

BOW17.7593: Ecological Advice Note

Introduction

Bowland Ecology Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for bats at Wilson Road, Huyton. The survey relates to proposed tree felling works required to facilitate development proposals at the site (Appendix A).

The site is located within Huyton Business Park, Merseyside (NGR: SJ 45755 90004), and comprises predominantly bare ground with patches of ephemeral vegetation, scrub, and trees along the site boundaries. A treeline and associated woodland habitat follows Logwood Mill Brook along the north-eastern boundary of the site, with additional scattered trees and scrub present along the north-western and southern boundaries.

The wider landscape is characterised by industrial land use interspersed with linear vegetation, woodland blocks, urban green space, and watercourses. Logwood Mill Brook and associated tree lines provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats, with desk study records confirming a range of species within 2 km of the site, including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), *Myotis* species, and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*). The closest known roost is a brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) roost located approximately 1.2 km to the south (Bowland Ecology 2024).

Suitable buildings on site were subject to two bat emergence surveys in 2022 and 2024. No roosts were identified, and only very low levels of bat activity were recorded. The high levels of floodlighting across the site is considered to significantly reduce its suitability for roosting, foraging, and commuting bats.

However, the adjacent treeline and Logwood Mill Brook along the northern boundary provide a continuous, unlit corridor of moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats. As such, trees within or adjacent to this corridor, where suitable features are present, may offer potential for roosting bats.

As such, trees identified for felling were subject to a ground-level inspection to assess their suitability to support roosting bats and to identify any potential roosting features (PRFs). The requirement for this assessment is in line with current best practice guidance (Collins, 2023), due to the potential risk of impacts to bats from the proposed works.

Methods

A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was undertaken on 31st March 2026 by Principal Ecologist Lucy Pocock MSc, BSc (Hons), ACCIEM. Weather conditions during the survey were cold (7°C) but dry, with 100% cloud covering and light wind (Beaufort 2).

The survey comprised a visual inspection of all trees marked for felling from ground level, using the aid of binoculars where necessary. Trees were assessed for the presence of PRFs that could support roosting bats, including:

- Cavities, wounds, and rot holes;
- Split limbs and hazard beams;

- Loose or flaking bark;
- Woodpecker holes;
- Dense ivy cover; and
- Tear-outs and cracks.

Where PRFs were identified, these were assessed based on their suitability for roosting bats, taking into account feature size, depth, orientation, shelter, and surrounding habitat. The survey also recorded any direct or indirect evidence of bats, including droppings, staining, feeding remains, and the presence of bats.

The suitability of each tree was categorised as per Table 1 below, in accordance with industry guidance (Collins, 2023). Where features could be assessed for their roosting suitability from ground level, they were given a roost category based on Table 2. The suitability of each tree was assessed based on the presence and characteristics of Potential Roost Features (PRFs), categorised (e.g. PRF-I, PRF-M), as applicable (Collins 2023).

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats.

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.

Table 2: Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on trees on proposed development site for bats

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
PRF-I	Tree with PRF only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats
PRF-M	Tree with PRF suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony
CONFIRMED	Confirmed bat roost identified

Limitations

This assessment was undertaken from ground level only; therefore, it is not possible to fully inspect all PRFs, particularly those located at height or obscured by vegetation. However, all of the trees were all in good condition, relatively young – semi-mature, and they were not yet in full leaf, allowing a clear view of the entire canopy and potential features. Thus, In this instance, this is not a significant limitation to the overall conclusions of this report.

The survey was undertaken in early spring marginally outside of the active bat season; however, ground level assessments remain suitable for identifying PRFs at any time of year. Spring and winter in particular, can be productive given that a lack of leaves allows for a full view of the tree. Thus, the timing of the survey is not a significant limitation to this report.

Upon arrival to site, it was unclear from the tree constraints plan provide by the client, which trees were to be felled, particularly where they were at woodland edge habitat adjacent to other trees. In this instance, all potential trees were assessed and mapped accordingly in Appendix B, alongside described and photographed in Appendix C, to ensure all of the trees marked for felling were covered.

Results

Ground Level Tree Assessment

All trees marked for felling (Appendix A) were inspected from ground level, alongside additional specimens where the target tree was unclear (see limitations). All trees are mapped according to their potential roosting status in Appendix B. In addition, they are described and photographed in Appendix C.

Many trees on site are associated with boundary habitats, including:

- Mature to semi-mature treelines along the north-western and southern boundaries;
- Scattered trees within the site boundary; and
- Woodland edge habitat associated with Logwood Mill Brook to the north-east.

No bats or evidence of bats were identified during the survey. All of the trees assessed during the survey were not found to support any PRFs, thus were assessed as 'NONE', accordingly.

A single goat willow (*Salix caprea*) tree (T27e) was noted to have lifting bark and weld features. However, these were deemed unsuitable for roosting bats, due to the relative inaccessibility of the features, in which flight lines are significantly obscured by fencing and brash. Thus, T27e was also assessed as 'NONE'.

Evaluation

The site as a whole offers low suitability for foraging bats, with higher value habitats restricted to boundary features such as treelines and the brook corridor. However, **the GLTA did not identify any trees suitable for roosting bats.** Previous emergence surveys of the building on site also recorded very low bat activity, attributed to high levels of illumination during darkness (Bowland Ecology 2024).

Impact Assessment

Given the above, the proposed felling of trees will result in:

- Negligible risk of disturbance or harm to roosting bats; and
- Very minor loss of commuting and foraging habitat along site boundaries.

Recommendations

Tree felling works may proceed, with no further survey work required. Contractors should be made aware of the potential for roosting bats within trees, and what to do in the highly unlikely event that one should be found (Appendix D).

Should any additional trees require felling that are not outlined within this report, they will first require a pre-works check for roosting bats.

Compensation and Enhancements

The bat box plan outlined in Bowland Ecology (2025), to satisfy Conditions 8 & 9, is considered to account for any compensation and/or mitigation required in respect to roosting and foraging bats.

Other Notes

Japanese knotweed was noted in dense stands behind the fence line, alongside new shoots within the site boundary. Himalayan balsam is also present along the stream banks outside of the palisade fencing, alongside several Cotoneaster shrubs.

Several wood pigeon nests were noted within the assessed trees. Felling works should avoid the nesting bird season, which runs from March – August inclusive. Otherwise, a nesting bird check no later than 2 days prior to felling works, must be undertaken by a suitably qualified Ecologist.

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References

Project-Specific Reports (Bowland Ecology):

- Bowland Ecology (2021a). *Huyton Business Park – Ecological Appraisal* (BOW17.1277).
- Bowland Ecology (2021b). *Huyton Business Park – Bat Survey Report* (BOW17.1277).
- Bowland Ecology (2024). *Wilson Road, Huyton – Updated Bat Survey Report* (BOW17.1593).
- Bowland Ecology (2025). *Wilson Road, Huyton – Bat Box Plan & Lighting Strategy* (BOW17.1593).
- Bowland Ecology Ltd. (2025). *Wilson Road, Huyton: Ecological Enhancement Plan (Version 3)*. (BOW17.1593).

CIEEM (2017a). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Appendix A – Tree Felling Plan



Appendix B – Ground Level Tree Assessment Plan

BOW17.1593 - Wilson Road, Huyton

Drawing title: Ground Level Tree
Assessment - Bats

Drawn by: LP
Checked by: JJ

Date:
31.03.2026



Legend

- site boundary
- Trees - no bat risk (NONE)



Appendix C – Tree Descriptions and Photographs

Tree Reference & NGR	Bat Roost Suitability	Description	Photograph
G1 - SJ 45671 90517	NONE	Row of mature Cypress (<i>Cupressus</i> spp.) trees, good condition.	
T12 - SJ 45718 89824	NONE	Semi-mature sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) tree with well-healed pruning wounds.	
T16 - SJ 45667 89941	NONE	Felled whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>) with signs of decay.	

T21a - SJ NONE Young whitebeam in good condition.
45652 89969



T21b - SJ NONE Young whitebeam in good condition.
45652 89969



T23 - SJ 45564 NONE Semi-mature wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
90014 tree in good condition.



T24 - SJ 45855 89966 NONE Young ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) & sycamore trees in good condition.



T25 - SJ 45844 89973 NONE Semi-mature English oak (*Quercus robur*) tree in good condition.



T26a - SJ 45845 89955 NONE Young ash tree in good condition.



T26b - SJ NONE Young English oak tree in good condition.
45843 89951



T27a - SJ NONE Semi-mature – mature English oak tree in good condition.
45843 89951



T27b - SJ NONE Young hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in good condition.
45853 89905



T27c - SJ
45842 89950

NONE

Young ash in good condition.



T27d - SJ
45831 89930

NONE

Young multi-stemmed ash in good condition.



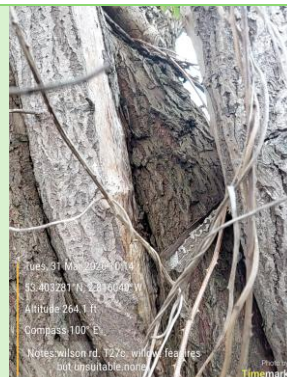
27e - SJ 45843
89917

NONE

Mature goat willow, with poor pruning. Main stem and secondary limbs are growing into the fence and have lifted bark in places, alongside a weld to the main stem.

However, these features are very inaccessible to bats, due to obstructed flight lines.

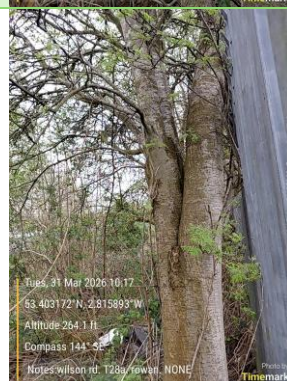




T28a - SJ
45853 89905

NONE

Semi-mature rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) in
good condition.



28b - SJ 45853
89905

NONE

Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) shrub, no
features.



T29 - SJ 45802 89857 NONE Young – semi-mature English oak tree in good condition.



G5 - SJ 45764 89851 NONE Deciduous tree line comprising oak, silver birch (*Betula pendula*), cherry, and willow with small shrub understory. All trees are in good condition, except for one silver birch at the centre which shows signs of decay. No potential roosting features noted.



Appendix D - Information Sheet for Contractors

Bats in Trees

Bats may be present on site or in the area. Please read for information, legal responsibility and best practice in the consultancy industry




Legal Information

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 disturb a place bats use for breeding or resting even if bats are not using the roost at the time;
- Possess, advertise, sell or exchange any part of a bat; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb access to a bat roost.

Penalties on conviction:

- An unlimited fine and/or up to six months in prison and forfeiture of items used to commit the offence.

Found a bat?

STOP

- Always follow the advice given in your ecological/bat survey report prior to any tree works, to avoid any bat conflicts;
- If you find a bat or suspect bats to be present in your working area, you must **stop works immediately and contact the project ecologist for further advice (Call 01200 446 777)**;
- Contractors should avoid handling bats as a very small number of bats in the UK have been identified as carrying rabies virus;
- Only if the bat is in immediate danger and you have you have thick gloves available**, move the bat into a breathable box or safe space until a licenced bat worker arrives.

Tree works

- Tree work should always follow the recommendations of the ecological report;
- This usually contains a set of 'precautionary' or 'reasonable avoidance' measures, ask your project manager for a copy if you have not already.

Signs of roosting bats



Feeding Remains - Piles of butterfly/moth wings are often left below bat feeding perches.



Droppings - Consists of insect remain and crumble easily between fingers.



Smoothing of bark - bark can become smooth where bats frequently use a feature.

How do bats use trees?

While undertaking tree work such as pruning, felling or crowning, it is important to consider if the tree has any features that could support bats. Bowland Ecology may be required to confirm presence or absence of a roost.



- Commuting** – As a navigational aid between roosting locations and foraging areas
- Feeding perches** – usually by species such as brown long-eared
- Woodpecker hole** – Noctules and long eared bats often roost inside
- Cracks and crevices** – Pipistrelles often use for roosting
- Loose bark** – Often used by pipistrelles and myotis species for roosting.
- Rot holes** – Used by many species for roosting.
- Hollow trunks** – May be used for roosting and hibernation, large enough for maternity.