Hillview Farm, Pitton

Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Strategy

Trudy Excell

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Introduction

1.1 Ecology

Following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd in 2021 the following taxa were confirmed to present a potential ecological constraint to the proposed development:

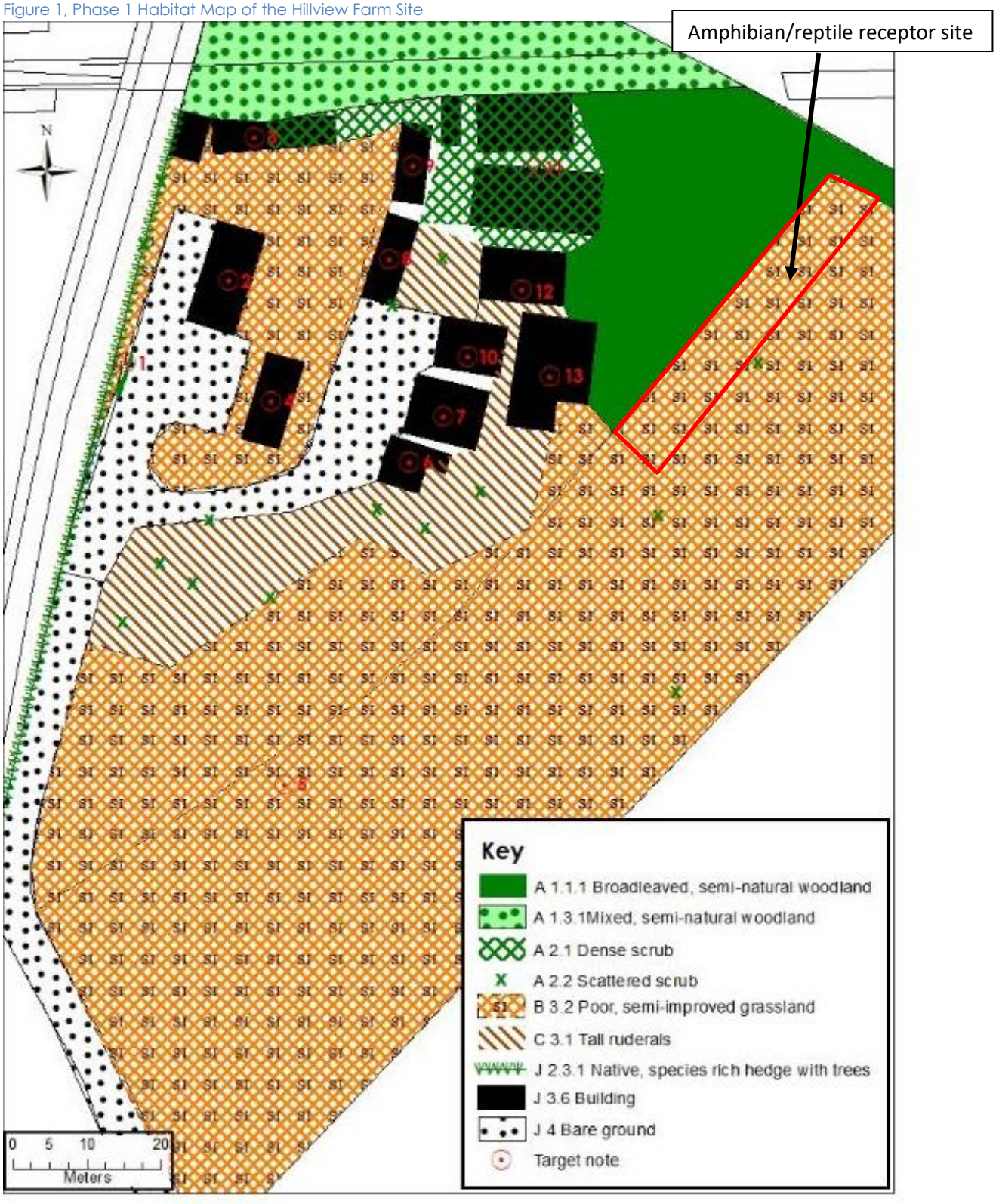
- bats
- breeding birds
- reptiles

In addition to the three species groups above, habitat enhancement measures for the following species groups will be incorporated into the scheme design:

- amphibians
- badger
- invertebrates

See Figure 1, below, for a Phase 1 habitat map of the site based on a Phase 1 habitat survey completed by Daniel Ahern Ecology on 18/07/21.

Figure 1, Phase 1 Habitat Map of the Hillview Farm Site



Species Mitigation and Enhancement

3.1 Amphibian Mitigation

3.2 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Amphibians

3.2.1 Oversee the removal of grass, herb and scrub vegetation. The first phase of this habitat removal is for it to be cut to a 10cm length using a strimmer to ensure the area is sub-optimal habitat for this group of species.

3.2.2 Should any amphibians be encountered during the initial cutting phase the ecologist will halt works and EITHER ensure the animal leaves the works area OR removed the animal to the pre-agreed receptor area, location shown on Figure 1. The receptor site is land at the eastern end of the Site.

3.2.3 During the second phase the ecologist will undertake a finger-tip search of all remaining vegetation adopting a sectional approach, examining an area of 10m by 10m at a time. Any amphibians discovered will be removed to a holding bag by the ecologist and then translocated to a pre-agreed receptor outside the works area, location shown in Figure 1, immediately to the north of the Site.

3.2.4 When a 10m by 10m section has been searched by the ecologist the vegetation will then be stripped to leave bare earth.

3.3 Works to be Undertaken by Landowner/Developer – Amphibians

3.3.1 Prior to any habitat clearance taking place the development site and receptor site will be fenced off using reptile fencing, see Figure 3.

3.3.2 Access to this area will be via an amphibian & reptile fenced gate, wide enough to accommodate expected works traffic.

3.4 Badger Mitigation

3.5 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Badgers

3.5.1 Briefing to contractors – A toolbox talk will be delivered to contractors in advance of works commencing on site. This will include information on relevant legislation relating to badgers and contractor's responsibilities.

3.5.2 Pre-clearance Check – A pre-demolition survey will be undertaken in advance of works commencing on site. The ecologist will walk the site to confirm the presence/absence of any badger setts.

3.6 Works to be Undertaken by Landowner/Developer – Badgers

3.6.1 The contractor's site foreman will ensure that at the end of each working day and groundwork excavations will be fenced with Herris fencing to prevent any access by badgers. All excavation will have a scaffold plank set in to act as an exit route for any badger which falls in.

3.7 Bat Mitigation & Habitat Enhancement

3.8 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Bats

3.8.1 Briefing to contractors – A toolbox talk will be delivered to contractors in advance of works commencing on site. This will include information on relevant legislation relating to birds and contractor's responsibilities. A bat box will be installed on a pre-agreed structure before any works start, see Figure 5 for the location.

3.8.2 Pre-clearance Check – A pre-demolition survey will be undertaken in advance of works commencing on site. Any trees to be removed will be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist on the day of clearance prior to any works taking place.

3.8.3 If the PRFs in trees on site cannot be fully checked during the pre-demolition survey the tree should be soft-felled. All limbs with PRFS should be felled and left grounded overnight to allow any bats present to leave before the timber is then further processed.

3.9 Works to be Undertaken by the Landowner/Developer – Bats

3.9.1 Recommendations for habitat enhancement will be added to three of the proposed new buildings in the new site design, see Figure 2 below.

3.9.2 A Beaumaris woodstone bat box – erected on the northern side of the main house at a height above 3m –

3.9.3 A wet ridge is recommended for all of the outbuilding roofs, this should have two gaps between ridge tiles on each buildings ridge. These will provide roost opportunities for crevice dwelling bat species

3.9.4 Two gaps should be created between the southern elevation and the soffit of each outbuilding to provide roost opportunities for crevice dwelling bat species. The gaps should measure 1cm wide by 5cm long.

Figure 2 – Proposed new building plan with habitat enhancement measures marked.



3.9.5 A lighting plan will be incorporated into the project design, mitigation measures will include the following:

- External lighting will be minimal and limited to 4 No. wall mounted luminaires with downward directional output for the new house and holiday lodges. There will be 2 No wall mounted luminaires with downward directional output either side of the front porch and 2 No wall mounted luminaires with downward directional output

either side of the rear door. The external luminaires selected will have integrated LED light sources, and will therefore emit no UV light, and will have a warm white colour temperatures of 3000K. LED Luminaires with warmer colour temperatures and no UV component have been shown to have less impact on bats. All external lighting will be controlled by timed PIR sensors.

3.10 Bird Mitigation & Habitat Enhancement

3.11 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Birds

3.11.1 Briefing to contractors – A toolbox talk will be delivered to contractors in advance of works commencing on site. This will include information on relevant legislation relating to birds and contractor's responsibilities.

3.11.2 Where practicable all works which may impact breeding birds eg vegetation clearance should take place outside of the breeding bird season ie the works should take place between 1st October and 31st March. Should this not be possible adopt recommendations in #3.11.3.

3.11.3 Pre-clearance Check – A pre-demolition survey will be undertaken in advance of works commencing on site. Any scrub or woodland vegetation to be removed will be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist on the day of clearance prior to any works taking place.

3.11.4 Any active bird's nests will be flagged by attaching a 1/2m length of bright coloured material to the plant containing the nest. Site clearance contractors will be made aware that there is a 5m buffer set up around the nest, inside which no vegetation clearance can take place until the ecologist confirms any young in the nest have fledged and the nest is inactive.

3.12 Works to be Undertaken by the Landowner/Developer – Birds

3.12.1 Each new property will have the following incorporated into the building design;
Two, double chamber Vivaro Pro woodstone sparrow nest boxes, see Figure 3 – to be installed at a height of at least 3m above ground level on a northern western elevation of the house.

3.12.2 A Schwegler 1B bird box – erected on the eastern side of the house at a height above 3m (see Figure 2) -

3.13 Invertebrate Mitigation & Habitat Enhancement

3.14 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Invertebrates

3.14.1 None

3.15 Works to be Undertaken by the Landowner/Developer – Invertebrates

3.15.1 A bee brick – installed on the southern side of the house as a height above 1.5m

3.16 Reptile Mitigation & Habitat Enhancement

3.17 Works to be Undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist – Reptiles

3.17.1 Oversee the removal of grass, herb and scrub vegetation. The first phase of this habitat removal is for it to be cut to a 10cm length using a strimmer to ensure the area is sub-optimal habitat for this group of species.

3.17.2 Should any reptiles by encountered during the initial cutting phase the ecologist will halt works and EITHER ensure the animal leaves the works area OR removed the animal to the pre-agreed receptor area, see Figure 1, at the eastern end of the Site.

3.17.3 During the second phase the ecologist will undertake a finger-tip search of all remaining vegetation adopting a sectional approach, examining an area of 10m by

10m at a time. Any reptiles discovered will be removed to a holding bag by the ecologist and then translocated to a pre-agreed receptor outside the works area, location see Figure 1, immediately north of the Site.

3.17.4 When a 10m by 10m section has been searched by the ecologist the vegetation will then be stripped to leave bare earth.

3.18 Works to be Undertaken by the Landowner/Developer – Reptiles

3.18.1 Prior to any habitat clearance taking place the development site and receptor site will be fenced off using reptile fencing, see Figure 3.

3.18.2 Access to this area will be via an amphibian & reptile fenced gate, wide enough to accommodate expected works traffic.

Figure 3, Reptile fencing to be installed around the development site and contractor's compound



3.18.3 All vegetation cuttings will be raked up into a pile and removed from site OR composted in an area of site which will not be disturbed during the construction phase.