

Additional information for application for ecology assessment

I carried out a site visit at Winnall primary school last Tuesday (03 July) to assess the building for any potential for ecological importance that may be impacted by development on the site (involving a single storey extension on the north-east side of the school and the stripping of timber cladding and soffits of all the walls).

Please note that only the external parts of the ground storey of the building could be looked at in detail - there is a higher level storey above the middle of the school building which could not be accurately assessed for bat roosting potential.

Overall the building was found to be in good structural condition with no obvious places for bat roosting potential within or around the timber cladding and soffits. The only area I would have potential concerns around is the chimney which features a wide strip of plastic 'box-cladding' topped with a strip of lead flashing, encircling the upper part of the brick chimney. If there are gaps beneath this, this feature may provide potential for roosting bats. However, as I believe the proposals will not involve any works to the chimney of the school, it is not reasonable to request a further bat survey on this basis.

The extension to the north of the school will involve the removal of a wide and dense strip of shrubbery directly adjacent to the existing building, as well as several shrubs and potentially two ash trees across the mown grassy area at the north-eastern area of the proposed extension. There is a low risk that these areas will provide shelter for common species of reptiles/amphibians, and the areas of larger shrubs and trees may provide nesting habitat for birds. It is advisable to carry out the works outside of the bird nesting season (ie between the months of October to February inclusive). Understandably this may not be possible as the work is likely to take place during the school holidays. Therefore, to follow best practice, the following vegetation cutting regime should be implemented to minimise any impacts on nesting birds and reptiles/amphibians:

1. Dismantle existing habitat piles by hand and transfer material to new location.
2. Check any suitable nesting habitat for occupied birds nests.

*** NB – if occupied nests are discovered, work in that area must cease until nests become empty of their own accord.***

3. Cut back scrub / bramble to remove nesting habitat.
4. Starting at points furthest from adjacent areas of boundary habitat e.g. woodland edge / hedgerows (i.e. within centre of development footprint), steadily trim remaining vegetation in affected areas down to approx 200mm.
5. Leave area for 24 hrs, then further cut to 50-100mm and maintain at this

height until area required. This cut – wait – cut operation allows any reptiles to move to the retained boundary vegetation of their own accord, while the continued strimming / mowing of the development footprint ensures the area remains less suitable for reptiles – while they may bask in the exposed areas, all potential refuge has been removed

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Rebecca

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