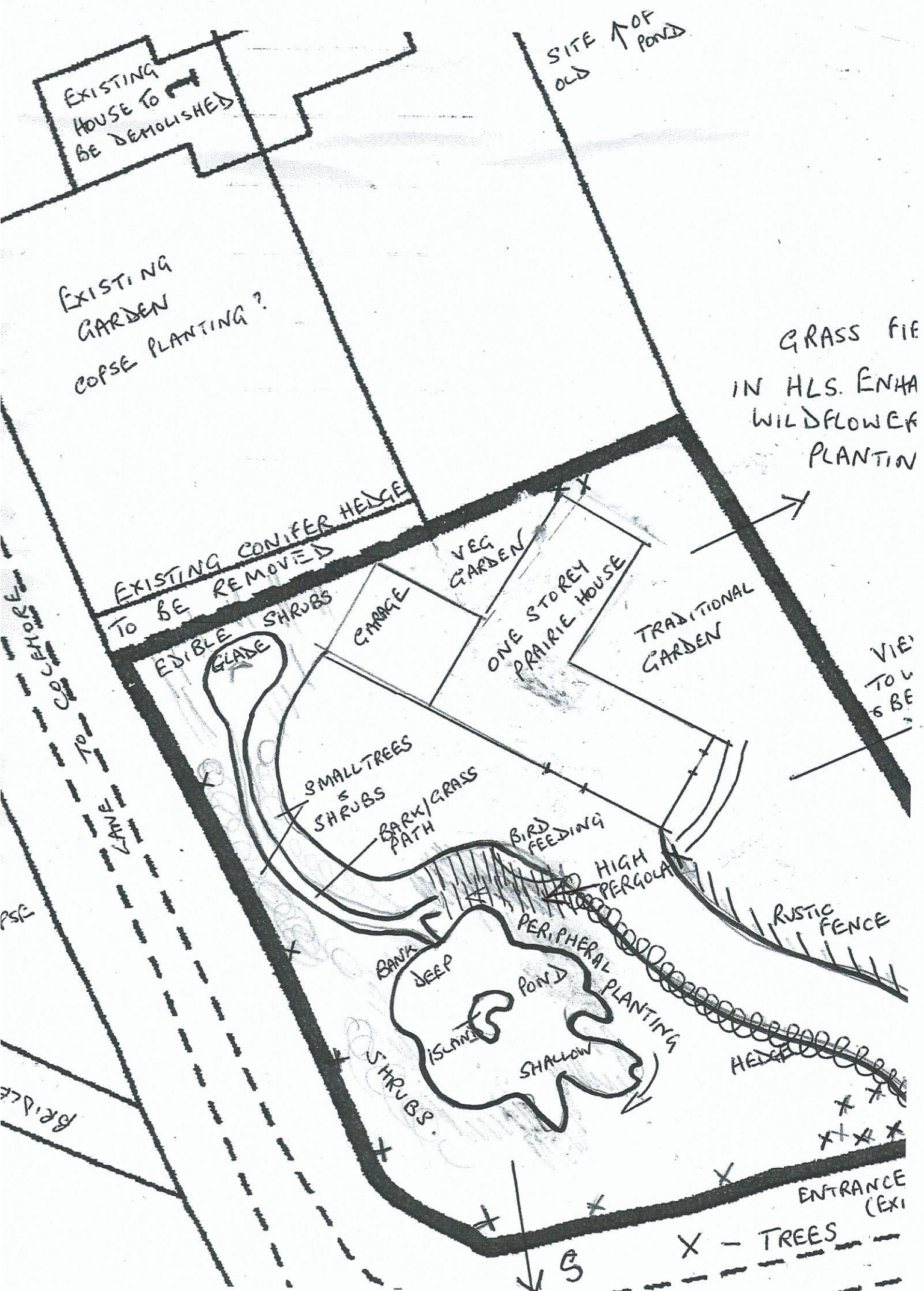
Title number **SH45186**
Ordnance Survey map reference **SU7129SW**
Scale **1:1250 enlarged from 1:2500**
Administrative area **Hampshire : East**
Hampshire



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PROPOSED PLANTING (NOT TO SCALE)



EXISTING HOUSE TO BE DEMOLISHED

SITE OF OLD POND

EXISTING GARDEN COPSE PLANTING?

GRASS FIE IN HLS. ENHA WILDFLOWER PLANTIN

EXISTING CONIFER HEDGE TO BE REMOVED

EDIBLE SHRUBS

GARAGE

VEG GARDEN

ONE STOREY PRAIRIE HOUSE

TRADITIONAL GARDEN

VIEW TO L & BE

GLADE

SMALL TREES & SHRUBS

BARK/GRASS PATH

BIRD FEEDING

HIGH PERGOLA

RUSTIC FENCE

BANK DEEP

POND

PERIPHERAL PLANTING

SHRUBS

SHALLOW

HEDGE

ENTRANCE (EXI)

X - TREES

TO LANE TO COACH HOUSE

PSE

BRICK

↓ S