

LAND OFF DALE ROAD (SITE 10)
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared for Worthing Borough Council

by

Hankinson Duckett Associates

HDA ref: 454.3 Rev A

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1 Site summary

- 1.1 Site 10 comprises approximately 6.7ha of land bordered to the north by a railway line beyond which lies farmland and wetland habitats; to the east by residential development, a public park and sewage works; to the south by commercial development; and to the west by a drainage channel with allotments beyond.
- 1.2 The site comprises derelict land on a former landfill, dominated by tall ruderal vegetation and scrub. The habitats and plant species present indicate that the majority of vegetation within the site has naturally regenerated on disturbed ground and is in various stages of succession. The northern area of the site has more recently been used as allotments and the south has been left undisturbed for a longer time as evident from the denser scrub in this area. A flowing drain runs along the northern site boundary, and connects with Teville Stream along the western boundary, which continues into a culvert in the south-west of the site. Teville Stream is a main river and waterbody designated under the Water Framework Directive. Tree planting including mixed plantation woodland and coniferous tree planting is present along the margins of the northern area of the site.
- 1.3 Locations and detailed descriptions of the habitats present at the site are provided in the Phase 1 habitat survey plan and target notes in *Appendix A*.

2 Desk study

- 2.1 No statutory nature conservation designations pertain to the site or adjacent land.
- 2.2 No areas of international importance (i.e. SPA, SAC or RAMSAR) occur within 10km and no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) occur within 5km of the site boundary.
- 2.3 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are located within 5km of the site. The closest of these is 'Cissbury Ring', located approximately 3.1km to the north of the site and designated for its chalk grassland habitat. Adur Estuary SSSI is located approximately 4.1km east of the site and is designated for its saltmarsh habitat and mudflats, supporting important populations of wading birds. No other SSSIs are located within 5km of the site boundary.
- 2.4 There are no Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) located within 2km of the site.
- 2.5 One Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) occurs within 2km of the site. 'Lower Cokeham Reedbed and Ditches' SNCI is located approximately 30m north of the site, to the immediate north of the railway corridor bordering the northern site boundary, and is designated for its reedbed and fen habitats.

- 2.6 Records of protected and notable species provided during the desk study included records of Slow-worm and Grass Snake pertaining to the site dating from 2011. Other records provided for within 2km of the site boundary include bats, Common Lizard, Water Vole, and notable birds, invertebrates and plants.
- 2.7 The full results of the desk study including plans showing the locations of nearby designated nature conservation sites and complete protected and notable species records for up to 2km from the site boundary are provided in *Appendix B*.

3 Constraints and opportunities

- 3.1 The habitats of highest ecological value associated with the site are the drainage channels along the northern and western site boundaries and the corridors of semi-natural habitats through which they flow. Although the sections of these linear habitats within and bordering the site are not considered to be of any higher than **local** value individually, they form part of a much wider network of wetland habitats in the surrounding area considered as a whole to be of **district** value.
- 3.2 Although the mosaic of scrub and tall ruderal habitats dominating the site is not particularly botanically diverse and is fairly recently established, it forms an extensive area of habitat that is relatively scarce in the wider area and provides opportunities for a range of species, and is therefore considered as a whole to be of up to **moderate local** value for wildlife.
- 3.3 Early-mature scattered mature coniferous and deciduous trees, native boundary hedgerow and plantation woodland occurring in the northern area of the site and along the south-western site boundary, although not exceptionally diverse and of fairly recent origin, do provide habitat for a range of species, compliment other habitats in the site's surrounds, and in combination provide opportunities for the movement of wildlife through the local area. Although these habitats are likely to be of only **site** value individually they are considered in combination to be of **low local** value for wildlife.
- 3.4 Development should seek to maintain the ecological function of water channels within and bordering the site and where possible enhance these features through appropriate habitat retention and enhancement, and sensitive design of SuDS. Opportunities for wildlife provided by habitats of local or site value lost through development should be replaced through provision of new and enhanced opportunities elsewhere within the site. Ways in which this could be achieved include:
- Enhancement of the Teville Stream and drainage channel corridors through bank reprofiling, creation of side channels and backwaters, management of trees and scrub to reduce overshading, provision of complimentary native scrub, tree and hedgerow planting, marginal and aquatic planting, and management of non-native/ invasive species.

- Retention of trees and scrub on the margins of the site and strengthening of associated wildlife corridors through appropriate management of existing vegetation, complimentary species-rich native tree and scrub planting, and creation of new linear semi-natural habitats such as species-rich hedgerows and treelines around the site boundaries.
- Selective retention and enhancement of the existing dense scrub habitats through additional species-rich native tree and scrub planting to maintain opportunities for wildlife within the site.
- Creation of a range of habitats with high wildlife interest within areas of public open space such as species-rich grassland, native scrub, hedgerows, woodland and wetlands.
- Control of invasive species including Japanese Knotweed which was recorded within the site during the survey.
- Creation of new opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds through provision of bird and bat boxes on existing trees and new buildings.
- Use native species typical of the local area in landscape planting where appropriate to do so. Where possible these should be sourced from stock of local provenance.
- Prioritising the use of plants which benefit native wildlife within formal landscaping schemes, including nectar- and pollen-rich and fruit- and nut-producing species.

4 Further information requirements

4.1 In view of the findings of the desk study and/or habitat resource of the site, consideration should be given to the requirement for the following further surveys and assessment work in support of a planning application:

- Phase 1 bat survey (scoping inspections of trees)
- Phase 2 emergence surveys (if potential for roosting bats identified during Phase 1 bat survey)
- Phase 2 bat activity survey
- Great Crested Newt survey
- Dormouse survey
- Reptile survey
- Badger survey
- Water Vole/ Otter survey
- Implications of increased recreational pressure on off-site designated areas both alone and in combination with other plans and projects.

4.2 It is recommended that the extended Phase 1 habitat survey and desk study are updated by the applicant prior to submission of a planning application. This is in order to ensure that the assessment of habitats at the site and its potential to support protected and notable species reflect any subsequent changes in the ecological character of the site and its surrounds, and strategic nature conservations objectives. The actual requirements for further work should also take into account the nature and extent of proposed development works.

APPENDIX A

Phase 1 habitat survey: Plan and Target Notes



KEY

- Site boundary
- Mixed plantation woodland
- Scattered mature trees
- Intact species-poor hedgerow
- Defunct species-poor hedgerow
- Dense scrub
- Scattered scrub
- Tall ruderals
- Drain and direction of flow
- Fence
- Bare ground / construction site
- Hard standing
- Buildings
- Target notes

CLIENT:
Worthing Borough Council
PROJECT:
Worthing Landscape and Ecology Study
TITLE:
Site 10 - Phase 1 Habitat Survey
SCALE AT A3:
1:2,000
DATE:
March 2017

454.3 / 04

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Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
Ecology



1:2,000 at A3 - metres:
0 50 100



Site 10 - Target Notes

1. **Scrub and trees:** Area in the north-east of the site dominated by mature non-native Pine *Pinus* sp. trees with scattered Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.
2. **Tall ruderal and scrub:** The northern section of the site was formerly used for allotments and is now dominated by self-seeded tall ruderal vegetation and scrub. The ruderal vegetation is dominated by Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* with Burdock *Arctium* sp., Teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, Bramble and Bristly Ox-tongue *Picris echinoides* with mosses also abundant. Dense Elder scrub dominates some areas and is scattered elsewhere. A few early-mature scattered trees also occur in this area including Leyland Cypress *Cupressus leylandii* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.
3. **Garden boundaries:** North-eastern boundary of the site bordering off-site residential gardens, comprising a mixture of fencelines with scattered trees and scrub including Elder and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*.
4. **Northern boundary:** The northern boundary of the site borders a railway corridor with a drainage ditch running along a fenceline which marks the site boundary. The drain is approximately 3m wide with banks lined with dense Common Reed *Phragmites australis*.
5. **Bare ground:** A narrow strip of cleared land comprising bare ground runs around the northern and north-eastern margins of the site.
6. **Northern margin:** The site comprises a former landfill and slopes steeply up from the bare strip of land running along the northern boundary. The top of the slope is planted with a line of early-mature Leyland Cypress trees. Occasional early-mature Crack Willow *Salix fragilis* trees and abundant scrub including Elder, Bramble and Buddleia *Buddleia davidii* occurs along the bank. A single stand of Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* is also present.
7. **Western boundary drain:** Drainage channel along the western boundary of the site with a strong southwards flow. The northern end of the channel adjacent to the site is lined by early-mature Crack Willow trees. Further to the south, Bramble and Elder scrub dominated bankside vegetation with occasional Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* and stands of Common Reed.
8. **North-western margin:** The slope on the western margin of the northern section of the site supports plantation woodland comprising semi-mature (around 30 years old) trees dominated by Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and occasional Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*.
9. **Southern end of drain:** In the south-west of the site the drain enters a culvert. Around this point, bordering vegetation includes tall ruderal vegetation with stands of dense Bramble, Elder and a small number of Crack Willow trees.
10. **Hedgerow:** A native hedgerow along the south-western boundary of the site. Close inspection was not possible due to dense scrub in this area of the site however the hedgerow appeared to be dominated by Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, and Buddleia was also present.
11. **Southern ruderals and scrub:** The southern area of the site (to the south of a central east-west fenceline) appears to have been left disused for longer than the northern half and supports tall ruderal vegetation with a higher density of scrub. Similarly to the north of the site the dominant tall ruderal species are Common Nettle, Teasel and Burdock. Elder and Bramble are the dominant scrub species. Other species present included Gorse *Ulex europaea*, Bristly Ox-tongue, Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg., Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and Daffodil *Narcissus* sp. There are also a few small areas where short grass turf is present due to intensive Rabbit grazing.
12. **Construction site:** An area of cleared land prepared for the routing of a grid connection cable. This area was formerly tall ruderal and scrub vegetation (TN2) but has been recently cleared and at the time of survey comprised bare ground. This area was surrounded by Heras and reptile exclusion fencing.

APPENDIX B
Desk Study Results