Waldens Fishery,
Waldens Estate,
West Grimstead,
Salisbury,
SP5 3RJ

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

(including Phase 1 Bat survey)

JANUARY 2024

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Prepared by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultant Chartered Ecologist Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of proposed Fishery Lodge at Waldens Fishery, West Grimstead, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 3RJ (GR:SU205 275).

The survey area was systematically walked and surveyed according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours by Dr.Jonty Denton on 27th January 2024. 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 (Collins, 2023).

There are no structures or trees with bat potential on site.

There will be no net loss of habitat on site as the lodge will be supported on stilts and the underside of the structure will be open and a woodland floor flora will be allowed to develop.

INTRODUCTION

Site Proposals

This is required for a planning application seeking to erect a fisherman's lodge on site.

METHODS

Introduction

This section details the methods used during the Phase 1 survey undertaken at Waldens fishery.

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 27th January 2024. 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 (Collins, 2023).

The Phase 1 Bat Survey was carried out and comprised of a daytime walkover of the site to record evidence of any protected bat species.

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 1km. The closest is Brickworth Down & Dean Hill SSSI which is 2.2km to the southeast.

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

SITE DESCRIPTION

The plot is situated in a rural setting north of West Grimstead village beside the River Dun. It is surrounded by mixed woodland and the proposed site of the lodge is in a small area of conifer woodland (a plantation of Norway spruce)



Figure 1.Location map

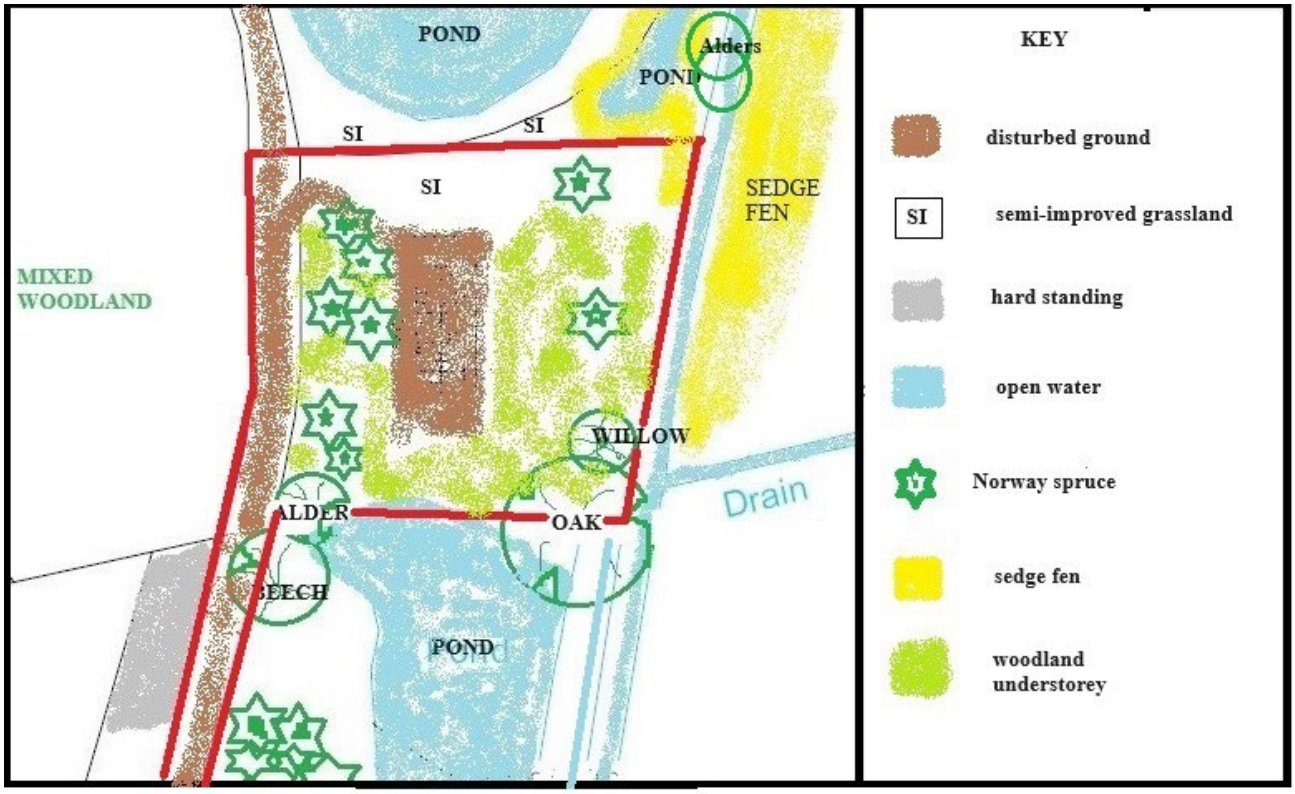

Figure 2. Habitat map

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'.

Priority habitats

The River Dun is marked as a chalk river with high certainty from the point immediately east of the plot and low certainty up stream of same. The surrounding woodlands are included on the Priority habitats inventory as deciduous woodland, but planted conifers are dominant to the west and southeast. The woodland west of the parking area is secondary with abundant birch.



Figure 3. Looking northeast across site



Figure 4. Looking east across proposed site of lodge.

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.

There is negligible potential for common reptiles as the site is largely shaded but Grass Snake may visit the ponds and move up and down the streamlines.



Figure 5. Looking southeast across site from northwest corner.



Figure 6. Car parking area to west of site.

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 adjacent water bodies are all stocked with fish and support three-spined sticklebacks and are therefore unsuitable for Great Crested newts. Common Frog and Common Toad (UKBAP/SPI) may occur in the wider area. The latter favour fish stocked ponds and are likely to occur in the area.

B**adgers**

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.

There were no sett entrances on or adjacent to the site as the proximity to groundwater means the whole valley is unsuitable. Badgers may well occur in the woodland on higher ground.

Otter

Otter do occur on site and fencing has been erected under license to prevent damage to the fish stocked ponds.

Water Vole

The stream edge and fen area do support habitats which could be utilised by Water Voles, but a thorough search of the pond and stream edges found no signs of any activity within 50m.



Figure 6. Pond to south looking southeast



Figure 7. Ditch and streamline to southeast of site looking south.



Figure 8. Looking west across northern third of site

Dormice

According to MagicMap, a EPS licence was issued for Dormice for a site 1.2km to the southwest. The adjacent woodland is dominated by Norway spruce and birch with some alder along the valley floor. These are suboptimal for dormice.

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.

According to MagicMap, two protected species licences have been issued for Bats within 1.5k of the site. The nearest is from Clarendon House 1.3km to the northwest Covering Common Pipistrelle, Lesser Horseshow Bat, Greater horseshoe Bat, Natterer's Bat and Brown long-eared Bat. The surrounding woodland provides ideal foraging habitats for most species with the lakes also likely to be attractive to Daubenton's Bat.

Phase 1 Bat Survey Results

Bats – trees

The only large tree is a mature oak to the southeast of the plot. A ground floor assessment found no obvious holes into the trunk of lower branches.

Bats – building

There are no structures on site.

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 Goldcrest, Great Tit, Great spotted woodpecker, Robin, and Wood Pigeon.

The trees have potential for nesting birds.

EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Protected Habitats

The plot includes bare ground, semi-improved grassland interspersed with a degraded woodland floor habitat in the shadier parts of the site.

The proposed lodge will be on stilts and the underside left open and woodland flora allowed to develop resulting in no net loss of habitat.

It is essential that the adjacent priority habitats (chalk river and woodland) are not adversely impacted. Adequate screening in form of Heras fencing to prevent any accidental ingress into surrounding areas and industry standards for provision of spill kits etc. must be in place prior to any works commencing.

Protected Species

Reptiles

There is negligible for reptiles to be present on site, and a presence/absence survey would not be required to determine whether any species are present.

Amphibians

The pond and lakes support large fish populations and as such have negligible potential to support Great Crested newts. A precautionary approach will be taken and any potentially suitable surface refugia affected will be searched and dismantled whilst also checking for any amphibians. Any found would be relocated to suitable refugia (log piles) at southwest corner of the site.

Badgers

There were no signs of foraging badgers on site and no setts within at least 40m. Badgers have very large territories, and it is always good building practice should be

followed (such as placing boards over holes or trenches overnight) to prevent animals being harmed during site works.

Dormice

No habitat with potential for dormice would be affected by the proposals and a presence/absence survey not required.

Phase 1 Bat Survey

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

The track and streamline provide ideal corridors for foraging/commuting bats, and the thinning out of the dense stand of Norway spruce will also help increase connectivity.

New exterior lighting should be avoided, but if necessary for security purposes, then the latest updated lighting guidance note (GN08/23) should be followed. This is available at Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk) and supersedes all previous guidance.

Breeding Birds

There is no habitat present for nesting birds at ground level on the plot and its approaches.

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