

Consultee Comments for Planning Application APP/23/00996

Application Summary

Application Number: APP/23/00996

Address: McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant, PO9 1BS

Proposal: Change of use from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) and associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage, including provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and new fencing.

Case Officer: Lesley Wells

Consultee Details

Name: Consultee Principal Ecologist

Address: Public Service Plaza, Civic Centre Road, Havant PO9 2AX

Email: Not Available

On Behalf Of: Ecologist

Comments

Dear Lesley,

APP/23/00996 | Change of use from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) and associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage, including provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and new fencing. | McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant, PO9 1BS

Thank you for consulting me on this application.

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (ECOSA, October 2023). The application site comprises a large, modern building set within an extensive plot containing hard surfacing, areas of modified grassland, planted hedging and various planted trees.

The proposals will result in the loss of c.200m² of modified grassland, as well as several smaller trees and a section of planted hedging. The ecology report proposes grassland enhancement using a commercial seed mix. This enhancement is not illustrated on the site layout plan (which is only presented within the ecology report appendices), and no firm details of proposed landscaping are given elsewhere. I would also suggest that a seed mix more suited to the underlying soils which here are clays, sands and silts would be preferable. Alternatively, areas of grassland could simply be managed appropriately to promote greater diversity in species and sward height, rather than via new seeding. Any proposals for grassland enhancement (as well as any other biodiversity measures) will need to be compatible with the sites proposed use as an educational facility and therefore be deliverable. Aside from a recommendation within the ecology report, no details of landscaping are provided and the LPA has no certainty over what is to be delivered and how any ongoing management will be implemented.

Otherwise, the site is relatively unconstrained. Two potential bat roosting features have been identified at the north-western end of the building but it is stated that these will remain unaffected by the proposed works: as long as this remains the case there is no requirement for additional assessment for bats. It is unclear whether the proposed MUGA requires lighting again, there is no site plan provided other than in the ecology report appendices.

Overall I am content that ecological impacts are likely to be limited and that the site provides opportunities for some biodiversity enhancement. However, at this stage there is a lack of detail around how measures will be delivered.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

Principal Ecologist | E: tristan.norton@havant.gov.uk

Planning Services, Havant Borough Council, Public Service Plaza, Havant, PO9 2AX