

Ecosystems Services Statement and Soil Management Plan

in support of

Underground parking area

AT

Millicent, Hillgrove Lane, Lurgashall, Petworth, GU28 9EP

Ecosystems Services Statement

1. Ecosystems Services Statement

1.1. The following Ecosystems Services statement has been produced in accordance with the Ecosystems Services Technical Advice Note (householder) to demonstrate the schemes compliance with Policy SD2 of the South Downs National Park Local Plan, the LPA's core policy on protecting and enhancing ecosystem services.

1.2. Ecosystem Services are the benefits that people and society get from the natural environment and are broken down into four main categories; supporting services, provisioning services, regulating services and cultural services. Following this approach will help the proposal delivers benefits for people and wildlife in the National Park.

2. Ecosystem Services Requirements

2.1. Core Policy SD2 requires development proposals to take a positive approach to the delivery of ecosystem services and sets out that

Core Policy SD2: Ecosystem Services

1. Development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This will be achieved through the use of high quality design, and by delivering all opportunities to:

- a) Sustainably manage land and water environments;
- b) Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats;
- c) Conserve water resources and improve water quality;

- d) Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding;
- e) Improve the National Park’s resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;
- f) Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;
- g) Conserve and enhance soils, use soils sustainably and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- h) Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials;
- i) Reduce levels of pollution;
- j) Improve opportunities for peoples’ health and wellbeing; and
- k) Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.

3 Ecosystem Services Actions

3.1 The following table sets out the ecosystem service actions that will be undertaken as part of this development. It then identifies which criteria under Policy SD2 the action will contribute towards:

Ecosystems Services Actions	Policy SD2 criterion
Protect and retain existing trees	B, F, I
Safeguard wildlife habitats and protected species	B, F, I
Introduce bird boxes in nearby trees	B
Introduce bat and bird boxes in nearby trees	B

3.2 With these actions in place the proposal will have a positive impact on ecosystem services, helping to manage our natural resources sustainably for the future, in accordance with Core Policy SP2.

4. Soil Management Plan

4.1 The following Soils Management plan has been produced in line with the requirements of the South Downs Local Validation List (July 2019) as the application proposes the ‘movement of top and / or subsoil’.

4.2 Having regard to Local Validation List in preparing a Soils Management Plan, the document refers to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), specifically Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

4.3 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF sets out that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) Minimising impacts on and improving net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure;
- e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing, to being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should wherever possible help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

4.4 The site falls within the Northchapel Basin landscape character area O2, as defined by the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment 2020. The key characteristics are identified as including:

- Lowland clay vale enclosed by the rising slopes of the Greensand Hills to the south and west
- Lighter soils derived from sandstone on the higher ground supports arable farming
- Intricate mosaic of arable/ pasture farmland and deciduous woodland plus areas of parkland and common land
- Rich in ponds and small streams which have often carved narrow valleys into the landform
- A heavily wooded landscape
- Medieval deer parks
- High density of dispersed settlements
- Villages represent modern infill
- Restricted views due to woodland cover

4.5 There are no policies within South Downs National Park Local Plan in relation to agricultural land classification. Within Chapter 3 of the Local Plan the site is identified as being within the 'The Western Weald' and at paragraph 3.24 notes 'The thin sandy soils in the majority of the Western Weald provide very poor agricultural land for farming and new enterprise and instead there is a large amount of heathland and woodland. However, there are areas of Grade 3 and Grade 2 agricultural land; the most fertile soils being found in the north along the River Rother in Hampshire.'

4.6 Notwithstanding the above, the site falls within an established residential garden and does not fall on agricultural land.

4.7 The application includes for the construction of basement parking under the existing garage and adjacent tennis court. This will require the excavation of soil to facilitate the development.

4.8 While some excavated top soil may be retained on site, it will be necessary to remove the majority of the excavated soil off site. The Applicant will look for opportunities for soil to be transferred to and used on sites close by the application site in the first instance.

4.9 The proposal does not involve the loss of agricultural land nor indeed, agricultural land that is classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The proposal accords with the objectives of the NPPF in relation to soils.

July 2023