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London Road Car Park Extension

Briefing Note: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Date: Monday 29th November 2021

Client Name: Newark & Sherwood District Council

Document Reference: WIE18852-100-BN-1-2-3-[redacted]

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with
Waterman Group's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2015, BS EN ISO 14001: 2015 and BS EN ISO 45001:2018)

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1. Introduction

1.1. This briefing note has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Waterman IE) on behalf of Newark & Sherwood District Council, with regard to a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) within the grounds of municipal buildings in the centre of Newark (Ordnance Survey grid reference SK 80006 53675; henceforth referred to as the 'Site').

1.2. The Site is scheduled for redevelopment as a carpark and four trees, and a length of hedgerow would be removed to facilitate the works (**Figure 1**).

2. Methodology

2.1. A PBRA and hedgerow inspection was undertaken on the morning of Friday 12th November 2021 by senior ecologist [redacted] (ACIEEM; Natural England level 2 class license [redacted]), following standard guidelines[1].

2.2. The PBRA was ground-based and searched for potential roost features (such as cavities, crevices, peeling bark etc) and direct evidence of bat presence (such as live or dead bats, droppings, fur oil/urine staining around potential roost features), using high-powered binoculars where necessary.

2.3. The hedgerow on site was assessed for its potential to offer a foraging and commuting resource for bats.

2.4. A high-level desk-based review was also completed including a review of the site Ecological Appraisal prepared by FPCR in 2018[2] and a review of online aerial photography and mapping to place the site in context with its surroundings in terms of connectivity to the wider landscape.

[1] Collins, J. (ed) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn).
[2] FPCR (For Newark and Sherwood District Council), London Road Car Park Extension Ecological Appraisal (September 2018).

3. Limitations

3.1. All aspects of each tree were readily viewed, and it is unlikely that any features were missed from the ground. Similarly, the hedgerow was fully inspected. Weather conditions were good: 11°C, overcast, dry, wind 8 mph SW. It is considered that a robust assessment was made.

4. Results

4.1. The Site is in the centre of Newark in a highly urbanised location. It consists of amenity grassland with scattered trees and ornamental shrub and hedgerow planting. It is surrounded by extensive built environment and shows no obvious ecological connectivity with any other areas of green space. Small numbers of those bat species typical of urban fringe environments (e.g. noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) may occasionally use the Site for foraging and commuting but it is unlikely to be a significant local resource for bats in any way.

4.2. Tree 1 was a false acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia* (**Photograph 1**). It had no obvious potential roost features and was considered to have negligible potential to support roosting and/or hibernating bats.

4.3. Tree 2 was a European lime *Tilia x eurupaea* (**Photograph 2**). The canopy contained occasional dead wood, snapped branches, and two probable grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* dreys. However, no obvious potential roost features were apparent, and the tree was considered to have negligible potential to support roosting and/or hibernating bats.

4.4. Tree 3 was a sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (**Photograph 3**). It contained a recently installed wooden bat box (**Photograph 4**) at approximately 8 m on the eastern aspect and a recently installed wooden bird box at approximately 8 m on the northern aspect. There were no obvious potential roost features on the tree. The bat box was checked using ladder access (it was not necessary to use an endoscope because the design of the box allowed direct visual inspection). It did not contain bats or any evidence of occupancy by bats.

4.5. Tree 4 was a sycamore (**Photograph 5**). It contained a recently installed wooden bat box at approximately 5 m on the northern aspect (**Photograph 6**). There were no obvious potential roost features on the tree. The bat box was checked using ladder access (it was not necessary to use an endoscope because the design of the box allowed direct visual inspection). It did not contain bats or any evidence of occupancy by bats.

4.6. There was a close-cropped ornamental privet *Ligustrum vulgare* hedge, with abundant ivy *Hedera helix*, running along the western border of the Site (**Photograph 7**). The hedgerow was considered to be of limited ecological value and was considered unlikely to offer foraging or commuting resource to the local bat population.

4.7. No features of bat roosting potential were previously recorded in the 2018 Ecological Appraisal.

5. Conclusions

5.1. It is highly unlikely that any of the four trees assessed are used by roosting and/or hibernating bats. All the trees were semi-mature/early-mature, were well maintained, and lacked any obvious potential roost features. All the trees are therefore currently considered to have negligible potential to support bats.

5.2. There were two bat boxes recently installed at the Site, both of a wooden ‘crevice’ design. Neither box contained bats and neither box showed any evidence of having been used by bats.

5.3. The hedgerow is of little ecological value, being species poor and of limited extent. It is unlikely to be of any importance to the local bat population.

5.4. It should be noted that there is potential for birds to use the trees and hedgerow for nesting during the core breeding season, which runs from 1st March to 31st August inclusive.

A. Figure 1

Figure 1. Plan of the Site showing the locations of the trees.

B. Legislation and Conservation Policy

Bats are European Protected Species and are fully protected in the UK by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

It is an offence to:

- deliberately take, injure or kill a wild bat;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

Bats are included on the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan. This means that their presence and conservation require special consideration within the local planning process.

C. Site Visit Photographs

Photograph 1. Tree 1.

Photograph 2. Tree 2.

Photograph 3. Tree 3.

Photograph 4. Bat box on Tree 3.

Photograph 5. Tree 4.

Photograph 6. Bat box on Tree 4.

Photograph 7. Hedge.