

Letter Ref: AB/2493 Bat

Date: 28th May 2024

Andrew Ruaux
Associate Architect
Bradshaw Gass & Hope LLP
2nd Floor, Regent House
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Bolton
BL2 RZ

Dear Andrew,

Re: 2493 Millwood Special Primary School, Bat Survey Letter Report

This document outlines the results of the ground level tree assessment (GLTA) survey for bats undertaken on trees at land at Millwood Special Primary School, Radcliffe, M26 3BW.

Project Background

In April 2024, a nesting bird check was carried out by Appletons prior to tree removal in two areas. While some bird activity was noted during the survey, including wood pigeon *Columba palumbus* and coal tit *Periparus ater* resting within tree removal areas, no nesting birds were observed during the survey.

In September 2023, a Biodiversity Assessment was conducted by Blackfryers Consultants of the existing school building and surrounding area. The site was considered to be dominated by amenity grassland with no priority habitats located on site. It was considered unlikely that development would impact any protected species or protected areas. No invasive species were noted during the survey. A large poplar tree along the boundary of the canal was noted to have enhanced biodiversity value due to significant heartwood decay.

Survey Methodology

In line with *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023), a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was conducted during daylight hours. A visual assessment of all trees covered by the tree survey was undertaken to determine the presence of any Potential Roost Features (PRFs). Any accessible PRFs were inspected using binoculars and a high-powered torch for any primary or secondary evidence of possible bat presence.

Based on the PRFs present, the trees were assessed using the suitability classes detailed within *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023), as outlined below in Table 1.1.

Suitability Category	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 (e.g., climbing or presence/absence surveys).
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF.
PRF-I	PRF is only 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.

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Table 1.1: Classification of trees with Bat Suitability/Potential, based on Tables 4.2 and 6.2 from Collins, 2023

Survey Results

The survey was undertaken on 28th May 2024 by Ecologist Adam Broda BSc (Hons) MSc. Weather conditions at the time of survey are detailed below in Table 1.2.

Precipitation	Wind (Beaufort)	Cloud Cover (%)	Temperature (°C)
Light rain	F4	100	14

Table 1.2: Weather Conditions During GLTA Survey.

All trees within and adjacent to the site were assessed in relation to their potential value for roosting bats. The species, maturity and suitability for roosting bats are detailed in Table 1.3 below. All trees have been referenced in line with the Tree Removal / Retention Plan and Tree Protection Map (see Appendix 2). It should be noted that T4, T6 and T23, highlighted below in blue, have been referenced as part of the 'Car Park Zone' list of trees.

Tree Ref.	Species	Age	Suitability Category and PRFs
T1	Hybrid black poplar	Mature	PRF-I, pruning cut holes seen
T2	Sycamore	Mature	PRF-I, multiple pruning cut holes (albeit some upwards facing and exposed to the elements), one knot hole,.
T4	Common ash	Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T6	Hybrid black poplar	Mature	PRF-I, multiple areas of lifted bark (albeit some are covered by cobwebs), a knot hole and a pruning cut hole.
T9	Common oak	Semi Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T10	Common oak	Semi Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T11	Common oak	Semi Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T20	Common ash	Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T22	Common ash	Mature	None, no PRFs observed
T23	Silver birch	Semi Mature	None, no PRFs observed

Table 1.3: Suitability Category and PRFs of surveyed trees.

T4, T9, T10, T11, T20, T22 and T23 were all considered to be unsuitable for roosting bats, owing to generally younger maturities and a lack of suitable roosting features such as woodpecker holes or split limbs.

PRFs were recorded on T1, T2 and T6. This included pruning cut holes, knot holes and lifted bark. It is considered likely that some of these features are not currently in use by roosting bats, with some PRFs being covered by cobwebs, suggesting a lack of use, and some cut holes being upward facing and exposed to the elements, making conditions less suitable (likely ingress from rainwater). However, due to the number of PRFs present, roosting bats cannot be ruled out within these trees.

Conclusions and Recommendations

PRFs for bats were identified within trees T1, T2 and T6. As these three trees are considered to have 'PRF-I' suitability roosting value, best practice guidance specifies that a precautionary inspection for bats shall be undertaken by a bat-licensed ecologist (tree climbing qualified) immediately prior to tree felling.

Arborists must be alerted to the possibility of bats being present and the need for vigilance during felling activities. Any PRFs should not be sawn through. On the low chance that evidence of bats is identified, works to the tree in question shall be postponed until after appropriate surveys have been undertaken and all necessary licensing and mitigation is in place.



All trees with bat roosting potential should be considered part of a resource that will be used at one time or another by tree-roosting bats (Collins, 2023). The three trees with bat roosting potential will be directly displaced by the development. 2nr bat tubes (2FR Schwegler bat tube) are proposed to be integrated into the brickwork of the proposed new classroom block as part of the overall biodiversity enhancement of the development (as indicated on drawing Appletons drawing no. 2493_03 Rev B).

As all of the trees on site remain suitable for use by nesting birds, the removal of trees T1, T2, T4, T6, T9-T11, T20 and T23 should take place outside of the breeding bird season. Breeding bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September, inclusive. If this is not possible then the trees to be removed should be checked by an experienced ecologist for nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing. If birds are found to be nesting, tree removal works will have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally.

Best wishes,

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Project Ecologist

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For and on behalf of **Appletons**

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Appendix 1: Photographs



Photograph 1: T22



Photograph 2: T20



Photograph 3: T9, T10 and T11



Photograph 4: T23



Photograph 5: T4



Photograph 6: T6.



Photograph 7: Lifted bark on T6



Photograph 8: Pruning cut hole on T6 (circled in red)



Photograph 9: T2



Photograph 10: Pruning cut holes and knot holes on T2



Photograph 11: T1



Photograph 12: Knot hole on T1 (circled in red)

Appendix 2: Tree Removal Plan and Tree Protection (February 2024, Drawn: LAC, Drawing No.: 2493_01, Revision A)

