

Foreman Homes Ltd

Land to the South of Romsey Avenue, Fareham
Updated Environmental Statement Volume 2: Main Text
Chapter 2: The Site



TEMPLE

CHAPTER 2: THE SITE

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2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This chapter describes the Site, its location and its context as well as providing an overview of its existing land uses and features. It also identifies the key receptors which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. More detailed description and analysis is available (in the form of the individual baseline assessments) within the technical assessments of the ES (**Volume 2, Chapters 6 to 10 and Volume 3, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**).

2.2 Site Context

- 2.2.1 The Site is located on an area of arable farmland to the south of Romsey Avenue and to the east of Fareham and west of Portchester, under the administrative jurisdiction of the Fareham Borough Council ('FBC'). The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) SU 60086 05560. The location of the Site can be seen in its wider geographical context in **Figure 2.1**.
- 2.2.2 The surrounding land uses to the Site are predominantly agricultural and residential. Residential properties of Romsey Avenue run along the northern boundary of the Site, with Beulieu Avenue and Portchester Road (A27) beyond. To the east of the Site lies a strip of open land, with residential properties and Wicor Primary School beyond, and to the west of the Site lies arable land and open space, with residential properties, Cams Hill School, Cams Hall Estate and Cams Hall Estate Golf Course beyond. To the south of the Site lies arable land and football fields of AFC Portchester Football Club, with Wicor Recreation Ground and Wicor Marina beyond.
- 2.2.3 Beyond the surroundings to the south and south-west of the Site, Wicor Lake lies to the south, with Great Cams Lake and Portsmouth Harbour to the southwest.
- 2.2.4 There are no heritage assets situated within the Site and there are no listed buildings within 500 m of the Site. Within 1 km of the Site, there are approximately 3 listed buildings located approximately 990 m to the west of the Site, as follows:
- Grade II* listed Cams Hall;
 - Grade II listed Orangery at Cams Hall; and
 - Grade II listed screen wall and attached former farmhouse, outbuildings and yard wall forming the east side of Home Farm Yard at Cams Hall.
- 2.2.5 There are no Scheduled Monuments on-site, with the closest Scheduled Monuments to the Site being Fort Nelson and a World War II Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite, located approximately 1.5 km to the north of the Site and Portchester Castle, situated 2.2 km to the east of the Site.
- 2.2.6 The Site is not located within an area with archaeological potential or a Conservation Area. The closest point of archaeological significance is approximately 500 m to the northwest of the Site, with the nearest Conservation Area (Cams Hall) being approximately 500 m to the west of the Site.
- 2.2.7 Portsmouth Harbour, located approximately 200 m to the southwest of the Site and approximately 370 m to the south of the Site, is designated as a Ramsar Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Special Protection Area. In addition to this, the

Downend Chalk Pit SSSI is situated approximately 740 m to the north of the Site, with the Portsdown SSSI located approximately 1.82 km to the northeast of the Site. The closest Special Area of Conservation is the Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons, situated approximately 6.9 km to the southeast of the Site. There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), ancient woodlands, Registered Parks and Gardens, or country parks within 1 km of the Site.

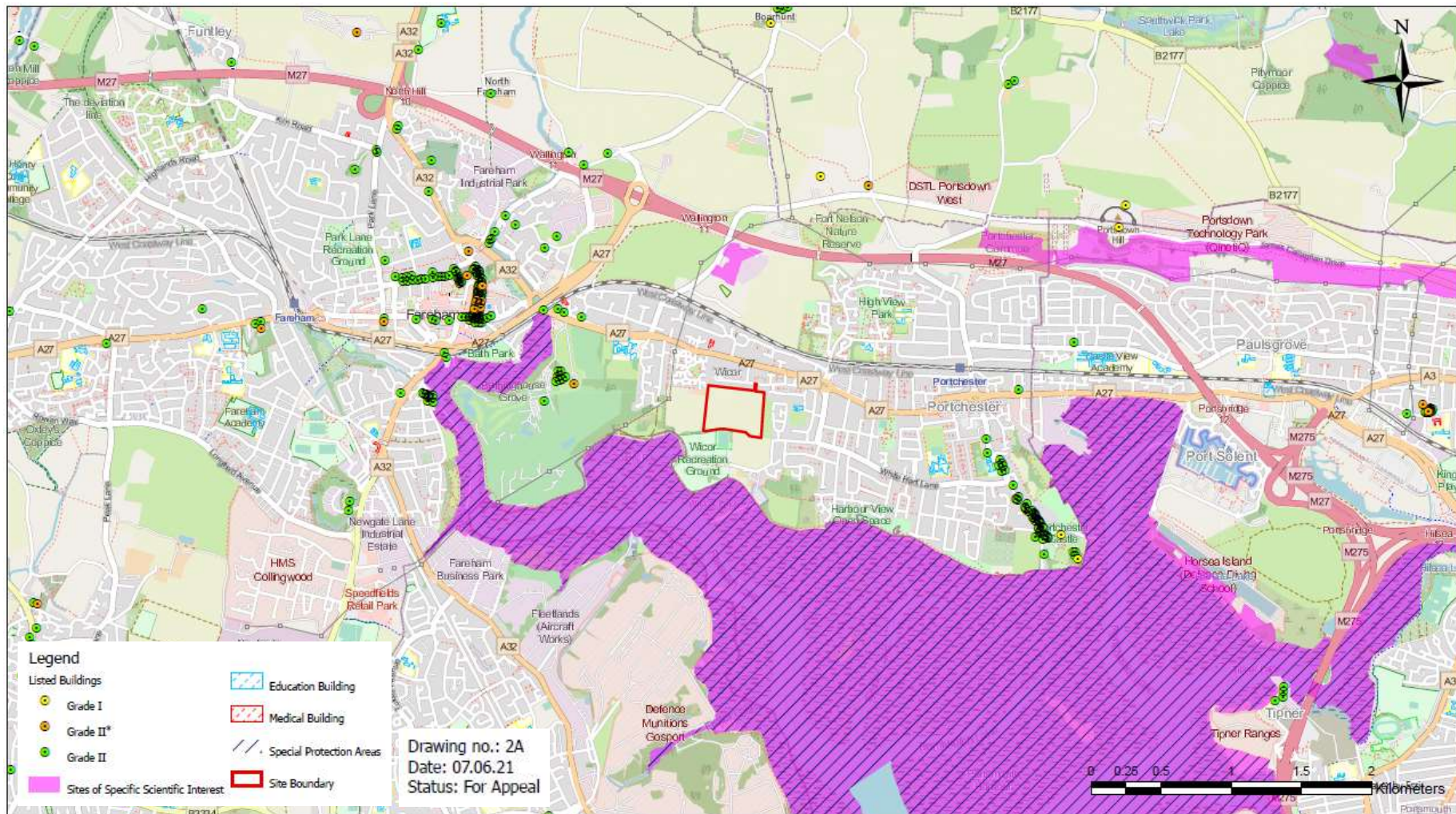
- 2.2.8 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, the lowest flood risk zone possible. Areas in Flood Zone 1 are defined as having less than a 0.1% chance (1:1000) of fluvial flooding in any given year.

2.3 Site Description

- 2.3.1 Historical maps indicate that the Site has previously comprised of agricultural fields.

- 2.3.2 The 12.6 hectare (ha) Site is located to the southeast of Fareham, approximately 1.8 km from the edge of the town. The majority of the land within the Site boundaries constitutes agricultural land, with a slightly sloped topography. Levels at the Site fall from 10.3 m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the north eastern corner of the Site to 3.9 m AOD in the southwest corner of the Site.

Figure 2.1: Site Boundary and Surrounding Constraints



2.4 Site Context by Topic

- 2.4.1 The sections below provide a brief description of the baseline conditions at the Site and the site context by topic. More detailed description and analysis is available (in the form of individual baseline assessments) within the technical chapters (**Volume 2, Chapters 6 to 10 and Volume 3, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**).

Agriculture and Soils

- 2.4.2 The Site is shown on the Provisional scale Agricultural Land Classification (CLC) map published in the late 1970s and early 1980s as an area of Grade 2 agricultural land, between the urban development of Portchester and Portsmouth Harbour. However, this map was produced using reconnaissance fieldwork and a system of ALC that has since been revised.
- 2.4.3 A detailed ALC survey undertaken in 1997 showed that approximately 5.9 ha of the Site is of Grade 1 land and approximately 6.7 ha of the Site is of Grade 2 land.
- 2.4.4 ALC Grade 2 is described as very good quality agricultural land. ALC Grade 1 is described as excellent agricultural land.
- 2.4.5 The Site is farmed in conjunction with the field located to the southwest of the Site, by a family business based to the north of the Site, between Portchester Road (A27) and the M25. The Site has been cropped with spring barley, winter wheat, winter oats and oilseed rape for the past few years.

Socio-Economics

- 2.4.6 There are 7 schools located within 2 km of the Site: Wicor Primary School, located approximately 250 m to the east of the Site; Cams Hill School, situated approximately 550 m to the northwest of the Site; Red Barn Primary School, located approximately 790 m to the northeast of the Site; Northern Infant School, situated approximately 1.15 km to the northeast of the Site; Northern Junior School, located approximately 1.15 km to the northeast of the Site; Portchester Community School, situated approximately 1.25 km to the southeast of the Site; and Castle Primary School, located approximately 1.65 km to the southeast of the Site.
- 2.4.7 The closest GP surgeries are Westlands Medical Centre, situated approximately 840 m to the east of the Site, and Portchester Health Centre, which is located approximately 1.3 km to the east of the Site in Portchester.
- 2.4.8 The Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth is the nearest Accident & Emergency unit, approximately 5.2 km to the east of the Site.
- 2.4.9 Recreational resources near the Site include Wicor Recreation Ground, located approximately 265 m to the south of the Site, and Cams Hall Estate Golf Club, situated approximately 1.2 km to the west of the Site.

Transport and Access

- 2.4.10 Access to the Site is via Romsey Avenue, which connects with Beaulieu Avenue, which provides access to Portchester Road (A27). Portchester Road provides access to Fareham

in the west, Portsmouth to the east and the M27. The M27 runs north of the Site and runs from Cosham and Portsmouth.

- 2.4.11 In terms of public transport, three existing bus services currently operate along Portchester Road, with bus stops located to the north of the Site. There are existing pedestrian routes from the Site to these bus stops, which are located within 400 m from the Site. The nearest railway station is Portchester Station, which is located approximately 2 km to the east of the Site.
- 2.4.12 National Cycle Route (NCR) 236 runs along a traffic-free route from Cosham to Portchester, then on-road to Fareham, including along Romsey Avenue, past the Site access.

Noise and Vibration

- 2.4.13 The main sources of noise incident on the Site are from birdsong; Wicor Primary School; occasional light aircraft flying over the Site; distant traffic noise from Portchester Road (A27) and neighbourhood noise. The AFC Portchester Football Club is also likely to be a source of noise, when it is operational.

Air Quality

- 2.4.14 The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The nearest AQMAs (Portland Street AQMA and Fareham AQMA) are located approximately 2 km to the west of the Site. The closest air quality monitoring locations to the Site are diffusion tubes located along Gosport Road and Portland Street, which indicate that the area is within the NO₂ objective thresholds.

Ecology

- 2.4.15 The Site is not located within a Ramsar Site, an SSSI, SAC, SPA, NNR, Ancient Woodland or Registered Parks and Garden.
- 2.4.16 The Site is dominated by arable farmland, with areas of improved grassland, tall ruderal, scattered scrub and hedgerow / tree lines. The majority of the Site comprises arable field cropping spring barley; the margins of the arable field comprise an approximate 1-2 m strip of unmanaged improved grassland; small areas of tall ruderal are located along sections of the northern and western boundaries, as well as adjacent to the southern boundary tree line; scattered scrub is associated with the margins of the longer grassland areas on-site, particularly along the northern boundary; and the western, eastern and southern boundaries of the Site are marked by hedgerows / tree lines of varying levels of maturity / diversity.
- 2.4.17 Six species of bat were recorded on-site, including Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Noctule, Serotine, Mouse-eared (*Myotis spp.*) and Long-eared (*Plecotus spp.*) bats. The bat recorded in the highest abundance was Common Pipistrelle. It was identified that ten trees in the southwestern corner of the site had negligible to low potential for bat roosts.
- 2.4.18 A number of signs of badger activity (trails) were noted on-site, along with a suspected active sett in the south eastern corner of the Site.
- 2.4.19 A good population of slow worms (between 5-20 adults seen in a single day) was noted on-site, with the vast majority of them recorded within the northern boundary grassland strip, to the rear of existing houses.

- 2.4.20 The Site forms part of an area that is currently designated as the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy primary support area F21 (but not fulfilling this function). Two counts of brent geese on the Site relate to years when the management regime at the Site comprised winter wheat or oats, both suitable forage crops for this species. Winter crops are no longer sown on this Site due to damage from Canada geese, and there have been no records of brent geese since 2017.
- 2.4.21 There are isolated records of waders and wetland birds, such as curlew and oystercatcher, and no records of ground nesting birds. Hedgerows and trees provide nesting habitat for other breeding birds.
- 2.4.22 The closest statutory designated site is the Portsmouth Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar Site, which is located approximately 200 m to the south of the Site. Portsmouth Harbour comprises a series of estuaries and harbours, with extensive mudflats and saltmarshes, together with adjacent coastal habitats including saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reedbeds, damp woodland and grazing marsh. The mudflats support beds of green seaweeds (*Enteromorpha spp.*) and seagrass beds (*Zostera spp.*) and have a rich invertebrate fauna that forms the food resource for the estuarine birds. The SPA is designated under the Bird Directive for supporting internationally important numbers of wintering dark-bellied brent geese and nationally important numbers of grey plover, dunlin and black-tailed godwit.
- 2.4.23 Other nearby internationally designated sites include the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site (5.14 km west of the Site), Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA and Ramsar site (6.83 km east of the Site), Solent and Wildlife Lagoons SAC (7.43 km east of the Site) and Solent Maritime SAC (6.79 km west of the Site).
- 2.4.24 Other SSSIs close to the Site include Down End Chalkpit (0.73 km to the north of the Site), Portsdown (1.84 km north of the Site), The Wildground (4.44 km south-west of the Site) and Hook Heath Meadows (4.68 km north-east of the Site).
- 2.4.25 The closest Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is the Cams Plantation SINC which is located approximately 400 m to the west of the Site.

Ground Conditions

- 2.4.26 British Geological Survey (BGS) mapping indicates that the underlying strata of the Site is shown to have Superficial Deposits comprising River Terrace Deposits (undifferentiated) consisting of sand, silt and clay. The bedrock consists of chalk from the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation, Culver Chalk Formation and Portsdown Chalk Formation.
- 2.4.27 A Site Investigation undertaken by Soils Limited in January 2017 confirmed that the geology of the Site is formed of River Terrace Deposits over Chalk.
- 2.4.28 There are no Source Protection Zones (SPZs) situated within 2 km of the Site. The nearest potable abstraction point is located approximately 750 m to the north of the Site, with the nearest non-potable abstraction point located approximately 890 m to the west of the Site. There are two historic landfill sites located within 250 m of the Site; one was situated approximately 200 to the west of the Site and accepted commercial and household waste, and another was located approximately 205 m to the south-west of the Site and accepted household waste. No pollution incidents to controlled waters have occurred within 250 m of the Site. The Site is not situated within an area where protection or risk assessment against

the ingress of radon is required and there are no Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Sites located within 250 m of the Site.

Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk

- 2.4.29 The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is classified as being at a low risk of river or sea flooding in any given year.
- 2.4.30 The Site is not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ). The superficial deposits beneath the Site are classified as a Secondary A Aquifer, whilst the bedrock beneath the Site is classified as a Principal Aquifer.
- 2.4.31 There is an existing foul water sewer which crosses the Site. There are no surface water sewers within close proximity to the Site and there are no main rivers crossing or within close proximity to the Site. Surface water from the Site currently drains via infiltration through the sub soils to Portsmouth Harbour.
- 2.4.32 The Ground Investigation undertaken by Soils Limited in March 2017 did not record any incidents of groundwater flooding affecting the Site, and groundwater was not encountered within any of the trial pits excavated as part of the Site Investigation.

Archaeology

- 2.4.33 There is significant evidence of prehistoric activity within and just beyond the Site, ranging from the Lower Palaeolithic through to the Iron Age. The lack of development on the Site and its geological context indicated a high potential for archaeological activity from these periods, particularly the Lower Palaeolithic.
- 2.4.34 Roman activity does not initially appear to be particularly substantial, but consists of a potentially early sunken-floored building, usually associated with Saxon settlements, with a Roman road recorded to the east of the Site. These find spots are however at some distance from the Site, suggesting a limited archaeological potential for the Roman period.
- 2.4.35 The evidence for early-medieval activity is much more limited, although there is continued occupation of a site to the northwest in use since the Iron Age. This site was abandoned very early in the Anglo-Saxon period and is some distance from the Site, suggesting a negligible potential for early medieval activity.
- 2.4.36 Medieval activity is also scarce within the Site, which is likely to have been situated between two known areas of occupation at Portchester and Fareham. Archaeological potential dating from the medieval period is, therefore, considered to be negligible and the Site appears to have continued to be in a largely agricultural zone during the post-medieval period, suggesting a negligible archaeological potential.
- 2.4.37 There is significant development in the surrounding landscape, as a result of residential development and defensive features constructed during the Second World War. None of these features are recorded within the Site; however, post-war mapping shows some buildings towards the northern end of the Site, which may have been associated with military activity. A series of inspection chambers noted on-site appear to be of a later 20th century date.

Cultural Heritage

- 2.4.38 Nationally designated heritage assets include scheduled monuments, listed buildings and registered parks or gardens. There are no designated or non-designated built (above ground) heritage assets within the Site itself or within the vicinity of the Site.
- 2.4.39 Within 1 km of the Site, there are approximately 3 listed buildings located approximately 990 m to the west of the Site, as follows:
- Grade II* listed Cams Hall;
 - Grade II listed Orangery at Cams Hall; and
 - Grade II listed screen wall and attached former farmhouse, outbuildings and yard wall forming the east side of Home Farmyard at Cams Hall.
- 2.4.40 The closest Scheduled Monuments to the Site are Fort Nelson and a World War II Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite, located approximately 1.5 km to the north of the Site and Portchester Castle, situated 2.2 km to the east of the Site.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 2.4.41 The Site lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 126: South Coast Plain.
- 2.4.42 The Site is located within Landscape Character (LCA) 9f: 'Gosport and Fareham Coastal Plain', within the 'Coastal Plain Open' Landscape Character Type (LCT). Key Characteristics of LCA 9f, of relevant to the Site and its context, include:
- Its low lying landscape which physically forms part of the coastal plain but is isolated from the coastline;
 - The presence of large arable fields with no significant boundary vegetation; strongly influenced by the adjoining urban areas including Fareham;
 - Numerous small parks;
 - A landscape rich in historic naval defences; and
 - Varied coastal view including across Portsmouth Harbour and the city skyline.
- 2.4.43 Key characteristics of the 'Coastal Plain Open' LCT include:
- An extensive and flat or gently sloping plain, high grade agricultural soils, often supporting horticulture and historically market gardening crops;
 - Tree shelter belts and low hedgerows with windswept trees near the coast as a result of exposure to coastal weather;
 - Fields which have been enlarged and reorganised to create an open character;
 - A predominantly arable land use;
 - A lack of bridleways and open access sites;
 - Some of the most densely developed areas of Hampshire; and

- Big skies and flat horizons to the south, sometimes with distant outline of hills of the Isle of Wight.

- 2.4.44 The Site and surrounding context are found to be, for the most part, in keeping with the key characteristics set out above, with the only minor differentiations being the localised ridgeline of Ports Down Hill which contrasts the described 'flat horizons', the lack of presence of 'horticulture and historically market gardening crops', and there being no views available towards the Isle of Wight from the site's locality.
- 2.4.45 As the characteristics identify, the landscape surrounding the Site is already densely developed which is visually apparent in the existing context of the site. Additionally, a number of detractors are present within the sites locality, including the presence of electricity towers and ancillaries associated with the recreation ground to the south-west. With the above in mind, and the mostly undesignated landscape, the LCA 9f: Gosport and Fareham Coastal Plain and the Coastal Plain Open LCT in the vicinity of the Site is considered to be of low sensitivity, capable of some change without fundamentally changing the characteristics of the LCA or LCT.
- 2.4.46 There are no public rights of way (PRoW) across the Site.
- 2.4.47 To the north of the Site, the extent of clear intervisibility with the Site is found to be limited by the existing built form of properties along Romsey Avenue, directly to the north of the Site and the presence of further development beyond this, up to the route of the railway line. Beyond this, only partial views of the Site are available above the intervening rooflines.
- 2.4.48 To the east of the Site, the extent of intervisibility with the Site is limited to 250 m from the Site boundary, by the presence of the existing built form of Portchester, emphasised by a gently downward sloping landform, as landform extends west towards the harbour.
- 2.4.49 Due to its gently sloping southerly aspect, the Site is partially opened up to views from the south of the Site. However, vegetation associated with the recreation ground to the south-west and industrial units to the south partially limits the extent of these views so that the majority of views from the Wicor Lake area of Portsmouth Harbour are unavailable. Upon the opposite banks of the harbour, to the south, views are limited by the buildings and complex associated with Royal Navy Armaments Depot (RNAD) Gosport.
- 2.4.50 To the west of the Site, clear intervisibility with the Site extends up to 500 m from the Site boundary, at which point, existing vegetation associated with the settlement edge, golf course, and built form curtail clear views from further west. The northern half of Fareham appears to be partially elevated, however the built form of Fareham itself screens views to the Site from within. Glimpsed views of the Site are available from the Cams Bay area of Portsmouth Harbour, where vegetation associated with the recreation ground allows, including from the south-eastern extent of Cams Hall Golf course.

2.5 Potential Key Sensitive Receptors

- 2.5.1 The key receptors which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Proposed Development have been identified and are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Potential Key Sensitive Receptors

Category	Potential Sensitive Receptor / Land Use
Residential	Surrounding residential areas to the north (such as dwellings along Romsey Avenue) and to the east (such as dwellings along Berry Close). Users of the surrounding roads / footpaths / cycleways.
Agricultural	Grade 1 agricultural land on-Site. Grade 2 agricultural land on-Site.
Community	Receptors and their approximate distances to the Site: Schools: 7 Schools (Wicor Primary School – 250 m to the east of the Site; Cams Hill School – 550 m to the northwest of the Site; Red Barn Primary School – 790 m to the northeast of the Site; Northern Infant School – 1.15 km to the northeast of the Site; Northern Junior School – 1.15 km to the northeast of the Site; Portchester Community School – 1.25 km to the southeast of the Site; and Castle Primary School – 1.65 km to the southeast of the Site). Two Health facilities (Westlands Medical Centre – 840 m to the east of the Site; Portchester Health Centre – 1.3 km to the east of the Site). Recreational resources (Wicor Recreation Ground – 265m to the south of the Site; Cams Hall Estate Golf Club – 1.2 km to the west of the Site).
Ecological	Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site, SSSI and SPA, located approximately 180 m to the southwest of the Site and 370 m to the south of the Site; Solent and Southampton Water SPA; Portsmouth Harbour SPA Brent Goose Population and Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy Network; On-Site habitat; Badgers; Bats; Bat roosts; Breeding birds; Hazel dormice; Reptiles; Other species (hedgehog and toad).
Geological	River Terrace Deposits – Secondary A Aquifer. Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation, Culver Chalk Formation and Portsdown Chalk Formation – Principal Aquifers.
Archaeological assets	The Site is not located within an area with archaeological potential. The closest point of archaeological significance is approximately 500 m to the northwest of the Site.
Heritage assets	Cams Hall Conservation Area (located approximately 500 m to the west of the Site).
Landscape and views	National Landscape Character Area 126: South Coast Plain. Landscape Character Area 9f: Gosport and Fareham Coastal Plain. Landscape Character Type: Coastal Plain Open. Views