APP/10/0029

PBRS Ecology Site Visit Report Form

Site	Bosmere Junior School, South Street, Havant
Date of visit	3rd November 2009
Ecology Group officer	Sarah Warriss
PBRS contact	Andrew Lenthall
Proposal for site	Extension of boundary fencing
Purpose of visit	Ecological scoping

Report

The Built Environment and Grounds

The site consists of a school building of fairly modern construction in the centre, surrounded mainly by playground (hardstanding) to the south west, playing field (amenity grassland) to the north west and a block of mixed woodland/nature area to the east. A strip of woodland runs along the western and north western boundaries of the site, and from the GIS mapping (although this part of the site was not observed during the visit) it appears that in the north west of the site there may be drains/ditches and wetter areas (but these are not in the vicinity of the works). The playing fields in the north west of the school site currently form part of the Brent Geese Strategy Area (areas which Brent Geese associated with the European designated sites of the Solent area might use at certain times as additional grazing areas). The proposed works will not impact this designation.

The Development Site

The development involves the extension of the existing boundary fence around the eastern and north eastern sides of the site boundary. The route takes in an area of amenity grassland in the north (photo a), a small bramble/scrub area (photo b) as it moves southwards and then has to cut through or around the woodland area to the east (photo c) before rejoining amenity grassland in the south east of the site (photo d).



Photo A

VALID APPLICATION

31 MAR 2010

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

07 APR 2010

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Photo B



Photo C



Photo D

The Surrounding Area and Designated Sites

The site is surrounded by main roads to the south and west and by roads/residential/built up areas to the north and east. The habitats on site are fairly isolated from habitats outside of the site and there are no designated sites in the vicinity of the school site which could be impacted by the proposals.

Protected species, habitats and recommendations

Amenity grassland areas to north and south of fenceline (A and D)

There are no concerns with works in these areas as only amenity grassland will be impacted and it is understood that the new fenceline will be located against the existing fence/wall.

Bramble scrub area (B)

This area as a scrub/rougher grassland interface, connected with the woodland, does have the potential to be used by small numbers of reptiles, and may be used by breeding birds. I would suggest that ideally the fenceline would be located in front of the scrub, thus avoiding the requirement for any vegetation removal. Additional scrub planting in front of the fence could screen it from view and be an added security measure. If vegetation removal is required here, the timings and restrictions detailed below will apply.

Woodland area (C)

The woodland area consists of various deciduous tree species and quite a bit of Yew. There is an understorey of several scrub species including holly, laural and rose species. There is a pathway through the centre of the woodland where the woodland is quite open. The woodland area does have the potential to support various protected species that need to be taken into consideration when designing and implementing this scheme, and various trees may be impacted by the works, which needs to be addressed from both an ecology point of view and also from an arboricultural perspective to avoid damaging the trees themselves. It is understood that generally the intention is for the new fence to follow the site boundary closely, and along much of the length of the boundary wall (eastern boundary) there is an existing gap where the fence could be located (see photo below). However there are various places within the woodland area that it may be necessary to avoid working in, in order to avoid ecological impacts, and instead to divert the line of the fence. Similarly, there may be timing restrictions in certain areas, as described below.



Eastern boundary - Gap between existing vegetation and boundary wall.

- **Breeding birds** may be using any of the trees and scrub vegetation on the site. Any removal of, or works to, such vegetation needs to be carried out outside of the bird breeding season, i.e. outside of the period March to August inclusive (though breeding birds are protected at all times, even outside of this period). In the case that an active nest was discovered it would need to be left in situ, undisturbed, until any young had fledged.
- Many of the trees are fairly young and lack features making them suitable for use by species like **bats**. Other trees present are maturing and have more complex structures and features which may make them suitable. I do not consider that the older, larger trees along the eastern boundary are particularly suitable for bats. However there is a tree along the northern edge of the woodland which is growing right up against the northern boundary fence. If this tree, and any others with cracks, hollows, significant ivy covering for example, are to be impacted by the works, then **further bat work may be required**. I would advise that impacting any such trees (particularly that tree on the northern boundary) is avoided by altering the location of the new fenceline. This will avoid the requirement for surveying, and for mitigation and possible requirement for licensing (which will affect the timescale of the works).
- **Reptiles and amphibians** may be using the woodland/rougher grassland/scrubby areas in fairly low numbers and the woodland presents good habitat for these species particularly for hibernating. The ground is rough in several places, with mats of ivy and lots of areas of dead wood/cut logs which may be used as hibernacula. There are several records of stag beetle in the vicinity of this site and these (Biodiversity Action Plan) species may also use the dead wood in areas like this. Generally the works ideally need to avoid such areas of ground with features such as wood piles, logs, stumps and mats of vegetation covering undulating ground, so that these features can be left undisturbed. The main area where this may be a problem is in the north west of the woodland, where the fence may have to come right in front of the woodland vegetation and follow the line of the footpath instead, in order to avoid disturbing the habitat. **Whereas above ground vegetation trimming needs to be carried out outside of the bird breeding season, any disturbance to the ground itself or features such as those described which could be being used as hibernacula, will need to be restricted to outside of the hibernation period, i.e. carried out between March and October inclusive.** This should ideally be supervised by an ecologist and any animals found can be carefully moved out of the area impacted by the works. There are a couple of trees which are very close to the eastern boundary and have large stem/root mounds at their bases, which could provide hibernation opportunities. I would advise that these should not be disturbed during the works due to the damage it would cause to the trees themselves, and due to the species that may be using these features. Furthermore, several **wasps nests** were encountered during the visit and it is suspected that these may be located in/around these mounds. For this reason, and the mature (bat potential) tree on the northern boundary, I would again suggest that the fenceline does not follow the site boundary around the north east corner of the woodland, but cuts the corner off and comes between trees or in front of trees, and perhaps could be

screened by additional deterrent scrub (e.g. holly) planting.

I would suggest that this site and proposal does not necessarily need further, full protected species surveys to be carried out, so long as the works can be designed and implemented in a way to avoid impacts. I would suggest that the Ecology group is consulted on the next stage of the design to discuss the exact layout of the fenceline on site, and in more detail look at which trees/features/areas to avoid on the ground.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for provision of bat/bird roosting/nesting opportunities on the trees in the woodland area could be investigated. Any additional planting should be native. Management of the amenity grassland could be altered to provide rougher grassland around the site boundaries, which would provide enhanced habitat for invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals.

Action Required

The above information needs to be taken into consideration in designing the scheme and the Ecology Group should continue to be involved in the design and implementation of this scheme.

Further Surveys Required

Depending on how the scheme is designed and implemented, further surveys could be required but this is not known at this stage.

Signed……Sarah Warriss…… Date…18 November 2009.