

Threeways,
Brighton Road,
Medstead,
Hants,
GU34 5NB

PROVISIONAL ECOLOGICAL
APPAISAL

June 2023

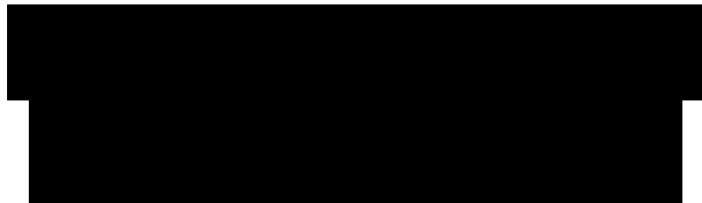


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report constitutes a provisional ecological appraisal carried out on the 8th June 2023 and further assessment of the potential impacts arising from any re-development of Threeways, Bighton Road, Medstead, GU34 5NB (GR:SU645363).

The survey area was systematically walked and surveyed according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours by Dr.Jonty Denton on the 8th June 2023. 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 Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Hundt, 2012).

There was no evidence of any bat activity within the shelter and no trees within 20m with potential to support bats.

INTRODUCTION

Site Proposals

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 8th June 2023. 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 (Hundt, 2012).

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.

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. There are no designated sites within 2.5km of the site.

The site lies INSIDE the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone as defined by DEFRA 2017

SITE DESCRIPTION

The plot is situated to the south of Bighton Road at junction with Goatacre Road in a rural setting in Medstead Parish. It is flanked to the north by extensive open arable and pasture, and to the west and east by detached properties with mature gardens.

The site is largely made up of manicured garden with formal flower beds and lawns. (See Figure 1, target note 1 and figure 4).

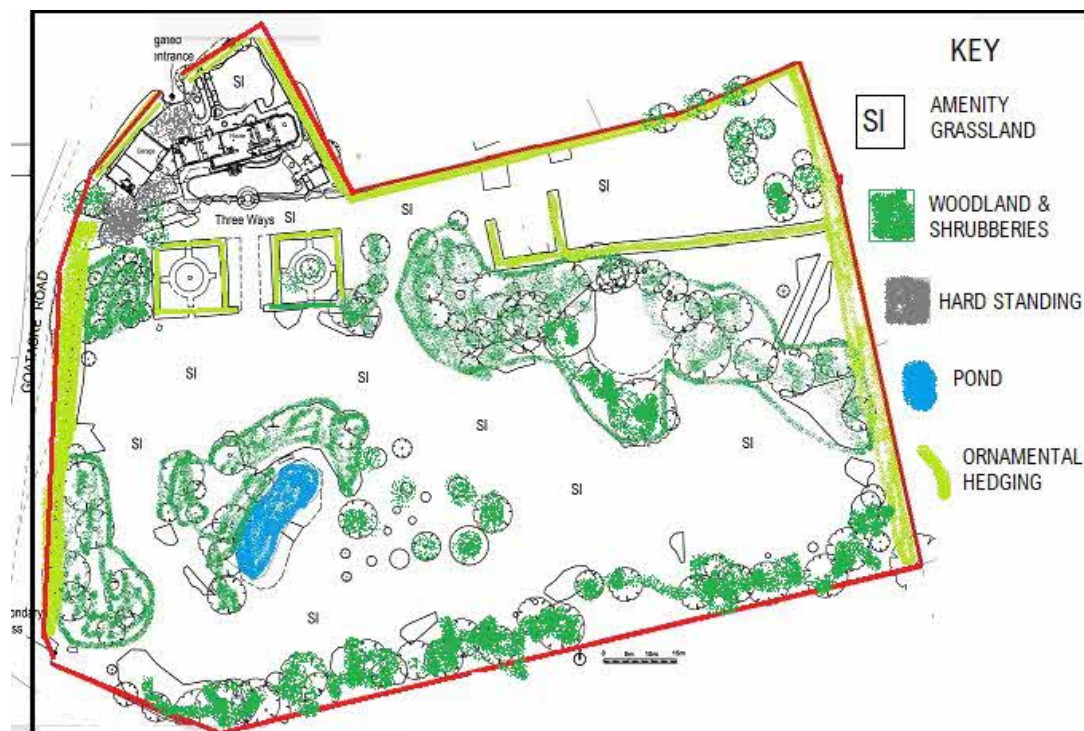


Figure 1. Habitat map

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’.

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 gardens within 30m of the house manicured amenity grassland and flower beds with negligible potential for reptiles. The rougher areas remote from the proposed works do have some limited potential for grass snakes and slow worms.

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.

The nearest GCN return is from 1km to the north in Hattingley. There is a large pond 57m to the south. This is concrete lined pond with large waterfowl population (mallard, moorhen) with a fringe of common reedmace at the north end. The remainder is open and devoid of submerged macrophytes. Amphibians such as Common Frog and Common Toad (UKBAP/SPI) may occur in the wider area. The log and debris piles and rank areas could well harbour common amphibians.



Figure 2. Looking north across garden where new extension would be placed.

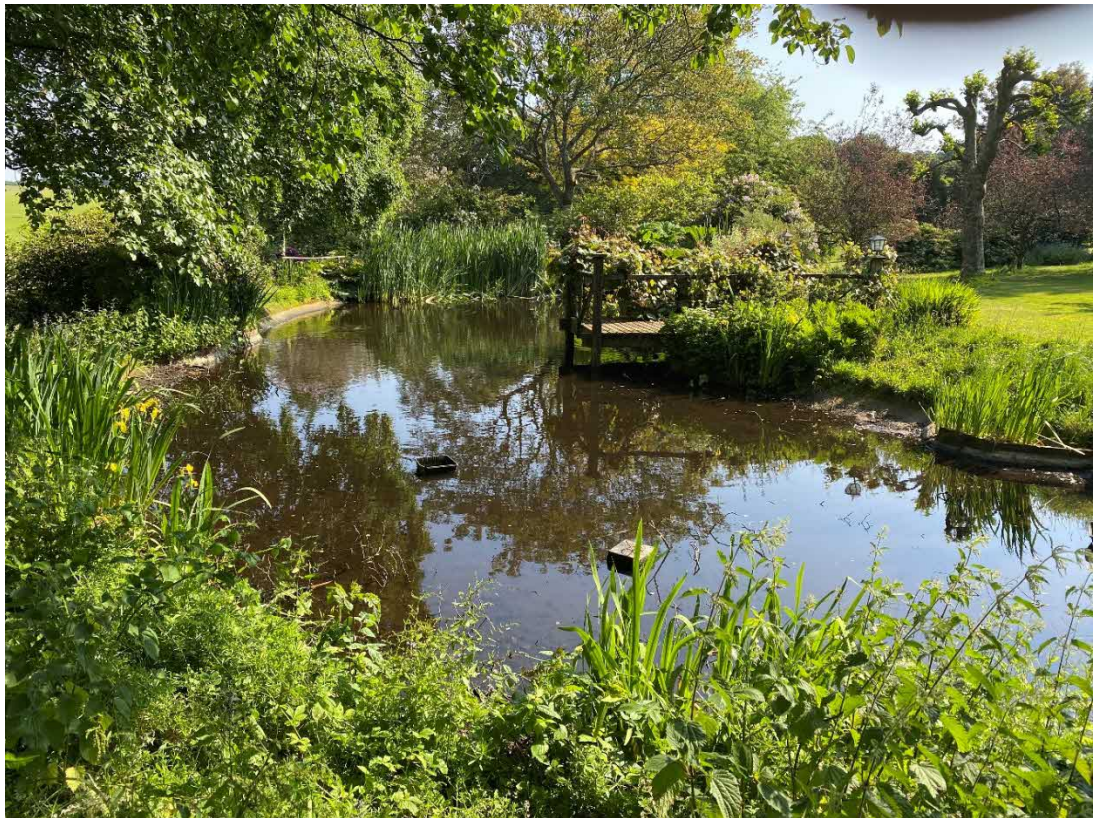


Figure 3. Pond looking northeast

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 was no sign of any active sett entrances within 20m of the plot in the woodlands to the south.

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.

Birds recorded on site included Blue Tit, Great Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Robin, Wood Pigeon and Wren.

The ivy clad walls of the Utility building have potential for nesting birds. The surrounding hedgerows and numerous mature trees also provide nesting habitat.

The thatch on the house is faced with wire mesh and has negligible potential for nesting birds.

The garage and sheds do not have any climbing plants but the northern shed could be used by birds as there are gaps around the doors.

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 (2010) 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

METHODS

Introduction

The buildings were investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas such as gaps or holes in 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 buildings were assessed as to its suitability for supporting roosting bats. The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Bat Conservation, (2016) Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines 3rd 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 a 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.

Medium Potential- Medium potential buildings 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 Timing and Weather Conditions

The Phase 1 bat survey was carried out on the morning of the 8th June 2023 which was a clear day, with 0% cloud cover and an ambient temperature of 22 °C.

Phase 1 Survey Equipment

During the Phase 1 survey the surveyor was equipped with 10x42 binoculars and a high-powered 1 million candlepower Clulite torch.

HOUSE

The house is a two-storey detached property dating to early 16th Century.

It is built of brick with a thatched roof. The upper storey is incorporated into the roof void. There is modern conservatory off the eastern end (see figure 2)

The proposed works are for replacement of the conservatory with a groundfloor extension (see figure 1).



Figure 4. Southern elevations looking north.



Figure 5. Conservatory looking north

UTILITY BUILDING

Is a modern brick built single storey structure with a close-fitting cement tiled roof. There are no enclosed voids within (see figure 6) and the structure has negligible potential for roosting bats



Figure 6. Utility building looking southeast.

GARAGE (Former indoor swimming pool)

Is a wooden structure with a low-pitched roof of felting on timber sheeting (see figure 7). The inner roof space is open to the rooms and there are no enclosed voids. Therefore, the structure has negligible potential for roosting bats (See figure 8).



Figure 7. West gable of garage looking northeast



Figure 8. Interior of garage looking northeast

SHEDS

The small sheds are of similar design with brick walls and clay tiled roofs (see figures 9 & 10). They are permanently illuminated within by windows and openings above the doors on the south. Therefore, the structure has negligible potential for roosting bats.



Figure 9. Sheds looking north



Figure 10. Sheds looking south

EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Protected Habitats

The proposed structures do not fall on any UKBAP habitats.

Grove Wood lies 340m to the north and is included in the Priority habitats Inventory as ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Good quality semi-improved grassland on the priority habitats Inventory is present 940m to the north in Hattingley.

Protected Species

Reptiles & Amphibians

Negligible potential for reptiles in the garden area.

Badgers

No badger activity was detected at the survey site but badgers are known from the wider area. Therefore, good building practice should be followed (such as placing boards over holes or trenches overnight) to prevent animals being harmed during site works.

Breeding Birds

Any removal of vegetation on or adjacent to the shelter 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 area 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.

Phase 1 Bat Survey

The Phase 2 bat survey is not recommended as the shelter has negligible potential to support roosting bats. The wider area has a high-suitability for foraging bats with roosting potential in woodland, trees and older houses. However, these features will not be affected by the works.

Lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats and many bats. Any new lighting around the replacement structure must be focused away from the tree lines and new integral bat roosts, hooded or baffled to ensure minimal light spillage. Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be installed.

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