22.0 WESTHAM SITES
FIGURE 25.1
WESTHAM: SITE LOCATIONS & CONTEXT

KEY

- Site Assessment Boundary
KEY

- Site Assessment Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation
- Ramsar
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Wildlife Site

FIGURE 25.2

WESTHAM: ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

- Site Assessment Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation
- Ramsar
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Wildlife Site
## ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement/Area:</th>
<th>Westham</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Address:</td>
<td>Land to West of Eastbourne Road, Westham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Reference Number:</td>
<td>159/3360</td>
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### Site Summary Description

A 2.03ha Site comprising species poor grassland/Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh and patchy scrub with a species poor hedge on its eastern boundary.

### ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

#### Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes Pevensey levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on the southern edge of Westham to the west of the B2191 Eastbourne Road. To the north and north east are residential areas of Westham. Immediately to the south and east are commercial and industrial areas and a camping and caravanning Site but beyond these, and to the west are extensive areas of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat.

### Desk Study: Designated Sites within 1km (See Figure 25.2)

- **The Site lies approximately 660m south west to the nearest point of the Pevensey Levels SAC / SSSI / Ramsar.** Extracts from the relevant citations are set out below: **Pevensey Levels SAC:** Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI:** Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton frisii*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritime*. The citation states: The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national Site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera … A ramshorn snail *Segmentina nitida* (RDB: Endangered), is found in well-oxygenated drains with lush vegetation. Particularly widespread and abundant on this Site is an aquatic...
snail Valvata macrostoma (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches in areas of permanent pasture. Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous puncticollis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselsly Coenagrion pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placobdella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech … One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (great raft spider) (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance … Wintering golden plover Pluvialis apricaria are of local significance and in some years are of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

- **Pevensey Levels Ramsar**: Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best Site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

- **Over 30% of the Langney Levels LWS lies within 1km of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Levels consist of a network of drainage channels within a field system. The overall character is very similar to the coastal wetlands elsewhere in Sussex and Kent”**

- **Langney Crematorium LWS** lies approximately 1km to the south west of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Crematorium … contains extensive areas of mature neutral grassland … The Site also contains a ditch in the east which supports a number of wetland species”.

### Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km</th>
<th>Distance from Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensey Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)</td>
<td>Within Site &amp; adjacent (Pevensey Levels SAC within 660m NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Fen BAP priority habitat (un-named)</td>
<td>825m South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard BAP priority habitat</td>
<td>850m West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Vegetated Shingle BAP priority habitat (including Sovereign Harbour Beach LWS)</td>
<td>700m South East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wealden Local Plan Sites
Landscape & Ecological Assessment Study

11124101R_WLPS_FinalV2_DW_26-07-2017  Chris Blandford Associates

Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Species</th>
<th>Common Pipistrelle (45 kHz) bat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</td>
<td>Pipistrelle sp. bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipistrellus sp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sussex BAP Species</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centaurea cyanus</td>
<td>Cornflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oenanthe fistulosa</td>
<td>Tubular Water-dropwort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sussex Rare Species Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</td>
<td>Frogbit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potroselinum segetum</td>
<td>Corn parsley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potamogeton acutifolius</td>
<td>Sharp-leaved pondweed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolffia arrhiza</td>
<td>Rootless Duckweed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sussex Rare Species Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</td>
<td>Frogbit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potroselinum segetum</td>
<td>Corn parsley</td>
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<td>Potamogeton acutifolius</td>
<td>Sharp-leaved pondweed</td>
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<td>Wolffia arrhiza</td>
<td>Rootless Duckweed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Notable Bird Inventory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Milvus milvus</td>
<td>Red kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invasive Alien Species Inventory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameraria ohridella</td>
<td>Horse-Chestnut Leaf-miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</td>
<td>Floating pennywort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymphoides peltata</td>
<td>Fringed Water-lily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (See Figure 25/159)

**Poor semi-improved grassland** – Is species poor throughout and comprises a mostly short, sheep-grazed sward. Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* are abundant but perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, cockfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and crested dog’s tail *Cynosorus cristatus* are all frequent. Rushes including hard and soft *Juncus inflexus* and *effusus*, are frequent and locally abundant in the lowest western part of the Site and hairy sedge *Carex hirta* is also locally frequent in this area. Forb content is low, approximately 10-20% and comprised common and widespread species, especially white clover *Trifolium repens*, but also creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. Thistles, including creeping and spear *Cirsium arvense* and *vulgare* are occasional and greater plantain *Plantago major*, mayweed *Matricaria* sp. and knotgrass *Persicaria aviculare* are present in poached areas.

**Trees and scrub** – There are dense trees and scrub, including hawthorn blackthorn, willows and field maple, on the southern boundary. Elsewhere are scattered hawthorns and stands of bramble.

**Hedges** – A species poor hedge dominated by hawthorn is on the eastern boundary.

**Ditch** – Although strictly outside the boundary, the Site adjoins a ditch in its south western corner. This is open down the centre and supports quite rich aquatic, emergent and marginal vegetation including duckweed *Lemna* sp., fringed water lily *Nymphoides peltata*, branched bur reed *Sparganium erectum*, water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, common reed *Phragmites australis*, water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, hemlock water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, foals water cress *F criticised hydropiper* and rushes *Juncus* spp.

Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.
Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

No invasive non-native species recorded within the Site.

Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Great crested newts** – There are no ponds within the Site. However, there are ponds to the east and north east of the Site, from about 250m distant, although the B2191 Eastbourne Road would be a barrier to dispersal from this direction. Also, great crested newts can use ditches, such as the on the Site’s western boundary, as breeding sites. Suitable terrestrial habitat within the Site is probably limited to the scrub and hedge of the Sites southern and eastern boundaries.

**Reptiles** – Very limited potential along boundaries.

**Breeding and wintering birds** – Breeding birds in hedges, trees and scrub but the grassland forms part of a larger area which would be suitable for ground nesting species such as skylark and meadow pipit. The Site lies adjacent to or forms a part of the wider complex of grazing marsh in the area, which includes Pevensey Levels, and which supports important populations of wintering waders, especially lapwing, and at least locally important breeding populations of the ground nesting yellow wagtail, lapwing and redshank.

**Bats** – There are no trees or other features with potential to be used as bat roosts. However, bats may use the Site for foraging and commuting, especially around hedges, scrub and ditches.

**Water vole** – the ditch on the south western boundary of the Site is suitable habitat for water voles. There are small and isolated populations of water voles in and around Pevensey Levels.

**Badgers** – Low potential for setts in the northern higher parts of the Site. The lower southern parts are probably too wet for Setts. Nevertheless, with or without setts all or any part of the Site could be used for foraging. However, no badger signs are recorded during the survey.

Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

**Amphibian (including great crested newt)** – (March – June) of the ditches to the west of the Site.

**Reptiles** – (May – June, September – October) in suitable habitat if present.

**Breeding birds** – (April – June) – whole site.

**Wintering birds** – (Sept – March) – whole site.

**Water vole** – (April – November) – of ditch to west of Site.

**Badgers** – (Year round but Spring / Autumn optimal) – of whole site.

**INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

Low to Moderate value – species poor grassland and small areas of scrub and a species poor hedge. However part of the Site forms part of a much larger area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat.

However, the Site’s location, adjacent to or forming a part of a larger area of grazing marsh, including Pevensey Levels, increases its value and sensitivity.

The Site has low potential to support notable/protected species.

**Impact Avoidance**

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the more ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Retaining the lower grassland in the south western part of the Site, for its own intrinsic value as part of a larger area of grazing marsh and as a buffer to the adjacent ditch.
- Retaining hedge and scrub on eastern and southern boundaries.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.
Outline Mitigation

Should development on this Site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest;
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive);
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshed into surrounding habitats.
- Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
- Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
- Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spillages and pollution incidents.
- On-Site spill incident equipment, in the event of spillages of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
- If great crested newts are found to be present in ditches to the west of the Site, measures should be put in place to prevent harming or killing them, including for example the erection of herptile fencing to exclude them from work areas, and possibly trapping and translocation to suitable receptor areas elsewhere.
- If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development Site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
- Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along Site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
- If water voles are found in the ditch(es) to the west of the Site these should be appropriately buffered.
- Development should avoid construction works within at least 30m of the nearest badger setts and seek to avoid prime foraging grounds identified through the badger survey and severance of commuting corridors within territories.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological /green infrastructure network are identified below:

- Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including grassland, hedge and scrub.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat, or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
FIGURE 25/159
WESTHAM - Site Ref 159/3360
- PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN:
LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL SITES
WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

KEY
- Site Assessment Boundary
- Scattered Scrub
- Dense Scrub
- Broadleaved Tree
- Hedge - Intact Species Poor
- Poor Semi-improved Grassland

Site Assessment Boundary

Scattered Scrub

Dense Scrub

Broadleaved Tree

Hedge - Intact Species Poor

Poor Semi-improved Grassland
## Ecological Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement/Area:</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Site Address:</td>
<td>Fairlands Farm, Eastbourne Road, Westham</td>
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<td>Site Reference Number:</td>
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</table>

### Site Summary Description

A large 94.36ha Site comprising largely of species poor grassland, most of which is grazing marsh with associated ditches. The Site also includes a camping and caravan site, a number of houses and gardens, several ponds, hedges, trees, scrub and broadleaved plantation.

### Ecological Baseline

#### Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes the Pevensey levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable land divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on the southern edge of Westham to the east of the B2191 Eastbourne Road. To the north are residential areas of Westham and greenspace in and around Pevensey Castle. Immediately to the west of the centre of the Site are commercial and industrial areas. However, the Site forms a part of, and is contiguous with, a much larger area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat, including Pevensey, Mountney and Langney levels.

### Desk Study: Designated Sites within 1km (See Figure 25.2)

- **Pevensey Levels SAC**: Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI**: Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton fruticosus*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritime*. The citation states: The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national Site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera … A ramshorn snail *Segmentina nitida* (RDB: Endangered), is

| Distance from Site | 300m North East |
found in well-oxygenated drains with lush vegetation. Particularly widespread and abundant on this Site is an aquatic snail Valvata macrostoma (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches in areas of permanent pasture. Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous puncticollis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselfly Coenagrion pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placodbella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech … One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance … Wintering golden plover Pluvialis apricaria are of local significance and in some years are of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports about one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

- **Pevensey Levels Ramsar**: Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best Site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

- Over 80% of the **Langney Levels LWS** lies within 1km of the Site, with the nearest locations forming the southern and south-western boundaries of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Levels consist of a network of drainage channels within a field system. The overall character is very similar to the coastal wetlands elsewhere in Sussex and Kent”

- **Langney Crematorium LWS** lies approximately 730m to the south west of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Crematorium … contains extensive areas of mature neutral grassland … The Site also contains a ditch in the east which supports a number of wetland species”.

- **Sovereign Harbour Beaches LWS** lies approximately 730m to the south south east of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “The Site consists of shingle with limited soil deposits”.

### Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensey Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)

### Distance from Site

- **Within Site & adjacent (Pevensey Levels SAC within 300m NE)**

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July 2017

Wealden Local Plan Sites
Landscape & Ecological Assessment Study

11124101R_WLPS_FinalV2_DW_26-07-2017

Chris Blandford Associates
• Lowland Fen BAP priority habitat (un-named)
• Orchard BAP priority habitat
• Coastal Vegetated Shingle BAP priority habitat (including Sovereign Harbour Beaches LWS)

Within Site
• 650m North West
• 730m SSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protected Species</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myotis daubentonii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipistrellus nathusii</td>
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<td>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</td>
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<td>Pipistrellus sp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zootoca vivipara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daubenton's Bat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathusius’s Pipistrelle bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Pipistrelle (45 kHz) bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipistrelle sp. bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common lizard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sussex BAP Species**

- Coenonympha pamphilus
- Erinaceus europaeus
- Galeopsis angustifolia
- Lasionymma niger
- Oenanthe fistulosa
- Scopula marginipunctata
- Valvata (Tropidina) macrostoma

- Small Heath
- European hedgehog
- Red Hemp-nettle
- Wall
- Tubular Water-dropwort
- Mullein Wave (moth)
- Large-mouthed Valve Snail

**Sussex Rare Species Inventory**

- Atylotus rusticus
- Brachythecium mildeanum
- Coris tus hyoscyami
- Dicranella crispa
- Erythromma viridulum
- Hippophae rhamnoides
- Hydrocharis morsus-anae
- Hypericum hircinum
- Lepidium heterophyllum
- Medicago polymorpha
- Mentha aquatica x spicata = M. x piperita
- Orthotrichum tenellum
- Parapholis incurva
- Petroserlinum segetum
- Pisidium pseudosphaerium
- Poa bulbosa
- Poa infirma
- Polypodium cambricum
- Polypogon monspeliensis
- Potamogeton acutifolius
- Segmentina nitida
- Sitticus inexpectus
- Stratiotes aloides
- Vicia lutea
- Vulpia ciliata subsp. ambiguca
- Wolffia arrhiza

- Four-lined Horsefly
- Sand Feather-moss
- Curl-leaved forklet-moss
- Small red-eyed damselfly
- Sea buckthorn
- Frogbit
- Stinking Tutsan
- Smith’s Pepperwort
- Toothed Medick
- Peppermint
- Slender Bristle-moss
- Curved Hard-grass
- Corn parsley
- Bulbous meadow-grass
- Early meadow-grass
- Southern Polypody
- Annual Beard-grass
- Sharp-leaved pondweed
- The Shining Ram’s-horn
- Water-soldier
- Yellow-vetch
- Purple Fescue
- Rootless Duckweed

**Notable Bird Inventory**

- Alcedo atthis
- Apus apus
- Ardea cinerea
- Cettia cetti

Kingfisher
Swift
Grey heron
Cetti's warbler
Charadrius dubius  Little Ringed Plover
Circus aeruginosus  Marsh Harrier
Corvus corax  Raven
Delichon urbicum  House martin
Egretta garzetta  Little egret
Falco peregrinus  Peregrine
Falco subbuteo  Hobby
Gallinago gallinago  Snipe
 Hirundo rustica  Swallow
Milvus milvus  Red kite
Numenius arquata  Curlew
Phoenicurus ochruros  Black Redstart
Tringa totanus  Redshank
Tyto alba  Barn owl
Vanellus vanellus  Lapwing

Invasive Alien Species Inventory
Allium triquetrum  Three-cornered garlic
Azolla filiculoides  Water Fern
Cameraria ohridella  Horse-Chestnut Leaf-miner
Campylopous introflexus  Heath Star Moss
Centranthus ruber  Red valerian
Cotoneaster horizontalis  Wall cotoneaster
Crassula helmsii  New Zealand pigmyweed
Crocopsis potsii x aurea = C. x crocosmiiflora  Montbretia
Fallopia japonica  Japanese Knotweed
Heracleum mantegazzianum  Giant Hogweed
Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica  (= H. x massartiana)  Hybrid bluebell
Hydrocotyle ranunculoides  Floating pennywort
Impatiens glandulifera  Indian balsam
Mustela vison  American mink
Nymphoides peltata  Fringed Water-lily
Petasites fragrans  Winter heliotrope
Rosa rugosa  Japanese rose

Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (see Figure 25/221)

Amenity grassland – Lawn-like areas in the camping and caravan Site and in an area to the south (TN1) comprising typical common and widespread species.

Poor semi-improved grassland – Comprises much of the Site and is of very variable structure, from very short and hard-grazed or cut to tall and rank. However, it is generally very species poor. Yorkshire fog Holcus lanatus, common bent Agrostis capillaris, perennial rye-grass Lolium perenne, meadow barley Hordeum secalinum, cocksfoot Dactylis glomerata and crested dog’s tail Cynosurus cristatus are the most frequent and abundant grasses. Rushes Juncus spp. are locally frequent or abundant. Forb cover is low and comprised common and widespread species such as creeping buttercup Ranunculus repens and white and red clover Trifolium repens and pratensis. Ruderals, including broadleaved dock Rumex obtusifolius and creeping thistle Cirsium arvense are occasional and locally frequent or abundant.

However, some areas are a little richer, such as the field at TN2, which includes frequent meadow buttercup Ranunculus acris, bird’s foot trefoil Lotus corniculatus, meadow vetchling Lathyrus pratensis, ribwort plantain Plantago lanceolata and autumn hawkbit Leontodon autumnalis. The field to the south is similar and includes a shallow depression with pond sedge Carex sp., creeping bent Agrostis stolonifera and silverweed Potentilla anserina.

Open areas within broadleaved plantation at TN3 and TN4 also include species such as pond sedges, meadow vetchling, silverweed, and fleabane.
Marshy grassland – Several small and mostly rather poor species areas. A linear depression at TN5 supported abundant rush with grasses, fleabane Pulicaria dysenterica and silverweed. TN6 is a species poor tall field margin with abundant rush and occasional fleabane. A depression at TN7 includes frequent or abundant rush, reed sweet grass Glyceria maxima and hairy sedge Carex hirta among the common grasses and forbs. There is also a linear area in the south of the Site, associated with base of a low bund with abundant rush. This area is not surveyed in detail but appears to be species poor when viewed from the north.

Tall ruderal – Patchy stands of nettles, thistles, docks, bindweed and coarse grasses etc., mainly around buildings (TN8), in yard/storage areas (e.g. TN9), in the western part of Gregory lane or field corners, and often in association with taller grassland and/or scrub.

Ephemeral/short perennial – Is present in a yard area beside the campSite used for storing caravans (TN10) and includes, for example broadleaved willowherb Epilobium montanum, greater plantain Plantago major, knotgrass Persicaria aviculare, field speedwell Veronica persica, scarlet pimpernel Anagallis arvensis, dandelion Taraxacum officinale agg., common ragwort Senecio jacobaea, bristly ox tongue Picris echioides and sowthistles Sonchus spp..

Trees and scrub – Are scattered throughout the Site, for example along ditch banks and field boundaries, around buildings, in the camping and caravan Site and around ponds. Typical scrub along the ditches included bramble, hawthorn, blackthorn and several willow species, including some mature crack and white willows, for example at TN11. Gorse is locally abundant on the edge of a raised area in the centre of the Site (TN12). There are standard trees, largely birches, set within the amenity grassland of the camping and caravan site. Trees and shrubs, especially willows, are also scattered beside the ponds at TN13 and TN14 and through the amenity area at TN1. There are also lines on poplars on the western boundary of the amenity area (TN1) and of the yard at TN9. Willows are also abundant around the pond/swamp at TN15.

Hedges – Alongside Gregory Lane are species poor and dominated by hawthorn and blackthorn. There are also species poor hedges of non-native cypress beside the caravan storage area and on the boundaries of the camping and caravan site.

Broadleaved Plantation – A number of areas at various stages of development but not yet mature and, as is the nature of such plantations, even-aged and rather structurally homogenous, except where development has been poor, such as at TN4. As is the most abundant species, but oak, alder, sycamore, cherry; rowan and hawthorn are also present.

Ditches – Are variable but many contain some water. Areas heavily shaded by scrub and trees support little vegetation. However, where open most of the ditches are heavily vegetated with a range of aquatic, emergent and marginal species. Common reed Phragmites australis is probably the most frequent and abundant species, but others include duckweed Lemna sp., reed sweet grass, floating sweet-grass Glyceria fluitans, rushes, sea club-rush Bolboschoenus maritimus, branched bur reed Sparganium erectum, arrowhead Sagittaria sagittifolia, water plantain Alisma plantago-aquatica, foals water cress Apium nodiflorum, yellow iris Iris pseudacorus, gypsywort Lycopus europaeus, woody nightshade Solanum dulcamara and the invasive non-native floating pennywort Hydrocotyle ranunculoides (e.g. at TN16) and fringed water lily Nymphoides peltata (e.g. at TN17). Although outside the Site boundary there is a larger ditch or drain on the Sites eastern and southern boundary (East Langney Sewer). This is approximately 10-15m wide with open water down the centre, common reed beside the banks and dense fringed water lily between the open water and reed.

Pond – There are several ponds. The pond beside the camping and caravan Site (TN13) is set within amenity grassland. Water is turbid but appears to be at least 10cm. The banks are quite steep and there is an island with trees and shrubs. There is very little aquatic vegetation, although some duckweed is present. Emergent and marginal vegetation includes reedmace Typha sp., yellow iris and rushes but has recently been cut. The landowner reports that he doesn’t think there are any fish present.

The pond at TN14 is a fishing pond. It includes hornwort Ceratophyllum sp. and/or water milfoil Myriophyllum sp., patches of white water lily Nymphaea alba and stands of lesser reedmace Typha angustifolia, common reed, branched bur-reed and reed sweet grass. There are frequent willows on the steep banks and on islands.

There is a small pond at TN18, which contains only a few centimetres of water on which there is abundant duckweed. Emergent and marginal species include greater reedmace Typha latifolia, branched bur reed, reed sweet grass, water plantain and rushes. There are frequent oraches Atriplex spp. and goosefoots Chenopodium spp. on the muddy banks.
A wet depression at TN19 comprises a widening of the adjacent ditch and supports branched bur reed, reed sweet grass, floating sweet-grass, water plantain, foals water cress, hemlock water-dropwort, watercress Nasturtium officinale, gypsywort and rushes.

No water could be found in the pond at TN15. This is filled with common reed and a number of other emergent and marginal species, including common club-rush Schoenoplectus lacustris, sea club-rush, gypsywort, marsh bedstraw Galium palustre and water mint Mentha aquatica.

There may also be a pond at TN20 among a plantation, but not inspected.

**Gardens** — not surveyed in detail due to limited access but appear to comprise a mix of amenity grassland, beds and borders, small trees and sections of species poor hedge.

**Buildings** — the houses are single storey with pitched and tiled roofs. There are a number of agricultural buildings, mainly modern barns, stables, sheds etc. within the farm complex.

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### Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.

### Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

Floating pennywort and fringed water lily – in ditches, e.g. at TN16 and TN17 respectively.

### Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Plants** — The ditches and ponds appear to support a moderately rich wetland flora and more detailed survey may identify additional species.

**Invertebrates** — The wetland areas in particular, including the ditch network and ponds have potential to support an assemblage of freshwater invertebrates, including notable species.

**Great crested newts** — In addition to the ponds within the site OS maps and aerial images indicate there are ponds immediately to the north of the site beside TN6 and in the grounds of Pevensey and Westham primary school (where there have been records of great crested newts - Keeble, H, Williams, P, Biggs, J and Athanson, M, 2009. Important Areas for Ponds (IAPs) in the Environment Agency Southern Region. Pond Conservation and Environment Agency). Great crested newts may also use ditches, such as those within the site, as breeding sites. Suitable terrestrial habitat, comprising relatively undisturbed areas such as plantations, scrub, ditch banks, tall unmanaged grassland and tall ruderal are widespread across the site.

**Reptiles** — Potential in many areas of taller or more structurally diverse grassland and tall ruderal, often in association with scrub, for example in areas close to buildings such around TN8, in yard/storage areas e.g. TN9, in taller grassland e.g. uncut areas among amenity grassland in TN1 and on undisturbed field boundaries e.g. TN6, along ditch banks, along the PRoW in the east of the site e.g. TN21, and in more open or less well developed parts of broadleaved plantations e.g. TN4 and 5.

**Breeding and wintering birds** — Breeding birds in plantations, hedges, trees and scrub and the larger and less disturbed areas of grassland would be suitable for ground nesting species such as skylark and meadow pipit. The site lies adjacent to or forms a part of the wider complex of grazing marsh in the area, which includes Pevensey Levels, and which supports important populations of wintering waders, especially lapwing, and important breeding populations of the ground nesting yellow wagtail, lapwing and redshank. The levels have also been found to support good populations of a number of farmland birds, such as linnet and reed bunting.

**Bats** — Trees and mature trees in particular, with features such as cracks and cavities, such as mature willows (e.g. TN11) have potential to be used as roosts. The buildings, including houses and agricultural buildings appear to have low potential for roosts. Activity, including foraging and commuting, is likely throughout but especially around trees, scrub and hedges.

**Water vole** — Many of the ditches and some of the ponds in the site would be suitable habitat for water voles. There are small and isolated populations of water voles in and around Pevensey Levels.

**Badgers** — Much of the Site is likely to be too low and wet for badger setts. However, there is some...
potential for setts within hedges and scrub on the higher ground in the west of the Site. Nevertheless, with or without setts much of the Site, especially those in and around the higher areas, could be used for foraging. However, no badger signs are recorded during the survey.

### Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Survey Period</th>
<th>Focus Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Botanical</strong></td>
<td>(May - August)</td>
<td>focussed especially on ponds, ditches and other wet areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invertebrates</strong></td>
<td>(April - September)</td>
<td>focussing especially on wetland areas, including ditches and ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amphibian (including great crested newt)</strong></td>
<td>(March - June)</td>
<td>of ponds and ditches within the Site and of ponds to the north of the Site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reptiles</strong></td>
<td>(May - June, September – October)</td>
<td>in suitable habitat throughout the Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breeding birds</strong></td>
<td>(April – June)</td>
<td>of whole Site but especially grazing marsh, plantations, scrub, trees and hedges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wintering birds</strong></td>
<td>(Sept - March)</td>
<td>of whole Site but especially grazing marsh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bats</strong></td>
<td>(inspections: year round; activity surveys April – October)</td>
<td>in the first instance inspection of trees and buildings to determine the scope for further survey and activity surveys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water vole</strong></td>
<td>(April – November)</td>
<td>of ditches and ponds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Badgers</strong></td>
<td>(Year round but Spring / Autumn optimal)</td>
<td>of whole Site but especially in and around higher areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**Moderate to High value** – a large Site which, although much appears to be botanically quite species poor, comprises largely of Priority Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, including associated ditches, as well as ponds and scrub. The Site forms part of a much larger area of wetland habitat, especially Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, and its location close to Pevensey levels SSSI/SAC/Ramsar Site increases its value and sensitivity. The Sites habitats and features have high potential to support notable/protected species.

### Impact Avoidance

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the more ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Targeting any development in the more elevated central-western part of the Site, around the existing camping and caravan Site and farm buildings.
- Retaining and buffering the lower parts of the Site, especially the Priority Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, including the ditch network.
- Retaining the native hedgerows beside Gregory Lane.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.

### Outline Mitigation

Should development at this Site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

**Construction Mitigation:**

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest.
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive).
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshed into surrounding habitats.
• Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
• Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
• Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spillages and pollution incidents;
• On-Site spill incident equipment, in the event of spillages of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
• If great crested newts are found to be present in any of the ponds or ditches within the Site, retention of pond(s) and ditches and sufficient area of terrestrial habitat (e.g. as part of buffer strip) and other possible measures to safeguard their conservation status, possibly under a Natural England European Protected Species license. If not present in potential breeding habitat on Site but present in any of the ponds to the north, then measures should be put in place to prevent harming or killing them, including for example the erection of herptile fencing to exclude them from work areas, and possibly trapping and translocation to suitable receptor areas elsewhere.
• If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development Site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
• New development may need to incorporate bat roosts as alternative or replacement habitat if roosts are likely to be lost.
• Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along Site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
• If water voles are found to be present, retention of suitable habitat, including ditches and ponds.
• Development should avoid construction works within at least 30m of the nearest badger setts and seek to avoid prime foraging grounds identified through the badger survey and severance of commuting corridors within territories.
• Seek to control invasive non-native floating pennywort and fringed water lily.

**Potential Enhancement Opportunities**

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological /green infrastructure network are identified below:

Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including Priority Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, including ditches, and ponds, hedges and scrub etc.. for example targeted at notable breeding and wintering birds characteristic of the wider levels, as well as plants and invertebrates.

- Carry out study of the hydrology of the Site and explore opportunities for water management, for example raising of water levels, to enhance existing habitats and to support and deliver objectives in relation to, for example, breeding and wintering birds, plants and invertebrates.
- Consider thinning the plantations and opening them up to grazing, i.e. as wood pasture.
- Remove fish from ponds.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat, or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
### ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement/Area:</th>
<th>Westham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Address:</td>
<td>Land Adjacent to Peelings Lane, Westham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Reference Number:</td>
<td>242/3360</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Site Summary Description

A 1.48ha Site comprising a species poor grassland field enclosed by trees and scrub and a narrow wooded strip along Peelings Lane. Also includes buildings and adjoining tall ruderal.

### ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

#### Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes the Pevensey levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on slightly rising ground on the northern edge of Westham to the north of Peelings Lane. To the south are residential areas of Westham. To the north and north east the ground slopes downwards to the Pevensey Levels, including Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat. To the west is more elevated ground comprising mostly grassland fields enclosed by hedges. The Site adjoins Pevensey Levels SSSI/ SAC/Ramsar Site in its north east corner.

#### Desk Study : Designated Sites within 1km (see Figure 25.2)

- **The Site lies immediately adjacent to the west to the nearest point of the Pevensey Levels SAC / SSSI / Ramsar.** Extracts from the relevant citations are set out below: **Pevensey Levels SAC:** Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI:** Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton frigidus*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritime*. The citation states: *The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national Site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera ... A ramshorn snail *Segmentina nitida* (RDB: Endangered), is found in well-oxygenated drains with lush vegetation. Particularly widespread*
and abundant on this Site is an aquatic snail Valvata macrostoma (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches in areas of permanent pasture. Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous puncticolis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselfly Coenagrion pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placobdella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech … One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (great raft spider) (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance … Wintering golden plover Pluvialis apricaria are of local significance and in some years are of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports about one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

**Pevensey Levels Ramsar:** Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best Site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

### Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensey Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)
- Orchard BAP priority habitat
- Adjacent (incl. Pevensey Levels SAC)
- 830m West

### Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km

**Protected Species**
- Myotis daubentonii
- Nyctalus noctula
- Pipistrellus nathusii
- Pipistrellus sp.
- Daubentons’s Bat
- Noctule bat
- Nathusius’s Pipistrelle bat
- Pipistrelle sp. bat

**Sussex BAP Species**
- Anguilla Anguilla
- Erinaceus europaeus
- Oenanthe fistulosa
- European eel
- European hedgehog
- Tubular Water-dropwort
Sussex Rare Species Inventory

- Erythromma viridulum: Small red-eyed damselfly
- Hydrocharis morsus-ranae: Frogbit
- Juncus articulatus x acutiflorus = J. x surrejanus: Rush
- Petroselinum segetum: Corn parsley
- Poa bulbosa: Bulbous meadow-grass
- Poa infirma: Early meadow-grass
- Polypodium cambricum: Southern Polypody
- Wolffia arrhiza: Rootless Duckweed

Notable Bird Inventory

- Alcedo atthis: Kingfisher
- Ardea cinerea: Grey heron
- Cettia cetti: Cetti’s warbler
- Circus aeruginosus: Marsh Harrier
- Corvus corax: Raven
- Falco peregrinus: Peregrine
- Falco subbuteo: Hobby
- Gallinago gallinago: Snipe
- Tringa totanus: Redshank
- Tyto alba: Barn owl
- Vanellus vanellus: Lapwing

Invasive Alien Species Inventory

- Cameraria ohridella: Horse-Chestnut Leaf-miner
- Cotoneaster horizontalis: Wall cotoneaster
- Crassula helmsii: New Zealand pigmyweed
- Elodea canadensis: Canadian Waterweed
- Elodea nuttallii: Nuttall’s Water-Weed
- Heracleum mantegazzianum: Giant Hogweed
- Hydrocotyle ranunculoides: Floating pennywort
- Nymphoides peltata: Fringed Water-lily
- Rhododendron ponticum: Rhododendron

Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (See Figure 25/242)

Poor semi-improved grassland – Is of variable height and structure, from short to moderately tall and species poor. Yorkshire fog Holcus lanatus and common bent Agrostis capillaris are abundant but perennial ryegrass Lolium perenne and crested dog’s tail Cynosorus cristatus are also frequent. Forb content is low and consists of common and widespread species, especially white clover Trifolium repens, but also includes creeping buttercup Ranunculus repens, red clover Trifolium pratense, self-heal Prunella vulgaris, common mouse-ear Cerastium fontanum, yarrow Achillea millefolium and autumn hawkbit Leontodon autumnalis. Tall ruderals, including nettle, broadleaved dock Rumex obtusifolius and creeping thistle Cirsium arvense are occasional and locally abundant. Greater plantain Plantago major, knotgrass Persicaria aviculare and common cudweed Filago vulgaris are frequent in a poached area near a gate on the north east boundary.

Tall ruderal – Stands of nettle and other species beside the buildings.

Trees and scrub – Scattered and dense scrub on the southern and eastern boundary, including hawthorn, blackthorn and willow. There is a bank between the field and Peelings Lane which supports a narrow woodland strip with mature oaks.

Buildings – An open barn and derelict single storey building with pitched corrugated asbestos roof.
Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.

Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

No invasive non-native species recorded within the Site.

Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Great crested newts** – There are no ponds within the Site. However, there is a pond approximately 50m to the south and further ponds in the grounds of Pevensey and Westham Primary School approximately 350m to the soth east (where there have been records of great crested newts - Keeble, H, Williams, P, Biggs, J and Athanson, M, 2009. Important Areas for Ponds (IAPs) in the Environment Agency Southern Region. Pond Conservation and Environment Agency). However, these are relatively distant from the Site and intervening residential areas and associated roads etc. would represent a significant barrier to dispersal. The lower land to the north east includes drainage ditches, which in some cases can also be used by breeding great crested newts. Within the Site woodland, scrub and tall ruderal represent suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts but the probability of their being present on Site is considered low.

**Reptiles** – Low limited potential along field boundaries and among tall ruderal

**Breeding birds** – In woodland, trees and scrub

**Bats** – Trees and mature trees in particular, with features such as cracks and cavities, have potential to be used as roosts. The derelict single storey building may also have some potential for roosts. Activity, including foraging and commuting, is likely throughout but especially around woodland, trees and scrub.

**Dormice** – Low potential in woodland and scrub due to limited habitat connectivity.

**Badgers** – Potential for setts within the woodland and scrub. However, with or without setts most of the Site could be used for foraging. However, no badger signs are recorded during the survey.

Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

**Amphibian (including great crested newt)** – (March – June) precautionary survey of the pond to the south of the Site.

**Reptiles** – (May – June, September – October) in suitable habitat.

**Bats** – (inspections: year round; activity surveys April – October) in the first instance inspection of trees and building to determine the scope for further survey.

**Dormice** – (April – November) in suitable habitat.

**Badgers** – (Year round but Spring / Autumn optimal) of whole site.

**INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

**Low to Moderate value** – the grassland is of low value but the woodland and mature trees and the scrub are of moderate value.

The Site’s location adjacent to Pevensey Levels SSSI/ SAC/Ramsar Site increases its value and sensitivity. The Sites habitats and features have moderate to low potential to support notable/protected species.

**Impact Avoidance**

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the most ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Retaining and buffering the boundary woodland and scrub.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.
Outline Mitigation

Should development at this Site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest.
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive).
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshed into surrounding habitats.
- Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
- Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
- Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spillages and pollution incidents;
- On-Site spill incident equipment, in the event of spillages of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
- If great crested newts are found to be present in the pond to the south, then measures should be put in place to prevent harming or killing them, including for example the erection of herptile fencing to exclude them from work areas, and possibly trapping and translocation to suitable receptor areas elsewhere.
- If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development Site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
- New development may need to incorporate bat roosts as alternative or replacement habitat if roosts are likely to be lost.
- Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along Site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
- If dormice are found to be present the retention and appropriate buffering of woodland and scrub (as noted above).
- Development should avoid construction works within at least 30m of the nearest badger setts and seek to avoid prime foraging grounds identified through the badger survey and severance of commuting corridors within territories.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological /green infrastructure network are identified below:

- Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including woodland and scrub.
- Strengthen boundary vegetation by planting appropriate native species, for example on the northern and southern boundaries.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat, such as the woodland and scrub, or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN:
LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL SITES
WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FIGURE 25/242
WESTHAM - Site Ref 242/3360
- PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement/Area:</th>
<th>Westham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Address:</td>
<td>Land Adjacent to 125 Rattle Road, Westham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Reference Number:</td>
<td>473/3360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Summary Description

A 4.47ha Site comprising amenity and other species poor grassland, of which the south eastern part is Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat with associated ditches. There is also a maturing poplar plantation and areas of scrub, a hedge and modern houses and gardens.

ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes Pevensey levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on the south western edge of Westham, to the south of Rattle Road. It straddles the boundary between the levels to the south and the rising ground on which Westham is located. To the north are residential areas of Westham. To the south are the Levels, including Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat. To the west is slightly more elevated ground comprising mostly grassland fields enclosed by hedges.

Desk Study : Designated Sites within 1km (See Figure 25.2)

- The Site lies approximately 820m west to the nearest point of the Pevensey Levels SAC / SSSI / Ramsar. Extracts from the relevant citations are set out below: **Pevensey Levels SAC**: Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI**: Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritima*. The citation states: *The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national Site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera ... A ramshorn snail Segmentina nitida*
Particularly widespread and abundant on this Site is an aquatic snail Valvata macrostoma (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches in areas of permanent pasture. Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous pucticollis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselfly Coenagrio pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placobdella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech ... One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (great raft spider) (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance ... Wintering golden plover Pluvialis apricaria are of local significance and in some years are of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus ... breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports about one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

- **Pevensey Levels Ramsar**: Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best Site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

- Approximately 10% of the Langney Levels LWS lies within 1km of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Levels consist of a network of drainage channels within a field system. The overall character is very similar to the coastal wetlands elsewhere in Sussex and Kent”.

### Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensey Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)
- Orchard BAP priority habitat

### Distance from Site

- Within Site & adjacent (Pevensey Levels SAC within 800m East)
- Within Site

### Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Species</th>
<th>Slow worm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguis fragilis</td>
<td>Common Pipistrelle (45 kHz) bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pipistrellus sp.
- Pipistrelle sp. bat

### Triturus cristatus
- Great crested newt

### Zootoca vivipara
- Common lizard

### Sussex BAP Species
- Pipistrellus sp. bat
- Triturus cristatus
- Zootoca vivipara

#### Sussex Rare Species Inventory
- Eriophorum angustifolium
- Oenanthe fistulosa

#### Sussex Rare Species Inventory
- Erinaceus europaeus
- Oenanthe fistulosa

#### Notable Bird Inventory
- Alcedo atthis
- Ardea cinerea
- Cettia cetti

#### Invasive Alien Species Inventory
- Alnus glutinosa
- Crassula helmsii
- Crocosmia pottsii × aurea = C. x crocosmiiflora

#### Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (See Figure 25/473)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Amenity grassland</strong></th>
<th>Species poor and of typical common and widespread species. Small areas within the gardens of the two houses but also a larger area to the west.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor semi-improved grassland</strong></td>
<td>Short to moderately tall species poor sward dominated by Yorkshire fog Holcus lanatus, common bent Agrostis capillaris and perennial rye-grass Lolium perenne. Soft rush Juncus effusus is occasional and hairy sedge Carex hirta locally frequent. Forb cover is low and comprises a few very common and widespread species, especially white clover Trifolium repens and creeping buttercup Ranunculus repens. Tall ruderals, including nettle, broadleaved dock Rumex obtusifolius and creeping thistle Cirsium arvense are occasional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trees and scrub</strong></td>
<td>Small areas of blackthorn, willow and bramble alongside ditches, as well as some ash trees on the eastern boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broadleaved plantation</strong></td>
<td>Maturing poplar over species poor, mostly short and mown grassland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td>Are species poor and dominated by hawthorn and blackthorn. Also includes a non-native cypress hedge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ditches</strong></td>
<td>Around the fields in the south east of the Site support dense vegetation, including much common reed Phragmites australis as well as branched bur reed Sparganium erectum, water plantain Alisma plantago-aquatica and the invasive non-native floating pennywort Hydrocotyle ranunculoides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buildings</strong></td>
<td>Two very modern houses with pitched and tiled roofs and a shed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.

Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

Floating pennywort – in the ditch at TN1.

Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Great crested newts** – There are no ponds within the Site. However, OS maps indicate the presence of a pond approximately 240m to the west of the Site and ditches can also be used by breeding great crested newts, although the ditches within and on the boundaries of the Site are currently considered to be significantly less than ideal. Hedges, scrub and ditch banks are suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts within the Site.

**Reptiles** – Very limited potential along boundaries and ditch banks.

**Breeding birds** – In plantation, hedges, trees and scrub.

**Wintering birds** – The Site lies on the edge of, and includes small part of a much larger area of grazing marsh, including Pevensey Levels, which supports important populations of wintering waders, especially lapwing. However, the fields within the Site are considered likely to be to be too small and marginal to attract such species.

**Bats** – Trees and mature trees in particular, with features such as cracks and cavities, have potential to be used as roosts. Although most of trees appear to have low potential their use as roosts cannot be ruled out. The houses appear to have low potential for roosts. Activity, including foraging and commuting, is likely throughout but especially around plantation, hedges, trees and scrub and ditches.

**Water voles** – Suitable habitat in ditches.

**Badgers** – Very limited potential for setts in hedges and scrub, especially on the rising ground. The lower areas are probably too wet for setts. However, with or without setts most of the Site could be used for foraging. However, no badger signs are recorded during the survey.

Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

**Amphibian (including great crested newt)** – (March – June) of the pond to the west of the Site and of ditches within and adjacent to the Site.

**Reptiles** – (May – June, September – October) in suitable habitat.

**Bats** – (inspections: year round; activity surveys April – October) in the first instance inspection of trees to determine the scope for further survey.

**Water vole** – (April – November) in ditches.

**Badgers** – (Year round but Spring / Autumn optimal) of whole Site but especially rising ground.

INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**Low to Moderate value** – the grassland is of low value although the south eastern areas form a small part of a much larger area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat. The Site’s location adjacent to a large area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat Site increases its value and sensitivity.

The Site’s habitats and features have moderate to low potential to support notable/protected species.
Impact Avoidance

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the more ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Retaining and buffering the Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat, including ditches, in the lower, southern part of the Site.
- Retaining native hedges.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.

Outline Mitigation

Should development at this Site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest;
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive).
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshed into surrounding habitats.
- Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
- Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
- Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spillages and pollution incidents;
- On-Site spill incident equipment, in the event of spillages of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
- If great crested newts are found to be present in any of the ditches within the Site, retention of ditches and sufficient area of terrestrial habitat (e.g. as part of buffer strip) and other possible measures to safeguard their conservation status, possibly under a Natural England European Protected Species licence. If not present in potential breeding habitat on Site but present in ditches to the south, then measures should be put in place to prevent harming or killing them, including for example the erection of herptile fencing to exclude them from work areas, and possibly trapping and translocation to suitable receptor areas elsewhere.
- If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development Site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
- New development may need to incorporate bat roosts as alternative or replacement habitat if roosts are likely to be lost.
- Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along Site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
- If water voles are found to be present, retention of ditches.
- Development should avoid construction works within at least 30m of the nearest badger setts and seek to avoid prime foraging grounds identified through the badger survey and severance of commuting corridors within territories.
- Seek to control invasive non-native floating pennywort.
### Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological /green infrastructure network are identified below:

- Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including Priority Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, including ditches.
- Strengthen boundary vegetation by planting appropriate native species, for example in the northern and southern boundaries of any development.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat, or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
**KEY**

- Site Assessment Boundary
- Scattered Scrub
- Broadleaved Plantation
- Dense Scrub
- Poor Semi-improved Grassland
- Standing Water
- Swamp
- Amenity Grassland
- Target Note

**FIGURE 25/473**

WESTHAM - Site Ref 473/3360
- PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Settlement/Area: Westham

Site Address: Land North of Peelings Lane, Westham

Site Reference Number: 732/3360

Site Summary Description

A 4.22ha Site comprising a very species poor grassland field enclosed within species rich hedges and scrub and trees. There is a narrow strip of species poor marshy grassland in a damp ditch across the centre of the field.

ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes Pevensey levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on slightly elevated ground on the northern edge of Westham to the north of Peelings Lane. Similar areas, with mostly grassland fields enclosed by hedges, extend to the west and north west. To the north east is lower ground, forming the edge of Pevensey Levels, including Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat. The A27 crosses this area a little north of the Site. To the south are residential areas of Westham.

Desk Study : Designated Sites within 1km (See Figure 25.2)

- The Site lies immediately adjacent to the west to the nearest point of the Pevensey Levels SAC / SSSI / Ramsar. Extracts from the relevant citations are set out below: **Pevensey Levels SAC**: Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI**: Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritime*. The citation states: **The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national Site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera ...** A ramshorn snail *Segmentina nitida* (RDB: Endangered), is found in well-oxygenated drains with lush vegetation. Particularly widespread...
and abundant on this Site is an aquatic snail Valvata macrostoma (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches in areas of permanent pasture. Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous puncticollis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatrus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselfly Coenagrion pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placobdella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech … One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (great raft spider) (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance … Wintering golden plover Pluvialis apricaria are of local significance and in some years are of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports about one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

**Pevensey Levels Ramsar:** Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best Site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

**Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km**

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensey Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)
- Orchard BAP priority habitat

**Distance from Site**

- Adjacent (incl. Pevensey Levels SAC)
- 460m South West

**Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km**

**Protected Species**

- *Myotis daubentonii*  Daubenton’s Bat
- *Nyctalus noctula*  Noctule bat
- *Pipistrellus nathusii*  Nathusius’s Pipistrelle bat
- *Pipistrellus sp.*  Pipistrelle sp. bat

**Sussex BAP Species**

- *Anguilla Anguilla*  European eel
- *Erinaceus europaeus*  European hedgehog
**Sussex Rare Species Inventory**

*Coenagrion pulchellum*  
Variable Damselfly

*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*  
Frogbit

*Juncus articulatus* x *acutiflorus = J. x surrejanus  
Rush

*Petroselinum segetum*  
Corn parsley

* Wolffia arrhiza  
Rootless Duckweed

**Notable Bird Inventory**

*Alcedo atthis*  
Kingfisher

*Ardea cinerea*  
Grey heron

*Cettia cetti*  
Cetti’s warbler

*Falco peregrinus*  
Peregrine

*Falco subbuteo*  
Hobby

*Gallinago gallinago*  
Snipe

*Tringa totanus*  
Redshank

*Tyto alba*  
Barn owl

*Vanellus vanellus*  
Lapwing

**Invasive Alien Species Inventory**

*Azolla filiculoides*  
Water Fern

*Cameraria ohridella*  
Horse-Chestnut Leaf-miner

*Crassula helmsii*  
New Zealand pigmyweed

*Crocosmia pottsii* x *aurea = C. x crocosmiiflora  
Montbretia

*Elodea canadensis*  
Canadian Waterweed

*Elodea nuttallii*  
Nuttall’s Water-Weed

*Heracleum mantegazzianum*  
Giant Hogweed

*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*  
Floating pennywort

*Nymphoides peltata*  
Fringed Water-lily

*Rhododendron ponticum*  
Rhododendron

*Trachemys scripta subsp. elegans*  
Red-eared Terrapin

**Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (See Figure 25/732)**

**Poor semi-improved grassland** – Comprises a short, heavily grazed and very species poor sward dominated by Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Hairy sedge *Carex hirta* is locally frequent. Forb content is dominated by white clover *Tribolium repens* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, but common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* are occasional.

**Marshy grassland** – Narrow, species-poor strip, with frequent soft rush *Juncus efuses* and abundant floating sweet grass *Glyceria fuitans*, in a damp ditch across the centre of the field.

**Tall ruderal** – Small stands beside scrub in the north of the Site.

**Trees and scrub** – A belt along the northern boundary including willows, holly, hawthorn, gorse and mature oaks and crack willow. There is a stand of bramble in the centre of the field.

**Hedges** – Are species rich with hawthorn blackthorn, holly, willow and gorse. Some sections include mature trees, especially oak but also ash.

**Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species**

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.
Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

No invasive non-native species recorded within the Site.

Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Great crested newts** – There are no ponds within the Site. OS maps indicate the presence of a pond approximately 160m west of the Site and ditches, for example in areas to the east of the Site, can also be used by breeding great crested newts. Hedges and scrub are suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts within the Site. However, given the very limited breeding habitat close to the Site and suitable terrestrial habitat within it, the probability of their being present is considered very low.

**Reptiles** – Very limited potential among marshy grassland and along northern boundary.

**Breeding birds** – In hedges and scrub.

**Wintering birds** – the Site is adjacent to Pevensey levels, which supports important populations of wintering waders. The field is large enough to be used by waders but given its less than ideal condition and marginal location it is considered unlikely to be important for these species.

**Bats** – Trees and mature trees in particular, with features such as cracks and cavities, have potential to be used as roosts. Activity, including foraging and commuting, is likely throughout but especially around hedges, trees and scrub.

**Dormice** – low potential in hedges and scrub due to fragmentary nature of wider habitat network of woodland, hedges and scrub.

**Badgers** – Potential for setts within the hedges and scrub. However, with or without setts most of the Site could be used for foraging. However, no badger signs are recorded during the survey.

Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

**Reptiles** – (May – June, September – October) in suitable habitat.

**Bats** – (inspections: year round; activity surveys April – October) in the first instance inspection of trees to determine the scope for further survey.

**Dormice** – (April – November) in suitable habitat.

**Badgers** – (Year round but Spring / Autumn optimal) of whole site.

INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**Low to Moderate value** – the grassland is of low value but the boundary hedges and trees and scrub are of moderate value.

The Site’s location close to Pevensey Levels SSSI/ SAC/Ramsar Site increases its value and sensitivity. The Site’s habitats and features have moderate to low potential to support notable/protected species.

Impact Avoidance

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the more ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Retaining and buffering the boundary hedges, trees and scrub.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.
Outline Mitigation

Should development at this Site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest.
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive).
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshine into surrounding habitats.
- Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
- Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
- Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spills and pollution incidents;
- On-Site spill incident equipment, in the event of spills of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
- If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development Site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
- New development may need to incorporate bat roosts as alternative or replacement habitat if roosts are likely to be lost.
- Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along Site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
- If dormice are found to be present the retention and appropriate buffering of hedges (as noted above).
- Development should avoid construction works within at least 30m of the nearest badger setts and seek to avoid prime foraging grounds identified through the badger survey and severance of commuting corridors within territories.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological /green infrastructure network are identified below:

- Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including hedges, trees and scrub.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
FIGURE 25/732
WESTHAM - Site Ref 732/3360
- PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN:
LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL SITES
WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Westham - Site Ref 732/3360
- Ph E 1 H Plan

Site Assessment Boundary
Scattered Scrub
Broadleaved Tree
Hedge - Intact Species Rich
Hedge - Species Rich with Trees
Dense Scrub
Marsh / Marshy Grassland
Poor Semi-improved Grassland
Tall Ruderal
Standing Water

12m
16m

Drain

Mast

ROMANS WAY

0 30 60 Metres

Site Assessment Boundary
Scattered Scrub
Broadleaved Tree
Hedge - Intact Species Rich
Hedge - Species Rich with Trees
Dense Scrub
Marsh / Marshy Grassland
Poor Semi-improved Grassland
Tall Ruderal
Standing Water
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Settlement/Area: Westham

Site Address: Land to the Rear of Hobney Rise

Site Reference Number: 893/3360

Site Summary Description

A 5.05ha site comprising species poor grassland/Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh with ditches and patchy scrub.

ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Green Infrastructure Context (see Figure 25.1)

The Site lies within the broader low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill, which includes the Pevensey Levels and the smaller Mountney and Langney levels. It is a largely flat and open landscape of grazing marsh and some arable divided by drainage ditches. The Site is on the southern edge of Westham west of the B2191 Eastbourne Road and immediately south of the railway line. To the east and north east are residential areas of Westham and a camping and caravanning site. To the south east are commercial and industrial areas but beyond these, and also to the south west are extensive areas of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat.

Desk Study: Designated Sites within 1km (See Figure 25.2)

- **Pevensey Levels SAC**: Comprising inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2.5%) and humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (97.5%). The SAC is designated for its Annex II population of Ramshorn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. *Anisus vorticulus* occurs across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. Pevensey Levels is a large and expansive grazing marsh that supports *Anisus vorticulus* in both a wide spatial distribution and in good population density classes.

- **Pevensey Levels SSSI**: Pevensey Levels is a large area of low-lying grazing meadows intersected by a complex system of ditches which show a wide variety of form and species composition and support important communities of wetland flora and fauna. The Site supports the nationally rare sharp-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton acutifolius* and several nationally scarce aquatic plants including watersoldier *Stratiotes aloides*, flat-stalked pondweed *Potamogeton friesii*, the pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, greater water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, whose presence are largely the result of ditch management to maintain ‘wet fences’ for grazing. Rich bankside floras also support a variety of plants such as the nationally scarce marshmallow *Althaea officinalis* as well as more widespread species such as ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, water mint *Mentha aquatica* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*. An area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site and although the shingle is largely bereft of vegetation it does support the nationally scarce sea-kale *Crambe maritime*. The citation states: The Site supports outstanding invertebrate populations and is a top national site for Molluscs and aquatic Coleoptera ... A ramshorn snail *Segmentina nitida* (RDB: Endangered), is found in well-oxygenated drains with lush vegetation. Particularly widespread and abundant on this site is an aquatic snail *Valvata macrostoma* (RDB: Vulnerable). Of the many species of water beetle recorded at the Site, the most interesting are confined to the ditches.

- **660m North East**
Of particular interest is Britain’s largest water beetle, the great silver water beetle Hydrophilus piceus (RDB: Rare) which is found only on grazed levels in the southern part of Britain. Also of importance is Bagous puncticollis (RDB: Endangered), found on Horse Eye Level and several nationally rare water beetles such as the small reddish-brown Hydrovatus clypealis (RDB: Rare) confined to the coast of southern England. Over fifteen species of dragonfly (Odonata) have been recorded including the nationally scarce species, hairy dragonfly Brachytron pratense and variable damselfly Coenagrion pulchellum. Survey has also revealed Britain’s only known location of Placobdella costata (provisional RDB), a large leech. One of Britain’s largest spiders Dolomedes plantarius (great raft spider) (RDB: Endangered) has also been recorded. The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance.

The Site is of national importance for its wintering lapwing Vanellus vanellus which exceed 1% of the total British population. The numbers of snipe Gallinago gallinago may also be of national importance. Sedge warblers Acrocephalus schoenobaenus and reed warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus … breed in numbers of local significance. The Site also supports about one fifth of the breeding yellow wagtails Motacilla flava in Sussex.

Pevensy Levels Ramsar: Pevensy Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The Site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the Site. The Site supports an outstanding assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates including many British Red Data Book species. The Site supports 68% of vascular plant species in Great Britain that can be described as aquatic. It is probably the best site in Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles Coleoptera and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies Odonata.

Over 30% of the Langney Levels LWS lies within 1km of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Levels consist of a network of drainage channels within a field system. The overall character is very similar to the coastal wetlands elsewhere in Sussex and Kent”.

Langney Crematorium LWS lies approximately 1km to the south west of the Site. The LWS citation states the following: “Langney Crematorium … contains extensive areas of mature neutral grassland … The Site also contains a ditch in the east which supports a number of wetland species”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desk Study: BAP Priority Habitats within 1km</th>
<th>Distance from Site</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP priority habitat (un-named, but including areas within Pevensy Levels SAC/SSSI/Ramsar)</td>
<td>• Within Site &amp; adjacent (Pevensy Levels SAC within 640m NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Fen BAP priority habitat (un-named)</td>
<td>• 750m South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard BAP priority habitat</td>
<td>• 850m West</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Vegetated Shingle BAP priority habitat (including Sovereign Harbour Beach LWS)</td>
<td>• 650m South East</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pevensey Levels Ramsar:</th>
<th>580m-690m South and South West</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>• 1km South West</td>
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<td>Desk Study: Protected and Notable Species within 1km</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protected Species</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Pipistrellus</em> sp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Pipistrelle (45 kHz) bat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pipistrelle sp. bat</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sussex BAP Species</strong></td>
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<td><em>Centaurea cyanus</em></td>
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<td><em>Oenanthe fistulosa</em></td>
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<td>Cornflower</td>
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<td>Tubular Water-dropwort</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sussex Rare Species Inventory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Potamogeton acutiformis</em></td>
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<td><em>Wolffia arrhiza</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frogbit</td>
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<td>Corn parsley</td>
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<td>Sharp-leaved pondweed</td>
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<td>Rootless Duckweed</td>
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<td><strong>Notable Bird Inventory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Milvus milvus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Red kite</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Invasive Alien Species Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Cameraria ohridella</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Nymphoides peltata</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Horse-Chestnut Leaf-miner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Floating pennywort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fringed Water-lily</td>
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</table>

| Field Survey: Habitat Descriptions (See Figure 25/893) |

**Poor semi-improved grassland** – Is species poor throughout and comprises a mostly short, sheep-grazed sward. Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris* are abundant but perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and crested dog’s tail *Cynosurus cristatus* are all frequent. Rushes including hard and soft *Juncus inflexus* and *effusus*, are frequent and locally abundant and hairy sedge *Carex hirta* locally frequent. Forb content is low, approximately 10-20% and comprises common and widespread species, especially white clover *Trifolium repens*, but also creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. Thistles, including creeping and spear *Cirsium arvense* and *vulgare* are occasional.

**Trees and scrub** – Patchy scrub and trees, including hawthorn, blackthorn, willows and rose is present along the shallower ditch lines and on the boundary with the railway embankment. There are also scattered bushes and stands of bramble among the grassland.

**Ditches** – Although strictly outside the Site boundary a ditch lies alongside the south western boundary. This is open down the centre and supports quite rich aquatic, emergent and marginal vegetation including duckweed *Lemna* sp., broadleaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*, the invasive non-native fringed water lily *Nymphoides peltata*, branched bur reed *Spartanium erectum*, water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile*, common reed *Phragmites australis*, pond sedge *Carex riparia* and/or *acutiformis*, water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, hemlock water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, foals water cress *Apium nodiflorum*, gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus*, water pepper *Persicaria hydropiper* and rushes *Juncus* spp.

There is no water in most of the shallower ditches within the Site, although at least one heavily shaded section does have some water, but no vegetation. Where open these ditches support stands of, for example, common reed and pond sedge and one area has abundant whorled water milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum*.

| Field Survey: Protected and Notable Species |

No species considered notable for their nature conservation value recorded during the Phase I habitat field survey.
### Field Survey: Invasive Non-native Species

- Fringed water lily – in the ditch on the south western boundary.

### Assessment of Potential for Protected and Notable Species

**Great crested newts** – There are no ponds within the Site. However, there are ponds to the east and north east of the Site, from about 400m distant, although the B2191 Eastbourne Road would be a barrier to dispersal from this direction. Also, great crested newts can use ditches, such as the on the Site’s south western boundary, as breeding sites. Suitable terrestrial habitat within the Site is probably limited to the scrub and hedge of the Sites southern and eastern boundaries.

**Reptiles** – Very limited potential along boundaries

**Breeding and wintering birds** – Breeding birds in trees and scrub but the grassland forms part of a larger area which would be suitable for ground nesting species such as skylark and meadow pipit. The Site lies adjacent to or forms a part of the wider complex of grazing marsh in the area, which includes Pevensey Levels, and which supports important populations of wintering waders, especially lapwing, and at least locally important breeding populations of the ground nesting yellow wagtail, lapwing and redshank.

**Bats** – There are two crack willow trees in the north centre of the Site that may have some potential to be used as bat roosts due to the presence of cracks and similar features. Bats may use the Site for foraging and commuting, especially around scrub and ditches.

**Water vole** – the ditches, especially that on the south western boundary of the Site is suitable habitat for water voles. There are small and isolated populations of water voles in and around Pevensey Levels.

**Badgers** – the Site is considered t o be unsuitable for badge setts due to its very low and flat (and probably seasonally wet) nature. However, there is potential for foraging to occur within the any part of the Site although no signs of this are noted during the survey.

### Recommendations for Further Survey (and optimal survey timings)

**Amphibian (including great crested newt)** – (March – June) of the ditches to the west/south west of the Site

**Reptiles** – (May – June, September – October) in suitable habitat if present

**Breeding birds** – (April – June) – whole site

**Wintering birds** – (Sept – March) – whole site

**Bats** – (inspections: year round; activity surveys April – October) in the first instance inspection of trees to determine the scope for further survey

**Water vole** – (April – November) – of ditches to west/south west of Site

### INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**Moderate to High value** – although comprised largely of species poor grassland the Site forms part of a much larger area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat. However, the Sites location, adjacent to or forming a part of a larger area of grazing marsh, including Pevensey Levels, increases its value and sensitivity.

The Site has moderate potential to support notable/protected species.

### Impact Avoidance

In order to limit, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of development including potential harm to the integrity of the wider green infrastructure network, effort should be made to avoid the more ecologically valuable parts of the Site by:

- Retaining at least the south western half of the Site as part of the larger area of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat.
- Screening any development from the Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat to the south west.
- As far as possible and appropriate retaining and buffering habitats and features supporting notable/protected species, based on the results of more detailed surveys.
Outline Mitigation

Should development at this site proceed, generic (standard) mitigation for impacts upon habitats and species is set out below. Further detailed or species-specific mitigation may be required dependent upon the outcome of the recommended protected habitat or species surveys.

- Implementation of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage site-specific issues relating to the potential impacts of construction on ecological features of interest.
- Timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August inclusive).
- Offset buffers to protect retained habitats (minimum 10m).
- Use of protective fencing to define construction areas and protect retained habitats.
- Avoidance of night-time working wherever possible. When not possible, use directional lighting to prevent lightshed into surrounding habitats.
- Inclusion of mammal ladders or similar in any trenches left open overnight.
- Sealing of pipework overnight, to prevent animals becoming trapped.
- Defined and bunded areas for fuel storage and refuelling to prevent spillages and pollution incidents.
- On-site spill incident equipment, in the event of spillages of fuel or other materials. Specific measures will be required if any works are close to watercourses and/or waterbodies.
- If great crested newts are found to be present in pond to the ditches west of the Site, measures should be put in place to prevent harming or killing them, including for example the erection of herptile fencing to exclude them from work areas, and possibly trapping and translocation to suitable receptor areas elsewhere.
- If reptiles are found to be present, measures to prevent harm to them, including potentially translocation from the development site to a suitable receptor site. Where feasible such receptor areas should be incorporated into the new development (for example in buffer strips beside retained hedges, as noted above).
- Insofar as any proposed development of the Site allows, lighting design, particularly for the periphery of the Site should be minimised as far as possible. As a minimum, any lighting along site boundaries that may potentially form important commuting corridors (e.g. hedgerows) or adjacent woodlands that may support bat roosts should make use of backboards and/or internal louvres to ensure light is directed into the Site and light spill into the adjacent areas of retained habitat is minimised.
- If water voles are found to be present the retention and appropriate buffering of ditches.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancing, restoring and/or creating new habitats as an integral part of a Site’s development that can also contribute to the District’s wider ecological/green infrastructure network are identified below:

- Positively and appropriately manage retained habitats and features, including grazing marsh and ditches.
- Plant appropriate native species to screen and potential development from the grazing marsh.
- Habitat creation, ideally located adjacent to retained or adjoining habitat, or to form habitat corridors or links. To include for example:
  - Wildlife pond(s), included for example as part of a SuDS scheme;
  - Species-rich grassland and associated features for supporting a variety of terrestrial invertebrates;
  - Scrub and trees; and
  - Creation of dead wood habitats and other habitat piles.
- Erection of bat boxes suitable for a range of bat species, on retained trees or incorporated into buildings where they will remain unlit.
- Erection of bird boxes suitable for a range of bird species on retained trees or incorporated into buildings.
- Incorporate features to SuDS scheme(s), such as the use of native wetland plant species, to enhance their value.
FIGURE 25/893
WESTHAM - Site Ref 893/3360
- PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN