



Preliminary Roost Assessment and
Ground Level Tree Assessment

Spurr House

For

Watson Construction Ltd

Report Ref.: WAT005-001-002/001/001

November 2024

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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Bat Survey Results

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1. Summary and Main Recommendations

1.1 Summary

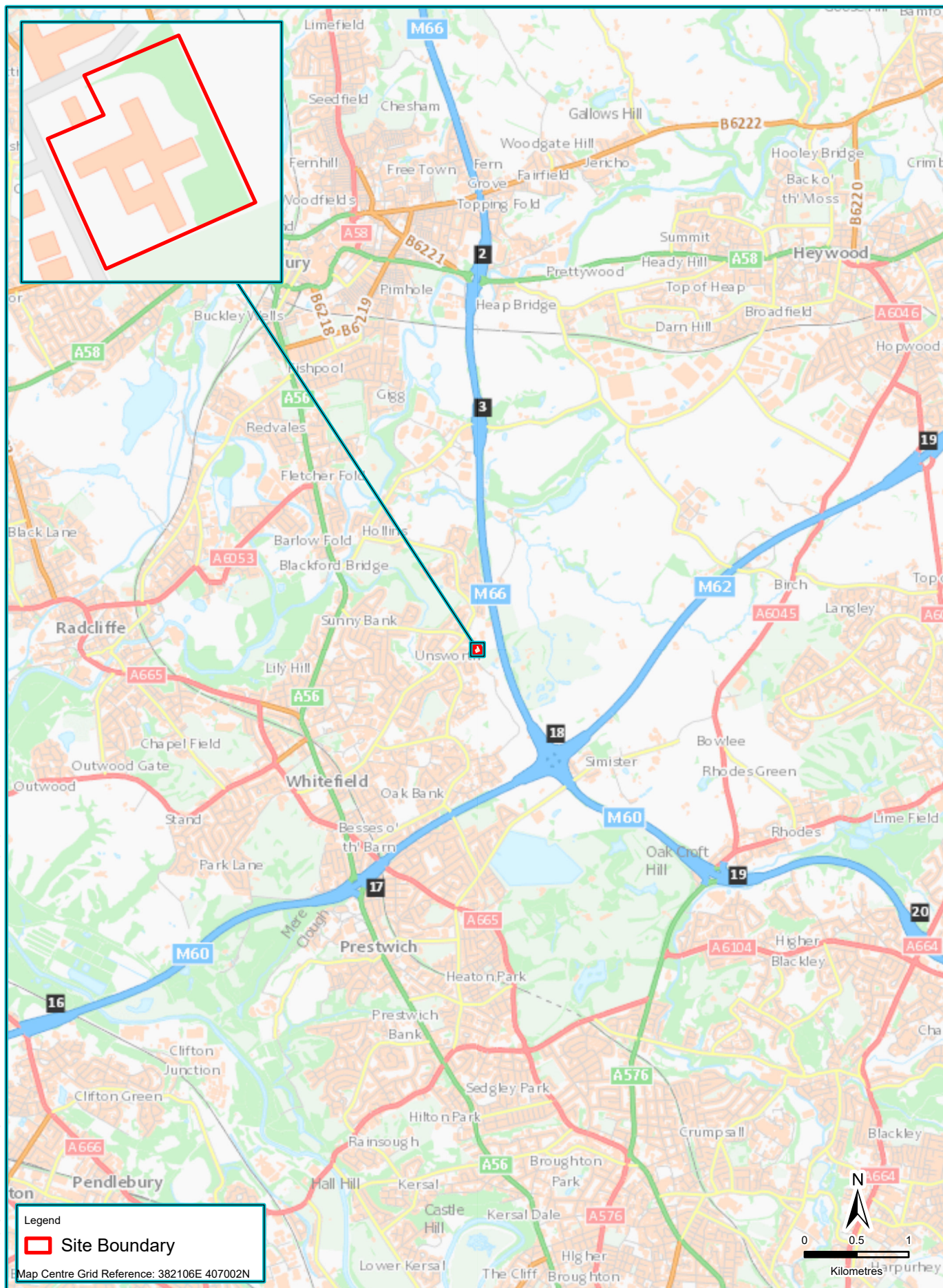
- 1.1.1 Watson Construction Ltd. is proposing the demolition of Spurr House, a former care home, on an approximately 0.68 ha site, to build affordable housing. The site is located near Bury, Greater Manchester and is shown on Figure 1.
- 1.1.2 Thomson Environmental Consultants (Thomson) was commissioned on August 28th 2024, to undertake an updated Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of Spurr House and suitable trees within the site.
- 1.1.3 Thomson previously carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), PRA and GLTA surveys of the site in September 2022 (Thomson, 2022a) for Gardiner and Theobald LLP, and identified and assessed two buildings (B1: the main building on site and B2: a garage) and two trees (T1 and T2) with roost potential. B1, T1 and T2 were found to have moderate potential for roosting bats, and B2 was found to have low potential for roosting bats. Further surveys were recommended, and dusk/dawn surveys were conducted (Thomson, 2022b) with no bats found to be roosting on site.
- 1.1.4 The updated PRA found no new PRFs on B1, but noted that it now has high potential for roosting bats due to the loft area now being fully open and accessible from inside the building (see Photographs 1 and 2 in Figure 3). It also found that B2 had been knocked down since the previous surveys, and so is no longer considered for roosting bats.
- 1.1.5 The updated GLTA found T1 and T2 to be unchanged, however, under the new Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, J. (ed.), 2023) they are classified as having PRF suitability. Another tree on site (T7) was also identified as having PRF suitability. A further four trees (T3 - T6) were identified on the site and were assessed as PRF-I suitability. All other trees on site were classed as having negligible potential for roosting bats.
- 1.1.6 The results of the updated PRA and GLTA surveys are shown on Figure 2, and photographs are provided on Figure 3.
- 1.1.7 The proposed development has the potential to kill or injure bats, and destroy or damage roosts, as well as disturb bats when within their roost. The legal protection afforded to bats is summarised in Section 5 and Appendix 1. Killing or injury of bats would be an offence, as well as damage or destruction of a roosting site. Disturbance of roosting bats is also an offence.

1.2 Main Recommendations

- 1.2.1 It is considered that B1 would likely hold a steady temperature over winter, and the building has been unoccupied for at least three years now, therefore it could be used as a hibernation roost. As such, hibernation surveys are recommended to include:
- Static bat detectors to be deployed for two weeks each month from November to March.
 - If no bats are recorded to be using the building during these surveys, then the building can be demolished before May 2025. If bats are recorded a licence and mitigation will be required.

- If works are delayed until after May 2025, the previous 2022 emergence surveys will be out of date and three new emergence surveys should be carried out, to be conducted under the guidelines set out by BCT.
- 1.2.2** Trees assessed as PRF-I do not require dusk surveys, therefore, T3-T6 do not require further surveys. However, as T3 is going to be felled for the development, it will require a bat licenced ecologist to check the potential roost feature for bats, immediately before it is soft felled. Additionally, mitigation, such as bat boxes, is required for the loss of roost features within the trees.
- 1.2.3** The three trees assessed as PRF (T1, T2 and T7) will require aerial assessment in order to determine their overall roost potential. Once their overall roost potential has been determined, it will be known if further survey is required or not.
- 1.2.4** Best practice measures should be followed at all times during the construction phase, in relation to keeping noise, dust and light pollution to a minimum.
- 1.2.5** It is recommended a Ecological Enhancement Plan report is completed for the development. This report should include how lighting impacts can be reduced during the functional phase of the development, and detail required enhancements, such as bat boxes.

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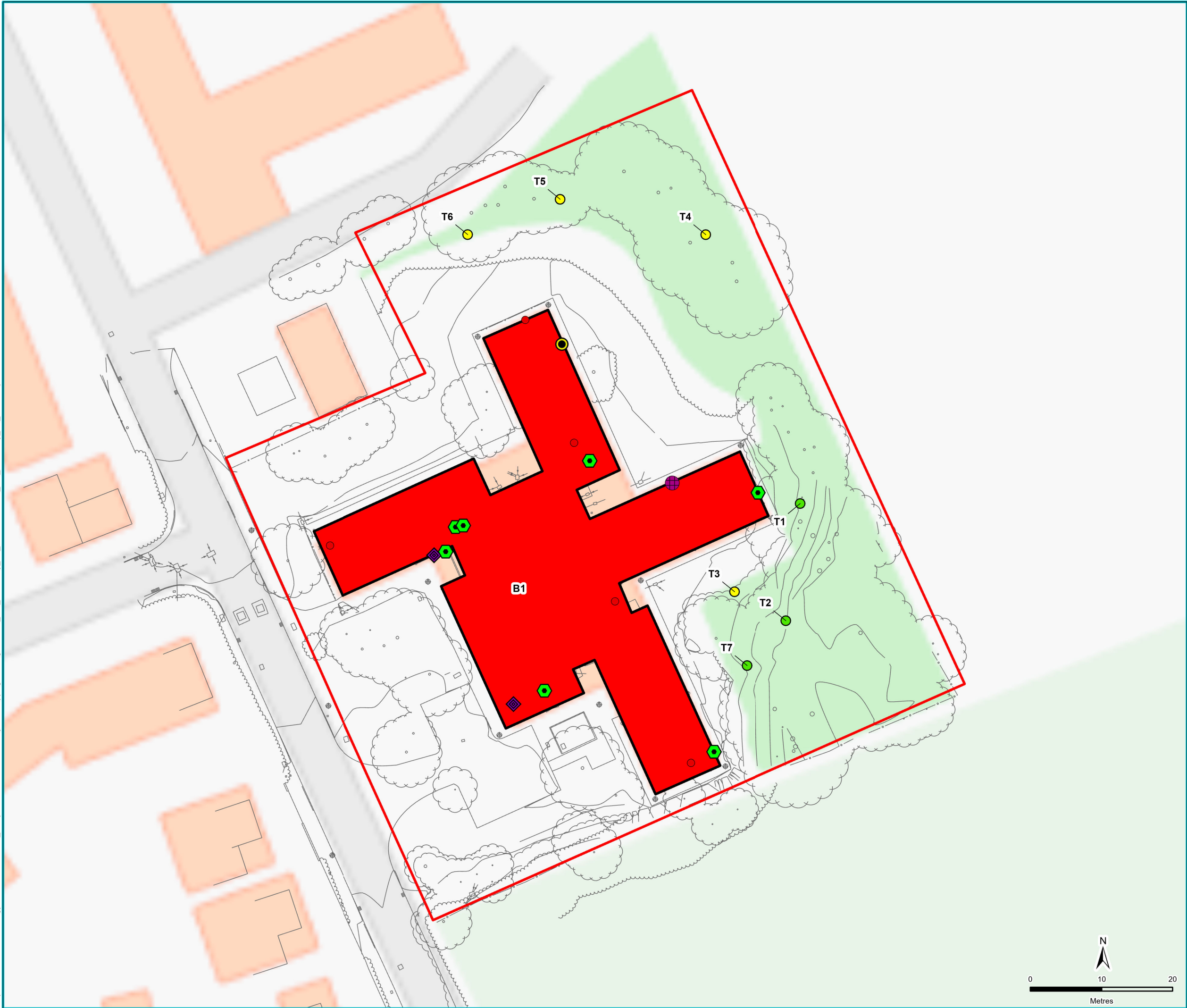


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Figure Number	1		Scale at A4	1:50,000	
Figure Title	Site Location		Drawn	SC	Checked
			Date	05/11/2024	AS

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Legend
**Ground Level Tree Assessment
Survey Results**

Overall Suitability of Tree to
Support Roosting Bats

PRF

PRF-I

Bat Potential Roost Feature

Hole in fascia

Broken ridge tile

Broken cladding

Damaged ventilation feature

Access at top of gable ends

Overall Potential (whole building) to
Support Roosting Bats

High

Site Boundary

Map Centre Grid Reference: 382106E 407002N

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Drawing Ref
WAT005-001/406452/1

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Date 06/11/2024	Date 06/11/2024

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Figure Number
2

Figure Title
Bat Survey Results



Photograph 1: B1 - Removed ceiling and accessible loft cavity. Light can be seen coming in through holes in the cladding.



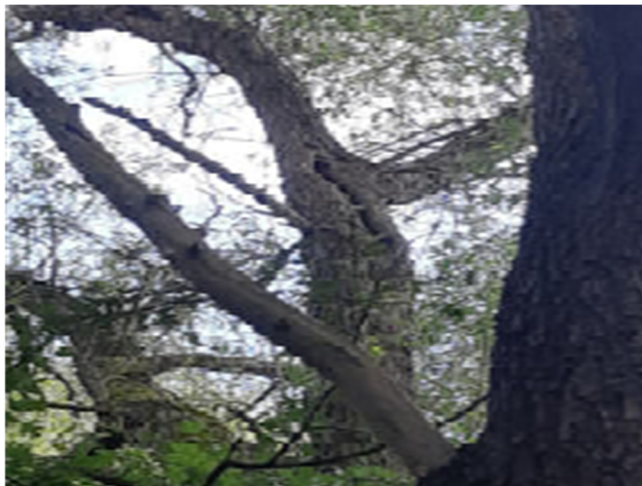
Photograph 2: B1 - Removed ceiling and accessible loft cavity.



Photograph 3: B1 - Holes in cladding.



Photograph 4: T2 - Large PRF in tree trunk.



Photograph 5: T2 - Large split running vertically up one of the stems, which may lead into a cavity.



Photograph 6: T3 - Broken limb approx. 2m high

Client	Watson Construction Ltd		Drawing Ref		Thomson environmental consultants www.thomsonec.com enquiries@thomsonec.com
Figure Number	Figure 3		WAT005-001-001/001/001		
Figure Title	Photographs of the Site		Drawn	Checked	
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			Date		
			05/11/2024		

2. Introduction

2.1 Development Background

- 2.1.1** Watson Construction Ltd. is proposing the demolition of Spurr House, a large former care home, on an approximately 0.68 ha site, to build affordable housing. The development will also require the clearance of some of the grassland, scrub and woodland on site, including the felling of trees. The development will include the creation of two blocks of housing containing 38 one bedroom, and 29 two bedroom apartments, a road, car parking spaces and landscaping. The site is located on Pole Lane in Bury, Greater Manchester, BL9 8PX (central Grid Reference: SD 82103 06996) and is shown on Figure 1.
- 2.1.2** The proposals described above are hereafter collectively referred to as 'the development'.
- 2.1.3** The area impacted by the works is hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is in a residential area, with a motorway to the east of the site and areas of arable land, grassland and woodland in the wider area.
- 2.1.4** Planning permission for the development has not yet been submitted.

2.2 Ecology Background

- 2.2.1** A PEA, PRA and GLTA was produced for Gardiner and Theobald LLP by Thomson Environmental Consultants in September 2022 (Thomson, 2022a) for a different development proposal, which planned to convert Spurr House to a School. The surveys and report identified and assessed two buildings and two trees within the site with bat roost potential. B1, T1 and T2 were found to have moderate potential and B2 was found to have low potential. Two dusk and one dawn survey was completed on B1 (totalling two surveys of all roost features on the building), one dawn survey was completed on B2, and one dusk and one dawn survey for both T1 and T2 was completed, with no roosting bats found during the surveys (Thomson, 2022b). Overall, bat activity levels during the dusk and dawn surveys was found to be low on site.
- 2.2.2** Watson Construction Ltd were advised by Suzanne Waymont (Senior Ecologist at Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) in August 2024, that an updated bat roost assessment of the building, to ensure no significant condition changes have occurred, would be required.

2.3 The Brief and Objectives

- 2.3.1** Watson Construction Ltd commissioned Thomson Environmental Consultants on August 28th, 2024, to undertake an updated Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of buildings, and an updated Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of trees within the development site. The brief was to:
- Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA): We will undertake a GLTA survey of all trees on site. The survey method will be based on Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (4th Edition) (Collins, J (ed), 2023). The preliminary ground level roost assessment will consist of the inspection of trees from ground level, to look for features with potential to support roosting bats. A pole mounted camera may also be used to more closely investigate potential roost

cavities. A level of potential will be assigned to each tree, to help determine if they are in the same condition as the original survey from 2022. NB. Only trees with the potential to support roosting bats will have detailed survey information recorded.

- Conduct external and internal inspections of all buildings and structures on site. The survey method will be based on Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (4th Edition) (Collins, J (ed), 2023). We will inspect buildings and structures from the ground, using high powered optics and torches where appropriate, to look for potential bat access and egress points, potential roosting site and signs of bats themselves. We will assess if the buildings are still in the same state as the original survey in 2022.
- Following the bat surveys, a report will be provided including the methods and results of the surveys, and a discussion of any legal issues and our recommendations as to how these may be overcome, including necessary avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures. The report will be supported by appropriate digitised mapping.

2.4 Limitations

2.4.1 This report is based on the development boundary and layout shown on the site plan (drawing number B1045-02-P4). Subsequent changes to either may result in a requirement to reassess the potential impacts of the development, and the requirements for avoidance, mitigation and enhancement.

2.4.2 It is known that at least a quarter of tree roosts are likely to be invisible from the ground. Therefore, per current guidance, only trees which could be thoroughly visually viewed from the ground with a high level of confidence that potential roost features (PRFs) were not present, were classified as having no suitability for roosting bats. Context such as tree age, species, management practices and health was also taken into account, when assessing tree roost potential.

2.4.3 The surveys were carried out when trees were in leaf, outside the optimal period for this survey. This impeded the visual assessment of trees, particularly regarding mature/taller specimens. However, the surveyor still felt able to accurately assess roost potential of trees present, and three trees where overall roost potential could not be determined (T1, T2 and T7) further aerial surveys have been recommended.

2.5 Surveyors

2.5.1 The survey was carried out on 10th September 2024 by Laura Meer BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Senior Ecological Consultant, BCT level 3 and Level 2 Survey Class bat licence holder (2023-11510-CL18-BAT), and Assistant Ecologist Matthew Henderson.

3. Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 A study area was defined as an area that encompassed the site and all land within 2km of the perimeter of the site. Records of designated sites and important species were then sought for the study area.

3.1.2 Sources of information were as follows:

- The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)
- Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC)

3.1.3 To ensure records are relevant for this site, records that are older than 10 years were excluded from the desk study.

3.1.4 Requests for information were to the Biological Record Centre sent on 10/08/2022 with responses received by 19/08/2022.

3.2 Survey Area and Data Collection

3.2.1 A survey area was defined that encompassed the development site.

3.2.2 Potential bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat was identified and evaluated. All data was recorded on the ArcGIS FieldMaps mobile mapping app. See Figure 2 for a map of the survey area.

3.2.3 During the survey the weather was 15 degrees Celsius, with heavy cloud cover and a light wind.

3.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment of Built Structures

3.3.1 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out to characterise the building on site, and search for potential roosting features for bats (PRFs) and evidence of bats. See Figure 2 for a map of the building location.

3.3.2 Evidence of roosting bats searched for included:

- Bat droppings, feeding remains (discarded invertebrate wings in localised piles) and corpses (with notes made on quantity, freshness and type);
- Dark staining below an access point that may be caused by bat faeces or urine;
- Staining around a hole that may be caused by the natural oils in bat fur;
- Noises made by bats, and
- Bats roosting in-situ.

3.3.3 Any evidence of bats found was recorded together with a note on the location.

External Inspection of Buildings

3.3.4 Where possible to determine, the following information was recorded for each building present within the survey area:

- Type (House, flats, offices, barn, church, etc.);
- Presence of roof void;
- Year built (1960 - present, 1914 - 1960, before-1914 or unknown);
- Aspect (orientation of the front of the building using the 8 principal compass points);
- Wall material (brick, block, stone, wood, concrete, metal, sheet materials or other), construction (solid, unfilled cavity or filled cavity) and presence of other materials (rendering, hanging tiles, wooden weather boards, plastic or metal cladding) and their condition;
- Presence and form of roof (absent, pitched (gable end or hipped) or flat), presence of roof void, type of roof covering (tiles, slates, felt or similar, thatched, corrugated sheet GRP, concrete or wood) and condition of roof covering (no, minor, moderate or severe damage/decay/gaps);
- Presence and form of eaves (presence of soffits, fascia boards, barge boards) and condition (no, minor, moderate or severe damage/decay/gaps); and
- Presence and condition of flashing (no, minor, moderate or severe damage/decay/gaps).

3.3.5 The exterior of all buildings was then searched for PRFs and evidence of bats. The search was made from the ground with the aid of binoculars and a high-powered torch. PRFs looked for included:

- Presence of loft voids and wall cavities;
- Gaps around windows, doors and lintels;
- Lifted lead flashing;
- Loose or missing roof, ridge or hanging tiles;
- Gaps between stones or bricks where mortar is absent;
- Other gaps or cracks between various elements of the building structure; and
- Potential access points to an internal cavity such as a cavity wall, loft space, eaves or behind cladding (such as hanging tiles and weather boarding).

3.3.6 The search for bats and evidence of bats focused on the following key areas:

- The ground and walls below potential access points and wall cladding;
- Window recesses, especially windowsills; and
- Accessible cracks and crevices.

3.3.7 The location of the PRFs and any evidence found were recorded using a GPS enabled mobile mapper, and photographs and/or diagrams of the building when necessary.

Contextual Information

3.3.8 For each structure with PRFs, contextual information was also recorded to aid the assessment. This was distance to hedge, distance to woodland, distance to water, potential commuting

corridors, potential foraging corridors, setting, surrounding area habitat quality and the level of disturbance.

Categorisation of Results

- 3.3.9** After each survey type, each building or structure was assigned a level of potential to support a bat roost as per Table 3.1. They were classified according to the highest suitability PRF identified during the inspections.

Table 3.1: Habitat Suitability for Roosting Bats (adapted from Collins ed 2023)

Suitability for a Significant Roost	Examples for Structures
Negligible	Absence of potential roost features (PRFs) or with PRFs of any quality but located in an environment which is not suitable for bats i.e. there is an absence of commuting and foraging habitat.
Low	Structures which are located near only low or negligible suitability commuting and foraging habitat, or that are exposed to high levels of lighting and disturbance, and which contain one or more PRFs (of any quality). Structures which are located near moderate or high suitability commuting and foraging habitat, with one or more PRFs, all of which are shallow, small or exposed.
Moderate	Structures which are not subject to high levels of lighting and disturbance, and which are either (i) located near only moderate suitability commuting and foraging habitat, and which contain multiple, sheltered PRFs of a type and size capable of supporting multiple bats; or (ii) located near moderate or high suitability commuting and foraging habitat and which contain one or more PRFs which are sheltered but not sufficiently large to support a maternity or hibernation roost.
High	Structures which are located near high suitability commuting and foraging habitat, not subject to high levels of lighting and disturbance, generally traditional built construction, and which contain multiple or large and sheltered PRFs that could support a maternity or hibernation roost.

Internal Inspection of Buildings

- 3.3.10** The building was entered and a systematic search for PRFs and evidence of bats was undertaken. A ladder and torch and endoscope were used when necessary.
- 3.3.11** The search for bats and evidence of bats focused on the following key areas within the building:
- Along and on top of all beams and the floor or surfaces immediately below them;
 - On and around dividing walls, gable end walls and chimney breasts;

- Within gaps in the structure, such as mortise joints and gaps in mortar;
- Within any uncovered water tanks; and
- Between the tiles and the roof lining, if accessible without causing damage.
- The floor and surfaces of furniture;
- Behind items attached to the walls;
- Around windows, including within curtains and along windowsills; and
- On top of door architraves and picture rails.

3.3.12 A search was also made for any access points which had not been recorded previously external inspections, as well as connecting access points recorded during the external inspection with interior spaces like loft voids etc. In addition, for each area searched, a note was made as to whether the area appeared to have been recently cleaned.

3.4 Ground Level Tree Assessment

3.4.1 Trees identified within the survey area were subject to detailed inspection from the ground, systematically visually surveying the tree from all possible aspects, including close to the stem and further from the base (as required). Results were recorded using a GPS enabled mobile mapper or paper form, with photographs taken to support results.

3.4.2 The survey searched for and recorded any PRFs which could be viewed from the ground. Those which were apparently pointing upwards were included in the assessment, as were seasonally wet features because these factors do not necessarily preclude use without further investigation. Where higher level areas of the tree were viewable from the ground, a high-powered torch was used to search for PRFs.

3.4.3 Features searched for included those in Table 3.2, defined according to Bat Roosts in Trees, (BTHK, 2018).

Table 3.2: PRF types that can be exploited by bats and how they form

Disease/Decay Formed PRFs	Damaged formed PRFs	Association formed PRFs
woodpecker holes	lightning strikes	fluting
squirrel holes	hazard beams	ivy
knot holes	subsidence cracks	
pruning cuts	shearing cracks	
tear outs	transverse snaps	
wounds	welds	
cankers	lifting bark	
compression forks	desiccation fissures	
butt rots	frost cracks	

3.4.4 All trees with identified PRFs and requiring further assessment were photographed, numbered and the following information recorded:

- GPS coordinates
- species, height, condition (alive, dead etc)
- approximate diameter at breast height

3.4.5 Where PRFs were identified, they were recorded including PRF type, location on tree (stem or limb), height above ground and compass direction on the tree. Any evidence confirming or indicating use of a PRF was also recorded, including:

- GPS coordinates
- Bat droppings, feeding remains and corpses (with notes made on quantity, freshness and type);
- Dark staining below an access point that may be caused by bat faeces or urine;
- Staining around a hole that may be caused by the natural oils in bat fur; and
- Noises made by bats.

Contextual Information

3.4.6 For each tree, contextual information was also recorded to aid the assessment. This was distance to hedge, distance to woodland, distance to water, potential commuting corridors, potential foraging corridors, setting, surrounding area habitat quality and the level of disturbance.

Categorisation of Results

3.4.7 The suitability of potential tree roosting habitat was classified according to the broad categories in Table 3.3, based on the presence or absence of PRF.

Table 3.3: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of tree PRFs on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement (adapted from Collins ed 2023)

Suitability	Description
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further Assessment Required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

3.4.8 Trees identified as 'none', with no bat roosting potential, were not recorded. Trees identified as FAR or PRF were recorded.

3.4.9 When all PRFs are visible from the ground, these were assigned a level of estimated suitability as per Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of tree PRFs on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement (adapted from Collins ed 2023)

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

3.4.10 All accessible PRFs were searched for evidence of use by roosting bats, including droppings (although these often deteriorate rapidly in trees) and bats occupying a PRF at the time of the survey.

3.4.11 During the classification visit, all PRFs were mapped within each tree (following the GLTA references) and numbered, with the following attributes were recorded, and updated as necessary during subsequent visits:

- stem/limb diameter at the PRF
- no. entrances
- width of all entrances
- internal dimensions (height, width and depth) and apex shape
- internal conditions (substrate, dry, damp, wet, odour)
- presence of competitors
- presence of bats / bat droppings
- lack of evidence of use by bats
- if roosting bats present: species, number, state (torpid/awake), location in PRF, distance from entrance

4. Results

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 Seven designated sites were identified within 2km of the site, the closest being Parr Brook SBI located 0.5km from the site, however, none of these were designated due to their bat populations.
- 4.1.2 Twenty two bat records were returned in the desk study within 2km of the site within the last 10 years. Species include common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and unidentified pipistrelle species. The closest record was of a common pipistrelle located 600m west of the site, the bat was found grounded.
- 4.1.3 There were no records of bat species returned in the desk study within 1km of the site within the last ten years.
- 4.1.4 A search on MAGIC for European Protected Species (EPS) licences granted for bats within 2km of the site returned no results.

4.2 Updated Preliminary Roost Assessment of Built Structures

- 4.2.1 Previously two buildings were identified within the site (B1 and B2) with B1 assessed as moderate potential and B2 as low potential (Thomson, 2022a).
- 4.2.2 This survey identified one building (B1), which is the main building on site, within the survey area which was assessed as having high potential for roosting bats.
- 4.2.3 The survey also found that the building previously referred to as B2 (a garage) had been demolished since the previous surveys were carried out, and so is no longer considered for roosting bat potential.
- 4.2.4 The development will involve the demolition of B1. The location of the building and the associated PRFs are shown on Figure 2. The results of the PRA are described below and summarised in Table 4.1. Full details of all PRFs are provided in Appendix 2.

Building 1 (B1)

- 4.2.5 B1 is the main old care home building, with a large footprint (1903m²) and brick walls, with plastic cladding covering the upper half of the walls. A total of 16 PRFs were recorded on the exterior of the building in the survey in 2022, and this survey confirmed these PRFs are unchanged and there are no new ones.
- 4.2.6 The potential for roosting bats was updated from 'moderate' to 'high' due to the ceiling having been pulled down since the 2022 survey, meaning the loft area is now open and accessible from the inside, which could allow hibernation roosts (see Figure 3). Also, as the building has not been occupied for at least three years, the chance of hibernating bats being present has increased.

- 4.2.7** There were no bat droppings, feeding remains or other signs of bats within the building.
- 4.2.8** The woodland and scrub habitat on site was found to have moderate potential for foraging and commuting bats, with the grassland habitat having low suitability. Overall, the site has good connectivity to the wider area, mostly along hedgerows, where areas of high potential for bat commuting and foraging within woodland and waterbodies is present.

Table 4.1: Summary of PRA results

Attribute	Building 1
Type	Care home
Age	1960 - Present
Construction	Brick
Description of building	Single storey brick built building with planks of plastic cladding on upper half of building. Tiled roof with soffit and fascia present.
Description and summary of potential roost features.	Potential roost features include broken ridge tiles, multiple instances of broken cladding, a hole in the fascia a damaged ventilation feature and gaps at the gable ends under the fascia.
Size of PRFs	2-30cm
Setting	Suburban
Distance and connectivity to from woodland, hedgerow and waterbodies.	The site contains areas of woodland, with hedgerows and other small pockets of woodland connecting to the wider area that contains woodland, grassland and hedgerows which are all suitable for commuting and foraging bats. There are also multiple waterbodies within 250m of the site and the wider area.
Level of disturbance/ lighting	Low/ moderate. The building is on a quiet residential street with street lighting present.
Evidence of bats	None
Potential roost types	This building has the potential to support hibernation, maternity, satellite, transitional, day, night and feeding roosts.
Overall roosting suitability	High

4.3 Updated Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 4.3.1** Previously two trees (T1 and T2) were identified within the site and assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats (Thomson, 2022a).

- 4.3.2** BCT guidelines of assessing tree roosts has now changed, so moderate potential is no longer valid. This survey found T1 and T2 to now be classified as PRF under the new BCT guidelines. Another tree on site, T7, was also found to have PRF suitability. A further four trees (T3-T6) were identified within the site and were assessed as PRF-I suitability (see Figure 2).
- 4.3.3** Further details for each of the identified trees, and the reason for the classification are given in Table 4.2 and in Appendix 3.

Table 4.2: Summary of GLTA results

Attribute	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
Tree species	Crack willow (<i>Salix fragilis</i>)	Crack willow	Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Crack willow	Wild cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	Crack willow	Crack willow
Life stage and condition	Mature alive	Mature alive	Semi-mature alive	Mature alive	Mature alive	Mature alive	Mature alive
Type of PRF 1	Hollow trunk	Hollow branch	Broken limb	Broken limb	Ivy	Ivy	Broken Limb
Type of PRF 2		Hollow branch					Knot hole
PRF1 suitability (estimated)	PRF	PRF	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF
PRF2 suitability (estimated)		PRF					PRF
Setting	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban
Distance from woodland or waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody	Within a woodland and <100m from waterbody
Level of disturbance/ lighting	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Tree suitability	PRF	PRF	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF-I	PRF

5. Legislation and Planning Policy Considerations

5.1.1 All UK bat species are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulations make it an offence, with very few exceptions, to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat in such a way as to be likely:
 - i. to impair its ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture its young; or
 - ii. to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate; or
 - iii. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; or
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.

5.1.2 In addition to the protection given to bats under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) already described, bats receive additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which adds the following offences (with certain exceptions):

- Disturbance while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstructing access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

5.1.3 A roost is any structure or place used by bats for shelter or protection. As bats tend to re-use the same roosts year after year, the roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time

5.1.4 The works have the potential to disturb bats whilst roosting.

5.2 Planning Policy

5.2.1 Seven species of bats have been adopted as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England (see Appendix 1). Under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, the Secretary of State must publish a list of species which in the Secretary of State's opinion are species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Planning authorities are required to have particular regard to these species, and treat them as a material consideration in the planning process. Most protected species are also listed as species of principal importance. Species of principal importance are often referred to as 'priority species'.

5.2.2 Consideration of species of conservation concern during development projects is a requirement of the NERC Act 2006 which states that any *"public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard ... to the purpose of conserving biodiversity"* and *"conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat."*

- 5.2.3** Policy EN6/3 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997) states that '*the effect of land use changes on existing features of ecological or wildlife value will be taken into account when assessing development proposals*', and that '*the Council will seek to negotiate with developers, where appropriate, to mitigate the potential effects of development on features of ecological value*'.
- 5.2.4** Also, the Bury Council Biodiversity Strategy (2024) states that from 2024 '*The Council will expect relevant proposed developments to incorporate nesting or roosting opportunities for birds and bats*'.
- 5.2.5** To comply with legislation and planning policy, the avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures outlined in Section 6 in relation to bats should be adopted as part of the development proposal.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Background

6.1.1 The building (B1) was assessed as having high suitability for roosting bats. Four trees (T3-T6) were classified as PRF-I, where at least one PRF is present, and the tree is suitable for a single or a few bats to roost. Three trees (T1, T2 and T7) were assessed as PRF, where at least one PRF is present, but it is unknown if it is suitable for more than a few bats or not.

6.1.2 The legal protection afforded to bats is summarised in Section 5 and Appendix 1. Killing or injury of bats would be an offence, as well as damage or destruction of a roosting site. Disturbance of roosting bats is also an offence.

6.2 Further Survey

6.2.1 As the loft cavity in B1 is now accessible by bats, and it is considered that the building would likely hold a steady temperature over winter, there is potential for it to be used as a hibernation and / or maternity roost.

6.2.2 It is recommended that static bat detectors are to be deployed for two weeks each month from November to March to determine if bats are using the building. During the two coldest months, likely January and February, internal hibernation surveys should also be completed, to search for hibernating bats or evidence of them.

6.2.3 As the previous surveys in 2022 found no bats to be roosting within the building, and no evidence of roosting bats was found during the internal inspection, if no bats are recorded to be using the building during these static bat detector surveys, then the building can be demolished before May 2025.

6.2.4 If works are delayed until after May 2025, the previous 2022 emergence surveys (Thomson, 2022b) will be out of date and three new emergence surveys should be carried out under the guidelines set out by BCT, before any demolition works.

6.2.5 If it is discovered that bats are using the building, a Natural England (NE) European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licence will be required prior to any works affecting the building, including disturbance such as noise and vibration. Depending on whether surveys have been sufficient to enable confident characterisation of the roost (if present), additional surveys may be required to classify the recorded roost to determine species and roost type.

6.2.6 Trees assessed as PRF-I do not require dusk surveys, therefore, the four trees (T3-T6) identified as PRF-I within the site do not require further surveys. As T3 will need felling, a bat licenced ecologist will have to check the potential roost features for bats or signs of bats, and the tree can then be soft felled immediately after this check. The roost feature of T3 is low enough for this to be done from ground level.

6.2.7 As the overall roost potential of trees classed as 'PRF' is unknown, further aerial surveys are required. If these trees are found to have negligible potential, then no further action is required. If they have PRF-I potential then mitigation is required. If they have PRF-M potential they will require three dusk surveys between May and September (inclusive), with at least two surveys between May and August (inclusive).

6.3 Avoidance and Mitigation

6.3.1 If, during the construction phase, works at night are necessary, any lighting used to facilitate the works should be implemented using a sensitive lighting regime. This should include the focus of lighting to be on the works area only, and directed away from suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats, including trees, and woodland. Any light spill in the surrounding trees and habitats should be minimised to prevent disturbance to any foraging or commuting bats that may be present, and ideally night work should be avoided. Additionally, noise pollution should be kept to a minimum, and machines turned off when not in use.

6.3.2 Bat boxes must be added to the site to mitigate the loss of roost features from T3, and also for somewhere to place bats if they are found during the check before the tree is soft felled. Dependent on the outcome of the aerial assessment of T1, T2 and T7, further mitigation may be required.

6.4 Opportunities for Enhancement

6.4.1 It is recommended a Ecological Enhancement Plan report is completed for the development. This report should include how lighting impacts can be reduced during the functional phase of the development, and detail required enhancements, such as bat boxes.

7. References

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Thomson (2022b) Spurr House Bat Surveys: Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry. Gardiner and Theobald LLP. Ref: GAR001-001-002/001/001.

Appendix 1: British Bats

Introduction

A summary of the biology of British bats and the legislation and policy that protects them is provided below.

Biology

There are 18 British species of bats, belonging to two families; the horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophidae*) and vesper bats (*Vespertilionidae*). Of the 18 species, two species are horseshoe bats and belong to the genus *Rhinolophus*, the remaining 16 species are vesper bats and are sub-divided between six genera; *Myotis*, *Eptesicus*, *Nyctalus*, *Pipistrellus*, *Plecotus* and *Barbastella*. Whilst there are many differences in the biology of the different species, all share certain characteristics, and these are described below.

Roosting

Bat species utilise roost sites of varying character; some preferring tree roosts whilst others are thought to be almost entirely dependent on built structures. Most bats will have a number of available roosting sites within their range, which they move between throughout the year. They are generally faithful to their roosts and a colony of bats may use the same roost site(s) year after year.

Bats hibernate during the winter and will often gather to hibernate communally, remaining in the same hibernation roost from November to February/March. Hibernation roost sites typically have a constant low temperature and high humidity levels. Sites include caves, mines, thick-walled buildings and hollow trees. With the arrival of spring, the ambient temperature and day length increase and bats begin to leave their hibernation roosts, either moving immediately to summer roost sites or occasionally, to a transitional roost.

By June, breeding females will begin to congregate in maternity roost sites where they will give birth to and nurture their young. Male bats are also occasionally found roosting in maternity roosts but during this period they mostly roost alone. Maternity roost sites include hollowed out trees, buildings and bridges. Male bats may use similar sites but also cracks and crevices in trees, under loose tiles or even amongst dense ivy growth during the summer period. Similar sites may be used by bats for brief periods during the night when they are resting or feeding on recently caught prey. In autumn, male bats establish mating roosts and are visited by females. A variety of roost sites may be used until the bats return to their hibernation roosts.

Foraging

All British bat species feed on invertebrates, with flies, beetles, moths and other insects making up much of their diet. Areas with an abundance of insect prey, such as woodlands, scrub, wetlands, river corridors and flower rich grasslands are therefore favoured foraging sites for bats. Habitats such as intensively farmed arable land, and amenity grassland support a much lower invertebrate abundance and are therefore less favoured foraging habitats for bats.

Commuting

Bats favour roost sites in close proximity to suitable foraging habitat, however, given variation in prey availability, land-use change, and competition with other bats, for at least part of the year bats must commute between their roosts and foraging habitat.

Commuting routes tend to follow linear features in the landscape such as hedgerows, woodland edges, rivers and other watercourses, particularly when crossing areas of less favourable habitat. The distance that bats commute between roost sites and foraging areas is dependent on local geography and also the species of bat. Some species will travel up to 18km, though shorter distances are more typical.

Site Designation

All bat roosts in the UK receive protection under the following legislation:

- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (which replaces the Conservation (Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 as amended)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (which amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act); and
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (which amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act).

This is described in more detail under 'Species Protection' below. In addition, the most important sites for certain bat species in the UK receive further statutory protection through designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Four UK bat species, the greater and lesser horseshoe, barbastelle and Bechstein's bats, are included on Annex II of the European Community Directive of the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, referred to as the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive was transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended. The Habitat Regulations, amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, now form stand-alone legislation for England and Wales, independent of the Directive. This legislation requires that areas are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to protect populations of these 4 bat species. These sites form part of the National site network and are considered to be of international importance for the bat populations they support.

Sites designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) are known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs received further protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Some SSSIs are designated for the population(s) of bats that they support. The criteria for selecting SSSIs on the basis of their bat populations are provided in Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs (NCC, 1989):

- Greater horseshoe bat - all main breeding roosts and all winter roosts with 50 or more adult bats;
- Lesser horseshoe bat - all main breeding roosts containing 100 or more adult bats and all winter roosts containing 50 or more bats;
- Barbastelle, Bechstein's and grey long-eared bats - any traditional breeding roosts;

- Natterer's, Daubenton's, whiskered, Brandt's, serotine, noctule and Leisler's bats - only exceptionally large breeding roosts or those with a long history of use; and
- Mixed Roost sites - all hibernacula containing four or more species and more than 50 individuals or three species and 100 or more individuals or two species and 150 or more individuals, though these criteria may be lower in some parts of the UK.

Sites that qualify as SSSIs for the bat populations they support are considered to be of at least national importance.

Sites designated for nature conservation at the county level may also include bat populations as part of the site qualifying criteria, although the criteria used may vary from county to county. Such sites are protected through the planning system and there is generally a presumption against development that affects such sites in local authority development plans.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, gives further direction with respect to biodiversity conservation and land use change / development. The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to identify, conserve and restore, ecological networks, which should benefit bats, and it also states that planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated. In addition, the Government Circular 06/05, which relates to biodiversity conservation, states that all protected species, such as bats, are a material consideration for the planning authority when considering proposed developments.

Species Protection

Legislation

All bat species are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended. The Regulations make it an offence, with very few exceptions, to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat in such a way as to be likely:
 - iv. to impair its ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture its young; or
 - v. to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate; or
 - vi. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; or
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.

In addition to the protection given to bats under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended already described, bats are also partially protected in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which adds the following offences (with certain exceptions):

- Disturbance while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstructing access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

A roost is any structure or place used by bats for shelter or protection. As bats tend to re-use the same roosts year after year, the roost is protected whether bats are present or not, at the time.

In this context of the legislation, 'damage' would include such operations as treatment of wood with toxic preservatives or use of rodenticides near roosting bats while 'disturbance' includes any work in or affecting a bat roost.

If proposed actions, such as redevelopment of an existing building may lead to an offence under the above legislation, appropriate mitigation which seeks to avoid these impacts should be devised and implemented under licence from Natural England to allow the activity to proceed legally.

In addition to the above legislation, all bats are protected under the Bonn Convention, within which the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (1991) or EUROBAT, establishes a mechanism for international collaboration to conserve bats and their habitats, including foraging habitats. All European bat species are covered under Appendix II of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 provide for the conservation of 'important' hedgerows and their constituent trees. The presence of a protected species such as bats is included in the assessment of whether a hedgerow is considered 'important' and applications to remove such hedgerows must be made to the planning authority.

UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and Species of Principal Importance

Published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in July 2012, the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework identifies UK-scale activities and priority works that are required to deliver the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Following a process of devolution, the framework is underpinned by country level strategies which are now largely responsible for continuing the work carried out under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plans (UK BAP). JNCC guidance dictates that UK BAP background information on priority species and habitats still remains relevant and it now forms the basis of country specific priority lists, which for England, are specified under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC Act). Targets for England's biodiversity strategy 'Biodiversity 2020': A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, are informed by this list.

Seven species of bats (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, greater and lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, noctule and soprano pipistrelle) have been adopted as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species. Furthermore, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should promote the protection and recovery of priority species populations linked to national and local targets, which presumably means those listed under the Section 41 of the NERC Act, the former UK BAP and on Local or Regional priorities species lists.

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Appendix 2: Full PRA Results

Attribute	Building 1
Type	Care home
Presence of roof void	Yes
Year built	Present-1960
Aspect	Building covers all aspects due to unusual shape
Wall material	Brick
Presence of other wall materials	Plastic cladding
Condition of other wall materials	Poor
Presence and form of roof	Present, gable and valley
Presence of roof void	Yes
Type of roof covering	Felt lined, slate
Condition of roof covering	Moderate
Presence and form of eaves	Present. Standard fink truss.
Eaves condition	Good
Presence of flashing	Present
Condition of flashing	Moderate
PRF 1 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, moderate, 10cm
PRF 2 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, high, 8cm
PRF 3 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, moderate, 10cm
PRF 4 type, exposure and size	Broken ridge tile, low, 10cm
PRF 5 type, exposure and size	Broken ridge tile, low, 10cm
PRF 6 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, high, 8cm
PRF 7 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, moderate, 30cm

Attribute	Building 1
PRF 8 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, low, 5cm
PRF 9 type, exposure and size	Damaged ventilation feature, high, 10cm
PRF 10 type, exposure and size	Hole in fascia, low, 6cm
PRF 11 type, exposure and size	Broken cladding, low, 5cm
PRF 12 type, exposure and size	Access at top of gable end, low, 2cm
PRF 13 type, exposure and size	Access at top of gable end, low, 2cm
PRF 14 type, exposure and size	Access at top of gable end, low, 2cm
PRF 15 type, exposure and size	Access at top of gable end, low, 2cm
PRF 16 type, exposure and size	Access at top of gable end, low, 2cm
Distance to hedge	<100m
Distance to woodland	On site
Distance to water	<100m
Surrounding area habitat quality	Moderate
Level of disturbance/lighting	Low/ moderate

Appendix 3: Full GLTA Results

Attribute	Tree 1	Tree 2	Tree 3	Tree 4	Tree 5	Tree 6	Tree 7
Tree species	Crack willow (<i>Salix fragilis</i>)	Crack willow	Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Crack willow	Wild cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	Crack willow	Crack willow
Tree age	Mature	Mature	Semi-mature	Mature	Semi-mature	Mature	Mature
Tree height	20m	20m	10m	17m	10m	15m	15m
Tree diameter	2.5m	2m	0.5m	1m	0.5m	0.5m	0.5m
Tree condition	Good health	Good health	Good health	Good health	Good health	Good health	Good health
PRF 1 Type	Hollow Trunk or Branch	Hollow Trunk or Branch	Broken Limb	Broken Limb	Ivy	Ivy	Broken limb
PRF 1 Exposure	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PRF 1 Size of PRF	6m	1.5m	10cm	10cm	10cm	10cm	10cm
PRF 2 Type		Hollow trunk or branch					Knot hole
PRF 2 Exposure		Moderate					Moderate

Attribute	Tree 1	Tree 2	Tree 3	Tree 4	Tree 5	Tree 6	Tree 7
PRF 2 Size of PRF		1.5m					8cm
Distance to hedge	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m
Distance to woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland	Within a woodland
Distance to water	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m	<100m
Surrounding area habitat quality	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Level of disturbance/lighting	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low