D F Clark Bionomique Ltd

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

of

Land at Brays Lane, Rochford

on behalf of

Bellway Homes Limited - Essex

Reference:	DFC 1259
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Date:	13th April 2012

Contents

1.0 Summary

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out at Brays Lane, Rochford on the 11th April 2012. The site (central grid reference TQ 871 923) was found to comprise large grazed paddocks, the remains of stable buildings, areas of semi-improved grassland, ruderal species, hardstanding, species poor hedgerows, scrub and scattered trees. The buildings are due to be demolished and the site cleared to allow for the construction of approximately 100 residential dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping.

The trees, hedgerows, scrub and buildings provide suitable nesting habitat for birds.

A previous reptile presence/absence survey at the site revealed the presence of slow worm and grass snake within the site. It is considered that the habitats across the site have not changed significantly since the survey in 2010 and that the hedgerows and some vegetated areas could still be used by foraging reptiles. The grazed pasture is considered unsuitable for foraging reptiles. It is recommended the population of slow worm are caught and translocated to an off-site receptor at Stow Maries airfield. The Stow Maries site is committed to conservation orientated management and a small population of slow worm have already been released on site. However, it is considered the number of animals released may be too low to form a viable long-term sustainable population. The development of this site has the potential to help create a larger, viable population that is likely to be self-sustaining in the long-term. The developer may need to make a donation to support conservation management at Stow Maries airfield that is specifically targeted at reptiles.

A previous bat activity survey at the site found low level bat activity across the site involving three common and widely distributed species. The survey results suggested the possible presence of a small roost in trees on the southern boundary; a commuting route was also identified passing along the western boundary. The mature trees across the site have moderate to high potential to support roosting bats, whilst the buildings have negligible potential. If any mature trees are being lost at part of the proposal, then further surveys are recommended prior to vegetation clearance. In accordance with best practice guidelines, 3 bat activity and emergence surveys are required during the bat activity season (May to September); surveys to include both dusk and dawn visits.

Due to a lack of suitable habitats the site is not considered likely to support any other protected or notable species.

No evidence was found of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed on or adjacent to the site.

Key Recommendations

- If any mature trees are being lost as part of the development, a bat emergence and activity survey is recommended to be undertaken during the bat active season, (May to September). Two dusk surveys and one dawn survey should be undertaken by suitably experienced ecologists.
- Vegetation clearance and building demolition should be completed during the period October to February (inclusive) to avoid the bird nesting season. If this is not possible, prior to commencement on site a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist and any active nests will need to be left in situ until the young have left .
- Due to the confirmation of reptiles on site, a combination of destructive search and translocation is recommended to move any reptiles off-site to a suitable receptor site at Stow Maries, Essex.
- The new development should include a wildlife friendly landscaping scheme, favouring native species beneficial to protected species. Bird and bat boxes should be incorporated within the development to replace the existing limited roosting opportunities.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Instruction

DF Clark Bionomique Ltd were instructed by Matthew Oates of Bellway Homes Limited on the 5th April 2012 to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey at Brays Lane, Rochford.

It is proposed to clear the majority of the site to allow for the construction of approximately 100 residential dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

Recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist based on the client's proposals for the site and an ecological site survey.

The survey was carried out by Lucy Plumb, who has been a professional ecologist since 2008 and is an associate member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM).

2.2 Aims

This survey and report aims to:

- Accurately assess and record the existing habitats on site.
- Highlight any potential protected species presence and make recommendations for further surveys where appropriate.
- Identify any statutory or designated sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development.
- Summarise the overall ecological value of the site, which must now be considered as part of the planning process.

See Appendices 4 and 5 for planning policies (local and national) and wildlife legislation relevant to the proposed development.

2.3 Constraints

Due to timescale restrictions, biological records were not obtained from the local records office. However, as part of the Biodiversity Report prepared by AMEC in March 2011, a desk study was conducted in which wildlife records were reviewed and information concerning designated nature conservation sites was gathered. This information was re-assed as part of the Phase 1 Habitat survey.

3.0 Method

3.1 Desk Study

Defra's MAGIC website was consulted to obtain information about any statutory designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 2km radius of the site.

The Essex Wildlife Trust's webpage was used to identify any Local Wildlife Sites within 1km of the application site.

3.2 Site Visit

A single daytime site visit was carried out on 11th April 2012. The survey was conducted following the standard methodology for Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2003). Vegetation communities were assessed through the identification of individual plant species, and then the groups were classified and mapped according to the standardised habitat descriptions. Any evidence of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed was noted.

The survey also included an assessment of the site's potential to support any legally protected or notable species. Where best practice guidelines exist, these have been used to assess the likelihood that individual species will be present, for example Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT 2007).

3.3 Assessment

The ecological value of the site and potential ecological impacts of the proposed development has been assessed in accordance with industry standard guidelines (IEEM) 2006).

Based on criteria detailed within best practice guidelines for individual species, habitat suitability ratings have been used as a guide to inform any need for further surveys in respect of these species.

3.4 Zone of Influence

The zone of influence for the proposed works will vary depending on the species likely to be impacted. Given that the development will not significantly impact on the rural landscape within the surrounding vicinity, the main effect will be on those animals that use the habitats on site for part of or the whole of their lifecycle. Therefore, the zone of influence is predominantly limited to the site boundaries.

4.0 Survey Results

4.1 Designated Sites

Defra's MAGIC website indicates that there is one statutory designated site within a 2km radius of the application site. There are 3 non-statutory sites within the 1km search area.

The names, locations and reasons for designation are provided in the table below.

Name	Designation	Distance & Direction	reason for designation / features of note
Statutory sites within a 2km radius			
Magnolia Fields	Local Nature Reserve	815m W	This site comprises pastures, areas of rough grassland, scrub and woodland. A large population of great crested newt (GCN) has been recorded at this site as well as grass snake and lizard.
Non-statutory sites within a 1km radius			
Doggett's Pond	Local Wildlife Site	0.40km S	These former gravel pits have developed a good general wildlife interest. The site comprises a large pond with patches of scattered and dense Hawthorn, Willow and Bramble are found around the peripheral areas of the site. These attract numerous birds and insect species. Both Water Vole and Great Crested Newt have been recorded from this site.
Wood Sloppy	Local Wildlife Site	0.73km E	This small wood has a canopy of Pedunculate Oak and Ash over Hawthorn and Elder. The ground flora is diverse with Moschatel, Spurge Laurel, Butcher's Broom and Grass Vetchling having been recorded.

Magnolia Fields	Local Wildlife Site	0.82km W	This site comprises grazed pastures, rough unmanaged grassland, scrub and maturing woodland. To the southeast stretches a series of fields with thick hedges, grassland, sedge/rush beds and woodland. Many scarce Essex plants have been recorded from the site. A large population of Great Crested Newts is present on the site, considered to be the largest in Essex, along with similarly high numbers of Smooth Newts as well as Common Frog and Common Toad. The site also supports populations of Slow Worm, Common Lizard and Grass Snake.

4.2 Habitats and Plants

4.2.1 Location

The site is approximately 5.4ha located immediately south of Brays Lane and comprises mainly horse grazing and stabling. The site is approximately 210m long and 250m wide and consists of horse paddocks with hedgerow boundaries, a stable yard and an indoor riding school. The surrounding land includes residential housing and associated gardens to the west of the site with a school to the south and further housing and horse paddocks to the east. Brays Lane borders the site to the north with arable farmland beyond.

3.2.4 Buildings

There is a large indoor riding school building along the eastern boundary, with several stable blocks further north. The stable blocks vary in structural condition; the majority are brick constructions with flat corrugated roofs. Hardstanding, bare ground and amenity grass surround the buildings, with yard rubbish scattered around.

4.2.2 Paddocks

The majority of the application site consists of heavily grazed paddocks. The grass is kept consistently short by grazing horses and appears to be species poor, containing occasional daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

4.2.3 Hedgerows/Boundaries

Along the boundaries of the site are hedgerows dominated by blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. There are thickets of dense bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg* incorporated within the hedgerow.

There are scattered trees within the hedgerows, particularly along the western and southern boundaries. Tree species include oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*.

4.2.4 Invasive species

Japanese knotweed was not found to be present within the site or immediately adjacent areas.

4.3 Invertebrates

The site is considered likely to support common and widespread invertebrate species typical of the habitats present.

4.4 Reptiles

The hedgerows, scrub patches and areas of rubble piles and tussocky grass have the potential to support reptiles. The grazed paddocks are considered unsuitable for reptiles. Due to the habitats present and the results of a previous reptile presence/absence survey revealing the presence of slow worm and grass snake, recommendations have been made in paragraph 5.4 of this report. They include the combination of a supervised destructive search and translocation programme to move reptiles off-site to a suitable receptor site at Stow Maries.

4.5 Amphibians

As with reptiles, terrestrial habitat suitable for great crested newts is restricted to the boundaries of the application site.

A full great crested newt survey was undertaken in 2010 of all potential amphibian breeding ponds within 250m of the application site. The survey did not reveal the presence of great crested newts in any waterbody and it was concluded that they are likely absent from the site and the surrounding area. Consequently, it was predicted that there would be no impact on great crested newts as a result of the proposed development. No mitigation measures were therefore required.

A recent Biodiversity Report (AMEC, 2011) concluded that, '*the presence of a large population of horses in the main area of land at the time of the survey and the consequently high level of disturbance it is considered unlikely that GCN would use the*

site for foraging or for refuge or hibernation. Furthermore, recent presence/absence surveys concluded that GCN were likely absent from this area. It is considered that no further action with regards to GCN and the proposals are therefore required.'

The habitats across the site, and use of the site, have not significantly changed since the 2010 and 2011 survey. Furthermore, all waterbodies within 500m of the site are located to the east of the application site, meaning that the site is not situated between ponds and therefore is unlikely to be used by great crested newts commuting between breeding ponds.

Research carried out by Cresswell Associates for English Nature in 2004 concluded that at distances greater than 200-250m from breeding ponds, capturing great crested newts will hardly ever be appropriate. They also found that capture rates for great crested newts decreased significantly away from ponds to a distance of 200-250m. There is only one pond within 250m of the application site, and one ditch. Both were recently surveyed with no amphibians recorded.

4.6 Birds

Several common garden bird species were noted during the site visit including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, blackbird *Turdus merula* and woodpidgeon *Columba palumbus*.

The scrub, hedgrowss, trees and buildings provide nesting and foraging habitat for bird species.

4.7 Bats

The stable buildings have flat corrugated roofs supported with modern, tightly fitting wooden beams. These do not create any suitable crevices for roosting bats. The beams and walls of the stables are covered in dense cobwebs and dust which does not indicate recent or regular use by roosting bats. The buildings are largely open, creating drafty and fluctuating environments, not usual favoured by bats.

The buildings across the site are deemed to be unsuitable for roosting bats. A detailed internal and external inspection of all buildings revealed no bat field signs such as droppings, staining or food remnants. The buildings are concluded to have negligible potential for bats; this was also the conclusion of the 2011 Biodiversity Report undertaken by AMEC.

The surrounding semi-rural environment is considered to be of moderate quality for foraging and roosting bats.

Across the application site there are several mature trees with cracks and crevices suitable for roosting bats. In particular, the western and southern boundaries are considered to contain trees with moderate to high potential. In addition, the boundary hedgerows are considered to act as potential commuting routes into wider foraging areas.

4.8 Badger, Otter, Water Vole

There are no water bodies present on or immediately adjacent the site and therefore otters *Lutra lutra*, water voles *Arvicola terrestris* and white clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* are unlikely to be present.

No evidence of badger *Meles meles* was found on site or in possible survey areas within 30m of the site.

4.9 Other Legally Protected or Notable Species

Areas of the site may provide suitable habitat for hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus*, a UKBAP priority species. The hedgerows and dense scrub patches may provide opportunities for breeding and/or hibernation.

The site provides potential habitat for song thrush, grey partridge and brown hare, all of which are Essex BAP, UK BAP and S41 species. It is considered that the proposed development works will not have any adverse impacts on these species as the current master plan indicates that the hedgerows and the trees, which may be used by these species, are to remain. Furthermore the area of arable farmland to be lost represents a small area of this habitat which is well represented in the wider area surrounding the application site.

Due to a lack of suitable habitats the site is not considered likely to support any other legally protected or notable species.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Designated Sites

The designated site within a 2km radius of the site will not be impacted in terms of construction or increased visitor pressure.

5.2 Habitats and Flora

The site is not considered likely to support any rare or notable plant species. Invasive plant species are not present. No further survey work is recommended in respect of habitats or plants.

The proposed development should include areas of soft landscaping. Using climbing plants on trellis, walls or fencing is a good way to maximise the area of habitat for wildlife where planting space is limited. Locally native species with recognised benefit to wildlife should be favoured over purely ornamental varieties, for example species with berries or nectar rich flowers.

It is recommended that the mature trees along the boundary line are retained, and a native mixed hedgerow is planted to replace any lost vegetation. Mixed native hedges should be planted using 60-90cm whips. A possible mix option is hawthorn (50%), field maple (30%), hornbeam (10%), guelder rose (3%), dogwood (3%), spindle (2%) and dogrose (2%). The hedgerow should be planted between November and March in weed free soil, incorporating suitable compost in cultivation; mulch after planting. Mechanical or chemical weed control should be used during the first year to aid rapid establishment and then ensure any vegetation within a metre diameter is removed by a hoe until year 3.

5.3 Invertebrates

The site is likely to support common and widespread invertebrate species therefore further survey is not recommended.

5.4 Reptiles

A previous reptile presence/absence survey at the site (AMEC, 2010) revealed the presence of slow worm and grass snake within the site. It is considered that the habitats across the site have not changed significantly since the survey in 2010 and that the hedgerows and some vegetated areas could still be used by foraging reptiles. The grazed pasture is considered unsuitable for foraging reptiles.

All British reptiles are protected from killing or injury and therefore care should be taken to avoid causing harm to any reptiles during the proposed works.

It is understood that some areas of suitable reptile habitat will be lost during construction, the works would therefore have the potential to result in adverse impacts on reptiles, with the potential for incidental killing or injuring of individual animals.

It is recommended the population of slow worm are caught and translocated to an off-site receptor at Stow Maries airfield. The Stow Maries site is committed to conservation orientated management and a small population of slow worm (15 adults and 25 sub-adults) have already been released on site. However, it is considered the number of animals released may be too low to form a viable long-term sustainable population. The development of this site has the potential to help create a larger, viable population that is likely to be self-sustaining in the long-term.

The developer may need to make a donation to support conservation management at Stow Maries airfield that is specifically targeted at reptiles.

Before trapping commences, reptile exclusion fencing should be erected in those areas where the adjacent areas provide suitable habitat for slow worm. This will ensure animals do not move onto site after trapping has been completed. The installation of fencing will need to be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist and not impact on any trees that are to be retained and protected during the development.

The trapping program should take place between April and September inclusive. Once the site has been cleared of slow worm a suitably qualified ecologist should supervise a phased destructive search of the remaining habitat. The timing and methods of habitat clearance need to consider the presence of other protected species on site (e.g. breeding birds and bats).

5.5 Amphibians

There are no waterbodies on site or within the immediate vicinity. There is limited suitable habitat for great crested newts across the application site, and the site is not situated between ponds. The recent survey (AMEC, 2010) did not reveal the presence of great crested newts and it is concluded that they are likely absent from the site and the surrounding area. Consequently, it is predicted that there will be no impact on great crested newts as a result of the proposed development. No mitigation measures are therefore required.

If construction works are delayed beyond spring 2013, it is recommended that ponds within 500m of the site are re-assessed for their potential to support great crested newts.

It should be noted that if any great crested newts are found on the site at any point, all works must cease, further survey and investigative works undertaken and a licence applied for to Natural England for destruction of great crested newt habitat. If a great crested newt is discovered on site outside of the main newt survey season, which is mid-March to mid-June, there could be significant delays to any development programme.

5.6 Birds

The site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds, with several nests observed across the application site.

Nesting birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Vegetation clearance and building demolition should be undertaken during the period October to February to avoid the bird nesting season. If this is not possible, prior to commencement on site a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist and any active nests will need to be left in situ until any young have permanently left.

The provision of a range of artificial nesting boxes within the new development will help replace any lost nesting habitat.

5.7 Bats

A previous bat activity survey at the site (EECOS, 2010) found low level bat activity across the site involving three common and widely distributed species. The survey results suggested the possible presence of a small roost in trees on the southern boundary; a commuting route was also identified passing along the western boundary.

The Phase 1 survey concluded that the mature trees across the site have moderate to high potential to support roosting bats, whilst the buildings have negligible potential. If any mature trees are being lost at part of the proposal, then further surveys are recommended prior to vegetation clearance. In accordance with best practice guidelines, 3 bat activity and emergence surveys are required during the bat activity season (May to September); surveys to include both dusk and dawn visits.

If the mature trees are being retained then the main impact from the development on bats will be in relation to an increase in artificial lighting and interruption of a commuting route. It is recommended that the design for artificial lighting includes measures such as low level, low lux and hooded lights to avoid spill into natural vegetation. It is also recommended that the landscaping scheme includes measures to maintain and enhance hedgerows in order to maintain routes of movement through the site. Bat boxes or bat bricks should be incorporated within the new development.

5.8 Badger, Water Vole, Otter

No further surveys are required.

5.9 Other Legally Protected or Notable Species

The proposed development is not anticipated to impact on any other legally protected species therefore no further surveys are recommended, other than those noted above.

There is potential for hedgehog, a UKBAP priority species, to be present on site. Care should be taken during vegetation clearance to avoid causing harm to any animals, particularly during the winter months when hedgehogs would be hibernating and therefore at their most vulnerable.

All wild mammals receive some protection by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 and it includes offenses of crushing and asphyxiation of any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering. If any animal burrows are found during works, careful excavation of animals from their burrows before works commence should be sufficient to avoid an offence.

6.0 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2007) *Bat surveys: good practice guidelines*

Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom*

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2007). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit*. Reprinted by JNCC, Peterborough.

Oldham et al (1996) *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt*. Herpetological Journal 10

English Nature (2004) *Report Number 576: An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt Triturus cristatus*

Essex Ecology Services Limited (2010) *Bat Activity Survey – Land off Brays Lane, Rochford*. EECOS

AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Limited (2010) *Native reptile presence/absence survey – Land at Brays Lane, Rochford*. AMEC

AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Limited (2010) *Water-body resource assessment - Land at Brays Lane, Rochford*. AMEC

AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Limited (2010) *Great Crested Newt presence/absence survey – Land at Brays Lane, Rochford*. AMEC

AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Limited (2011) *Biodiversity Report - Land at Brays Lane, Rochford*. AMEC

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

UK Biodiversity Action Plan www.ukbap.org.uk

Defra's MAGIC website www.magic.defra.gov.uk

Essex Wildlife Trust's Local Wildlife Sites website www.localwildlifesites.org.uk

Appendix 1:

Site Photographs

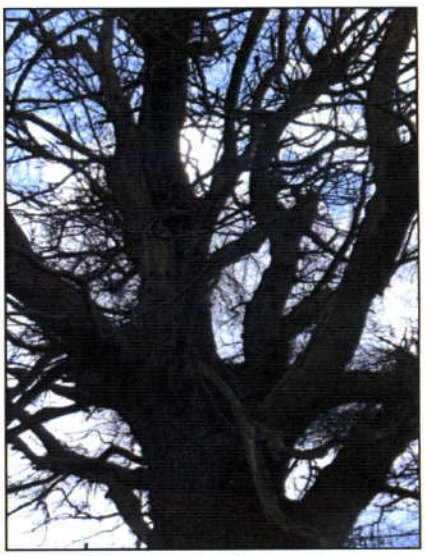
Photograph 1: The stable buildings and hardstanding along the eastern boundary.

Photograph 2: The paddocks covering the majority of the site consisting of heavily grazed amenity grassland.

Photograph 3: The species poor hedgerows bordering the grazing fields.

Photograph 4: Tall ruderal species and bare ground along the eastern boundary.

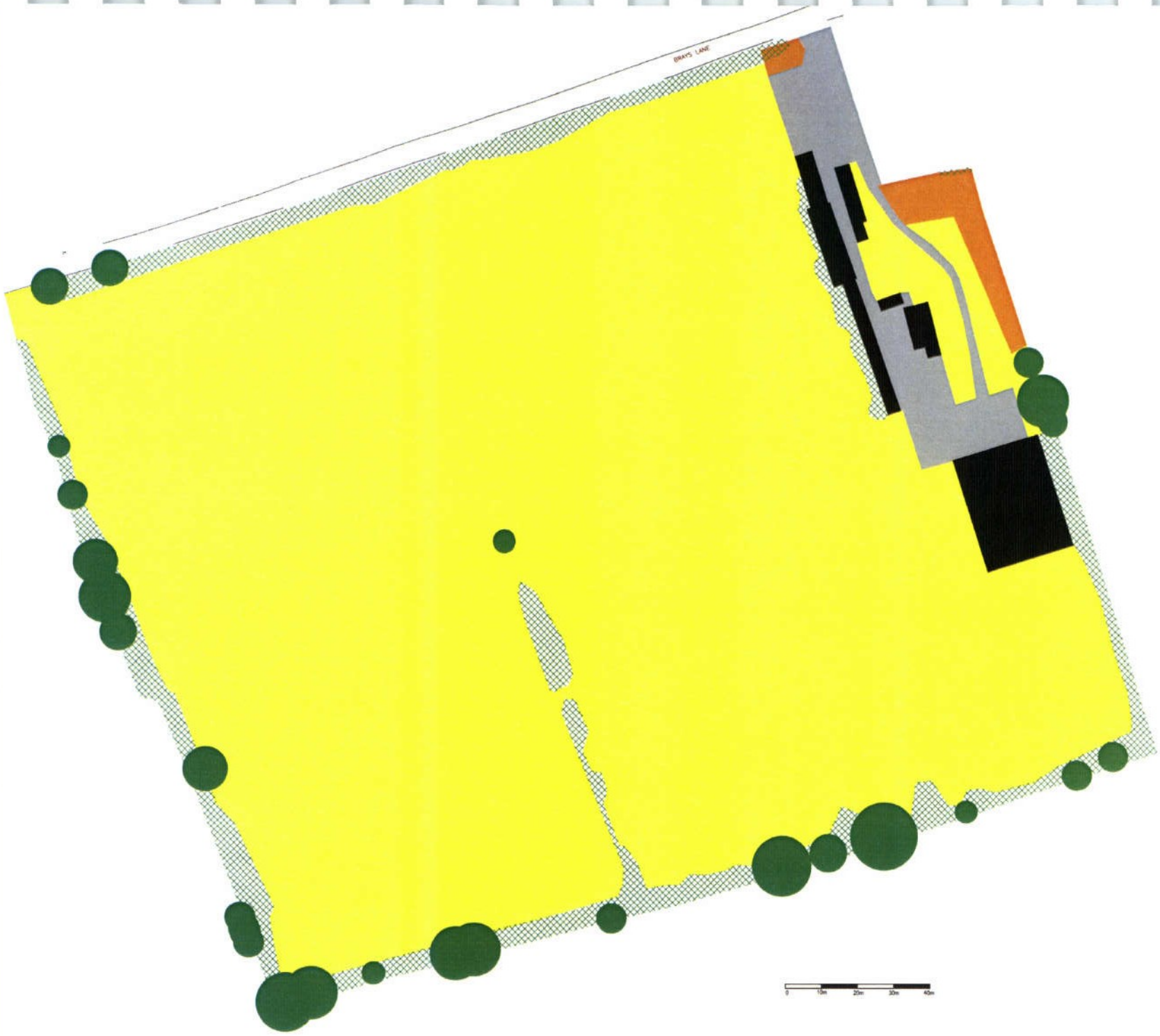
Photograph 5: Inside the stable buildings demonstrate negligible potential for bats.



Photograph 6: Mature trees around the site boundary, potentially suitable for bats.

Appendix 2:

Phase 1 Habitat Map



Building

Hardstanding

Amenity grassland

Species poor hedgerow

Scattered tree

Semi-improved grassland

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Brays Lane, Rochford

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan

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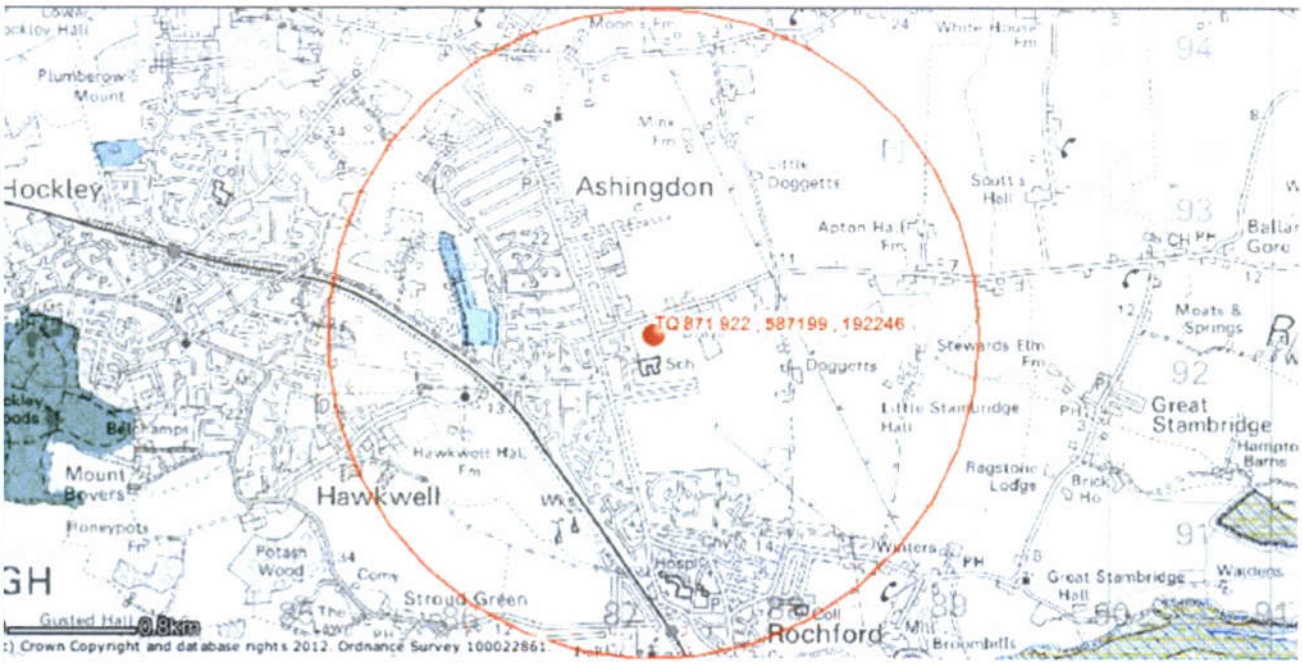
Appendix 3:

Designated Sites Map

MAGIC



Local Nature Reserves (England)

Ramsar Sites (England)

Special Protection Areas (England)

Special Areas of Conservation (England)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

Important Bird Areas (England)

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)

Local Nature Reserves (England)

Reference	Name
1009557	MAGNOLIA FIELDS

Ramsar Sites (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Special Protection Areas (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Special Areas of Conservation (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Important Bird Areas (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)
There are no features within your search area.

Appendix 4:

Wildlife Legislation & National Planning Policy

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 confer various degrees of legal protection on species including bats, reptiles, great crested newts, otters, dormice, water voles, badgers and birds. (A full list of protected species and their specific legal protection is provided within the schedules of the legislation.) This legal protection overrides all planning decisions.

The level of protection varies depending on which schedule of the legislation applies; however, typically any activity that would injure, kill, ill-treat, intentionally damage or destroy any protected species or their place of shelter may be a criminal act. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb a European protected species in any way which would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear its young, or affect its local distribution.

Under certain circumstances licences can be granted by the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England in England) to permit actions that would otherwise be unlawful.

In addition to the above legislation, the Protection of Mammals Act (1996) provides protection for all wild mammals from certain cruel acts including crushing and asphyxiation, which can have relevance for methods employed during site clearance works.

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) refers to invasive species such as signal crayfish, grey squirrel and Japanese knotweed and makes it an offence to release them or, in the case of plants, to cause them to grow in the wild.

Planning Policy

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) describes the UK's biological resources and identifies 1150 species and 65 habitats of conservation concern at a national level. The UKBAP is used as a guide for decision makers such as local authorities to fulfil their obligations under sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in carrying out their duties.

Protected species are specifically referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that '*the presence of a protected species is a material consideration*' in any planning decision. In addition to this, NPPF also places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to further the conservation of habitats and species of principal importance where a planning proposal may adversely affect them.

Effectively this means that the total biodiversity value of a site rather than purely in relation to protected species must now be considered prior to determining a planning application and councils are recommended to refuse planning permission where inadequate information is provided.

Appendix 5:

Local Planning Policy

The site is situated within the district of Rochford. The Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework for this borough, adopted to date, includes several key polices relating to ecology and nature conservation.

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL – CORE STRATEGY

The Council is committed to the protection, promotion and enhancement of biodiversity throughout the District. Biodiversity is the variety of living species on earth including well known trees and animals as well as lesser known insects and plants and the habitats that they occupy. It is an essential component of sustainable development.

Policy ENV1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Landscape and Habitats and the Protection of Historical and Archaeological Sites

The Council will maintain, restore and enhance sites of international, national and local nature conservation importance. These will include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Ancient Woodlands, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs). In particular, the Council will support the implementation of the Crouch and Roach Management Plan. The Council will also protect landscapes of historical and archaeological interest.

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