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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL & DAYTIME BAT ASSESSMENT SURVEY OF LAND AND BUILDING AT FAIRLIGHT SWAIN ROAD TENTERDEN TN30 6PD.

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land and building at Fairlight, Swain Road, Tenterden, TN30 6PD.

The Preliminary Ecological Survey was commissioned by Vernacular Homes Ltd.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was conducted by Sean McMinn from Marsh Environmental on the 13th of February 2025, a suitably qualified ecologist.

Sean McMinn
Sean McMinn has been working as a professional Ornithologist and Ecologist for over thirty years both in the UK and overseas and was a consultant Wildlife Inspector for Defra's Global Wildlife Division for 17 years. He has a particularly diverse knowledge of British Fauna and Flora. Sean has been a regular contributor to various magazines, journals and periodicals throughout this period and is a regular advisor on conservation and legislative issues for both government and non-government organizations. Sean is also a holder of several protected species' licences that includes bats, great

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The land at Fairlight is located in St Michaels, Tenterden and set in a rural landscape of farmland, woodland and hedgerow. There are residential properties to the north, south, east and west of the site.

The land itself consists of the bungalow and gardens, that have been recently cleared of overgrown brambles. There are the occasional broad-leaved trees (willow) and species poor hedging at the boundaries (Leyland, & bramble/ivy). The bungalow is brick built with concrete tiled roof covering, there is no externally accessible roof void. The site is located at grid reference TQ 88887 35227.

<u>Scheme proposals.</u>

Demolition of existing building and construction of a new dwelling.

Existing site plan

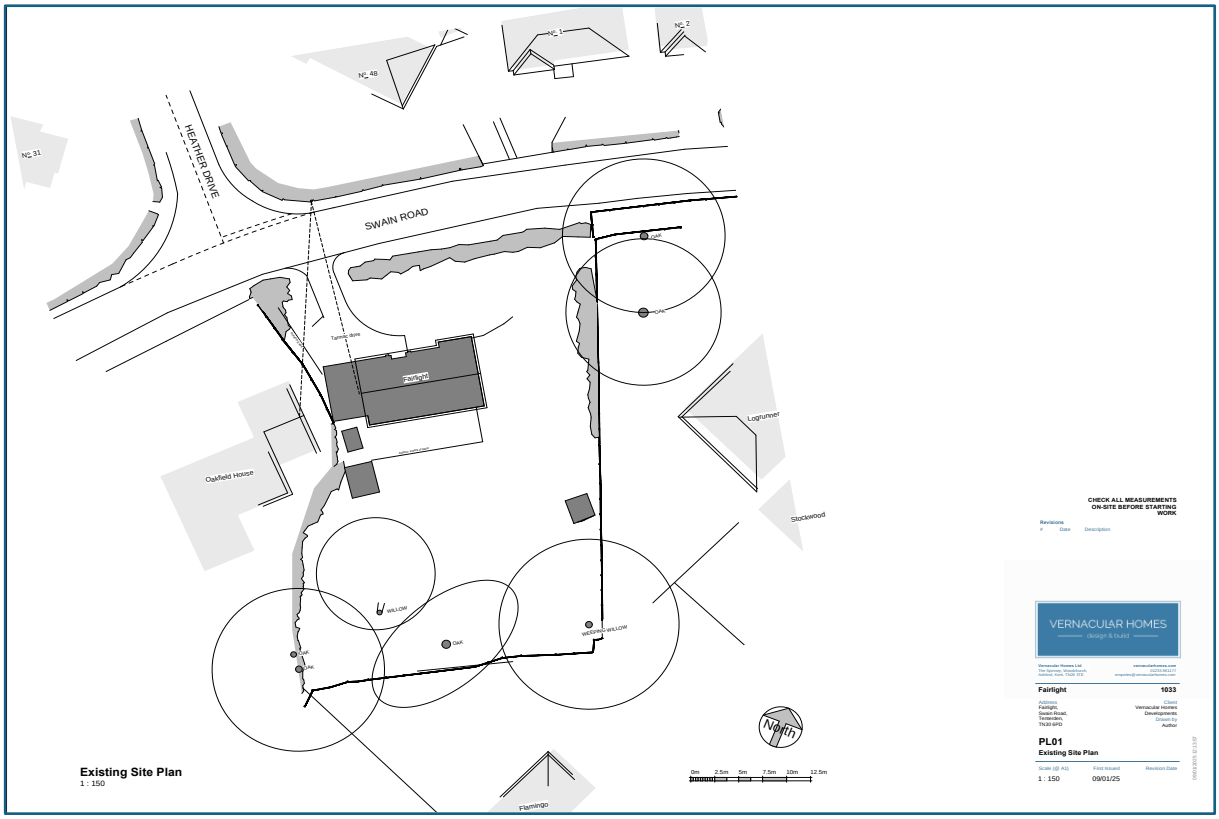

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF LAND & BUILDING AT FAIRLIGHT

3. METHODOLOGY

Site Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land and building was undertaken at Fairlight Swain Road, Tenterden, TN30 6PD on the 13th of February 2025. The survey area concentrated on the land as defined in red in figures 1 & 2.

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with the UK Habitat Classification and standard best practice as recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management in their Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2023). A basic habitat plan illustrates the results in figure 2**.**

The daytime bat assessment survey followed the survey guidelines recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust and The Joint Nature Conservation Committee in their Bat Workers Manual (3rd Edition 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trusts Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th· Edition 2023).

The exterior and interior of the building was carefully examined, with particular attention to roof parts, internal and external walls and floors.

Signs of bat activity may include (English Nature 2002; Mitchell-Jones 2004; JNCC 2004; Cowan 2003) the following: -

- Faeces - these typically contain fragments of insect exoskeleton and crumble (unlike those of small rodents, which typically harden with time). Bat droppings will stick to surfaces including walls, windows and window ledges. They may also become caught in cobwebs below a roost site or feeding perch.
- Feeding remains - these include the discarded wings of flying invertebrates, which may accumulate under a well-used feeding perch. Some species, such as the brown long-eared bat, have a known penchant for moths of the noctuid family. Hence the accumulated wings of these moths assist in suggesting the presence of this bat.
- Oil staining - the fur of bats may leave an oily residue on surfaces close to occupied roost sites and access/egress points.
- Diurnal vocalisations - these are most pronounced at larger roost sites during periods of hot weather.

FIGURE 2: PHASE 1 SURVEY HABITAT MAP

4. RESULTS – WHAT WE FOUND

Objectives

The objectives of this commission were to:

1. **Conduct a baseline ecological survey and appraisal of the above site and identify notable factors/features;**
2. **prepare a 'Phase 1' Habitat Map with Target Notes to recognised standards;**
3. **produce a written summary of results;**
4. **provide appropriate recommendations for mitigation, biodiversity protection/ enhancement, *etc.***

Limitations

It should be noted that, whilst the investigation of the site was appropriately intensive within the intended framework of the commission, and we feel it is unlikely that significant matters have been overlooked, a single visit will inevitably miss species not apparent on the date of survey by reason of seasonality, mobility, habits or chance.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Habitats & vegetation (*NB.* Please be aware that several designated habitat types and many plants enjoy legal protection in Britain.)	
General description	The land at Fairlight is located in St Michaels, Tenterden and set in a rural landscape of farmland, woodland and hedgerow. There are residential properties to the north, south, east and west of the site. The land itself consists of the bungalow and gardens, that have been recently cleared of overgrown brambles. There are the occasional broad-leaved trees (willow) and species poor hedging at the boundaries (Leyland, & bramble/ivy). The bungalow is brick built with concrete tiled roof covering, there is no externally accessible roof void. The site is located at grid reference TQ 88887 35227.
Target Note (TN) 1 for location of TNs please see plan above	The bungalow that has no potential for roosting bats
TN 2-4	Species poor hedgerow that provides some limited nesting bird habitat.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Statutory designations (on/near)	Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside. Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) and: The Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) and Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay RAMSAR site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 8.5km southeast, and Orlestone Forest SSSI 8.4km east of the land at Fairlight. The development proposals will have no negative impacts on these designated sites.
Non-statutory designations (on/near)	Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: There are areas of Priority Deciduous Woodland <150m north and southeast of the site.
Notable hedgerows, woodland or scrub	None considered notable in this context. There are lengths of hedgerow at the boundaries of the site primarily species poor, with some, Leyland, laurel and ivy.
Ecologically notable trees (e.g., veteran, wildlife significant)[1]	None within the given curtilage.
Ponds/water courses	There are no ponds on site.
Notable communities	None observed on site.
Notable vascular plants	None observed on site.
Notable bryophytes	None present on site.
Notable lichens	None present on site.

[1] Please note that we do not check TPO status as this is a landscape/amenity planning classification.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Notable fungi	None present on site.
Other notable habitats/vegetation	None.
Mammals (*NB.* Several species and their habitats have very strict protection in British/European law.)	
Badger	There was no evidence of badger activity within the survey area. However likely occurs in the wider area.
Otter	No suitable habitat.
Other mustelids	None observed.
Bats	The main property (bungalow) was closely examined for potential bat roosting features. There were, no potential bat roosting features noted. The roof is fully intact with concrete interlocking tiles with all soffits and brickwork intact with no crevices. There are no trees on site with bat roosting features. Foraging habitat is considered to be poor, across the site.
Water vole	No suitable habitat.
Common or hazel dormouse	No suitable habitat within the immediate survey area.
Deer	Unlikely on site.
Hedgehog	May occur as suitable habitat is present on site and in neighbouring gardens.
Shrews	Unlikely on site.
Others	Other mammals such as fox, rats and mice may use the site for foraging/breeding as suitable habitat exists.
Birds (*NB*. With the exception of eleven derogated pest or very common species, the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 and amendments) gives protection to all wild birds in Britain from killing, injuring or taking as well as taking, damaging or destroying nests in use or being built, and taking or destroying eggs. Many species are also protected by European and international statutes. [2])	
Schedule 1	None.

[2] Please also see http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/status_explained.aspx and http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u38/downloads/home-news/2011-11/SUKB%202011%20final.pdf for red and amber lists *etc.,* and explanations.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Red list	None.
Active nests	No active nests found (out of season). Nesting bird habitat is present in hedgerow, however limited.
Other	Blue tit, and robin at the boundary.
Herpetofauna (*NB.* The grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous (common) lizard and adder (viper) are all protected from intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5, Section 9(1), of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended/reinforced by the CROW Act 2000. They are also protected under Schedule 5, Section 9(5) which prohibits selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, or advertising for sale, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from the species. Other species and their habitats have stricter protection at national and European levels.)	
Adder	Considered unlikely in this area.
Grass snake	The terrestrial habitat is currently bare ground/earth which is unsuitable for reptiles generally
Slow-worm	The terrestrial habitat is currently bare ground/earth which is unsuitable for reptiles generally
Common lizard	The terrestrial habitat is currently bare ground/earth which is unsuitable for reptiles generally
Rarer reptiles	None (not found in this area).
Great crested newt	There are no ponds on site. There is a pond within an adjacent garden separated by substantial fencing, screening and gravel boarding and another 75m southeast of the site however it is separated by neighboring properties and a road. The terrestrial habitat of bare earth is poor foraging and resting habitat for this species.
Natterjack toad	No (not found in this area).
Other amphibia	Unlikely.
Fish	
Significant fishery	None.
Other notable fish	None.
Macro-invertebrates (*NB*. Several species enjoy legal protection.)	
Notable assemblage (terrestrial)	None present or indicated on site.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Notable assemblage (aquatic)	None recorded.
Crayfish	None recorded.
Roman snail	None observed.
Lesser silver water-beetle	None recorded.
Stag beetle	None.
Mining bees	None observed.
Other notable spp or groups	None recorded.
Notable invertebrate habitat	There was moderate- high invertebrate activity over the river.
"Invasive" species (There are an increasing number of these being listed by authorities, some subject to regulatory control.)	
Japanese knotweed (or related *Fallopia* spp.)	None recorded on site.
Giant hogweed	None recorded on site.
Himalayan balsam	None recorded on site.
Tree-of-heaven	None recorded on site.
New Zealand pigmy weed	None recorded on site.
Floating pennywort	None recorded on site.
Parrot's feather	None recorded on site.
Water fern (*Azolla*)	None.
Weeds Act natives (common ragwort, creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks)	None recorded.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Other exotics that may cause problems such as *Rhododendron ponticum, Buddleia davidii*.	None recorded.
Invasive animals (signal crayfish, killer shrimp, oak processionary moth, harlequin ladybird, zebra mussel, grey squirrel *etc.*)	None recorded.
Phytophthora ramorum and other serious plant diseases (sudden oak death, *etc*.)	None observed on site.
Policy	
Are there any known conflicts with local planning biodiversity policy	None anticipated.
Are there any known conflicts with national planning biodiversity policy	None anticipated.
Are there any known conflicts with European or international biodiversity policy	None anticipated.

GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (Geodiversity is a material planning consideration)	YES/NO	ACTION REQUIRED IF "YES"
Are there any features of geological importance on the development site?	Unknown	
Are there any features of geological importance adjacent to the development site or that might be affected	Unknown	

by the development (during or post construction)?		

FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Entrance

Garage

Front view

Bare ground to front

Front of bungalow

Outbuilding

Outbuilding/bare ground

Willow tree

View of east boundary

Bare ground to rear

Laurel hedge

Rear view of bungalow

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are to meet compliance with current legislation, planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. They are intended to fulfill ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED	
From observations of this walk-over examination, is further work likely to be needed regarding notable/protected species, habitats, planning policy, biodiversity duty or related regulatory compliance?	YES

Work required if "yes":	Reason
Birds – Nesting birds are likely to be present within the areas of hedgerow and derelict outbuildings. Any clearance of these areas should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (typically, February – September). If this is not possible then it is recommended that a suitably qualified ecologist checks the site for any active nests before commencement of any clearance/construction activities.	Compliance with law protecting active birds' nests.
Undertake a fingertip search of the development area immediately prior to any site clearance to safely remove vulnerable taxa, (reptiles & amphibians) to safe zones.	Precautionary and best practice.
If there are any steep-sided excavations created during construction, please ensure they are covered overnight or provided with ramps to prevent any mammals becoming trapped. Re-fill such excavations as soon as feasible.	Prevention of cruelty.
Avoid unnecessary negative impacts of new lighting at night, *e.g.,* on bats, invertebrates, plants, night sky. Minimise the hours when lighting is used, avoid "spillage" by using directional down-lighting, reduce brightness of necessary illumination and keep light from shining on any potential bat roost entries, mammal holes, *etc*.	Reducing ecological impact and compliance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 125.
Use native planting (preferably of local origin and reflecting local botany) wherever feasible in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter.	Biodiversity enhancement and helping to assure "no net loss".
Wherever possible, retain mature trees and established native hedgerows on site and at the periphery by designing around them. Protect trees in line with BS5837 and do not remove ivy, mistletoe, standing dead wood, snags or rot unless there is a clear and material safety risk or presence of a serious pathogen. (Ask for advice on pathogens from a qualified silvicultural ecologist if in doubt.)	Tree and biodiversity protection; BS5837: 2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.*

6. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

Ecological enhancements should where possible be included in the proposed development plans to contribute towards the intended objectives of planning legislation below:

The UK Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged—(Para 118).

Biodiversity enhancements (generic) for the site could include some of the following:

- Provision of reptile / amphibian hibernacula (as stand-alone or within new walls by creating recesses into wall structures). Hibernacula has been provided around the pond for great crested newts. Additionally, an area of reptile/amphibian habitat could be created at the east boundary of the site to provide connectivity to neighbouring gardens etc.

- Provision of log piles for invertebrates (including stag beetles), reptiles and amphibians.

- Use native planting (preferably of local origin) in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species, and choose those with wildlife value such as nectar or shelter.

- Priority should be given to species present on the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan species list, and where there is the potential for that species to occur on site. The list includes great crested newt, common toad, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake, adder, house sparrow, tree sparrow, hedgehog, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, brown hare, water vole, harvest mouse, dormouse, otter as well as many more species. https://www.kmbrc.org.uk

- Design and incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in agreement with the Environment Agency or other relevant authority.

7. REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trusts Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition 2023).

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CIEEM (2007) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. CIEEM, Winchester, UK.

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