



Habitats and Protected Species

PBA was also commissioned to complete a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) of the Northney Marina site. This included a site visit during which an extended Phase 1 habitat survey was completed alongside an initial assessment of buildings to determine levels of roosting bat potential. This was followed by further activity/emergence bat surveys of the office building (the Roundhouse) which is proposed for redevelopment into residential units, and which is the subject of the PD Application. The aim of these surveys was to provide information relating to any ecological constraints/opportunities associated with the redevelopment project.

The field surveys found the Marina site to be dominated by artificial and/or heavily managed habitats (buildings, hard-standing and amenity grassland) that are typically species-poor and widespread in southern England. The Roundhouse was, however, found to have features with the potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds.

Further surveys for bats were undertaken in summer 2016 following the initial building assessment. The 'Roundhouse' was found to support roosting bats, with small numbers of soprano pipistrelles (a common and widespread species) emerging from the roof/soffit area during the dusk survey in June 2016. The survey data and levels of activity recorded was indicative of a small roost used by low numbers of bats on an occasional or transitory basis. Due to the presence of a bat roost, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) may be required if the roof and/or soffit features being used by bats are affected by the proposed redevelopment. Given the likely low conservation status of this roost, it may be possible to undertake any works under the Low-Impact Class Licensing system. In either licensing approach, in order to secure the Licence, mitigation measures would need to be defined to ensure the favourable conservation status of the bats using the building. This would likely involve timing of works affecting roosting features to when the bats are least sensitive to disturbance, in addition to ensuring that existing roosting features are retained and/or replaced.

Further survey for other species (e.g. nesting birds and reptiles) will not be required providing the development footprint remains focussed within the Roundhouse and surrounding hard-standing and by adopting sensitive working practices, such as appropriate timing of works to avoid bird nesting features and/or the bird-breeding season.

Conclusion

The proposed development site sits within a potentially sensitive location due to its proximity to Chichester and Langstone Harbour Ramsar and SPA and the Solent Maritime SAC. The redevelopment of the site to residential use has the potential to indirectly impact the designated areas around the site through increased recreational use of the coastline (e.g. dog-walking), resulting in increased disturbance to wintering bird populations. However, the development will contribute to the SRMS to fund monitoring and management of recreational issues across the Solent Maritime sites, in accordance with local plan policy. In addition, the timing of the construction/conversion works will necessarily take account of the proximity of the wintering bird areas of interest. Mitigation required to avoid or minimise impacts on common species of breeding bird and small numbers of non-breeding bats will be integrated into the proposed scheme; in relation to bats a Licence may also be required to allow derogation from the legislation that protects bats and their roosts.

Yours sincerely,

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For and on behalf of
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