



Hampshire  
County Council

# Ecological Desk-Based Assessment

Riverside School

For

Hampshire County Council

Property Services

May 2020

**Hampshire County Council Ecology Team**

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# Report Conditions

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
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| <i>Client</i>                | Hampshire County Council Property Services                                                            |                         |             |
| <i>Report status</i>         | <b>FINAL</b>                                                                                          |                         |             |
| <i>Written by</i>            | J Simpson                                                                                             | <i>Date</i>             | 19 May 2020 |
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| <i>Approved by Client PM</i> | Andrew Withers                                                                                        | <i>Date</i>             | 26 May 2020 |

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## Summary

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Hampshire County Council Property Services propose a new double modular classroom at Riverside School, Scratchface Lane, Widley, Waterlooville, PO7 5QD. The modular building will be installed on an area of amenity grassland.

An ecological desk-based assessment was conducted in order to inform proposals for the site. This included analysis of aerial imagery of the site and a search for designated sites and protected species within a 500m radius in addition to reviewing recent site photographs.

Five locally designated non-statutory Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and four sites listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) are located within 500m of the site.

Habitats on the site comprise amenity grassland, hardstanding, modern buildings and semi-natural woodland.

The site overall has suitability to support protected species including bats, nesting birds and hazel dormice.

The modular classroom will be placed on an area of amenity grassland to the south of the site. This habitat is considered to have negligible ecological value.

No vegetation will be removed for the installation of the modular classroom and the habitats and buildings that may support protected species will not be affected.

No further survey or assessment work is recommended due to limited extent of the current proposed works and negligible potential for impacts to habitats and species present on site.

# 1. Introduction

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## *Objectives*

- 1.1. Hampshire County Council Ecology Team (HCCET) has been commissioned by HCC Property Services to undertake an ecological desk-based assessment in relation to proposals for the installation of a modular classroom at Riverside School. Proposed plans are shown in **Figure A1.1** in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2. This desk-based assessment is understood to be needed to support the feasibility assessment stage of the overall project.
- 1.3. If necessary, this desk-based assessment report recommends measures to avoid impacts to biodiversity or, if necessary, recommends further site survey work.

## *Site Description*

- 1.4. The site is located to the south east of Waterlooville, a town in south east Hampshire. The site is set on the edge of an urban environment within the suburb of Widley approximately 650m to the west of the A3(M). Surrounding land uses include housing with associated gardens to the west of the site and an extensive area of woodland to the east. The site itself comprises modern buildings, hardstanding and amenity grassland and semi-natural woodland. The site is centred on national grid reference SU 6864 0745.
- 1.5. Location plan and aerial photo of the site within its wider setting are shown in **Figure A2.1** and **A2.2** in **Appendix 2** respectively.

## *Limitations*

- 1.6. A site visit has not been conducted to inform this ecological desk-based assessment and recommendations made are dependent upon the data and imagery available to HCCET as well as any likely project impacts.

## 2. Methods

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### *Desk-Based Assessment*

- 2.1. An ecological desk-based assessment was carried out by HCCET on 19 May 2020. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping was used in order to identify all records of protected species and habitats within a 500m radius of the site. Given the localised nature of the proposals this search radius was considered sufficient for assessing risk to all ecological features. In addition, records were obtained of all statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites within the search radius.
- 2.2. HCCET had full access to the extensive biological database held by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC). The data is aggregated to meet the HBIC Data Users Agreement and attention is drawn to paragraph 5 of the agreement which states: *'Whilst every reasonable effort is made to validate information supplied to and by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre, owing to the dynamic and judgmental nature of information relating to wildlife, HBIC disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy or comprehensiveness of the information supplied, and accepts no liability for any indirect, consequential, or incidental damages or losses arising from use of the information'*.

### 3. Results

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#### *Desk-Based Assessment*

##### Designated Sites

- 3.1. Five Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and four sites listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) are located within 500m of the site. The details of these sites are shown in **Table A3.1** in **Appendix 3**.

##### Notable Habitats

- 3.2. The site supports areas of broadleaved mixed and yew woodlands at the south and east of the site.
- 3.3. Notable habitats in the surrounding area are associated with the woodlands to the east of the site and comprise lowland mixed deciduous woodland, broadleaved mixed and yew woodlands and wet woodland.

##### Protected and Notable Species

- 3.4. A review of the biological database held by HBIC identified a small number of protected and notable species within the search area. Relevant records are shown in **Table A3.2** in **Appendix 3**.

#### *Habitats/Vegetation*

- 3.5. Review of aerial imagery of the site indicates that site comprises areas of hardstanding, modern buildings, areas of amenity grassland and semi-natural woodland (**Figure 1**). There is woodland treeline boundary to the west, south and north of the site and a parcel of woodland within the site to the east. The woodland on site is contiguous with the woodland areas to the north east of the site.
- 3.6. The location of the modular building is to the south of the site on an area of existing amenity grassland.



**Figure 1:** *The location for the modular classroom on an area of amenity grassland*

3.7. **Figure A2.3**, in **Appendix 2**, shows an aerial image of the site.

## 4. Potential Ecological Constraints

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### *Designated Sites*

- 4.1. Fives SINCs and four AWI sites are located within 500m of the site; the closest being 100m to the north-east. The boundary vegetation has ecological connectivity to the nearest designated site and to a woodland corridor along Scratchface Lane bridleway.
- 4.2. However, the works are small scale and will not involve the removal of any vegetation so it is considered that there will **no impact to locally designated sites**.

### *Habitats/Vegetation*

- 4.3. The proposed location of the modular building is on an existing area of amenity grassland to the south of the school site. No removal of vegetation is required to install the classroom and access to the site will also not require any removal of vegetation.

### *Protected Species*

#### Bats

- 4.4. Several records of bats were returned within a 500m search radius including rarer species such as Alcathe bat *Myotis alcathoe* and Brandt's bat *M. brandtii*. The surrounding area is largely urban to the south and west. The woodland to the east of the site is more suitable for supporting foraging and commuting bats. The woodland and treelines on site are well connected to the woodland areas to the east and are likely to support foraging and commuting bats. The school buildings are modern with flat roofs and therefore lack internal voids. The buildings may have other external features suitable for supporting roosting bats.
- 4.5. The planned installation of the modular classroom will not affect the existing buildings and trees on site and will not include the removal of habitat that could support bats. It is therefore considered that the planned works will have negligible potential for negative impacts on bats.

### Birds

- 4.6. The site contains some scattered vegetation and buildings that may support nesting birds. The data search assessment returned few records of notable bird species within the search area; however, it is likely that common and widespread bird species are present within and around the site.
- 4.7. No vegetation will be removed from the site to accommodate the modular classroom and therefore, there is **negligible potential for negative impacts to nesting birds**.

### Hazel Dormouse

- 4.8. No records of hazel dormouse were returned within a 500m search radius. However, Littlepark Wood SINC is located within a 500m radius of the site and is partly designated as it supports hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*. The site is connected to a woodland corridor along Scratchface Lane bridleway which was surveyed by HCCET in 2017 and a single dormouse nest was found. Therefore, it is assumed that dormice are present within this habitat.
- 4.9. The planned installation of the modular classroom will not affect the woodland on site and will not include the removal of habitat that could support hazel dormice. It is therefore considered that the planned works will have **negligible potential for negative impacts on hazel dormice**.

### *Ecological Enhancement*

- 4.10. Local and National Planning Policy encourages the incorporation of ecological enhancements into development proposals. Where opportunities exist, it is best practice to provide features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites. The following are examples of some potential options for enhancing the site ecologically:
- Planting of native woody species
  - Planting of herbaceous species suitable for insect pollinators
  - Installation of bird nesting boxes
  - Installation of bat boxes

## 5. Conclusion

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- 5.1. It is not considered that the proposals have any reasonable potential to adversely affect sites, habitats, or species of ecological importance. No further survey or assessment work is currently recommended. However, if proposals change significantly from those assessed in this report, it is advised that the Ecology Team is consulted further.
- 5.2. Unless otherwise advised, the findings and recommendations in this report are solely based on the plans and brief provided to HCCET. The results and findings are valid for two years from the date of this desk-based assessment. HCCET should be contacted if this report is to be used after this period to check if any updating work needs to be undertaken.

# Appendix 1 – Existing and Proposed Plans

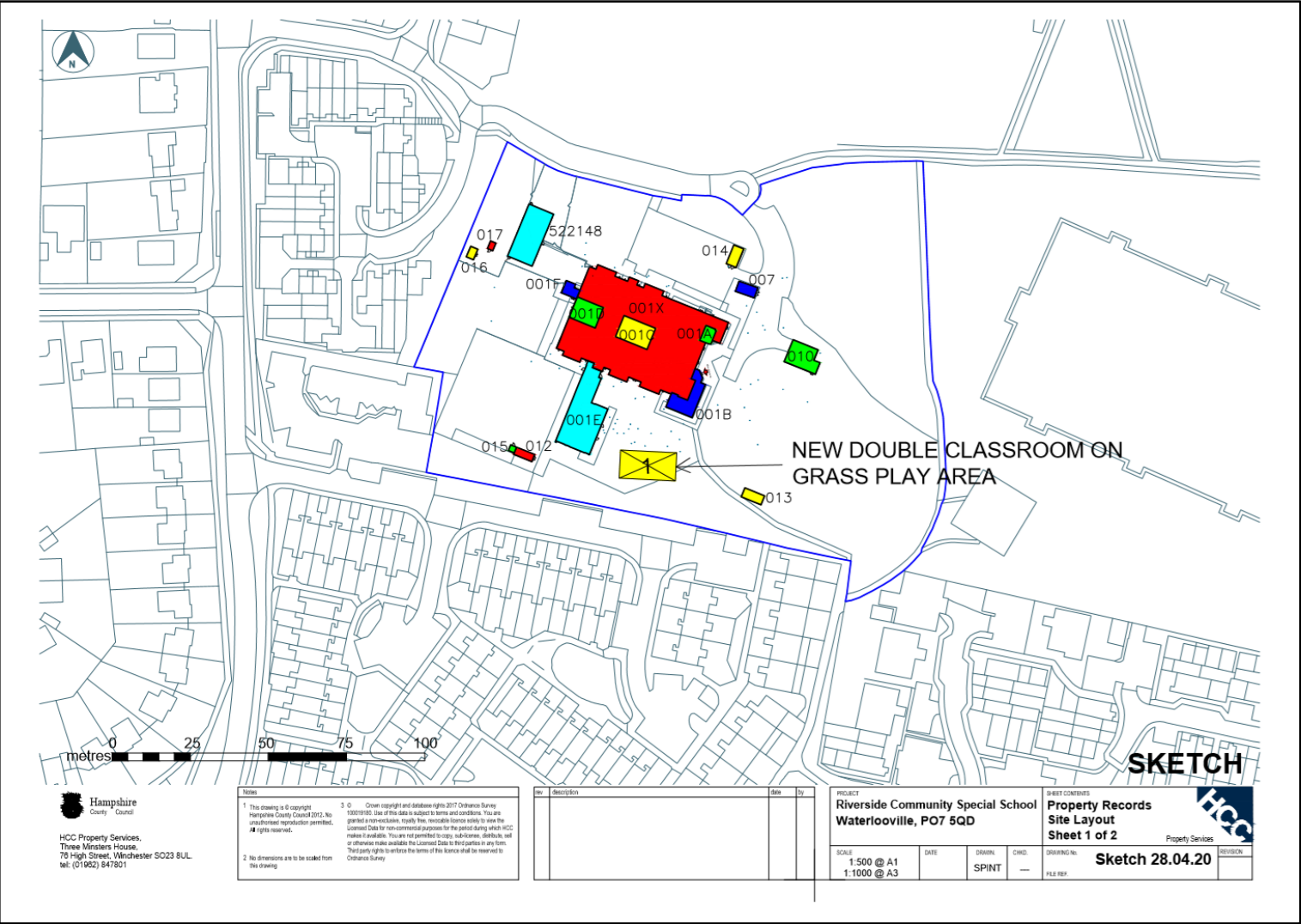


Figure A1.1: Plan of site showing location of the proposed modular classroom (Riverside Community Special School 28.04.20)

## Appendix 2 – Site Location and Aerial Photos

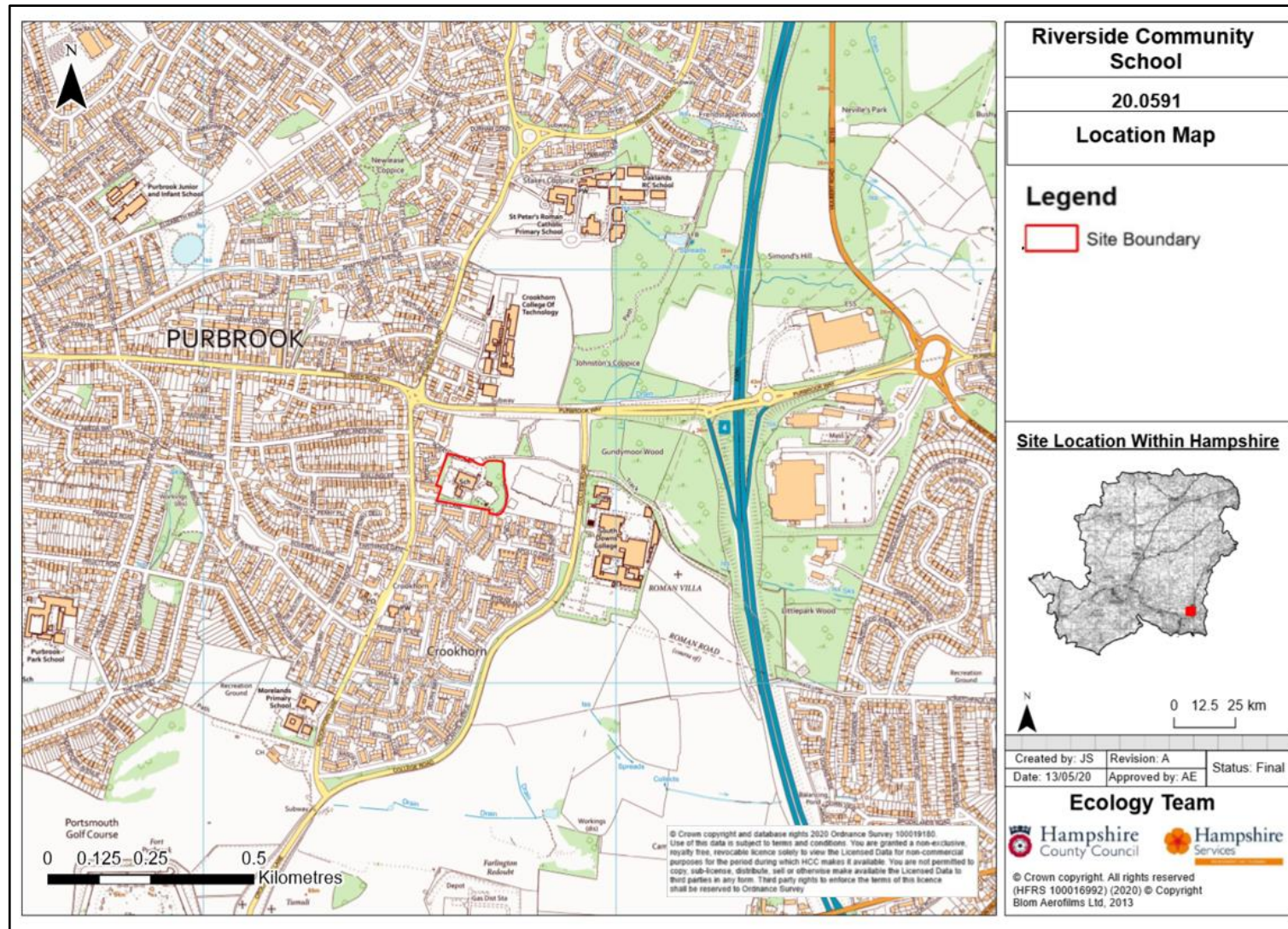


**Figure A2.1: Location of site**

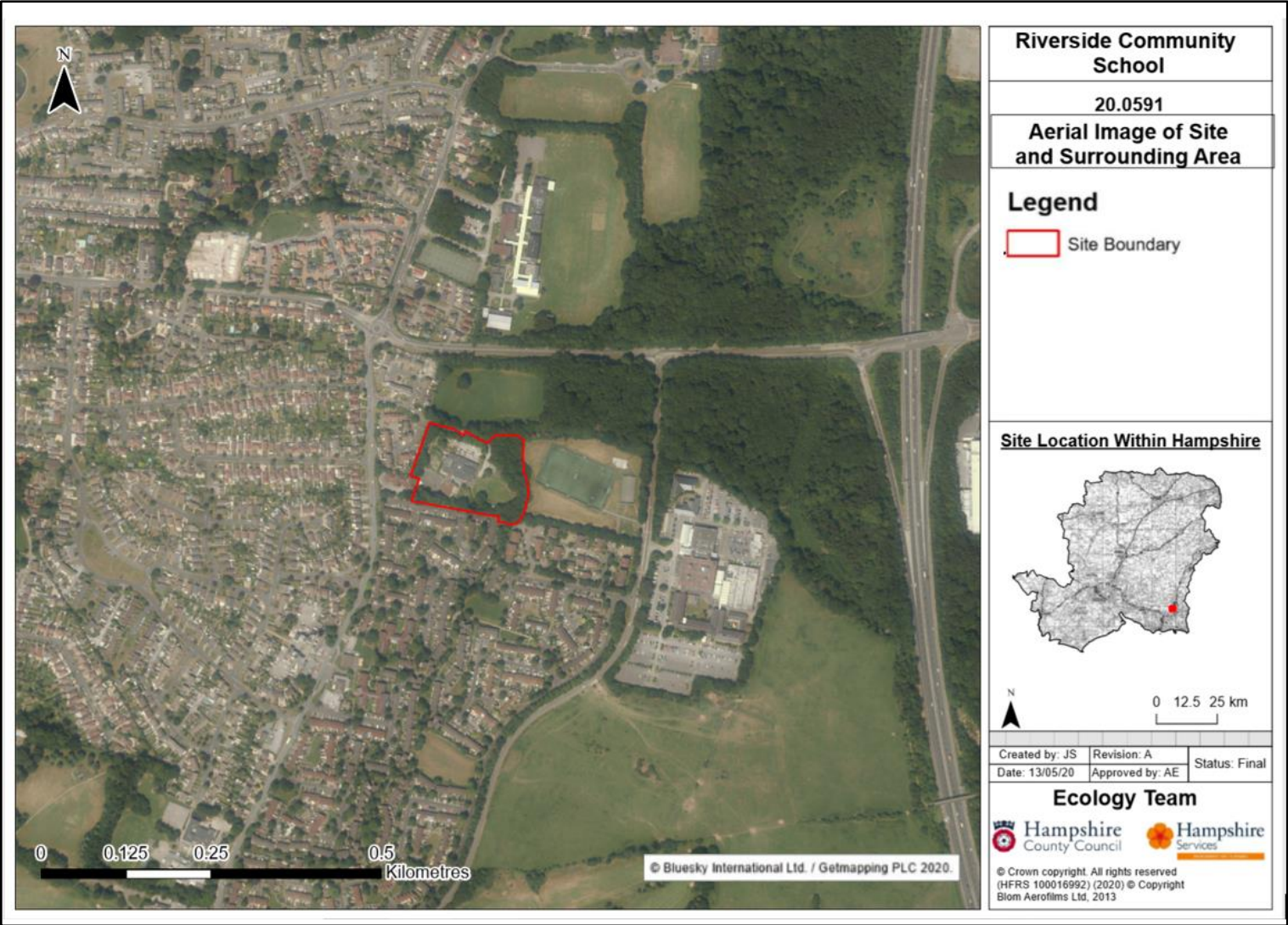


Figure A2.2: Aerial image of site in wider landscape

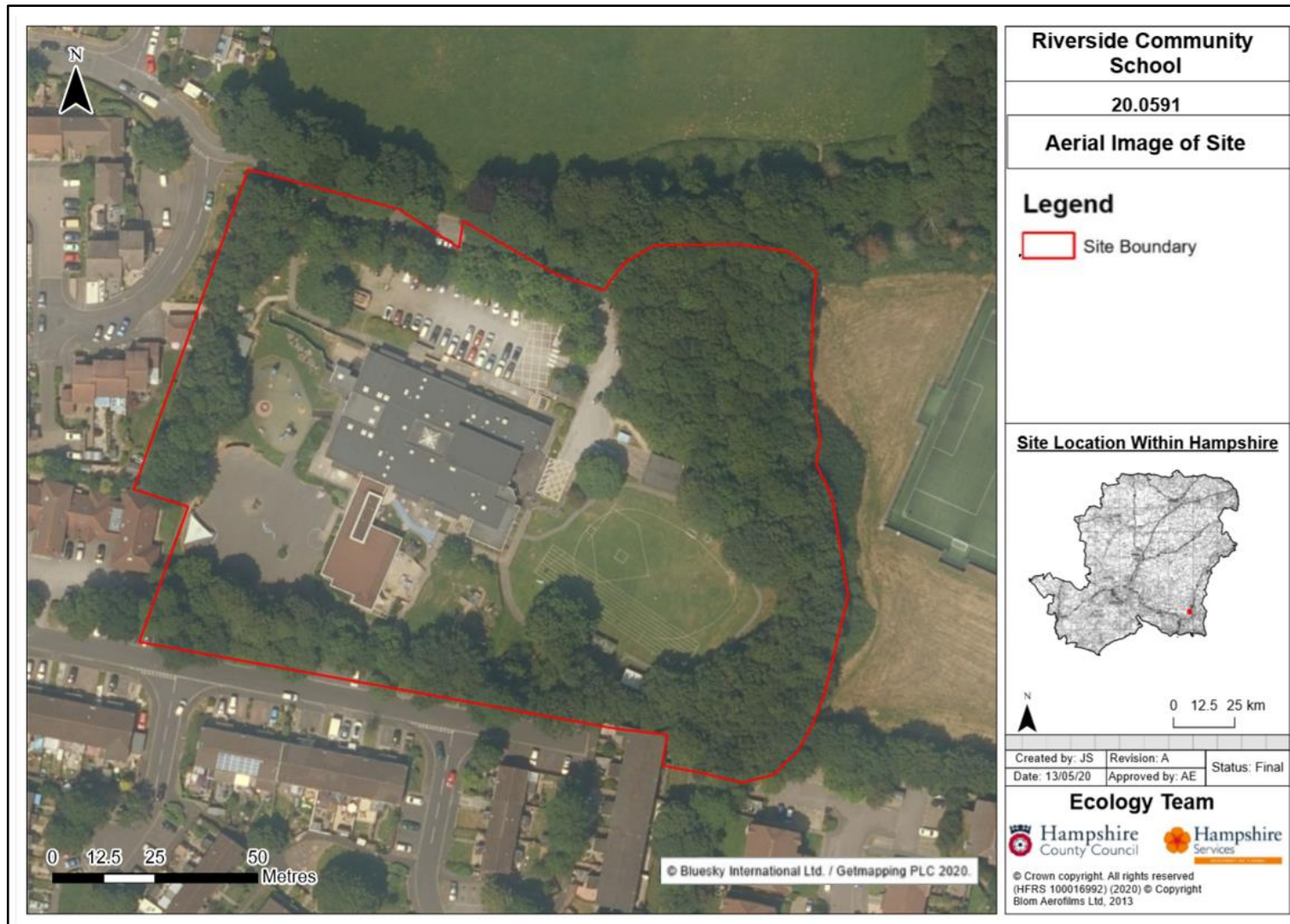


**Figure A2.3:** Aerial image of site

## Appendix 3 – Desk-Based Assessment Findings

**Table A3.1:** Designated sites located within 500m of the site

| Site Name                                | Reason for Designation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Distance and Direction from Site |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Locally Designated Sites</i>          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                  |
| Gundymoor Wood (West) SINC and AWI       | An area of ancient semi-natural woodland and other semi-natural woodland that comprise important community types of restricted distribution in the County, such as yew woods and alder swamp woods.<br>Ancient semi-natural woodland listed on the AWI.                                                                              | 100m NE                          |
| Johnston's Coppice SINC and AWI          | An area of ancient semi-natural woodland<br>Ancient semi-natural woodland listed on the AWI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 280m NE                          |
| Gundymoor Woodland (Main) SINC and AWI   | An area of ancient semi-natural woodland<br>Ancient semi-natural woodland listed on the AWI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 292m NE                          |
| Littlepark Wood SINC and AWI             | An area of ancient semi-natural woodland and other semi-natural woodland that comprise important community types of restricted distribution in the County, such as yew woods and alder swamp woods.<br>Supports notable species hazel dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> .<br>Ancient semi-natural woodland listed on the AWI. | 360m E                           |
| Meadow adjacent to Johnston's Copse SINC | An area of ancient semi-natural woodland.<br>The site also contains semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland.<br>Wetlands that support a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.                                                 | 430m NE                          |

**Table A3.2:** Protected and notable species located within 500m of the site

| Common name          | Taxon name                       | Details                 | Distance and direction from site |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Bats</i>          |                                  |                         |                                  |
| Pipistrelle species  | <i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.          | Field Observation; 2002 | 50m SW                           |
| Pipistrelle          | <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> | Bat Detector; 2011      | 175m E                           |
| Natterer's bat       | <i>Myotis nattereri</i>          | Bat Detector; 2011      | 175m E                           |
| Soprano pipistrelle  | <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>     | Bat Detector; 2011      | 175m E                           |
| Pipistrelle species  | <i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.          | Roosting; 1998          | 375m S                           |
| Pipistrelle species  | <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> | Bat Detector; 2017      | 400m E                           |
| Serotine             | <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>       | Bat Detector; 2017      | 400m E                           |
| Soprano pipistrelle  | <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>     | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Pipistrelle          | <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Brandt's Bat         | <i>Myotis brandtii</i>           | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Alcathoe Bat         | <i>Myotis alcathoe</i>           | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Brown long-eared bat | <i>Plecotus auritus</i>          | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Whiskered bat        | <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>         | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Natterer's bat       | <i>Myotis nattereri</i>          | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |
| Serotine             | <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>       | Harp Trap; 2018         | 525m NE                          |

| Common name              | Taxon name                       | Details                       | Distance and direction from site |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Birds</i>             |                                  |                               |                                  |
| Curlew                   | <i>Numenius arquata</i>          | Field Records; 2017           | 450m S,<br>475m S,<br>525m SE    |
| Dark-Bellied Brent Goose | <i>Branta bernicla</i>           | Field Record; 2017            | 575m S                           |
| <i>Plants</i>            |                                  |                               |                                  |
| Wild Strawberry          | <i>Fragaria vesca</i>            | Field Observation; 2006       | 275m NE                          |
| Lesser Spearwort         | <i>Ranunculus flammula</i>       | Field Observation; 2004       | 375m E                           |
| Wood-Sorrel              | <i>Oxalis acetosella</i>         | Field Observation; 1998; 2004 | 375m E                           |
| Sanicle                  | <i>Sanicula europaea</i>         | Field Observation; 1998; 2004 | 375m E                           |
| Heath Speedwell          | <i>Veronica officinalis</i>      | Field Observation; 1998       | 375m E                           |
| Ragged-Robin             | <i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>        | Field Observation; 2004       | 375m E                           |
| Mousetail                | <i>Myosurus minimus</i>          | Field Observation; 2015       | 375m S                           |
| Alder Silk-Moss          | <i>Plagiothecium latebricola</i> | Field Observation; 2001       | 375m E                           |
| Nees' Pellia             | <i>Pellia neesiana</i>           | Field Observation; 2001       | 375m E                           |
| Handsome Woollywort      | <i>Trichocolea tomentella</i>    | Field Observation; 2001       | 375m E                           |
| Wood-Sorrel              | <i>Oxalis acetosella</i>         | Field Observation; 2017       | 425m E                           |
| Sanicle                  | <i>Sanicula europaea</i>         | Field Observation; 2017       | 425m E                           |
| Common Valerian          | <i>Valeriana officinalis</i>     | Field Observation; 2017       | 425m E                           |