

Our Ref: 92871.564129 Meadhurst, Uppingham School

26th January 2024

To whom it may concern,

Delta Simons Ltd was instructed by Ridge and Partners LLP (the 'Client') to undertake an updated Habitat Classification Survey of land at Meadhurst, Uppingham School (the 'Site') in support of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment.

It is understood that the Proposed Development at the Site comprises partial demolition of an existing boarding house and replacement with new purpose-built boarding facilities alongside a new arrival courtyard, landscaping and associated works.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) covering an area at the northern extent of the Site was undertaken by CBE Consulting in June 2023. An updated Habitat Classification Survey was completed on the 29th November 2023 by a Delta-Simons ecologist. The purpose of the updated Habitat Classification Survey was to verify the type, extent and condition of the habitats identified within the previous PEA (CBE Consulting, 2023) as well as classify and assess the condition of habitats within a wider Site boundary as shown in Figure 1, enclosed.




The previous PEA identified the presence of buildings, modified grassland, sealed surface car parking areas and an ornamental hedgerow within the Site. Following the updated Habitat Classification Survey, these habitats were verified to be present with no notable changes in their extent or condition.

The wider Site subject to the updated Habitat Classification Survey was found to comprise a complex of school buildings, a gravel driveway and sealed surface footpaths within its eastern and southern extent, whilst the western extent of the Site was characterised by the presence of modified grassland which appeared to be regularly managed and utilised as a sports pitch. Further areas of modified grassland which were similarly managed and of amenity value were present within the Site. A group of mature and semi-mature trees were identified at the southern Site boundary, separating the Site from nearby residential dwellings. A species-rich native hedgerow and scattered individual trees were present at the western Site boundary, separating the Site from an adjacent car park. Several lengths of ornamental hedgerow and further individual trees also identified across the Site. Habitats present within the Site are shown in Figure 1, enclosed.

Following the completion of the updated Habitat Classification Survey, Delta-Simons is in agreement with the conclusions and recommendations presented within the previous PEA report (CBE Consulting, 2023). These include the requirement for nesting bird checks should suitable habitat require removal during the core nesting period (March - August, inclusive), timing of works to existing roof structures outside of the active bat period (May-September, inclusive) or alternatively following a precautionary pre-commencement bat survey.

Delta-Simons is also in agreement with the recommendation that the Proposed Development incorporate a sensitive external lighting scheme, as well as species specific enhancements including bat roost tubes, swift nesting bricks and hedgehog refugia at suitable locations within the Site. Detailed recommendations on the type, placement and orientation of species-specific enhancements are provided below.



<p>2 no. Ibstock Eco-habitat for Swifts or suitable alternative</p> <p>Boxes should be incorporated into suitable buildings and installed avoiding a southerly orientation, at least 3 m from ground level.</p>	
<p>1 no. Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tube or suitable alternative</p> <p>At least one integrated bat roosting tube should be incorporated into a suitable building and installed avoiding a northerly orientation, at least 3 m from ground level and facing retained vegetation, ensuring a clear flight path to the entrance.</p>	
<p>2 no. Schwegler Hedgehog Dome or suitable alternative</p> <p>Should be placed within vegetated areas that are accessible to the species but will remain undisturbed, such as within woodland planting at the northern Site boundary.</p>	

The current External Lighting Strategy (J7359-MXF-ZZ-XX-DR-E-3100) has been reviewed, although detailed external lighting specifications are not currently available and are understood to be conditioned. The finalised external lighting strategy must be functional and directional and in line with current guidance (BCT and ILP, 2023), with the following consideration given to habitat retained, enhanced or planted for roosting, foraging and/or commuting bats:

- Light emitting diodes (LED) should be used, as these typically feature no UV component and as a result are less attractive to invertebrates and less disturbing to bats;
- Only luminaires with 0 % upward light ratio should be used and fitted on the horizontal to avoid excessive up-lighting, back lighting and light spill onto boundary hedgerows and trees;
- A warm white spectrum (ideally under 2700 Kelvin) should be used in order to reduce blue light component, therefore reducing the number of invertebrates attracted to the lights;
- The use of specialist bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires to retain darkness above can be considered, although this has certain drawbacks and should only be used as directed by a lighting professional;
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill;
- Any external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and short (e.g. 1 minute) timers;
- Luminaires should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats;
- As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed; and
- Where habitat needs to be unlit (e.g. important foraging and commuting corridors/roost sites), illuminance should be below 0.2 lux on the horizontal plane and below 0.4 lux on the vertical plane.

The finalised external lighting strategy should be reviewed by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that there is no significant light spill onto retained or newly created habitats likely to be of importance to roosting, foraging or commuting bats.

To conclude, the nature of the Site has not changed since the previous PEA was undertaken, with additional habitats now included within the Site not considered to significantly alter the likelihood of impacts upon protected or notable habitats and species as a result of the Proposed Development.

Yours sincerely,

Delta-Simons



Jonathan Spencer

Associate Ecologist

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References

BCT and ILP (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night

CBE Consulting (June 2023) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Delta-Simons (January 2024) Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment










Enclosed

Figure 1 - Habitat Survey Plan

Figure 1 - Habitat Survey Plan



Legend

-  Site boundary
-  g4 - modified grassland
-  u1 - built-up areas and gardens
-  u1b - developed land, sealed surface
-  u1b5 - buildings
-  u1c - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
-  h2a - Hedgerow priority habitat
-  h2b - Other hedgerows
-  Individual tree

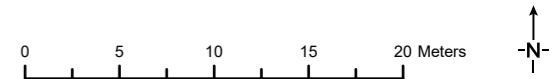


Figure	Habitat Survey Plan		
Job	Farleigh and Meadhurst Schools, Uppingham		
Client	Savills		
Figure No.	1	Revision	A
		Date	16/01/2024
Drawn	BB	Checked	BH
		Scale	1:400 @ A3
Job No.	92871.564129		Central GR
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