

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Westbourne House, Birmingham Road
Cowes, Isle of Wight

Limewave Ltd

NN1645R01
17 August 2023



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FIGURES

Figure 1: **Site Location**

Figure 2: **Site Photographs**

Figure 3: **Existing Approved Dredging Plan**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 E3S Consulting Ltd (E3S) have been engaged by Limewave Ltd (the client) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). The PEA is required to support the proposed plans at Westbourne, Birmingham Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight (the site). OS Grid Reference at the approximate centre of site: SZ 49787 95835.

1.2 Proposed Development

1.2.1 It is understood that the development proposal is for the extension of the existing deck and linkspan to a floating pontoon as detailed in Figure 1 of this report.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 The PEA establishes whether there are any ecological influences on the site. This includes searching for designated nature conservation areas e.g., Statutory Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or non-statutory Local Wildlife sites within a 1km radius of the site, and internationally important sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

2.1.2 Publicly available information relating to the known presence of notable species and/or habitats within the site's proximity is also reviewed at this stage. Following this, a site walkover assesses the potential for any identified ecological factors that could influence or be influenced by the proposed development. Any further assessment work is subsequently identified and scoped (if required).

3 LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

3.1 Local Planning Policy and Legislation

3.1.1 Policy DM12 of the Island Plan Core Strategy provides development control policy in relation to biodiversity. The council will support proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the landscape, seascape, biodiversity, and geological interest of the island. Development proposals are expected to:

- Protect the integrity of international, national, and local designations relating to landscape, seascape, biodiversity, and geodiversity including the reasons for these designations, the weight given to them, and enhance their features of interest wherever possible;
- Ensure new development avoids both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites, and if necessary, provides appropriate mitigation measures;
- Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the links between designated sites, especially through the provision of, and/or enhancement to green infrastructure (GI), and appropriate local designations;
- Reflect the aims and objectives of the AONB Management Plan, the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation, and any further relevant landscape assessment;
- Positively contribute to meeting the aims and objectives of the Isle of Wight's local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Local Geodiversity Action Plan; and
- Minimise the threats and promote the opportunities arising from climate change on the island's landscape, seascape, biodiversity, and geodiversity.

3.2 Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

3.2.1 Based on the above legislation, the Isle of Wight Council is committed to the following species action plans:

- The red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been identified by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group as

a priority species for conservation action; and

- The woodland bat Habitat Action Plan (HAP) covers a suite of old forest bat species which are dependent upon woodland and wood-pasture habitat for their survival.

3.2.2 And the following HAPs:

- Farmland Biodiversity - Farmland is not defined as a habitat in the UK BAP but contains a mosaic of different habitat types e.g., arable and horticulture, improved grassland, boundary and linear features, and standing and open water. Collectively, these habitats can be of high biodiversity and nature conservation importance;
- Woodland Habitat - Identifies a total of six native woodland types as priority habitats of which, three can be found on the Isle of Wight: lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, wood pasture, and parkland; and
- Lowland Meadows Habitat - Lowland meadows have been selected as a HAP for the Isle of Wight. This is to ensure that national objectives for this priority habitat (identified under the UK BAP) are translated into effective action on the island considering local issues.

4 SITE DETAILS

4.1 Site Walkover

- 4.1.1 A site visit was undertaken on 20 July 2023 by Tracey Pullan of E3S Consulting Ltd (E3S) during low tide. Weather conditions were dry and clear at time with no access limitations. The site was accessed through a gated entrance from the main road adjacent to Westbourne House.
- 4.1.2 The site is located on the western side of the river Medina, and surroundings consist of residential/commercial buildings with associated pontoons, piers, moorings, and slipways evidenced within the site photographs presented as Figure 2 of this report.
- 4.1.3 The slipway associated with the site was vegetated with bladder wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) and sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*). Areas of concrete were identified in disrepair with anthropogenic debris located on both sides of slipway.
- 4.1.4 It is understood that an existing MMO license has been issued to the adjacent property owners to dredge an area of sea bed which includes the subject site. It is understood that these works will commence in spring 2024. As it is understood that a license has already been granted for these works and they do not form part of this application, they are not considered further as part of this assessment, however the extent of those works (as provided by the client) is illustrated in Figure 3 of this document for guidance.

5 Habitat Classification

- 5.1.1 The habitats present on-site have been defined using the UK Habitat Classification Key (UK Habitat Classification Working Group 2018). The following habitats were identified on-site:
- Built up areas and gardens (u1); and,
 - Buildings (u1b5).

6 Public Records

- 6.1.1 Public records were assessed to include any recorded habitats or species on or near the site. Relevant SINC designations are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: *Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs) within 1km of the Site*

| Site code/ Name | 1a | 1b | 2a | 4 | 6a | 6bi | 6c | 7a | 8a | Approx. distance from centre of site (m)/ Approx. direction | Connectivity to the site (Direct/Indirect/No) | Description |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|---|----|-----|----|----|----|--|--|--|
| C232A*/Springhill Wood | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | 935/NE | No, river Medina disconnects the site from the SINC | Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) which supports protected species and has value for the appreciation of nature |
| C233A*/Shrape Muds | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 563/NE | Hydrological connectivity via Cowes Harbour | Coastal habitat which supports nationally scarce species, is geologically significant, and has value for the appreciation of nature |
| C241A*/Northwood Cemetery | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | 943/SW | No, urban development disconnects the site from the SINC | A mosaic of ASNW, Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), and agriculturally unimproved grasslands which supports BAP species and has value for the appreciation of nature |
| C241B*/Shamblers Copse South | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | 997/S | No, urban development disconnects the site from the SINC | ASNW which supports protected species |

*Sites partially within search area

6.1.2 Designation Criteria

1a: All ASNWs.

1b: Other ancient woodland where there is a significant element of the original semi-natural woodland surviving.

2a: Agriculturally unimproved grasslands.

4: All remaining natural and semi-natural coastal and estuarine habitats which retain some nature conservation interest, including sand dunes, saltmarsh, brackish ponds, grazing marshes and coastal grasslands, sea cliffs, landslips, slopes and chines, and intertidal rocky shores, sandflats, and mixed sediment shores.

6a: Any site which supports a viable population of one or more species protected under the Habitats Regulations of listed in Schedules 1, 5, or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as revised and amended) or in Red Data Books of Britain and Ireland.

6bi: Any site which regularly supports a viable population of a species that is nationally scarce in Britain.

6c: Any site that supports a significant proportion of the Island population, or contributes significantly to the range in the Island, of a national BAP priority species, or a local BAP species which could be at risk because of very small populations, recent rapid decline, or habitat loss or change.

7a: Sites outside of existing Geological SSSI designations which display or contain structural, stratigraphic, sedimentological, palaeontological, or mineralogical features of local or regional significance.

8a: A site which has value for the appreciation of nature.

6.2 Recorded Statutory Sites

6.2.1 Recorded statutory sites within 1km of the site were identified using the Isle of Wight Local Records Centre (LRC). Further information was gathered on the designated sites using publicly available online resources. The information is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *Statutory Sites Identified within 1km of the Site*

| Statutory Sites | Name | Within ≤ 1km (Y/N) | Approx. distance from the site (m) | Approx. direction from the site | Connectivity to site (Indirect, Direct, No) |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| SSSI | N/A | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| SAC | Solent Maritime | Y | Adjacent | E | Direct hydrological connectivity |
| SPA and potential SPA (pSPA) | Solent & Dorset Coast | Y | Adjacent | E | Direct hydrological connectivity |
| Local Nature Reserves (LNR) | N/A | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| National Nature Reserve (NNR) | N/A | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Ramsar | N/A | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| ASNWs | Springhill Wood | Y | 935 | NE | None |
| | Shamblers Copse South | Y | 997 | S | None |
| PAWS | Northwood Cemetery | Y | 943 | SW | None |
| Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) | N/A | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |

7 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

7.1 Local Records

7.1.1 Local records provide details of rare and protected species within 1km of the site, these records, along with an assessment of the relevance of the site to those species can be summarised as follows:

7.1.2 Amphibians – There are LRC records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*) within 1km of the site.

7.1.3 The site does not provide suitable habitat for amphibians.

7.1.4 Birds – LRC data of bird species identified within 1km of the site include reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*), common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), swift (*Apus apus*), turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), brent goose (*Branta bernicla*), dark-bellied brent goose (*B. bernicla bernicla*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), stock dove (*Columba oenas*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*), European pied flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*), common loon (*Gavia immer*), red-throated loon (*G. stellata*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Mediterranean gull (*Ichthyophaga melanocephalus*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), common gull (*L. canus*), lesser black-backed gull (*L. fuscus*), great black-backed gull (*L. marinus*), black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), redstart (*P. phoenicurus*), willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), northern willow warbler (*P. trochilus trochilus*), marsh tit (*Poecile palustris*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), bullfinch (*Pyrrhula*

pyrrhula), bullfinch subsp. (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*), firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), garden warbler (*Sylvia borin*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), sandwich tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*), redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), song thrush (*T. philomelos*), fieldfare (*T. pilaris*), mistle thrush (*T. viscivorus*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), and lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).

- 7.1.5 The birds recorded are characteristic of grassland, farmland, coastal/wetland habitats, woodlands, hedgerows, and urban/suburban habitats.
- 7.1.6 The site does not provide suitable habitat for the majority of the listed bird species. However, urban coastal species such as the gull spp. may use the site's buildings for nesting. No negative impacts are anticipated to occur as the buildings will not be impacted by the proposed development. The surrounding marine area has a high volume of traffic and is not suitable for marine foraging species.
- 7.1.7 Bats – There are LRC records of western barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), *Myotis* sp., Bechstein's bat (*M. bechsteini*), Daubenton's bat (*M. daubentonii*), whiskered bat (*M. mystacinus*), Natterer's bat (*M. nattereri*), lesser noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*), noctule (*N. noctula*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), grey long-eared bat (*P. austriacus*), and greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*).
- 7.1.8 The site offers no suitable habitat for foraging or commuting bat species. Furthermore, the building on-site will not be affected by the proposed development, thus, a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) will not be necessary.
- 7.1.9 Badgers – The LRC search identified records of badgers (*Meles meles*) within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.10 The site does not provide suitable foraging habitat for badgers, nor does it provide suitable areas for a sett. Furthermore, no evidence of badger activity was identified on-site. No further surveys relating to badger activity are recommended.
- 7.1.11 Chromista – Whilst no chromista species were identified within the LRC records, bladder wrack was identified during the site visit covering the slipway.
- 7.1.12 Some bladder wrack may be removed during the construction and operational phases of the development. This species has high fecundity and dispersal and, whilst sensitive to displacement, is highly likely to recolonise the site, especially as suitable habitat will remain on-site throughout the life of the proposed development. However, leaving bladder wrack where possible is also recommended to reduce any negative ecological impact.
- 7.1.13 Dormice – The LRC has not identified any records of dormice within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.14 Dormice are typically found in woodlands, hedgerows, and scrub. The site does not provide suitable habitat for dormice and no further surveys are required.
- 7.1.15 Ferns – maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) has been identified by the LRC records within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.16 The site does not provide suitable habitat for fern species.
- 7.1.17 Fish – short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*), smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*), Dover sole (*Solea solea*), and sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) have been identified within 1km of the site by the LRC records.
- 7.1.18 The harbour surrounding the site has a high volume of marine traffic due to it being a popular sailing destination. The nature and scale of the proposed development is unlikely to have an impact on the identified fish species.

- 7.1.19 Fungi – pink meadow-cap (*Hygrocybe calyptriformis*) and earth tongue (*Microglossum olivaceum*) have been identified within 1km of the site by the LRC records.
- 7.1.20 The site does not provide suitable habitat for either protected species of fungi which are typically associated with unimproved grasslands.
- 7.1.21 Invertebrates – LRC records include species from the orders Coleoptera (beetles), Diptera (true flies), Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.22 The site does not provide suitable habitat for the protected species of invertebrates identified within the LRC.
- 7.1.23 Marine mammals – grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), common seal (*Phoca vitulina*), and bottle-nosed dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).
- 7.1.24 The adjacent waters are suitable; however, the surrounding area already has an existing high volume of marine traffic (sailing boats etc.), and the nature and scale of the development is unlikely to have a further impact (than already exists) on marine mammals.
- 7.1.25 Plants – LRC records found the following higher plants: field garlic (*Allium oleraceum*), marsh-mallow (*Althaea officinalis*), green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*), stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*), quaking-grass (*Briza media*), divided sedge (*Carex divisa*), centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), small toadflax (*Chaenorhinum minus*), nettle-leaved goosefoot (*Chenopodium murale*), spear-leaved willowherb (*Epilobium lanceolatum*), blue fleabane (*Erigeron acris*), dwarf spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*), broad-leaved spurge (*E. platyphyllos*), common cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), tall ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria bastardi*), French oat-grass (*Gaudinia fragilis*), bloody crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), weasel's-snout (*Misopates orontium*), curved hard-grass (*Parapholis incurva*), hoary plantain (*Plantago media*), early meadow-grass (*Poa infirma*), annual beard-grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), butcher's-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*), autumn lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*), strawberry clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*), clustered clover (*T. glomeratum*), dark mullein (*Verbascum nigrum*), eelgrass (*Zostera marina*), and dwarf eelgrass (*Z. nolte*).
- 7.1.26 No rare or protected species of plants were encountered during the site walkover. Furthermore, the eelgrass species have not been identified within the site's boundary.
- 7.1.27 Reptiles – There are LRC records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.28 The site is unsuitable for reptile habitation.
- 7.1.29 Other species – LRC data search provided hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) records within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.30 Hedgehogs preferred habitat is a mosaic of grassland, woodland, woodland edges, and hedgerows. They can also be found in urban/suburban areas such as gardens and margins of arable fields.
- 7.1.31 The site does not provide suitable foraging or sheltering opportunities for hedgehogs.
- 7.1.32 There are LRC records of red squirrels within 1km of the site.
- 7.1.33 The site does not provide suitable habitat for red squirrels which are arboreal mammals reliant on tree/hedgerow connectivity.
- 7.1.34 Invasive and non-native species – The LRC have identified the following invasive and non-native plant species within 1km of the site: three-cornered garlic (*Allium triquetrum*), hollyberry cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster bullatus*), wall cotoneaster (*C. horizontalis*), entire-leaved cotoneaster (*C. integrifolius*),

Himalayan cotoneaster (*C. simonsii*), montbretia (*Crocasmia pottsii x aurea*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), knotweed (*F. japonica x sachalinensis = F. x bohémica*), yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*), and Virginia-creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*).

- 7.1.35 On-site vigilance for the invasive and/or non-native species identified in this report should be maintained during any work. Optimum surveying period for flora is from April-September.
- 7.1.36 There are LRC records of invasive and/or non-native animal species within 1km of the site which include ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and barn owl (*Tyto alba*). These species are listed under the Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 9, Part 1 which lists species established in the wild which may not be released/allowed to escape into the wild unless licensed to do so.
- 7.1.37 No invasive and/or non-native animal species were identified during the sight visit. However, any sightings during the construction phase should be reported to an ecologist.

8 LIMITATIONS

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The survey provides a single snapshot of the site and does not account for seasonal variation or species which may take up residence after the published report. Furthermore, lack of signs of a particular species does not confirm its absence, merely that there was no indication of its presence at the time of the site survey.
- 8.1.2 The PEA is valid for 2 years (or any material change in the site, whichever is sooner) after which an updated PEA will be required to assess if there are any changes to the site's condition.
- 8.1.3 This report does not include assessment of the already approved dredging works. No application documentation relating this existing approval has been provided to E3S for consideration or review.

8.2 Badgers

- 8.2.1 Although the site was examined for signs of badgers and their setts, there is no guarantee that sett entrances can be located, especially if the sett is currently inactive, seasonally used, and/or concealed.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Species

- 9.1.1 Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development in an already busy marine environment is unlikely to have a negative impact on marine species. The only species considered to be impacted by the proposed development is bladder wrack, a species of algae which was identified covering the site's slipway. This may be removed both during construction and throughout the life of the proposed development. This is likely to have occurred regardless of the proposed development due to the nature of the site. Furthermore, this species is highly likely to recolonise the site due its high fecundity and dispersal, as well as the retention of suitable habitat for it to attach itself to. However, to mitigate negative impacts, this species should be left in place where feasible.
- 9.1.2 Any conclusions do not consider the existing MMO license which has been obtained by the adjacent land owners in reference to proposed dredging works.

9.2 Designated Sites

- 9.2.1 The site has hydrological connectivity to various designated sites (Table 2). A Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment is required.

10 MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT

10.1.1 The following measures are proposed; however, the list is not exhaustive and will be updated to reflect the outcomes of any further survey reports.

10.2 Avoidance, Mitigation, and Compensation Measures Proposed:

10.2.1 Adhering to avoidance and/or mitigation measures outlined within the WDF assessment;

10.2.2 Retaining bladder wrack where possible; and

10.2.3 Allowing natural regeneration of any bladder wrack lost due to the proposed development.

10.3 Enhancement Measures Proposed:

10.3.1 No enhancements have been proposed.

Table 3: *Site Photograph ID with Descriptions*

| Site photograph ID | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Photograph 1 | View of slipway and harbour |
| Photograph 2 | View of slipway, harbour, and brick building |
| Photograph 3 | View of man-made debris |
| Photograph 4 | View of brick wall adjacent to slip way with piles rock debris |
| Photograph 5 | View of bladder wrack on slipway |
| Photograph 6 | View of adjacent jetties |
| Photograph 7 | View of slipway into harbour |
| Photograph 8 | View of brick wall and rocks covered in bladder wrack |
| Photograph 9 | View of built-up area looking away from the harbour |
| Photograph 10 | View of built-up area looking away from the harbour |

NOTES:

DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING.

MAP OF THE SITE DISPLAYING ITS BOUNDARY AND LOCATION.

KEY:

— - SITE BOUNDARY



CLIENT: LIMEWAVE LTD

SITE: WESTBOURNE, BIRMINGHAM ROAD, COWES, ISLE OF WIGHT.

TITLE: FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN

AUTHOR: HO

PROJECT REF:
NN1645

DATE: DECEMBER 2023

NOT TO SCALE



NOTES:

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING OUR SITE VISIT. EACH PHOTO DEPICTS HABITAT ON SITE AS WELL AS SPECIFIC SITES OF INTEREST.

1



2



3



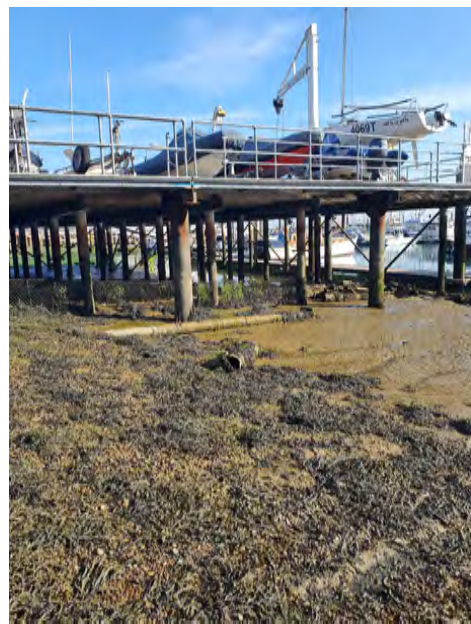
4



5



6



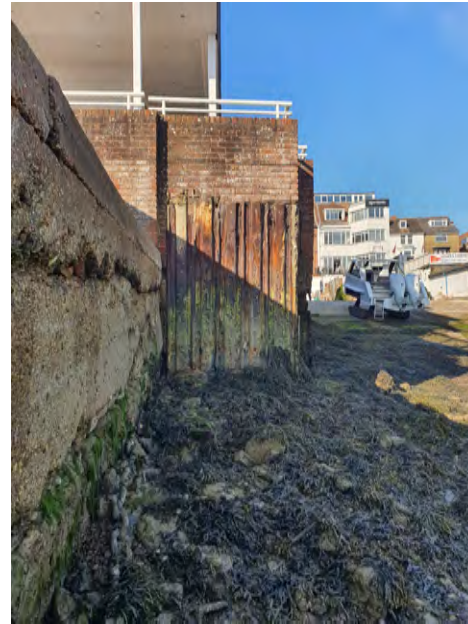
7



8



9



10



CLIENT: LIMEWAVE LTD

SITE: WESTBOURNE, BIRMINGHAM ROAD, COWES, ISLE OF WIGHT.

TITLE: FIGURE 2 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

AUTHOR: HO

PROJECT REF:
NN1645

DATE: DECEMBER 2023

NOT TO SCALE



NOTES:
DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING.

MAP OF THE SITE DISPLAYING AREA IN WHICH DREDGING WILL BE COMMENCING EARLY 2024 AS APPROVED BY THE MMO. THIS ALSO INCLUDES OUR SITE AREA.

KEY:
— - APPROVED DREDGING AREA



CLIENT: LIMEWAVE LTD

SITE: WESTBOURNE, BIRMINGHAM ROAD, COWES, ISLE OF WIGHT.

TITLE: FIGURE 3 - APPROVED DREDGING PLAN

AUTHOR: HO

PROJECT REF: NN1645 DATE: DECEMBER 2023
NOT TO SCALE