

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2016/2675/MAJ
Location: Queenswood School, Shepherds Way, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 6NS
Proposal: Erection of extension to existing sports hall, re cladding of existing roof and wall, following removal of existing mobile classrooms and increase parking provision from 85 to 102 approximately
Officer: Mr D Elmore

Recommendation: Granted

6/2016/2675/MAJ

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The site lies within the Green Belt, Major Development Site and Landscape Character Area (53) as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.</p> <p>The Queenswood School site is located between Hatfield and Potters Bar, adjoining the B157 (Shepherds Way). The application site is located to the northern part of the educational core of the school and the site is presently occupied by a structure known as “the Palaestra” (a large unheated building housing a sports hall), and two mobile modular classrooms.</p> <p>The sports hall is approximately 36 x 36 metres in footprint and approximately 14 metres in height.</p> <p>The site is surrounding to its west, north and east by area Tree Preservation Order 503 (2016) W1.</p> <p>Planning permission is sought for the erection of a two storey extension, single storey extension and re-cladding of existing roof and walls of the sports hall, following removal of existing mobile classroom. Laying of hard surfacing and increase of parking provision.</p>
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>GB - Greenbelt - Distance: 0</p> <p>LCA - Landscape Character Area (North Mymms Common and Newgate Street Farmed Plateau) - Distance: 0</p> <p>LCA - Landscape Character Area (Northaw Common Parkland) - Distance: 0</p> <p>MDS - Major Developed Site in the Green Belt (RA5,RA6) - Distance: 0</p> <p>PAR - PARISH (NORTH MYMMS) - Distance: 0</p> <p>Wards - Brookmans Park & Little Heath - Distance: 0</p> <p>National Grid Gas Pipeline - Distance: 7.3</p> <p>FM10 - 2744386 - Distance: 0</p>

	<p>FM00 - 7625946 - Distance: 0</p> <p>FM00 - 7625599 - Distance: 0</p> <p>FM00 - 7625985 - Distance: 0</p> <p>TPO - TPO 503 (2016) W1 - Distance: 0</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>Application Number: S6/2011/0743/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 08 June 2011</p> <p>Proposal: Demolition of existing modular classroom and replacement modular classrooms for a temporary five year period</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2010/0658/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 14 June 2010</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of a services enclosure attached to the existing swimming pool building</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2009/0481/MA Decision: Granted Decision Date: 06 May 2009</p> <p>Proposal: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING TENNIS BUILDING AND DEMOUNTABLE CLASSROOMS AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS HALL WITH ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2006/1562/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 12 January 2007</p> <p>Proposal: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND ERECTION OF 3 NO. 3 BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL UNITS FOR STAFF ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2006/0470/FP Decision: Refused Decision Date: 06 June 2006</p> <p>Proposal: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND ERECTION OF 3 NO. 3 BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL UNITS FOR STAFF ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2005/0863/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 07 October 2005</p> <p>Proposal: ERECTION OF NEW TENNIS CENTRE AND SPORTS HALL, AFTER DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2004/0446/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 13 May 2004</p> <p>Proposal: ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING GREAT HALL TO FORM PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE</p>

	<p>Application Number: S6/2000/1119/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 30 October 2000</p> <p>Proposal: FORMATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS AND GATES TO SERVE EXISTING CAR PARK, AND CLOSURE OF EXISTING ACCESS</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1994/0230/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 07 July 1994</p> <p>Proposal: Alterations and extensions to existing sports pavillion, construction of additional tennis courts and erection of 12 floodlights</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1990/1011/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 15 February 1991</p> <p>Proposal: New building to provide replacement changing facilities, with first floor gym facilities and single storey extension to existing gymnasium & provision of 5 car parking spaces</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1990/0349/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 04 June 1990</p> <p>Proposal: Construction of temporary vehicle access from Shepherds Way for the use of contractors vehicles</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1988/0921/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 22 November 1988</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of new educational building</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1974/0151/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 28 March 1974</p> <p>Proposal: Extension to form sports centre</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1970/0978/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 27 July 1970</p> <p>Proposal: Construction of car park.</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1961/2087/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 29 November 1961</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of sports pavillion and changing room.</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1956/1527/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 02 January 1957</p> <p>Proposal: Science block.</p>
Consultations	
Neighbour	Support: 0 Object: 0 Other: 0

representations			
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 17 January 2017 Site Notice Expiry Date: 7 February 2017 Press Advert Display Date: 18 January 2017 Press Advert Expiry Date: 1 February 2017		
Summary of neighbour responses	No responses received		
Consultees and responses	Councillor Stephen Boulton – No response Councillor John Dean – No response Councillor Jonathan Boulton – No response North Mymms Parish Council – Comment stated as follows: <i>“...the proposed materials and colours are inappropriate for a Green Belt location. More imaginative designs and colours, given the proximity of the road, would be more in keeping with this major development site which includes other characterful buildings. The excessive use of grey is a trend that will pass and it does not enhance the environment.”</i> Environment Agency – No response Hertfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority) – Acceptable subject to adherence with surface water drainage assessment Hertfordshire County Council (Ecology) – No objection and recommend informatives regarding the support and protection of wildlife. Hertfordshire County Council (Transport Programmes & Strategy) – No objection Thames Water – No response Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Parking Services) – Support Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Environmental Health) – No objection Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Landscaping) – No objection subject to conditions requiring a Tree Protection Plan and soft landscaping plan		
Relevant Policies			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GBSP1 <input type="checkbox"/> GBSP2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M14 Others: R11, R17, CTL7, CTL8, RA5, RA10			
Main Issues			
Appropriateness in the Green Belt and effect upon openness of the Green Belt	The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and identified in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (District Plan) as a Major Development Site in the Green Belt (MDS). The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) sets out the national policy approach to development in the Green Belt. It indicates that decision makers should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to some exceptions. In general terms, new buildings include construction of part of a structure and also extending a building. One of the exceptions to inappropriateness relates to extending or altering a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the		

size of the original building.

The NPPF and the District Plan provides no guidance for establishing whether a proposal would be disproportionate; however the assessment of “proportionality” has been developed through planning decisions to take into consideration both a quantitative and qualitative methodology.

In terms of a quantitative assessment, an analysis of footprint, floor space and volume are normally a good proxy for the overall size of extensions. The existing sports hall has not been previously extended or altered and is therefore regarded as the original building. This sports hall has a footprint/floor space of 1260.sqm (measured externally) and total height of approx. 14 metres. As a result of the proposed extensions, the resultant sports hall would have a footprint of 1817.sqm and floor space of 2195.sqm (both measured externally). The maximum height would not be increased. This would represent a 44% increase in footprint and a 74% increase in floor space. It is not possible to undertake a comparative volumetric calculation based on the drawings submitted and the applicant has not provided such figures in any support statements. Such an assessment can be achieved through a qualitative assessment. However, based independently on the above calculations, the proposed development would be regarded as disproportionate.

A qualitative assessment would take in account the proposal in the context of the size and character of the building and its surroundings. The bulk of the extension would be sited to the southern side of the existing building. Its scale and form would be in keeping with that of the existing building and be subordinate in scale. The single storey extension would be read as part of the original building and the same can be said with regard to the two storey extension when viewed from within the school grounds to the south. The extensions would not compete with any of the other buildings on the wider site. Furthermore, the design and appearance would result in a marked improvement to what is currently a harsh and utilitarian structure. In that the bulk of the building would increase by additional built development the proposal would inevitably have some effect on the openness of the Green Belt. However in isolation, the loss of openness would be minimal.

On balance, whilst it is considered that the proposed extensions would represent a disproportionate addition to the original building in purely numerical terms, taking account of the qualitative assessment, the proposal would not have an adverse effect. Therefore, the development is considered appropriate development in the Green Belt when assessed against the NPPF.

Now turning to the proposed hardstanding. The operations to create the area of hardstanding would represent an engineering operation. Paragraph 90 of the NPPF outlines that engineering operations are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The strip of hardstanding would intersect an area of woodland to the east of the application site. It would serve vehicle access from the adjacent car parking area to the sports hall and 5 ‘drop-off’ spaces in a linear arrangement. Despite the change to a hard surface, this part of the land remains free from built form. Furthermore, the strip of

hardstanding would predominantly be used for the passage of vehicles across it, and whilst car parking spaces are included, the use of these spaces, by their nature, would be infrequent. As a consequence, it is not considered that there would be any material effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

In addition, the hardstanding proposed would not contravene the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and as a result, this aspect of the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would accord with the requirements of the NPPF.

The site is identified within the District Plan as a MDS and this requires that any proposals for infilling and redevelopment be treated in a comprehensive way and brought forward in the context of a master planning brief. The Queenswood School Master Planning Brief was adopted in March 2003.

Planning permission has been granted under references: S6/2009/0481/MA & S6/2005/0863/FP, for the re-development of the sports hall in a similar manner to that proposed. These planning permissions are no longer extant as the development was not implemented within the required time period.

It is considered that the proposed development would broadly fall under limited infilling rather than redevelopment of the building and site.

Policy RA5 of the District Plan states that limited infilling will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- i. The proposal will have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
- ii. The proposal should not exceed the height of the existing buildings;
- iii. The proposals should not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site;
- iv. The proposal should be brought forward in the context of a master planning brief for the site;
- v. Any new development must be acceptable in terms of its impact on the highway network, including highway network including highway safety;

It has been considered that the proposal would not contravene the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Furthermore, no element of the proposal would exceed the height of the existing buildings.

With regard to bullet point 3, the extended building would have a total internal floor space of approximately 2195.sqm. Although greater to that approved under reference: S6/2009/0481/MA (1925.sqm), the floor space would be materially less than that granted under reference: S6/2005/0863/FP (2885.sqm). In this context and considering the total floor space on the site (the estimated footprint of buildings within the MDS boundary is approximately 10,400.sqm) this would not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

Highway impact and other material planning considerations in the context of the master plan brief will be assessed under the following sections of this report.

<p>Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)</p>	<p>The five year plan for Queenswood School, as set out in paragraph 3.14 of the master planning brief, makes particular mention of a replacement indoor tennis facility and a new sports hall.</p> <p>The existing building presently accommodates a multi-purpose sports hall, known as the “Palaestra” which has primarily been used for indoor tennis. However, this is an unheated, unattractive and unsustainable building, which offers poor standards that do not meet Sport England requirements. The building has asbestos cladding and a lack of insulation which makes it particularly uncomfortable for users. Paragraph 3.16 of the master planning brief states that <i>“it is a totally inadequate indoor complement to the outstanding outdoor tennis facility”</i>.</p> <p>The master planning brief outlines that a high quality of design will be expected in any new development and the architectural style found on the site varies between buildings and a flexible palette of materials should be used to ensure that the buildings are suitable for the site and their context. This principle is in line with the design policies contained within the District Plan and NPPF.</p> <p>The existing sports hall is of a simple symmetrical design with a pitched roof at approx. 19deg. Profiled cladding sheets enclose the perimeter with 4no access and emergency doors. The proposed extension would complement and reflect the form of existing building and be subordinate in scale. The proposed external materials, taken together with design of the two story extension, would represent a marked improvement in design and appearance terms and breathe new life into what is currently a harsh and utilitarian structure that is not fit for purpose. The proposed building would not detract from the scale and character of adjacent buildings and only part of the building would be visible from outside of the site given the presence of the dense woodland that envelopes the site and its set back from Shepherds Way. External materials can be secured through planning condition.</p> <p>Contrary to the comments raised by North Mymms Parish Council, it is considered that the use of light tones for the roof and discernible facades and the introduction of glazing helps to soften the impact of what is a large building, assisting to minimise its impact in the landscape and this Green Belt location.</p> <p>Internally, the footprint of the main sports hall would be maintained. The single storey extension would facilitate additional storage for the main hall and ancillary accommodation would be contained within the two storey extension, including aerobics and cardio suite, toilet facilities and viewing gallery. The viewing galley would also have a partial dual use for future classrooms.</p> <p>Importantly, the sports hall would follow Sports England design guidance recommendations, thereby ensuring that the best possible facilities for sports.</p> <p>Although the proposed development would result in the loss of a number of mature trees and woodland, it is not considered the scale of loss would adversely affect the visual amenity of the site. Furthermore, it is normal practice, in accordance with policy R17 that trees which are removed and protected by a Tree Preservation Order shall be replaced in appropriate locations within the site.</p>
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Impact on neighbours	No adverse impact
Access, car parking and highway considerations	<p>Development is unlikely to result in a material impact on highway capacity at peak times on the local highway. There is no apparent intensification of use at the site other than the sports centre.</p> <p>The school has a historic travel plan, with sustainable travel modes encouraged. No aspects of the design prevent the use of sustainable modes.</p>
Landscape and Biodiversity	<p><i>Landscaping</i></p> <p>In addition to trees which require felling irrespective of development, it is necessary to fell four individual trees and a section of woodland in order to achieve the proposed layout. All trees proposed to be felled are cover by area Tree Preservation Order 503 (2016) W1.</p> <p>The Council's Landscaping Department have been consulted and overall have no objection subject to conditions requiring a Tree Protection Plan and a soft landscaping plan (with planting schedule) approval.</p> <p><i>Biodiversity</i></p> <p>Hertfordshire Ecology have been consulted and have no objection to the nature and scale of the proposal, however informatives relating to the protection of wildlife are recommended.</p>
Flooding/ surfaces water drainage	The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been consulted given the nature and scale of the proposed development. Following a series of re-consultations and revised Surface Water Drainage Strategies, the LLFA do not wish to restrict a grant of planning permission on flood risk grounds, however a number of conditions are requested. Such conditions will be imposed in the event of a grant of planning permission.
Waste Management	An informative will be attached in the event of a grant of planning permission in connection with the disposal of asbestos.
Any other considerations	While the proposed extensions to the sports hall and indoor tennis centre may appear to be contrary to elements of Policy CLT8 (New and Extended Education Facilities) in that it is intended to locate additional education facilities away from existing centres of population and passenger transport services, it is considered that this policy is only partially relevant here. The preamble suggests that this policy relates to County Council maintained schools and, in any event, the specific requirements of this policy are outweighed by the special circumstances here in that this is a designated Major Developed Site within the Green Belt for which there is an adopted master planning brief. Furthermore, this building would provide ancillary accommodation to an existing sports hall. The need for a new sports hall was advanced with the brief, but broadly is due to the classrooms being of a temporary nature, the sports hall being unheated, unsustainable and not meeting Sport England requirements.
Conclusion	
The proposal is considered to comply with Green Belt Policies and the Master Planning Brief and thus is considered to be appropriate development. Subject to an external materials condition, the extensions and alterations proposed would represent a marked improvement to the overall design, appearance and sustainability of the existing building.	

Furthermore, the proposed building would relate well to the scale and character of adjacent buildings.

Biodiversity would be protected and, although the proposed development would result in the loss of a number of mature trees and woodland covered by an area Tree Preservation Order, it is not considered the scale of loss would adversely affect the visual amenity of the site, particularly as tree protection and appropriate re-planting will be conditioned.

The development is unlikely to result in a material impact on highway capacity at peak times on the local highway and there is no apparent intensification of use at the site other than the sports hall.

Subject to conditions, the proposed development would not also not result in any flood risk.

Conditions:

1. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby granted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented using the approved materials and subsequently, the approved materials shall not be changed.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

2. No development shall take place until a tree protection plan and method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To protect the existing trees and hedgerows in the interest of visual amenity in accordance with Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. No development shall take place until full details on a suitably scaled plan of soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:

(a) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, number and percentage mix, and details of seeding or turfing;

(b) details of planting or features to be provided to enhance the value of the development for biodiversity and wildlife;

(c) management and maintenance details.

REASON: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies GBSP2, D2 and D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

4. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved surface water drainage assessment carried out by Richard Jackson

Engineering Consultant, dated 13 April 2017, drainage calculations titled: Queenswood Sch 47175 dated 04 July 2017, Queenswood School GF 1ha dated July 2017, document titled: 45875, drawing number: 47875/P/001 Revision B, and the following mitigation measures detailed within the flood risk assessment:

1. Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the critical storm events so that it will not exceed the surface water run-off rate of 21 l/s during the 1 in 100 year event plus 20% of climate change event.
2. Providing storage to ensure no increase in surface water run-off volumes for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event.
3. Discharge of surface water from the private drainage system into the ordinary watercourse.

The mitigation measures must be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

5. No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site based on the approved drainage strategy and sustainable drainage principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage strategy should:

1. Demonstrate that the surface water run-off generated up to and including 1 in 100 year + climate change critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

2. Include detailed engineered drawings of the proposed SuDS features including their size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features including any connecting pipe runs.

The approved details shall be fully implemented and retained thereafter.

REASON: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

6. Upon completion of the drainage works an updated management and maintenance plan for the all the Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy features and structure must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall include arrangements for adoption and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime. The approved details shall be implemented and retained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

DRAWING NUMBERS

7. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
5655-D	A	Tree Constraints Plan	19 December 2016
22968A/01	A	Location Plan	9 January 2017
22968A/02	A	Existing Survey	9 January 2017
22968A/03	A	Proposed Site Plan	9 January 2017
22968A/04	A	Ground Floor Plan	9 January 2017
22968A/05	A	First Floor Plan	9 January 2017
22968A/06	B	Elevations	19 January 2017
22968A/07	C	Elevations	20 July 2017
22968A/08	A	Section A-A	9 January 2017
22968A/09	A	Car Park Plan	9 January 2017
22968A/11		Existing Sports Hall Elevation	19 January 2017
22968A/10	A	Existing Car Park	19 January 2017
47875/P001	B	Proposed Surface Water & Exceedance Event Areas	5 July 2017

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Informatives:

1. This permission does not convey any consent which may be required under any legislation other than the Town and Country Planning Acts. Any permission required under the Building Regulations or under any other Act, must be obtained from the relevant authority or body e.g. Fire Officer, Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency (Water interest etc. Neither does this permission negate or override any private covenants which may affect the land.
2. The attention of the developer is drawn to the safe disposal of the asbestos on the site. Advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Executive prior to undertaking any works.
3. New trees and shrubs should be predominantly native species, particularly those that bear blossom, fruit (berries) and nectar to support local wildlife; and night flowering plants to attract insects and increase foraging opportunities for bats. The planting of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) should be avoided due to the serious Ash dieback disease that is killing ash across Europe, and thus the subsequent ban on the movement of ash planting stock.

4. Existing trees (including the roots and overhanging branches) that are remaining on or adjacent to the site should be protected from damage. Protection barriers and/or a no-dig policy may be required and recommendations in the Tree Survey report (Hayden's, 09/12/2016) should be followed.
5. Demolition of buildings and the removal or severe pruning of trees & shrubs should be avoided during the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible then a search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced Ecologist and if active nests are found, then clearance must be delayed until the last chick has fledged.
6. If bats or evidence for them is discovered during the course of works, work must stop immediately and advice sought on how to proceed lawfully from Natural England - tel: 0300 060 3900 or a licensed bat consultant.
7. Any external lighting scheme should be designed to minimise light spill, in particular directing light away from the boundary vegetation to ensure dark corridors remain for use by wildlife as well as directing lighting away from potential roost / nesting sites.

Determined By:

Mrs L Hughes
20 July 2017