

9th September 2025

Our Ref: P.2048.24

Re: Preliminary Ecological Addendum Letter Report – Grace Park

Ascerta has been instructed by Knowsley Council to carry out an updated walkover survey and ground level tree inspection at Grace Park. The OS grid reference is SJ 44680 85247 and the what3words reference is helm.hotel.advantage.

A preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in August 2023 (WSP report 70112144, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, September 2023).

The site was visited by Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons) on the 3rd September 2025. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data regarding the current site conditions and, where appropriate, allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation.

This letter report presents the results of the survey including evaluation of habitats on-site and potential for protected species to be using the site. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable, in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives.

Bat surveys are conducted in accordance with the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, published 2024 (the Guidelines). Strict adherence to these is not necessary, but where practice deviates from them, clear reasons and rationale are required.

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2024). Habitats, buildings and trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using Table 4.1 page 44 within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2024).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for bats

Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability for bats to use them for roosting, commuting and foraging, both on the site and surrounding area. Commuting and foraging habitat suitability was categorised **low** to **high**. Any commuting and foraging habitat valued as **moderate** or above may need further survey effort if lost to the proposals.

Preliminary Roost Assessment trees

All trees were inspected for Potential Roost Features (PRFs). Features searched for included: Natural or woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows/cavities, dense epicormic growth, bird and bat boxes. Where such features were found they were investigated for scratches or staining, bat droppings and smoothing of surfaces around entry points.

Trees on site are categorised as per Table 1 (below). Trees assigned a suitability of **FAR** or above may require further survey effort if they are to be lost to the development.

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement. Guidelines taken from Table 4.2, page 45 of the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2024).

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.

In August 2023, the onsite habitats were assessed to comprised existing sports (football) facilities with associated buildings, amenity grassland, with pockets of semi-improved grassland and dense scrub. Scattered trees are present along with a water body and existing play area facility to the west of the site. (WSP report 70112144, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, September 2023).

In 2023 building B1 within the site was assessed to provide **low** potential for roosting bats and within the response received from Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) in July 2025 it was confirmed that no further surveys for bats were required at the building.

During the walkover survey in September 2025 the habitats within the site remained the same as in 2023, with the continued use of the leisure centre facilities.



Photograph 1: Amenity grassland , September 2025



Photograph 2: Amenity grassland and scattered trees September 2025



Photograph 3: Existing pond, September 2025



Photograph 4 : Existing sports facilities, September 2025

In 2023 the trees were assessed to provide **negligible** suitability to support roosting bats (WSP report 70112144, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, September 2023). Individual trees and tree groups within the site will be lost to accommodate the proposals (WSP, Report October 2023) 70112144-ARB-001, Tree Constraints Report).

The trees within the site were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats in 2025 during the site visit. No features such as cracked/split limbs or tear outs within major limbs were identified and the trees were assessed to provide **no** suitability for roosting bats.

	
Photograph 5: Scattered trees with no bat roost potential September 2025	Photograph 6: Scattered trees with no bat roost potential September 2025

In April 2025 a Great Crested Newt eDNA survey (GCN eDNA) was undertaken at the onsite pond. The survey returned negative results for GCN within the pond (Ascerta Letter report P.2048.24 eDNA Survey at P. 2048.24 Halewood LUF – Grace Park).

A full badger survey of the site and adjacent areas was carried out by Ascerta in August 2024 (P.2048.24 Badger Letter Report). The report concluded that no badger signs, including foraging activity, setts or latrines were noted within the site or the immediate areas to the site. No mammal paths, likely to have been created by badger were also noted.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) has also been produced for the Avoidance of Harm to Bats, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians and Badger During Construction (Ascerta Report P.2048.24, August 2024). Along with the completion of the Biodiversity Net Gain Statutory Metric for the site.

Conclusion

Following the site walkover in September 2025 the habitats were assessed to remain the same as in 2023 and the trees were assessed to provide **no** potential for roosting bats, within no further surveys for bats recommended.

If works have not begun by September 2027 an updated site walkover and ground level tree assessment is recommended.

The scattered trees provide suitable nesting provision for birds, and it is recommended that vegetation clearance or pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1 March to 31 August inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. Or a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing.

It is considered that there would be very limited impacts on the local ecology as a result of the proposals, provided the recommendations detailed above are followed.