

Ecological Appraisal

Report for:

**Hampshire County Council –
Property Services**

**Morelands Primary School,
Crookhorn Lane, Purbrook
Waterlooville, PO7 5QL**

Reclad of the main block

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SUMMARY

This report constitutes an assessment of the potential impacts arising from the proposal and site set out below and provides recommendations to ensure that this proposal can reasonably avoid or mitigate such effects identified. If the proposal differs from that set out below, then this assessment and recommendations may not be applicable. Furthermore, the assessment and recommendations are based on surveys which may only be considered valid for up to two years following the date of this report.

- Hampshire County Council proposes to undertake recladding works to the main school building at Morelands Primary School, Waterloooville. An ecological appraisal was undertaken with respect to the proposals.
- An initial site visit identified a small numbers of features on the building of limited suitability for supporting roosting bats, comprising gaps in the wooden cladding of the flat roofed structure. One of these gaps was observed to be being used by nesting blue tit. Overall the building was assessed to have low – but not negligible – potential to support roosting bats.
- A phase 2 bat emergence survey was undertaken on the evening of 12 May 2016 and no bats were seen to emerge from the building. Extensive external lighting is present around the building substantially limiting the suitability of the site. It is therefore considered that roosting bats are likely absent from the structure.
- All species of bird, including active nests and eggs, are legally protected. Therefore it will be necessary to ensure that the nest is inactive before works proceed.
- Replacement nesting provision in the form of bird nest boxes should be installed on the building once the work is complete, to ensure no net loss of biodiversity in line with government and local policy requirements..

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

Hampshire County Council Ecology Team (HCCET) has been commissioned to carry out an ecological appraisal at Morelands Primary School, Crookhorn Lane, Purbrook, Waterlooville, PO7 5QL.

1.1.1 Proposal

Hampshire County Council (HCC) proposes to reclad the main school building, as indicated on Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Proposals are to undertake works to building 001 and associated outbuildings

1.1.2 Requirement for Ecological Survey/Assessment

Consultation with HCCET has identified the potential for the site to support legally-protected species.

1.1.3 Limitations to Report

There were no access or weather constraints during the survey.

1.2 Site Description

Moreland Primary School is situated off Crookhorn Lane in the Purbrook suburb of Waterlooville and comprises a typical urban school site containing hard standing and managed grassland with scattered trees and scrubby woodland surrounding a complex of modern buildings. A golf course occurs to the south of the site and a recreational park occurs to the west.

2 DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

2.1 Methods

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping was used in order to identify all records of protected species and habitats within a 500 metre (m) 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.

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'*.

2.2 Results

2.2.1 Designated Sites

There are eight non-statutory designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and two sites designated under the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy within the 500m data search radius. **Table 1** provides details of these sites.

Table 1 Designated sites located within 500m of Morelands Primary School.

Site Name	Distance and Direction from Site (km)	Reason for Designation
Fort Purbrook SINC	0.42 km S	Agriculturally unimproved grassland and sites which support one or more notable species.
Fort Purbrook Paddock 1 (Havant) SINC	0.28 km S	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland and which supports one or more notable species.
Fort Purbrook Paddock 2 (Havant) SINC	0.47 km S	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland and which supports one or more notable species.
Fort Purbrook Paddock 3 (Havant) SINC	0.49 km S	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland.

Site Name	Distance and Direction from Site (km)	Reason for Designation
Portsmouth Golf Course West SINC	0.12 km SW	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland and which have become impoverished through inappropriate management but which retain sufficient elements of relic unimproved grassland to enable recovery.
Portsmouth Golf Course East SINC	0.28 km SE	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland and which have become impoverished through inappropriate management but which retain sufficient elements of relic unimproved grassland to enable recovery.
Purbrook Park Wood SINC	0.24 km W	Ancient semi-natural woodland.
Sandy Dell SINC	0.39 km NW	Ancient semi-natural woodland.

2.2.2 Protected Species

A review of the biological database held by HBIC, as well as records of protected species submitted in association with local planning applications, revealed the presence of a small number of protected and notable species within a 500m radius of the site. Relevant records are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2 Protected and Notable species located within 500m of Morelands Primary School.

Species	Details	Distance and Direction from Site
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Three field observations, 2006 to 2007.	0.34 km SW
Eurasian Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	Single record of a road casualty, 2009.	0.50 km S
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Grounded individual, 2013.	0.42 km W
	Grounded individual, 2014.	0.23 km E
Pipistrelle bat species <i>Pipistrellus</i> spp.	Roost, 1998.	0.27 km NE

3 FIELD BASED ASSESSMENT

A site visit was made on 4 May 2016. All external parts of the structure were inspected visually to identify potential bat access, egress and roosting features. Such features include: missing, slipped, broken or bowed roof materials; gaps within soffits; gaps behind fascias; gaps/holes within brickwork; louvers; lifted lead flashing and gaps around window and door casements. Consideration was also given to the possibility of nesting birds and evidence of bird nesting was searched for. Surveyors were equipped with a high-powered torch and 10x42 binoculars.

3.1 Results

The building comprises a typical SCOLA type building. It contains a mixture of single and two storey elements. The structure is construction containing both brick and wooden clad elements.

The external inspection revealed small number of gaps within the structure:

- A gap in the wooden cladding above the first floor windows toward the centre of the western aspect of building;
- Damaged wooden cladding to the south of the protruding structure above the single storey part of the building, visible from the south; and
- A hole in cladding on the south western corner of the structure. A blue tit was observed to be nesting within this feature.

The location of these features is shown on the plan (Figure 2) alongside photographs of the structure.



Figure 2: Approximate Location of features identified on school building



Figure 3: Photographs of the building. Above right shows gap in cladding identified on the west of the building

4 PHASE 2 BAT SURVEYS

4.1 Methods

Further to the field-based assessment a single bat emergence survey was carried out on the 12 June 2016 using two surveyors.

The surveyors were positioned in order to enable full coverage of the identified gaps in the cladding. The emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for 1.5 hours after sunset, as detailed within Table 3 below.

Table 3 Phase 2 bat survey timing and weather conditions

Survey Date	Survey Type	Duration	Weather Conditions	Sunset/sunrise Time
12 May 2016	Emergence	20:30-22:15	15°C, dry, 40% cloud light wind	20:45

4.2 Results

No bats were seen to emerge from any of the features. A single (likely) common pipistrelle *Pipistrells pipistrellus* pass was noted at 21:40 from the survey location to the west of the structure. No other bats were encountered.

As shown on Figure 4 below, extensive external lighting surrounds the building, reducing the likelihood that bats would use the building for roosting, and it is therefore concluded that roosting bats are likely absent from the structure.



Figure 4: Extensive external lighting surrounds the building

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Designated sites

Given the limited scale of works and because the school is at least 100m from the nearest designated site, it is considered that there is negligible potential for impacts to designated sites.

5.2 Bats

In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is found during works, all works must cease immediately and professional ecological advice should be sought. In this event it is likely that a licence would be required from Natural England in order to avoid unlawful actions. The process of obtaining a licence can take up to ten weeks, and is subject to requirements of adequate assessment.

5.3 Breeding birds

The building currently supports nesting birds. All species of bird and their eggs are legally protected and it is therefore necessary to ensure that the nest is vacant before works commence. HCCET can monitor the nest and it may be blocked up when confirmed to be inactive.

National and local policy requires planning decisions to work to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity, and net gains should be sought where possible. Therefore, it is recommended that once the recladding work is complete, a minimum of two new nest boxes, of a type designed for tits and / or general urban bird species, are installed on suitable building locations at high level. We would be happy to provide detailed information on suitable boxes if you require.

6 REFERENCES

Collins J (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.