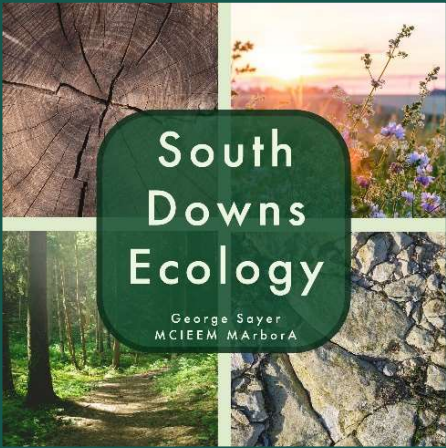




Ecological Impact Assessment

The Cowplain School,
Waterlooville



South
Downs
Ecology

George Sayer
MCIEEM MARBORA

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Summary

The applicant, The Cowplain School has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposals for the proposed new theatre on land at Cowplain School, Waterloooville, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

The PEA and PBRA were conducted on 1st April 2025. The site consists of a carpark with access road and footpaths, and a section modified grassland playing/ amenity area with 2no. large trees. A clump of aspen line the northern boundary and a coniferous hedgerow lies just off-site to the north. An area of modified grassland and bramble scrub is proposed to be planted with trees.

The proposals are expected to have a negligible impact on ecology; the habitats in the site footprint are of very low distinctiveness other than the trees, and offer minimal potential for protected species.

The two trees offer some limited bat roost and bird nesting suitability. An inspection of the trees by tree surgeons shall be undertaken prior to works to ensure these are not in use by birds or bats. Compensation measures for the loss of these features are included in accordance with best practice. No further protected species potential was noted.

With mitigation recommendations followed, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon designated sites, habitats or protected species in accordance with local and national planning policy. The application of enhancements on site would also result in a net gain and would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan Policies. A separate Biodiversity Net Gain assessment details how this gain would be achieved.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The applicant, The Cowplain School has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposals for the proposed new theatre at Cowplain School, Waterloooville, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.2 The appraisal was completed, and the following EclA report authored by George Sayer - *BSc (Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MA ArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN - Ecologist*.
- 1.3 This appraisal consisted of a site visit to identify existing habitats on site; the habitats have been categorised broadly following the UK Habitats Classification Guidance V2.01 (*UKHab Ltd 2023*). In addition, an assessment of habitats and structures on the site was made to determine their potential for protected species. Following this an on-site and desktop assessment was undertaken, of the likelihood of National or European Protected Species being present on or near site, and the constraints these may pose on the development proposals.
- 1.4 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.5 The site consists of a carpark with access road and footpaths, and an area of modified grassland forming part of the play / amenity area of the school, with 2no. large trees present. A clump of aspen line the northern boundary and a coniferous hedgerow lies just off-site to the north. An area of modified grassland and bramble scrub is also included, to be planted with trees.
- 1.6 The site is bound by Hart Plain Avenue, and several residential and commercial properties to the north, residential estates to the east and south. Hart Plain Junior school lies to the west, with a new care facility also being constructed on a field to the immediate west of the site.
- 1.7 The site lies in the centre of the Waterloooville-Cowplain built-up area. The immediate surroundings are largely residential; however Park Wood lies 250.0 m south, and an area of woodland known as the Queen's Inclosure, with the Hermitage Stream are noted beginning 375.0 m east, just east of the A3. Waterloooville Golf Club is 1.3km east.

Proposals

- 1.8 The proposals are for the erection of a school theatre building and changing rooms to serve adjacent sports facilities, with associated landscaping, planting, and ancillary works.
- 1.9 An area of modified grassland and bramble scrub is proposed to be planted with trees.

2.0 Scope of Appraisal

- 1. Identify the habitats and vegetation on site;*
- 2. Identify habitat which may have potential for protected species;*
- 3. Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
- 4. Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there are any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
- 5. Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures; and*
- 6. Provide suggestions as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*

- 2.1 This appraisal and assessment are deemed to be relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site. Should the site or proposals alter, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

3.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was updated in December 2024 sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'
- 3.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.3 The site is within the Havant Borough within Hampshire County; the borough has just finished consulting on its Draft Building a Better Future Plan. This contains Policy 4: Infrastructure and Environmental Mitigation to Support Development.
- 3.4 The current adopted documents are the Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations Plan (2014). This includes the relevant policies:
- Policy CS11 Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough: Planning permission will be granted for development that:
 1. Ensures the key landscape and built form principles set out in the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment are protected and where possible enhanced by partnership working with developers, groups and the wider community.
 2. Protects and where possible enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory designated landscape, habitats and features of biological, hydrological or geological interest. Protection and enhancement will be achieved by appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures including wardening, education and information and the creation of new habitats, water bodies/courses planting of new trees and woodland.
 3. Has particular regard to the following hierarchy of nature conservation designations within the borough (as identified on the Proposals Map): (i) Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar [International]. (ii) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves [National]. (iii) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), other Ancient Woodland not identified in (ii) above [Local].

4. Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough's statutory and nonstatutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest.
5. Supports an ongoing programme of survey of habitats and species and designation of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
6. Incorporates partnership working with conservation organisations to improve public understanding of biodiversity and to manage public access to designated sites, particularly on the coast, to reduce harm to nature conservation interests.
7. Incorporates partnership working with landowners and developers to ensure land management practices restore, enhance and where appropriate create new valued landscapes, habitats and their soil structure, particularly the ancient woodland remnants of the Forest of Bere and coastal salt marsh.
8. Protects wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors to prevent the fragmentation of existing habitats and to allow species, for example Brent Geese, to respond to the impacts of climate change by making provision for habitat adaptation e.g. coastal managed realignment and species migration.
9. Maintains undeveloped gaps between the settlements of Emsworth/Havant; Havant/Waterlooville; Havant/Portsmouth; Emsworth/Westbourne and Leigh Park/Rowlands Castle as shown on the Proposals Map.
10. Protects the best and most versatile agricultural land that has the greatest potential for local food security.
11. Responds to the emerging evidence from the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, the published recommendations, and future related research.

Legislation

3.5 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this EclA includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996; and
- The Environment Act 2021.

3.6 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

3.7 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.

3.8 All widespread reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with rarer reptiles receiving further protection under EU regulation. Reptiles must also be given consideration under the NERC Act 2006 as part of the planning process.

3.9 Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a GCN or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.

3.10 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to harm badgers or disturb badgers and their setts.

3.11 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. It is an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

- 3.12 In the UK, dormice are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Dormice are also a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.13 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.
- 3.14 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory from 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%.

4.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

- 4.1 A desktop study was conducted using the government 'MAGIC' Map GIS tool; a search was carried out for all international (Ramsar, SAC, SPA) and national statutory designated sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR) within 2.0 km of the site; and non-statutory designated sites (SNCI) and priority habitats within 1.0 km of the site. These have been summarised below and their significance considered in the context of the development proposals. A search was also carried out to identify features of ecological interest in the area, such as water bodies and ancient woodland. Given the overall scale and nature of the existing habitats on-site and the proposals, a full data search from SxBRC was not considered appropriate. This is in accordance with CIEEM current guidance for such projects (CIEEM, 2020).

Site Visit

- 4.2 A site visit was conducted on 1st April 2025, during suitable weather conditions (12°C, WF2, 10% cloud). Habitats were recorded according to the UK-Hab Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual, Version 2.01 (UKHab Ltd. 2023).
- 4.3 During the survey any constraints with regard to protected species were considered; the site was considered for its potential for protected species even when signs of these species were not noted at the time of survey.
- 4.4 Points of interest for protected species have been plotted into the Site Habitat Plan and within target notes. Protected and Notable Species considered as part of this assessment include but are not limited to:
- Bats – Foraging, Commuting, Roosting, Swarming and Hibernating
 - Badgers – Sett-building, Commuting and Foraging
 - Dormice – Nesting and Commuting
 - Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians such as Common Toads – Terrestrial Active and Hibernation Habitat and Aquatic Habitat, Including Commuting
 - Reptiles – Terrestrial Active and Hibernation Habitat
 - Rare or Notable Invertebrates
 - Rare or Notable Plants
 - Water Voles – Foraging and Shelter Habitats
 - Otters – Foraging and Shelter Habitats
 - White-clawed Crayfish

- 4.5 A bat roost assessment was conducted following the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2023). Trees were inspected for features conducive to bat and bird roosting, including knot holes, limb failures, cavities, splits and heavy ivy cover; evidence of bats such as droppings, staining or squeaking were recorded. Trees were classified into FAR – further assessment required, PRF-I, trees suitable only for individual bats or very small numbers of bats, and PRF-M, suitable for multiple bats and therefore may be used by a maternity colony (refer to Table 6.2 of the Guidelines, 2023).
- 4.6 The site and its immediate surroundings were searched for badger signs such as snuffle holes, tracks, push-throughs, trapped fur and setts.
- 4.7 Due to the site visit being carried out over one day, it is possible that some signs of protected species may not be apparent within this short timeframe. This is a constraint recognised within best practice guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of protected species.

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 4.8 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.
- 4.9 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined Geographic context such as:
- International and European;
 - National;
 - Regional;
 - County;
 - District;
 - Local;
 - Site Level; and
 - Negligible.

4.10 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:

- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
- The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- The sites social and economic value.

4.11 Specifically in the case of bats, the impact assessment has been conducted in accordance with the recently published Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray 2023).

5.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions and Protected Species Assessment

Desktop Study

Designated Sites and Habitats

- 5.1 The following is a summary of all protected and notable wildlife sites, with sites of local, national and international importance recorded within 2.0km of the site. These are divided into statutory and non-statutory; those with full legal protection and those without, but which the Local Planning Authority should still consider when deciding on planning policy and applications. These sites are summarised in tables 1 and 2 below. A description of locally designated sites is also made below.
- 5.2 This information is included so that the site can be considered within the ecological context of the surrounding area, guiding decisions related to habitat change and protected species; these sites are not necessarily representative of the habitat on or surrounding the site and may not be influenced by the proposals.
- 5.3 The MAGIC Map tool shows that the site is within the Nutrient Impact Area; however, as no new residential units are being proposed, nutrient neutrality does not need to be evidenced in this instance. The site is also within the Recreational Impact Area; however, as no new residential units are being proposed, there is no requirement for mitigation of such impacts.

- 5.4 The following statutory designated sites are present within a zone of influence of the proposal site:

Table 1: Statutory Protected Designated Sites

Site Name	Reason for designation	Distance from site
Hazelton Common LNR	<i>Consists of heathland with a series of ponds and woodlands.</i>	1.7 km SW

- 5.5 The following non-statutory designated sites are present within 1.0 km of the proposal site:

Table 2: Non-statutory Protected Designated Sites (SINCs)

Site Name	Reason for designation	Distance from site
<i>Havant Park Wood</i>	<i>Supports veteran oaks with meadows.</i>	0.32km south
<i>The Queens Inclosure</i>	<i>Woodland consisting primarily of pedunculate oak Quercus robur with some yew Taxus baccata and supports a range of rare plants.</i>	0.42km east
<i>Weacock Common</i>	<i>Area of deciduous woodland with glades and ponds</i>	0.65km north
<i>Havant Longwood</i>	<i>A small area of woodland supporting a range of species.</i>	0.88km north

Habitats

Desk Study

- 5.6 Priority Habitats located within 1.0 km of the site include deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.

Site Assessment

- 5.7 The site is given over to the habitats discussed further below.

u1b6 – developed land; sealed surface

- 5.8 The eastern section of the site consists of tarmac carpark with hardstanding footpaths. These surfaces offer **negligible ecological value**.

G4 32 – modified grassland with scattered trees

- 5.9 The western section of the site consists of modified grass areas of low species diversity. Part of the grassland is an amenity area, whilst the furthest west section is the margin of a modern sports pitch, and is currently being used to store soil in a mound. Species include dominant perennial rye *Lolium perenne*, abundant daisy *Bellis perennis*, abundant creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, rare dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., locally frequent Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, rare ragwort *Jacobea vulgaris*, rare creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, occasional yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, rare groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, rare spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* and rare nettle *Urtica dioica*. The habitat is well maintained to a short sward height.
- 5.10 To the east of the site is an area of rougher grassland, which will be used for tree planting to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain. The area is rank and dominated by Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* with occasional common forbs, and encroaching bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. This habitat offers **low ecological value**.
- 5.11 In the centre of the habitat are two large trees, a willow sp. (T01 on the site habitat plan) and poplar *Populus* sp. (T02 on the site habitat plan), whilst along the northern edge of site is a clump of aspen trees *Populus tremula*. This habitat offers **site ecological value**.

H3d – Bramble Scrub

- 5.12 The south-eastern edge of the site contains a bank of brambles. Some of these have been trimmed back. This habitat offers **site ecological value**.

H2b – Non-native hedgerow

- 5.13 Just outside the northern boundary runs a coniferous hedgerow formed of red cedar *Thuja* sp. This habitat offers **negligible ecological value**.

6.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

- 6.1 2no. European Protected Species Mitigation License *EPSML* have been active within 2 km of the site within the past 10 years for the destruction of resting places of brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The closest of these is 1.9km north west (case reference: 2015-11969-EPS-MIT).
- 6.2 The closest area which appears suitable for foraging bats is Park Wood, 0.25 km south.

Site Assessment

- 6.3 The two large trees T01 and T02, which are to be removed to facilitate works, each contained 1-2 woodpecker holes each. These were assessed from the ground and appeared to be relatively shallow features. In addition, the holes would be subject to light disturbance from the school, likely reducing their suitability for bats. No obvious evidence of bats was observed through binoculars, such as droppings or staining. The holes are considered to offer PRF-I, being able to support low numbers of bats but highly unlikely to support larger or permanent roosts.
- 6.4 The entire site is subject to high light levels at night from street lighting and security lighting. The proposal area sits between a modern illuminated sports pitch, parking and classrooms. This significantly reduces the value of the site to foraging and commuting bats. The well-tended nature of the grassland also reduces the value of the site for foraging bats due to lack of flowering plants. The trees might be used for occasional foraging, with the canopies being high enough to avoid light spill to some extent. The habitats are of within the site area only with no suitable connective habitat.
- 6.5 No buildings are to be affected by works. The adjacent building is a modern school building of brick with a flat concrete roof. Whilst this has not been fully assessed it would appear to offer negligible suitability for bats.

Birds

Desk Study

- 6.6 The surrounding area is likely to support a fairly limited range of common garden and hedgerow species such as blackbird *Turdus merula* and dunnoek *Prunella modularis*.

Site Assessment

- 6.7 Within the large trees in the grassland, woodpecker holes were noted in each tree; a full breeding bird survey was not conducted; however no sound of chicks or regular returning birds were noted to suggest active nests. No other nests were noted. The hedgerow and trees on the northern boundary are not to be affected by works and would offer some potential for nesting.

- 6.8 The grassland offers limited value for foraging birds limited to species such as blackbird and robin *Erithacus rubecula*, being well-maintained, low-diversity and subject to frequent disturbance. The bramble bank offers some potential to a range of birds. The habitats on the site are of **site value** to birds overall.

Other Species

- 6.9 No protected species were recorded during the assessment and it is considered the site offers no value for other protected species. The site would be suitable for hedgehogs, but is fenced to all aspects, significantly reducing the likelihood of them being able to access the site.
- 6.10 The area to the south-east would offer some suitability for reptiles and small mammals, mainly in the bramble and rough grass. The area is only to be used for tree planting.

7.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

- 7.1 Given the intervening distances, and the nature of the proposals, any impacts upon local designated sites would be of minor magnitude and highly unlikely to occur. Indirect impacts from traffic pollution during construction to protected sites are considered highly unlikely.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.2 None required.

Residual Impacts

- 7.3 The impacts will be negligible and non-significant.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 7.4 The proposals include the loss of modified grassland and trees. Given the minor scale of the works, such disturbances will only have a **site** impact.
- 7.5 In the absence of mitigation, the northern hedge and trees and further offsite trees could be degraded / damaged by inappropriate storage, access and pollution during works. Impacts would be moderate at the site level.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.6 The proposals must achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the Environment Act (2021). On-site enhancements will provide the 10% gain through mixed scrub planting and enhancement of grassland into neutral wildflower grassland, as well as significant new tree planting on the site.
- 7.7 All construction will be undertaken in accordance with best practice advice with regards to control of dust, noise and emissions. Any chemicals or fuel shall be stored appropriately and on existing surfaces.
- 7.8 Tree protection fencing shall be employed around the northern hedgerow and trees in line with BS5837:2012.

Residual Impacts

- 7.9 With mitigation measures followed, the impacts will be negligible and non-significant.

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 7.10 In the absence of mitigation, there is a potential for a bat to be harmed or killed during works should one be present within a woodpecker hole. The likelihood is considered to be sufficiently low that further survey is not considered appropriate.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.11 Following the current guidelines, the trees shall be inspected by tree surgeons immediately prior to felling. The woodpecker holes shall be inspected with torches and endoscopes under the supervision of a licenced ecologist. The trees shall be searched in their entireties for any other features. Should any sign of bats be present, works shall cease and a suitably qualified ecologist shall determine an appropriate course of action.
- 7.12 Any works shall be undertaken with due consideration and measures to minimise dust and noise. No works shall take place externally between 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise. Any external works lighting shall be angled down and into the site area.
- 7.13 Any new lighting, if necessary, shall accord with the principles of the BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23. All lighting shall be angled down and away from boundaries and shall be subject to intelligent controls or sensors to avoid unnecessary lighting at night.

Residual Impacts

- 7.14 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

- 7.15 There is potential a birds nest could be disturbed during works, including within the woodpecker holes.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.16 All tree removal required will take place outside of the bird breeding season (removal during September to February inclusive). If this is not possible, a detailed check of the trees for birds' nests must be undertaken; any nests found must be assessed for activity, and any active nests afforded a 5.0 m disturbance buffer and retained until the nest has fledged. This check would be undertaken concurrently with the check for bats.

Residual Impacts

- 7.17 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Other Species

Potential Impacts

- 7.18 None foreseen. The area to the south-east would offer some suitability for reptiles and small mammals, mainly in the bramble and rough grass. The area is only to be used for tree planting.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.19 None required.

Residual Impacts

- 7.20 None foreseen.

8.0 Ecological Enhancements

8.1 The proposals are subject to Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. As described above, how this will be achieved is detailed in a separate assessment, which shall be secured by condition. The following non-metric ecological enhancements have been proposed as suited to the location and the proposals and would result in a Biodiversity Net Gain, in accordance with Local and National Policy.

- Addition of integrated bird boxes to the new theatre, or tree-mounted box to a retained tree – this could include boxes for swifts if on the building, and predator-proof bird boxes if on a tree;
- Addition of integrated bat box to the new theatre, or tree-mounted box to a retained tree; a single crevice box facing south;
- Addition of integrated insect boxes to the new theatre or boundary planting; a bug hotel or insect tower would be appropriate;

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 Overall, the proposals are considered to represent a negligible impact upon ecology and no further surveys are recommended.
- 9.2 The two existing trees within the site which require removal, offer suitability for support roosting bats (assessed as PRF-I). A pre-works check of the trees by the tree surgeon prior to works shall ensure no bats are harmed.
- 9.3 The proposals present a low risk of disturbing nesting birds which nest in the two trees mentioned above. A full check of the two trees for nesting birds, alongside the bat check would ensure no risk of harm.
- 9.4 No significant effects are anticipated upon any designated sites or priority habitats.
- 9.5 With mitigation and enhancements taken into account, the proposals, will not negatively affect habitats and protected species and will ultimately result in net gain, with significant new tree planting of a range of native species proposed. A separate Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment details how a compliant 10% Gain will be achieved.
- 9.6 The new tree planting alongside other enhancements such as mixed scrub and grassland enhancement, will achieve a significant gain for a range of species such as birds, invertebrates and bats.
- 9.7 Should the prescriptions herein be adhered to, the proposals would accord with legislation, national and local planning policy.

10.0 References

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11.0 Appendix 1 – Site Photos

Photo 1 – Carpark view looking east.



Photo 2 – View of the grassland with trees.



Photo 3 - Detail of woodpecker hole in one of the willows.



Photo 4 – Detail of modified grassland, its well-tended nature obvious.



Photo 5 – Northern boundary hedgerow.



Photo 6 – Access to the modified grassland, with line of aspen noted to the right.



Photo 7 – Western part of the grassland, currently being used to store soil.



Photo 8 – Adjacent buildings with no significant bat roost potential, and significant lighting.



Photo 9 – Rank modified grassland to south-east.



Photo 10 – Bramble scrub to south-east (partly cut-back).



12.0 Site Aerial



13.0 Site Habitat Plan

