

ST MARK'S, KIRKBY

Ground Level Tree Assessment Report

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Report Control Sheet

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE	5
1.2. LOCATION	5
1.3. OBJECTIVES.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY	6
2.1. DESK STUDY	6
2.2. GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT.	6
2.3. SURVEY LIMITATIONS	7
3. SURVEY RESULTS.....	8
3.1. DESK STUDY	8
3.2. SITE WALKOVER RESULTS	8
3.3. SUMMARY	12
4. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	14

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

- 1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Wroot Design Ltd to Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) at St Mark's, Kirkby, Liverpool. This report has been prepared to inform planning permission for the erection of four apartment blocks and associated landscaping.
- 1.1.2. The author of this report is Sina Sanati MSc, Graduate Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. This report has been overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM, Technical Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced in undertaking and carrying out Nocturnal Bat surveys/reports and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission. Katie also holds a level two bat license (Ref: 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).

1.2. LOCATION

- 1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is situated to the northeast of Kirby, a town in the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside, England. (Grid reference: SJ 42097 99535).

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1. The objectives of the GTLA are as follows:
- Identify any areas of bat roosting potential within the trees.
 - Assess the value of the trees for roosting bats.
 - Search for signs of bats
 - Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats.
- 1.3.2. The proposals are to follow Good Practise Guidance which includes:
- Establish likelihood and identify types of impact
 - Implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation
 - Provide adequate buffers
 - Provide adequate supporting evidence

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

- 2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information.
 - Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

2.2. GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT.

- 2.2.1. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of the site was undertaken by Sina Sanati, Graduate Ecologist on 29/07/2026. This report has been overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM, Technical Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced in undertaking and carrying out Nocturnal Bat surveys/reports and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission. Katie also holds a level two bat license (Ref: 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).
- 2.2.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2023). This includes undertaking a detailed inspection of the exterior of the trees from ground level to look for potential bat roosting features.
- 2.2.3. The Ground Level Tree Assessment methodology (GTLA) is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 4th edition (Collins 2023).
- 2.2.4. The GLTA and potential flight paths and foraging habitats were assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2, demonstrated below (Collins 2023).

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

*Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential***Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

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 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
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.

2.3. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

2.3.1. There were no limitations during the assessment.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. DESK STUDY

3.1.1. The site is situated to the north-east of Kirkby, within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside (Grid Reference: SJ 42097 99535). The site is located within a predominantly urban area comprising residential and commercial development, with areas of open green space and transport infrastructure in the surrounding landscape.

3.2. SITE WALKOVER RESULTS

3.2.1. A total of seven trees were recorded within the site (Figure 3.1). Of these, five trees contained no Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats and were assessed as having **"None"** bat roosting potential. A summary of these trees is provided in Table 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Trees location and site boundaries.



3.2.2.

Table 3.1 trees description

Description	Photographs
T1: A semi-mature silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) was present on the southern side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a diameter at breast height (DBH) of approximately 25 cm and a height of approximately 4 m. Some loose bark was present on the trunk at approximately 2 m above ground level; however, it was not sufficiently deep or sheltered to provide a suitable bat roosting feature. Small broken branches were also present but did not provide suitable roosting features. No Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were identified. Suitability: None	
T2: A semi-mature silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) was present on the south-western side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 30 cm and a height of approximately 7 m. Bramble was present around the base of the tree. Some loose bark was identified; however, it was not sufficiently deep to provide a suitable bat roosting feature. No holes, broken branches, cracks or crevices were identified. No Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were recorded. Suitability: None	

T3: A semi-mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*) was present on the western side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 40 cm and a height of approximately 6 m. A small amount of loose bark was present on the main stem at approximately 1.80 m above ground level; however, it was not of sufficient depth to support roosting bats. No holes, cracks or crevices were identified. No Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were recorded.

Suitability: None



T4: A young beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) was present on the northern side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 20 cm and a height of approximately 3 m. No PRFs were identified.

Suitability: None



T6: A semi-mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*) was present on the northern side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 40 cm and a height of approximately 15 m. A small number of broken branches were present on the main stem; however, these did not provide suitable bat roosting features. No cavities, holes, cracks or other PRFs were identified.

Suitability: None



3.2.3. Two of the seven trees recorded within the site contained Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats. Table 3.2 provides a summary of these trees. The identified features were classified as "PRF-I" and have the potential to support individual bats or very small numbers of bats roosting bats.

Table3.2 trees description

Description	Photographs
T5: A mature silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) was present on the northern side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 50–60 cm and a height of approximately 12 m. A small number of broken branches were present on the main stem. A knot hole was identified on the trunk, approximately 2 m above ground level on the north-facing side. The feature comprised a dome-shaped cavity approximately 4 cm wide, with an unknown depth, and was considered a PRF-I suitable for an individual crevice-dwelling bat, but would not lead to a large cavity. As the tree is located within a bramble and bushes setting it also provides a commuting feature. It is anticipated that foraging bats will be present within the local area that may utilise these roosting features. Suitability: PRF- I	

T7: A semi-mature boxelder (*Acer negundo*) was present on the northern side of the site and was in good health. The tree had a DBH of approximately 40 cm and a height of approximately 4 m. Some broken branches and areas of loose bark were present. A knot hole was identified on the main stem, approximately 3 m above ground level on the east-facing side. The feature comprised a dome-shaped cavity of unknown depth and was considered a PRF-I, as it was sufficiently sheltered and could support an individual roosting bat but too shallow for a larger roost. Based on the quality of the wound, it was evident it was healing, limiting opportunity for a cavity. As the tree is located within a bramble and bushes setting it also provides a commuting feature. It is anticipated that foraging bats will be present within the local area that may utilise these roosting features.

Suitability: PRF- I



3.3. SUMMARY

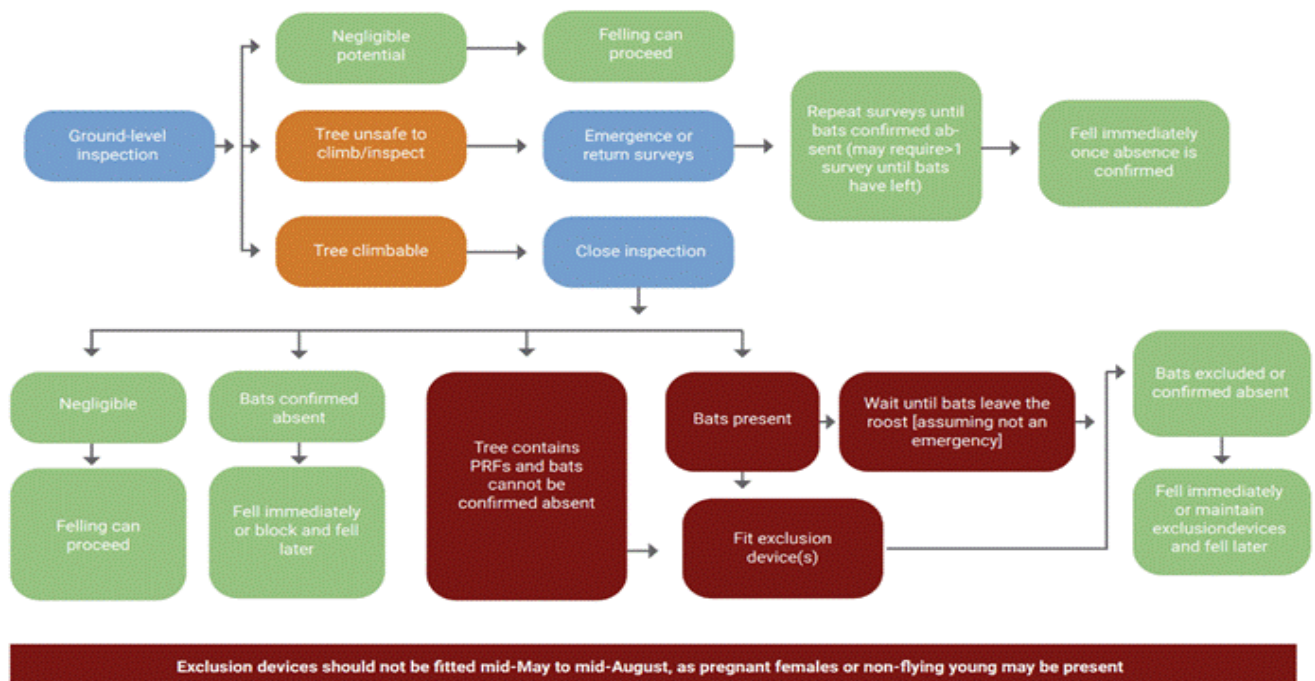
3.3.1.A total of seven trees were assessed during the Ground Tree Level Assessment. **Five** trees contained no Potential Roost Features (PRFs) and were assessed as having “None” bat roosting potential. **Two** trees contained “PRF-I” features in the form of knot holes/cavities on the main stem and were assessed as having bat roosting potential for individual bats.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 Two trees on site were found to provide potential bat roosting suitability. If the trees are to be directly impacted by the proposals (i.e., removal), then further survey work is required, as outlined in Table 4.1. If the trees will be retained, there is only a requirement for considerations for flight lines and foraging.

Suitability	Definition	Rating	Further Survey Work
PRF-I	Only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats due to size or lack of surrounding habitats	T5, T7	No further surveys required. Appropriate compensation for all PRF-I in advance of impacts. PWMs for works involving being inspected by a licensed bat worker with an endoscope before felling or utilising a soft felling technique (which involves practises like removing limbs separately and lowering them to the ground and then leaving for 24 hours before clearing).

4.1.2 In summary, the following chart will be adhered to, extracted from the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2023). All individual trees excluded from Table 4.1 were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats and can be felled without any further bat mitigation. **Please note that felling a roost or obstructing access to a roost would require an appropriate mitigation licence**, which will be obtained following the results of the further surveys outlined in Table 4.3.1.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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