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Ecological Appraisal – Proposed Site Area

- The proposed site area for the location of the Temporary Accommodation Classroom lies within the existing school grounds and playground area to the western edge of the existing Battle and Langton C of E School buildings, and to the south of the children's hard play area. An ecological appraisal was undertaken of the site on the 21st April 2011 in order to establish the ecological value inherent to the site and the immediate surrounding area.

- The existing vegetation within the site area is comprised of a small number of scattered trees, stemming from a small Willow Grove; and amenity grassed areas; the school fields extend from the southern edge of the proposed site location, and are bordered to the north by a boundary hedgeline.

- The existing tree group located to the western boundary between the main school building and neighbouring residential properties consist of a number of Willow trees *(Salix caprea)* containing several naturalised Willow trees of upright slender drawn form becoming arched and sprawling. The trees form a small grove clear of lower branches below the open canopies. The trees include singular and twin stemmed trees and are of variable condition. Within the tree grove are other semi-mature to mature tree species of Alder *(Alnus incana)*, Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)*, and a solitary Oak *(Quercus robur)*. The tree group is edged to the north east with 2 no. Silver Birch *(Betula pendula; B. pubescens)*. *(Refer to Drawing LLD361 / 01 – Tree Constraints Plan and accompanying Existing Tree Schedule)*

- The trees though regenerative, are largely in decline and are receding with a good deal of dead and damaged wood within the rather sparse canopy cover. The ground layer beneath the trees is given over to hard paving and bark mulch surfacing and used as a semi-formal seating area for the school pupils. The tree group extends to the southern edge with a small number of scattered Ash and Alder trees; these trees and trees edging the eastern aspect of the group are located within *Improved* short mown amenity grassland. The tree group and underlying layer are further isolated from surrounding vegetated areas by hard surfaced vehicular access and pedestrian paths and are of particularly limited ecological value.

- To the east of the Willow grove and scattered trees is an area of managed turf, which has been allowed to naturalise with a greater diversity of herb material. A solitary multi-stemmed Cherry tree is located within this area. The small but varied range of the herb layer may provide some foraging potential for invertebrates but, due to the separated nature of the grassed area, remains of fairly low ecological value.

- The isolated grassed areas below the western boundary tree group, edging the bare ground of the tarmacadam surfaced hard play areas and vehicular and pedestrian access, hold very little ecological value. The grassland is routinely maintained with a short sward; *Improved* to the degree that extremely few herb species were noted.

- To the south and west of the proposed Temporary Classroom site location lie the sports pitches of the school playing fields; such *Improved Grassland* contains little ecological value. The fields are bordered to the northern edge with a dense native species hedgeline of Hawthorn *(Crataegus monogyna)*. The hedgeline would provide reasonable hibernation cover for Birds, Reptiles and Invertebrates but due to the underlying *Improved Grassland* edge, and lack of structural diversity, foraging potential is rather more limited. The hedgeline terminates to the west of the proposed Temporary Classroom site area.

- The trees within the Willow grove include those which contain surface damage and internal decay. Such cracks, holes and crevices provide habitat potential for roosting Bats, however due to the relatively weak connectivity to the vegetation of the surrounding high potential woodland and field margins, via the narrow foraging corridor of the northern boundary hedgerow, means the likelihood Willow trees being used as Bat Roosts is reduced.

- The ecological appraisal of the proposed site area is that the proposed location and 'Construction Zone' for the Temporary Classroom is an area of Low Ecological Value.

Soft Landscape Proposals

- The development plan for the Temporary Accommodation Classroom at the Battle and Langton C of E Primary School, Battle aims to enhance the existing landscape setting and ecological features of the existing site. *(Refer to Drawing LLD361 / 02 – Tree Retention and Protection and Soft Landscape Proposals.)*

- The proposed Temporary Accommodation Classroom at the Battle and Langton C of E Primary School would be located to the western edge of the main school building and to the northeast of the school playing fields.

- The location of the Single Mobile Accommodation unit would require the removal of existing trees, as follows; Willow tree *(T12),* Ash tree *(T14)*, and 2 no. Alder trees *(T13 and T15).* The *Category C* trees are located within an amenity grassed area. The trees are of limited ecological value; *(T15)* is an *R Category* tree and in decline. There are a number of trees within a group to the north of the proposed development of poor and possibly unsafe condition. It is proposed that several of these trees also be removed within, but not due to, the development proposals. The removal of the trees is to be mitigated for within the development scheme and will include 7 no. Advanced Nursery Stock trees planted in replacement. *(Refer to Drawing LLD361 / 02 – Tree Retention and Protection Plan and Soft Landscape Proposals.)*

- The removal of any R Category trees within the northern tree group should only be undertaken subsequent to inspection by an experienced Bat Surveyor, in order to mitigate and prevent any potential loss to protected species, or roosting habitat, of Bats.

- The Advanced Nursery Stock tree planting is proposed to comprise native species to enhance the bio-diversity of the site, and suited to the local soil type.

- The tree planting proposals would enhance the existing ecology of the site and mitigate any losses through the development proposals. The tree planting would enhance and compliment the existing tree group and provide visual amenity and screening value to the north-western and western school boundary, adjacent to the proposed unit and also to the neighbouring residential properties.

- The outline Native Tree planting specification is shown below;

Native Tree Planting				
Acer campestre (Field Maple)	14 – 16 cm Girth Size; 3.0 – 3.5 m height; Advanced Nursery Stock.	RB	Specimen	1
Alnus glutinosa (Alder)	14 – 16 cm Girth Size; 3.0 – 3.5 m height; Advanced Nursery Stock.	RB	Specimen	4
Betula pendula (Silver Birch)	14 – 16 cm Girth Size; 3.0 – 3.5 m height; Advanced Nursery Stock.	RB	Specimen	2

RB – Root Balled;