

Ecological Impact Assessment

Havant College

September 2023

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

Unit 1, Brassmill Lane Enterprise Centre | Bath | BA1 3JN

01225444114 | info@ethosep.co.uk

www.ethosep.co.uk



Report Produced for Peter Marsh Consulting

Written by: Jim Phillips, Managing Director

Issue: Final

Date: September 2023

Project: ETH23-251



CONTENTS

	Page(s)
SUMMARY	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION	6
3 METHODOLOGY	9
4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITONS	11
5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	14
6 IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES	15

SUMMARY

Introduction	• The site is located at Havant College; • Development proposals comprise a new teaching block for the college; • This Ecological Impact assessment (EclA) has been written to assess the potential ecological impacts the development proposals may have and to recommend species-specific mitigation and compensation where applicable.
Surveys undertaken	• A UKHab survey and ground level assessment of trees for bats has been undertaken.
Key results	• The site comprises modified grassland which is of low ecological value. • None of the trees on site have PRFs for bats; • The habitats on site have negligible potential for protected species.
Recommendations	• No specific mitigation is required in relation to biodiversity; • As an ecological enhancement, four swift boxes will be provided on the new structure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) have undertaken this Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) at Havant College. The site is shown at Figure 1.

Figure 1 Site location



- 1.2 The site is 0.2 hectares and is dominated by modified grassland and a small number of semi mature trees.
- 1.3 The proposals for the site comprise the construction of a new building for the college.
- 1.4 The EcIA has been written based on the guidelines provide in *CIEEM (2017) Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*.
- 1.5 The aims of this EcIA report are:
- to identify the existing habitats on site;
 - to identify the suitability of the site to support protected species;
 - to identify key ecological constraints to the project and make recommendations for design options to avoid significant effects on important ecological features/resources;

- to identify the mitigation and compensation measures to ensure there is no negative impact on habitats and protected species during construction and in operation; and
- to set out ecological enhancements at the site.

2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 174, 180 and 185) have been summarised below:

Para 174: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Para 180: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Para 185: c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

2.2 Havant Borough Biodiversity Strategy 2019

- 2.2.1 This document sets out the relevant local policies as set out within the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the draft local plan 2036, providing a summary table as to the approach as shown below:

Adopted Local Plan		Draft HBLP 2036 (nb later versions of the HBLP 2036 could use different Policy references or names)		
Policy Ref	Policy Name	Status	New Policy Ref	New Policy Name
CS13	Green Infrastructure	Updated	E2	Green Infrastructure
DM8	Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features	Updated	E2	Green Infrastructure
			E10	Landscape and the Coast
			E15	Ecological Conservation
DM23	Sites for Brent Geese and Waders	Updated	E17	Brent Goose and Wader Feeding and Roosting Sites
DM24	Residential Disturbance to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) from Residential Development	Updated	E16	Solent Special Protection Areas
n/a		New	E18	Protected Species
n/a		New	E19	Agricultural Land Quality

2.3 Relevant Legislation

- 2.3.1 The **Habitats Directive** (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the Directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" (e.g., special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The habitats Directive and parts of the Birds Directive are transposed into legislation by the **Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017** (as amended).
- 2.3.2 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is a key piece of national legislation which implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and implements the species protection obligations of Council Directive 2009/147/EC (formerly 79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds (EC Birds Directive) in Great Britain.
- 2.3.3 The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006** (the NERC act) places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to consider biodiversity in their work. Local planning authorities are to ensure that there is no net

loss of biodiversity on a site, no net loss in habitat connectivity and aims to enhance biodiversity.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Assessment

- 3.1.1 This assessment has been undertaken following the approach set out in the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' (CIEEM, 2018). In line with the guidance, the level of detail provided is proportionate to the scale of the development and complexity of its potential impacts.
- 3.1.2 The assessment has considered 'Important Ecological Features' that are present within the 'Zone of Influence' of the project. Important Ecological Features for this project comprise¹:
- Statutory designated nature conservation sites;
 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England;
 - Legally protected species; and
 - Red Listed or rare species (based on Red Data Book lists, Birds of Conservation Concern and species considered to be nationally rare / scarce).
- 3.1.3 The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is the area over which the project could have an influence on ecological features. The Zoi is likely to vary for different features. However, in general terms the Zoi for this development proposal is considered to comprise the land within the red line boundary as well as immediate adjacent habitat features. It also includes designated nature conservation sites in the surrounding area, to the extent that these may be impacted by increases in visitor numbers.

3.2 Desktop Study

- 3.2.1 A data search for habitats and species within 0.5km of the site was provided by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre on the 6th September 2023.

3.3 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 The site was surveyed on 18th August 2023, and incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora.

3.4 Protected Species Surveys

- 3.4.1 A ground level tree survey for bats was undertaken to assess if any of the trees on site had potential roost features (PRFs) for bats. Due to the limited nature of the habitats

¹ Box 14 in CIEEM's ECiA Guidelines (2018)

on site, no targeted surveys for protected species have been deemed necessary to inform the assessment. further explanation of this is set out at section 4.3.

3.5 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.5.1 In line with CIEEMs guidelines on EcIA, this assessment has focused on relevant Important Ecological Features. The scale of importance of these features has been determined based on available contextual information.
- 3.5.2 Potential impacts on Important Ecological Features are identified and assessed; likely significant effects are those likely to result in a change to the conservation status of a habitat or species population or undermine/support nature conservation policy. Mitigation measures have been devised following the mitigation hierarchy; appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation measures have been identified.

3.6 Personnel

- 3.6.1 The surveys were lead by Jim Phillips, BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM. Jim's experience in ecology covers a wide range of projects and clients and his focus is on interpreting relevant policy and legislation to ensure projects are delivered efficiently and meet the needs of the client. Jim holds protected species licenses for both bats and great crested newts (GCN). Jim's experience with numerous similar projects is considered to have provided a robust ecological assessment of the site.

3.7 Limitations

- 3.7.1 There are considered to be no limitations to the assessment.

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Notable Sites

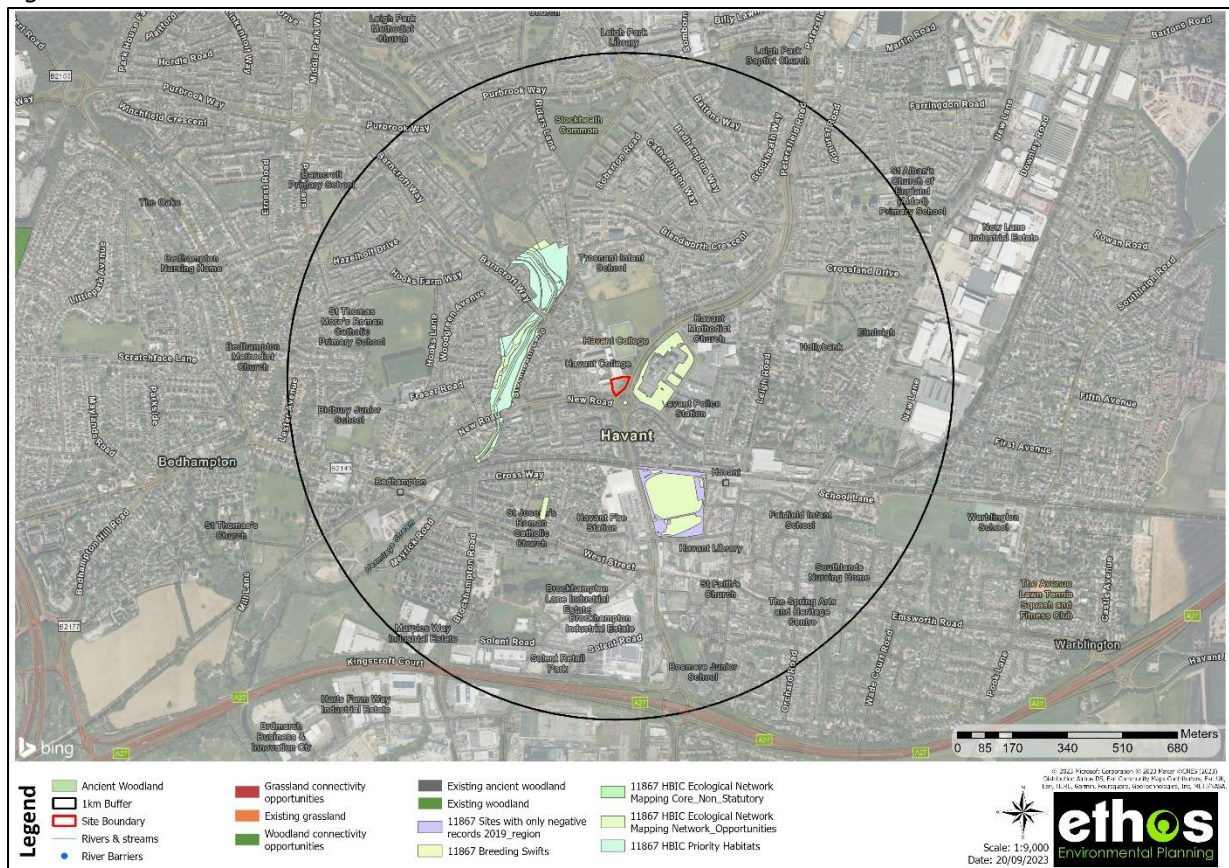
Statutory Sites

- 4.1.1 Chichester and Langstone Harbour is located approximately 2km to the south of the site. This is an internationally important site designated as a Special Protection Area for breeding birds.
- 4.1.2 Residential development within the ZOI of this site is expected to have a significant effect on the site, however, a development of this nature comprising educational use will not have a significant effect. Therefore, the SPA is not considered further in this assessment.

Non Statutory Sites

- 4.1.3 Figure 2 shows the location of non-statutory sites within 0.5 km of the site. The nearest site of note is Havant Police Station (located to the immediate east of the site) which is identified on the HBIC Ecological Network Opportunities map. It is considered that this designation does not impact the proposals at the site itself. Therefore, no further assessment in relation to any non-statutory sites is necessary.

Figure 2 Notable Sites



4.2 Habitats

Modified Grassland

- 4.2.1 The site comprises an area of modified grassland, approximately 50% of which is based on a hexagonal 'grasscrete' surfacing. The grassland was managed to a short sward and formed a typical amenity grassland. Species diversity was poor with the following species noted: daisy, dandelion, hawkbit, ribwort plantain, rye grass, white clover, trefoil, storksbill. The grassland was assessed to have low ecological value and is not assigned any level of importance for nature conservation. It is therefore not considered further in this assessment.



Photo 1 Modified grassland



Photo 2 'Grasscrete' area

4.3 Protected Species

Background Data

- 4.3.1 There are several records of bats within the data search including Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Serotine, Brown Long Eared bat and Myotis spp.
- 4.3.2 An extensive list of bird species have been recorded within the wider search area, almost exclusively from the Chichester and Langstone Harbour, and therefore not considered relevant to the site.
- 4.3.3 There are local records of stag beetle and hedgehog, although the site is not considered important for either of these species.

Tree survey for bats

- 4.3.4 The Tree Survey (arbtech, August 2023) identifies 7 trees on or adjacent to the site which may be impacted by the proposals, these are shown at figure 3. Each of these trees was assessed for its ecological value, notably focusing on the presence of any potential roost features (PRFs) for bats.

- 4.3.5 None of the trees had reached a scale of maturity by where natural PRFs had developed, and there was no notable damage resulting in PRFs. Therefore, all the trees were assessed to have negligible potential for bats. T2 and T6 were the larger of the trees and are shown at Photos 3 and 4.

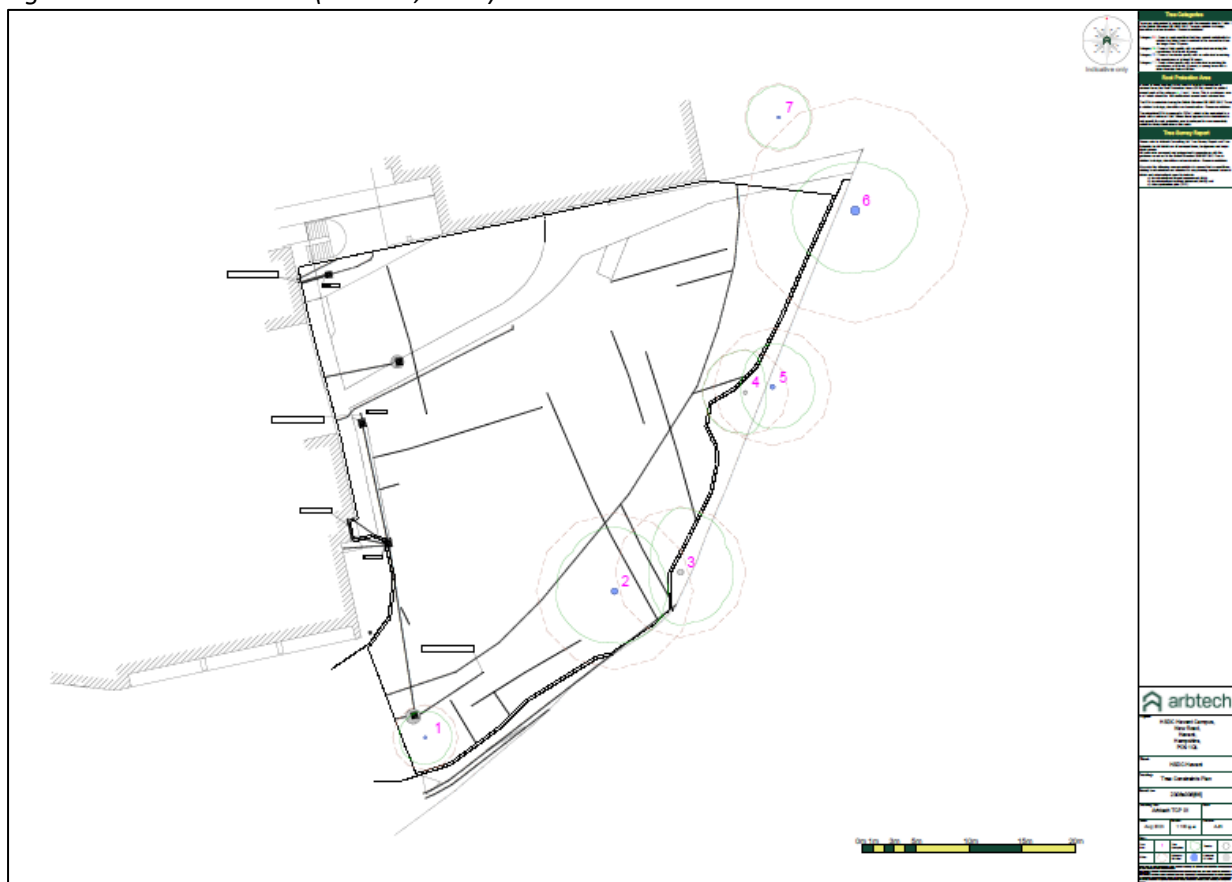


Photo 3 Common Lime (T2)



Photo 4 Sycamore (T6)

Figure 3 Tree Plan (arbtech, 2023)



Other Species

- 4.3.6 The habitats on site are assessed to have negligible potential for protected species and no further survey or assessment are required.

6 IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

6.1 Impact Assessment

- 6.1.1 The development proposals will result in the loss of an area of modified grassland which is of low ecological value, therefore no specific mitigation measures are required in relation to biodiversity.

6.2 Enhancements

- 6.2.1 It is recommended that four swift boxes² are installed on the new building.

² <https://www.actionforswifts.com/>

REFERENCES

CIEEM (2017^a) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), Winchester.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended) Available at: [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>.