



ecosupport



Author(s):

Client:

Report	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Site Name	Forres Sandle Manor School
Author(s)	Hannah Yates BSc (Hons) & Leah Murphy & Abby Pidgen BSc (Hons) MSc
Checked by	Lyndsey Barratt BSc (Hons) PGCert ACIEEM and Madison Errington BSc (Hons) ACIEEM
Client	Rob Tasker, Forres Sandle Manor School Ltd.
Date of Issue	5 th December 2023
Status	Final Copy

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 BRIEF	5
1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION & LOCATION	5
1.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	6
2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY	7
2.1 LEGISLATION	7
2.1.1 <i>The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) 2017 (as amended)</i>	7
2.1.2 <i>The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)</i>	7
2.1.3 <i>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)</i>	7
2.1.4 <i>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)</i>	8
2.1.5 <i>Protection of Badgers Act</i>	8
2.1.6 <i>The Environment Act (2021)</i>	8
2.2 POLICY	9
2.2.1 <i>National Planning Policy</i>	9
2.2.2 <i>Local – New Forest District Council</i>	10
3.0 METHODOLOGY	12
3.1 DESK STUDY	12
3.1.1 <i>Designated Sites</i>	12
3.2 FIELD SURVEY	12
3.2.1 <i>Habitats</i>	12
3.2.2 <i>Badger</i>	12
3.2.3 <i>Bats</i>	12
3.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	13
3.3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	13
3.3.2 <i>Valuation</i>	14
3.4 LIMITATIONS	14
4.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE	15
4.1 DESIGNATED SITES.....	15
4.2 VEGETATION SURVEY RESULTS.....	15
4.2.1 <i>Modified Grassland (g4) – frequently mown (Secondary code 108), vegetated garden (Secondary code 828)</i>	15
4.2.2 <i>Artificial Unvegetated / Unsealed surface (u1c)</i>	15
4.2.3 <i>Buildings (u1b5)</i>	16
4.3 BAT SURVEY RESULTS.....	16
4.3.1 <i>PRA (Buildings)</i>	16
4.3.2 <i>PRA (Trees)</i>	19
4.4 BADGERS	19
4.5 BREEDING AND NESTING BIRDS	19
5.0 LIKELY ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS IN ABSENCE OF MITIGATION	20
5.1 INTRODUCTION	20
5.2 SITE PREPARATION AND CONSTRUCTION	20
5.2.1 <i>Impacts to Habitats</i>	20
5.2.2 <i>Impacts to Wildlife</i>	20

5.3 SITE OPERATION 20

 5.3.1 *Impacts to Wildlife*..... 20

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS 21

6.1 INTRODUCTION 21

6.2 BATS 21

 6.2.1 *Roosting Bats – Buildings* 21

 6.2.2 *Sensitive Lighting*..... 21

 6.2.3 *Enhancements* 21

6.3 BADGERS 22

6.4 BREEDING & NESTING BIRDS..... 22

 6.4.1 *Mitigation*..... 22

 6.4.2 *Enhancement*..... 22

6.5 HABITATS..... 22

 6.5.1 *Protection of Trees*..... 22

7.0 CONCLUSION 23

8.0 REFERENCES 24

Executive Summary

Ecosupport Ltd was instructed by Rob Tasker, Forres Sandle Manor School Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the buildings and associated garden areas at Forres Sandle Manor School, Station Rd, Fordingbridge, SP6 1DS. This was required to identify any potentially important ecological features that may be affected by the proposed development. As part of this assessment, the following surveys were undertaken:

- Desktop search for designated sites and protected species within 1 km
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (July 2023)
- Preliminary Roost Assessment (July 2023)

The following important ecological features were identified on site following the conclusion of the above survey work and may be subject to adverse impacts in the absence of suitable mitigation / compensation:

- Low potential for roosting bats (Building 1)
- Moderate potential for roosting bats (Building 2)
- Potential for nesting birds

In the absence of any mitigation measures, the proposed development is anticipated to result in **likely adverse impacts** (significance level to be determined following phase II survey work where considered appropriate). In addition to this, measures are outlined within section 6.0 of this document to mitigate where impacts have been identified (which includes further survey work where considered appropriate) as well as provide targeted ecological enhancements.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd was commissioned by Rob Tasker, Forres Sandle Manor School Ltd to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the buildings and associated garden areas at Forres Sandle Manor School, Station Rd, Fordingbridge, SP6 1DS (here after referred to as 'the site'). The purpose of this survey was to assess any ecological impacts that may arise as a result of a proposed development. The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- Identify and classify any priority habitats;
- Assess the ecological value of the site;
- Identify any signs of protected species and potential features that may support them
- Make recommendations for further survey work as necessary;
- Make recommendations for any necessary ecological avoidance and mitigation where possible at PEA stage.

NB: If the works do not take place within 18 months of this report¹ then the findings of this survey will no longer be considered valid and may require updating.

1.2 Site Description & Location

The site comprises of two temporary buildings and associated hard standing, amenity grassland and ornamental planting at Forres Sandel Manor School, Station Rd, Fordingbridge, SP6 1DS (centred on OS grid reference SU 13700 14909) (**Fig 1**). The immediate surroundings consist of arable fields, tree lines, parcels of woodland to the south and west, and the town of Fordingbridge to the southeast.

Figure 1. Map showing the redline boundary of the existing temporary buildings (Google Satellite, 2023).



1.3 Proposed Development

The proposals entail the demolition of the two existing temporary buildings and the subsequent erection of a single permanent classroom building.

2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) 2017 (as amended)*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit) makes changes to the three existing instruments which transpose the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives so that they continue to work (are operable) upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This instrument also amends section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ensure existing protections continue. The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under the Nature Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU.

In order for activities that would be likely to result in a breach of species protection under the regulations to legally take place, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England.

2.1.2 *The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that it is an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9 part II of the Act. This list over 30 plants including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Parrots Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

2.1.3 *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)*

This Act strengthens the Wildlife & Countryside Act by the addition of "reckless" offences in certain circumstances, such as where there is the likelihood of protected species being

present. The Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

2.1.4 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies must have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity with a particular regard to species and habitats considered to be of greatest conservation importance. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity and the list of species and habitats of importance when planning or undertaking activities.

Section 41 of the Act lists species and habitats found in England which are considered to be priority species and were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The latest update to the list of Section 41 habitats of principal importance under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework* includes 56 listed habitats including arable field margins, traditional orchards, hedgerows and several specific habitats within the categories of coastal, grassland, freshwater, inland rock, marine, wetland and woodland. The latest update to the list of Section 41 species of principal importance was in May 2014 and now includes a list of 943 species covering a range of species including vertebrates, terrestrial and marine invertebrates, plants and fungi.

2.1.5 Protection of Badgers Act

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) relates to the welfare of Badgers (*Meles meles*) as opposed to nature conservation considerations. The Act prevents:

- The wilful killing, injury, ill treatment or taking of Badgers and / or
- Interference with a Badger sett
- Damaging or destroying all or part of a sett
- Causing a dog to enter a set and
- Disturbing a Badger while it is occupying a sett

Provisions are included within the Act to allow for the lawful licensing of certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence under the Act.

2.1.6 The Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's new legislation for environmental protection in the UK, which includes protection of water quality, clean air, and biodiversity among other key protections. This Act provides the government power to set targets to reach long-term aims relating to the environment, which will be periodically reviewed and updated. This legislation also establishes a new environmental watchdog organisation, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), which will hold the government accountable on environmental issues.

Part 6 of The Environment Act relates to nature and biodiversity. This section makes provision for biodiversity net gain to be a condition of planning permission in England and a requirement for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Biodiversity net gain will require maintenance for a period of at least 30 years after the completion of enhancement works to be achieved.

The legislation also includes updated to existing environmental legislation, such as the NERC Act 2006, to strengthen biodiversity enhancements rather than just conservation and includes a requirement for local, or relevant, authorities to publish biodiversity reports. Further, The Environment Act placed a requirement on responsible authorities to prepare local nature recovery strategies, which will outline nature conservation sites and priorities and opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity within the local area. Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

2.2 Policy

2.2.1 National Planning Policy

Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment. They should do this by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks.

The plan states to protect and enhance biodiversity plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks. This includes the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them. Plans should identify the protection and recovery of priority species and opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can

secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

2.2.2 Local – New Forest District Council

The site falls within the jurisdiction of New Forest District Council but is outside the boundary of the National Park. Therefore, the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1 is relevant to this site (New Forest District Council, 2020).

Chapter 5 of the Local Plan Part 1 outlines the objective of the district that development should protect and enhance biodiversity and the environment. Saved Policy DM2 from the Local Plan Part 2 (New Forest District Council, 2014) remains relevant to the plan and outlines the council's aim to protect and enhance biodiversity:

Saved Policy DM2: Nature Conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity states:

Development proposals which would be likely to adversely affect the integrity of a designated or candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC), classified or potential Special Protection Area (SPA), or listed Ramsar site will not be permitted unless there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest which would justify the development.

Development proposals within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which would be likely to adversely affect the site will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh both the adverse impacts on the site and any adverse impacts on the wider network of SSSIs.

Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance (including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS), and habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity) will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity.

Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity and retain and, where possible, enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity.

Where development is permitted, the local planning authority will use conditions and/or planning obligations to minimise the damage, provide mitigation and site management measures and, where appropriate, compensatory and enhancement measures.

Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect species of fauna or flora that are protected under national or international law, or their habitats, unless their protection can be adequately secured through conditions and/or planning obligations.

Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites aims to protect sites of international importance within the district including New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar, River Avon SAC, SPA & Ramsar and River Itchen SAC. The policy states that development will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that any necessary mitigation, management or or monitoring measures are secured in perpetuity as part of the proposal and will be implemented in a timely manner such that, in combination with other plans and development proposals, there will not be adverse impacts on the above listed sites.

The policy further lays out the requirement for recreational mitigation as a result for additional units of residential accommodation. Developments of 49 or fewer net additional units may provide recreational mitigation through financial contributions while developments of 50 or more net additional units will be required to provide recreational greenspace within the site.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Designated Sites

A search for designated sites within 1km of the site was undertaken using freely available online resources.

3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 Habitats

The field survey work which forms the basis of the findings of this report was carried out by Leah Cook and Ollie Silvester BSc (assistant project ecologists with Ecosupport) on the 13th July 2023. Weather conditions during the survey were warm with no wind and moderate cloud cover.

Habitats on site were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey, using Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This was chosen as an appropriate habitat categorisation system as it fits within the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation. Where appropriate primary habitat codes were used although for some habitat types, the use of secondary habitat codes was necessary as well.

3.2.2 Badger

The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of use by Badgers (*Meles meles*), with the specific aim of identifying the presence and location of any setts. In accordance with the *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing* (Natural England, 2011) guidance, the survey accounted for a 30m from the site's boundary (observed where possible i.e. does not conflict with private dwellings). Evidence of Badgers could include latrines, dung pits, feeding remains and foraging evidence, trails and setts.

3.2.3 Bats

A full assessment of the buildings on site was undertaken by Leah Cook during the initial walkover survey. This followed BCT (Collins (ed) 2023) best practice survey guidelines searching for any PRFs / evidence of bat occupation and assigning a roost potential assessment as outlined in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for roosting bats (reproduced from BCT (Collins (ed) 2023).

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ² and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ³ .
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ² and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ² and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
<p>2 For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.</p> <p>3 Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.</p>	

3.3 Assessment Methodology

3.3.1 Introduction

The methodology for the assessment of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development is based on CIEEM's *Guidelines for Ecological Assessment in the UK* (CIEEM 2018). Although this assessment does not constitute a formal Ecological/ Environmental Impact Assessment, the CIEEM guidelines provide a useful framework for assessing ecological impacts at any level.

3.3.2 Valuation

Features of ecological interest are valued on a geographic scale. Value is assigned on the basis of legal protection, national and local biodiversity policy and cultural and/or social significance.

3.4 Limitations

There were not considered to be any limitations of the survey results with all areas of the site to be impacted upon accessible and the survey conducted at the appropriate time of year.

4.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

4.1 Designated Sites

There are no designated sites in the immediate vicinity of the site.

4.2 Vegetation Survey Results

The vegetation within the site has been described below using the UK Habs Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). The below species noted should not be considered an exhaustive list and instead refer to dominant, characteristic and other noteworthy species associated with each community within the survey area. The habitat types on site comprise.

- Modified Grassland (g4) – frequently mown (Secondary code 108)
- Artificial unvegetated / unsealed surface (u1c)
- Buildings (u1b5)

4.2.1 Modified Grassland (g4) – frequently mown (Secondary code 108), vegetated garden (Secondary code 828)

Surrounding the east and southern aspects of the buildings is an area of modified grassland which is managed to a very short sward height (**Fig 2**). The species composition was made up of White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Perennial Rye Grass (*Lolium perenne*), Common Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Hawkbit (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*), and Thistle (*Cirsium sp.*). To the western side of the buildings, there are large flower beds planted with ornamental non-native species.

Figure 2. Modified grassland to the east of the buildings (taken July 2023).



4.2.2 Artificial Unvegetated / Unsealed surface (u1c)

There is a gravel driveway to the west of the buildings (**Fig 3**).

Figure 3. Area of gravel to the west of the buildings (taken July 2023).



4.2.3 Buildings (u1b5)

The final habitat type present on site was the buildings with further description of these provided in **Section 4.3** below.

4.3 Bat Survey Results

4.3.1 PRA (Buildings)

Building 1 is a prefabricated building with a flat, felt roof with wooden bargeboard and wooden cladding on the east elevation. Upon inspection, the building was classed as having **low potential** for roosting bats (**Fig 5**).

Building 2 is a prefabricated building with a pitched, tiled roof and wooden cladding on the east and south elevations. Upon inspection, the building was classed as having **moderate potential** for roosting bats (**Fig 6**).

Figure 4. Map showing the location and number of each building (taken July 2023).



Figure 5. View of western elevation of building 1 and supporting photos of PRFs and eastern elevation (taken July 2023).



View of gaps beneath wooden cladding. Gaps beneath cladding were present in multiple places across both the building 1 & 2.



Figure 6. View of western elevation of building 2 and supporting images of PRFs and eastern elevation (taken July 2023).



4.3.2 PRA (Trees)

To the south of the buildings there is a large Oak tree (*Quercus robur*) which has been assessed for its bat potential due to several of the branches encroaching into where the two-story building is proposed to be erected. During the survey, no PRFs were noted and therefore the tree is considered to hold **negligible potential** for roosting bats.

4.4 Badgers

During the walkover survey on site, several mammal burrows leading to beneath the buildings were noted. The size and shape of the holes are not considered to be consistent with a Badger sett (**Fig 7**). Additionally, large numbers of rabbit droppings were noted on site and around the entrances to the burrows. However, the modified grassland on site does provide limited suitable habitat for foraging and commuting Badgers. It is therefore considered to have **potential** for foraging and commuting Badgers on site.

Figure 7. View of mammal burrow leading to beneath the buildings (taken July 2023).



4.5 Breeding and Nesting Birds

The buildings and tree on site provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging birds. Additionally, the surrounding landscape provides a mixture of woodland and residential gardens which would provide further foraging resources for any nesting birds utilising the site. Therefore, the site can be considered to have **potential** for nesting and breeding birds.

5.0 LIKELY ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS IN ABSENCE OF MITIGATION

5.1 Introduction

The CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2018) require that the potential impacts of the proposals should be considered in absence of mitigation. In order for a significant adverse effect to occur, the feature being affected must be at least of local value. However, in some cases, features of less than local value may be protected by legislation and/or policy and these are also considered within the assessment. Although significant effects may be identified at this stage of the assessment, it is often possible to provide appropriate mitigation.

5.2 Site Preparation and Construction

5.2.1 Impacts to Habitats

It is assumed the proposals predominantly involve the loss of buildings, developed land and artificial surfaces which are only considered to be of value at the **Site** level of significance.

5.2.2 Impacts to Wildlife

The existing temporary buildings are due to be demolished and replaced with a new permanent building. The buildings were identified as having low potential (building 1) and moderate potential (building 2) for roosting bats. If Phase II Bat Surveys reveal that bats are roosting in the building, the works to the buildings would lead to the loss of a bat roost as well as the potential disturbance of, harm to or even death of bats. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, an **adverse impact is possible** (with the level of impact to be determined following the results of the bat surveys).

The proposed works will involve the demolition of the buildings on site as well as branch. This could lead to the disturbance, harm or even death of any nesting birds within the buildings and / or vegetation, if present. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, an adverse impact is **possible** at the **local level**.

5.3 Site Operation

5.3.1 Impacts to Wildlife

The development may result in an increase in lighting within the general area from external lights on the new extension. This can affect the behaviour, particularly foraging, of nocturnal wildlife. Therefore, a **minor adverse impact is possible** on nocturnal wildlife including bats, Badgers.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The below sections outline a number of recommendations for further survey work required to fully assess the potential ecological impacts of the development and ensure and proposed mitigation and compensation appropriate and proportionate. In addition to this, measures are outlined to protect the existing features of value and provide enhancements post development.

6.2 Bats

6.2.1 Roosting Bats – Buildings

The buildings on site were considered to provide potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, survey visits will be required between May and August. The information obtained will help to inform a more detailed mitigation and compensation strategy to minimise the potential impacts of this development scheme upon bats, if required.

Building 1 was considered to provide **low** potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, one dusk emergence survey will be required between May and August. Building 2 was considered to provide **moderate** potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, two survey visits will be required between May and August.

Table 2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits (from Table 7.2, BCT 2023).

Low Roost Suitability or PRF-I	Moderate Roost Suitability	High Roost Suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits.
<p>a Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, more than once survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.</p> <p>b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least three weeks apart, preferably more.</p>		

6.2.2 Sensitive Lighting

Recommendations with regard to sensitive lighting will be informed by the results of the Phase II bat surveys and included within the Phase II Bat Survey report.

6.2.3 Enhancements

Recommendations with regard to enhancements will be informed by the results of the Phase II bat surveys and included within the Phase II Bat Survey report.

6.3 Badgers

During the construction phase, any open excavations left overnight will either be covered to prevent commuting mammals from falling in or escape ladders will be used to prevent them from becoming trapped. Any open pipework will be checked and then capped nightly.

6.4 Breeding & Nesting Birds

6.4.1 Mitigation

In order to avoid disturbance of nesting birds or damage to their nests, any works impacting the vegetation on site will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March – August). If this is not possible, the area of vegetation to be cleared will be thoroughly checked by an ecologist immediately prior to clearance. If any active nests are found, they will be left undisturbed with a suitable buffer (ca. 5m) until nestlings have fledged.

6.4.2 Enhancement

1 No. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm bird box will be erected on a mature tree within the site (**Fig 8**). This nest box caters to a variety of small bird species including blue tits, tree sparrows, house sparrows, great tits, crested tits, nuthatches, coal tits and pied flycatchers. This box will be erected between 1.5m and 3m high (higher if the area has a particularly high cat population).

Figure 8. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm bird box (NHBS, 2023).



6.5 Habitats

6.5.1 Protection of Trees

The tree next to the building is expected to be retained as part of the development and therefore will be protected as part of the works. It will be fenced using Heras fencing or similar to prevent access but machinery. This will ensure that the tree is not directly impacted upon during the works and that the root protection zone is not compacted.

7.0 CONCLUSION

In order to fully assess the value of the site and the impacts in the absence of mitigation Phase II protected species survey(s) (bats) will be required on the two buildings. Once completed, Phase II reports will be produced, including mitigation and compensation measures if required.

General measures have been provided to reduce the impact towards other legally protected and/or notable species. It is considered if the measures are implemented in full it will ensure the associated species are protected during the development and once operational.

8.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK & Ireland

Collins (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition

HMSO (1989). *Wildlife and Countryside Act* (amended). HMSO, London.

HMSO (1992). *Protection of Badgers Act*. HMSO, London.

HMSO (2000). *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act*. HMSO, London.

HMSO (2006). *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act*. HMSO, London.

HMSO (2017) *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations*. Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 490. HMSO, London.

HMSO (2019). *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations*. Statutory Instrument 2019 No. 579. HMSO, London.

HMSO (2021). *The Environment Act 2021*. HMSO, London. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30>

Natural England (2011) *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing*

New Forest District Council (2020). Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy. New Forest District outside the New Forest National Park. Adopted 6 July 2020.

New Forest District Council (2014). Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management. Adopted April 2014.

UKHab Ltd. (2023). *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 2.0* (July, 2023).