

ACS Hillingdon School,
108 Vine Lane,
Uxbridge,
Middlesex,
UB10 0BE

18th April 2023

Dear ACS International Schools,

Report of Ecological Walkover Survey at ACS Hillingdon School, 108 Vine Lane, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB10 0BE.

Arbtech Consultancy Ltd was instructed to undertake an ecological walkover survey (variously referred to as the; "survey, report") at the above-named site. The survey was commissioned to provide an update of the site to inform to inform a Section 73 minor-material amendment application to permission 2393/APP/2015/1146 for:

- Creation of science laboratories above the existing West Wing, extension to existing hall/West Wing to create a multi-purpose hall, refurbishment of internal rooms, enclosure and refurbishment of the internal courtyard and alterations to manoeuvring yard and access road with associated landscape works
- The Multi-use hall (Project D) is the phase currently being progressed. This will be a two storey, flat roof building of masonry construction. The new building will incorporate a living wall

A previous Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken in December 2014 by Arbtech Consulting Ltd. The survey stated that all species and habitats found are common and widespread, no rare or unusual plants or habitats were found. There are no protected sites nearby to be affected. Additionally, there was no suitable habitat found on site for reptiles, amphibians, bats or other protected species. Although, no badger setts were found on site, badgers could use the site occasionally to forage within.

Additionally, no bird nests were found on site, birds may nest on site in the future in the trees or hedges.

This report describes the baseline ecological conditions at the site, evaluates habitats within the survey area in the context of the wider environment and describes the suitability of those habitats for notable or protected species. It identifies possible ecological constraints as a result of the proposed development and summarises the requirements for further surveys and mitigation measures to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.
- A field survey has been undertaken to record baseline information on the site and surrounding area including habitat types and their suitability for notable or protected species.
- Invasive plant and animal species (such as those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act) have been identified.
- Potential impacts on features of value, as a result of the proposed development, have been identified.
- Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity have been set out.

The survey was undertaken on 11th April 2023.

Site Location and context

The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 06847 83845 and has an area of approximately 4.04ha comprising several school buildings of a range of sizes, set amongst grass fields, ornamental shrubs and trees. The local area around the school is mainly suburban in character, with detached houses and gardens present in all directions. Hillingdon Court Park is adjacent to the East of the site and is a large amenity grass area with scattered trees. A small wood can be found ~300m away within this. The tree-lined course of the river Pinn passes ~360m to the West of the site and is the closest source of open water. It then runs alongside a golf course ~400m to the South-West of the survey site. Approximately 730m to the North of the site lies hedge lined arable fields.

Results of desk study

Details of any statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site, including their reasons for notification, are provided in table 1 below.

Table 1: Statutory designated sites within 2km radius of the site

Designated site name	Distance from site	Reasons for notification from Natural England
Yeading Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1715m east	The reserve has a small meadow, riverbank and coppiced woodland. Species include bluebells in spring, broad leaved helleborine orchid and kingfisher along the Yeading Brook.
Frays Valley LNR	2km north-west	The wildlife-rich Frays River meanders through the luxuriant Frays Farm Meadows SSSI. Snipe; water vole and harvest mouse; kingcups and ragged robin; slow worm; willow; banded demoiselle
Fray's Farm Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2km north-west	The land was designated as SSSI because it represents one of the last remaining areas of relatively unimproved grassland habitat in the Greater London area. The habitat exhibits a number of features of interest, including natural floodplain features such as tall sedge beds, areas of tall fen vegetation and vegetated ditches.

There are also 16 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the search area. Priority habitats within 2km comprise broadleaved woodland and ancient woodland with woodpasture and parkland and traditional orchards. The nearest habitat is woodpasture and parkland, located adjacent to the site on the eastern boundary.

Habitats present on site

Mixed woodland (w1h)

The South-Eastern corner of the site has a small area of woodland. The dominant trees are Pedunculate Oak, Yew, Sycamore, Holly and Birch. A low density of ground flora of bramble and nettle is present, but mainly covered in leaf litter. Some of the trees possess roosting potential for birds and bats, but this area will not be affected by the development.

Modified grassland (q4) with introduced shrubs (1160) and scattered trees (11)

Much of the site consists of closely mown modified grassland, resulting in a sward of approximately 2cm in length. Species composition is poor, comprising perennial ryegrass (D), daisy (F), dandelion (F), small-flowered cranesbill (A) and lesser chickweed (F).

There are introduced shrub planting areas around the site, featuring non-native cultivars in flower borders and beds, and also shrubs in dense associations. Topiary shrubs are also scattered around the buildings. Ornamental hedgerows are present around most of the boundary, featuring plants such as Holly, Cypress, Privet, Laurel, Rhododendron, Yew and Lonicera.

There are several scattered trees on site, around the modified grass areas as well as in the ornamental hedge. The ornamental nature of the sites history is represented by the mix of deciduous and coniferous trees found, including Cypress, Cedar, Hawthorn, Sycamore, Yew, Birch, Pedunculate Oak, Beech, Holly, Willow, Larch, Pine and even Wellingtonia. Most of the trees are relatively small, however some of the Oaks and Cedars are mature, and a couple have fissures of wildlife value. It is currently understood that these trees will not be part of the development, and no new light sources will fall upon them.

Hard standing (u1b)

There is a driveway leading from the road the front of B7, car parking areas and also pathways around the site. These areas are comprised of tarmac and are of negligible value.

Building (u1b5)

There are 9 buildings around the survey site, designated as B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8 and B9. B7 is directly affected by the development works, as it is being extended and renovated, including an extension to northern elevation. B7 is a white stone and brick built, 4 story mansion building. It has hipped, slated roofs of an excellent condition, with no loose, broken or missing examples visible from the ground. The roof is surrounded by a small parapet wall. There are no soffit boards, instead a molded cornice. There are no brick gaps, crevices or holes of wildlife value anywhere on the building. There are also modern 2 storey extensions to the West of the original section, with flat, felted roofs without any gaps.

Protected/notable species

No direct evidence of protected species was found onsite. All habitats onsite are widespread and common and no notable plant species were observed. There is no suitable habitat for protected amphibians or reptiles on site. There are no ponds or extensive foraging areas e.g. long grass or scrub on site or nearby. There are no logs or stone piles for refuge in the development area. There are also no ponds nearby than amphibians could commute to. Therefore it is extremely unlikely that any protected amphibians or reptiles are present. No badger setts were found on site and no other badger evidence (e.g. latrines, footprints, hairs) found. However, badgers could use the site occasionally to forage within. All nine buildings have negligible habitat value for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable roosting features.

Site photographs



Figure 1: the mixed woodland to the south-east of the site



Figure 2: the modified grassland within the centre of the site, surrounded by introduced shrubs



Figure 3: the introduced shrubs surrounding the buildings



Figure 4: the scattered trees throughout the site



Figure 5: the hard standing to the north of the site



Figure 6: the main building to be affected by the proposed development

Site Maps



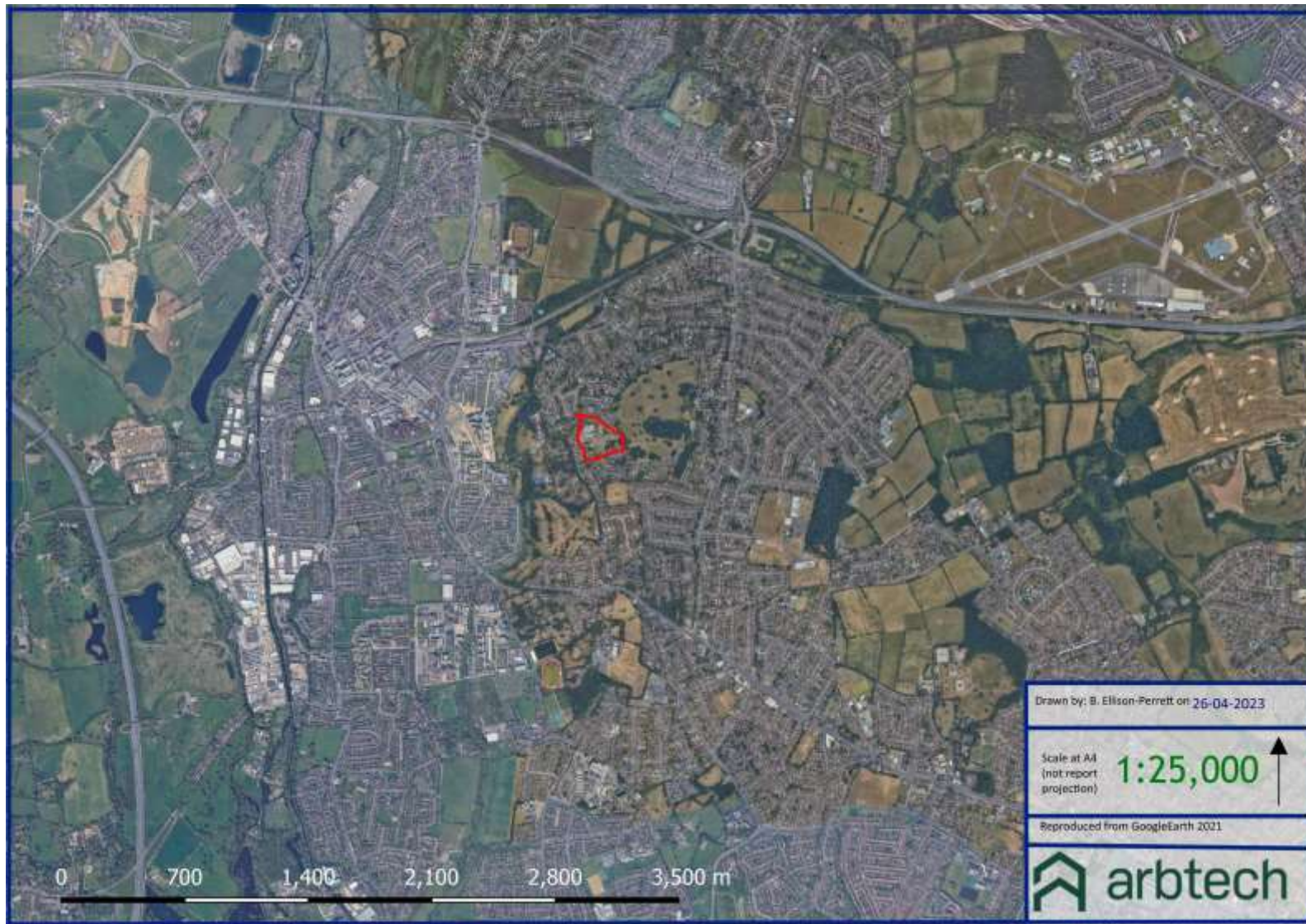


Figure 6: Site map

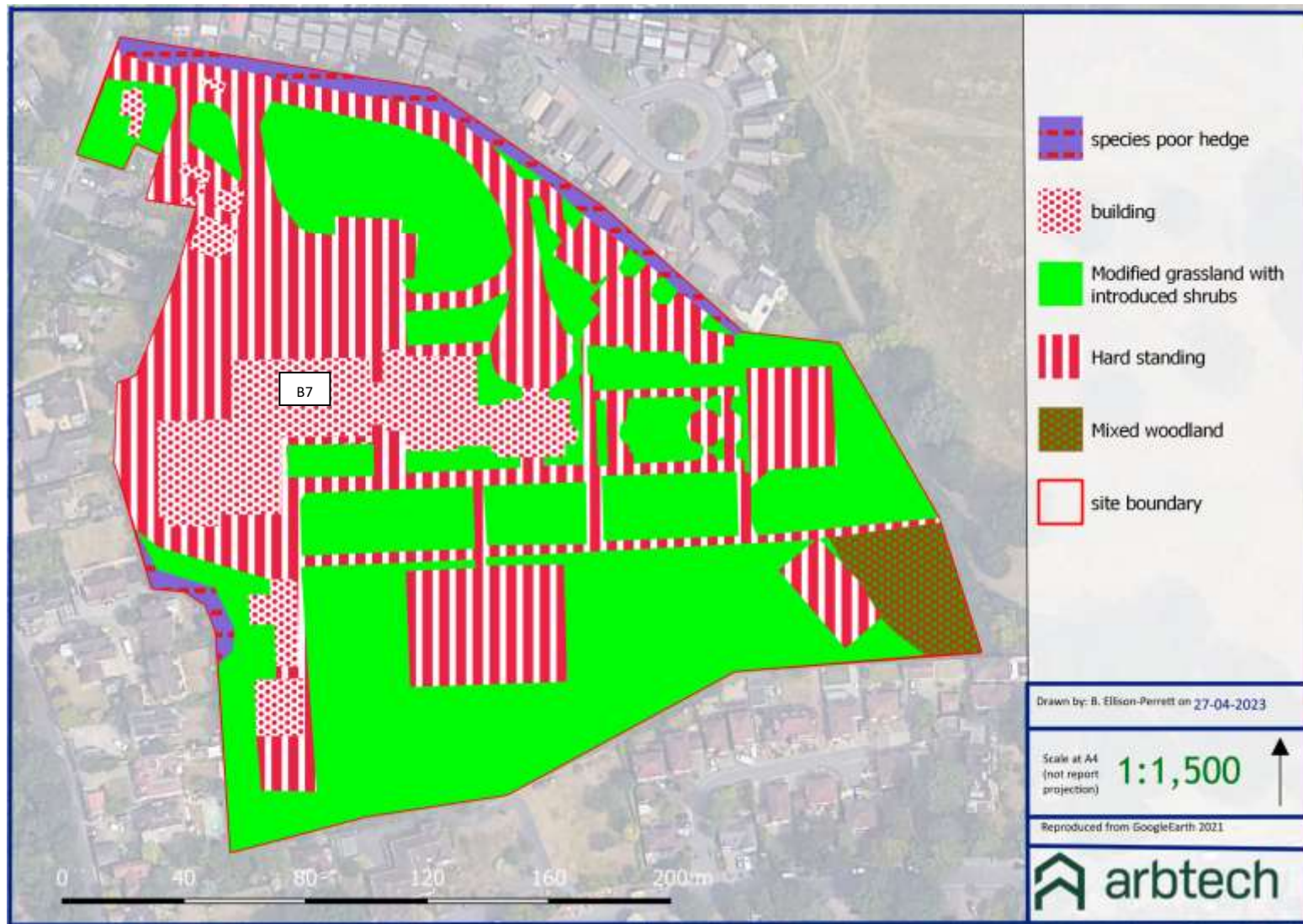


Figure 7: Site plan – UK Habs Survey map

Conclusion

The buildings onsite have negligible habitat value for roosting bats and nesting birds. There was no evidence of any protected species onsite and the habitats onsite are of low ecological value, with the exception of the mixed woodland to the south-east of the site as the woodland could be used by foraging and commuting bats, nesting birds and foraging badgers. However, the woodland will not be affected by the proposed development.

Author

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