

Ascerta

Landscape, Arboricultural & Ecological Solutions
for the Built Environment

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Glebe House, Prescot, L34 1LA

Ref: P.1845.23

Date: September 2023

(See revision dates below)

Rev	Date	Details

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Site	Glebe House, Prescot, L34 1LA
Client	Mr & Mrs Smailes
Date	September 2023
Field Work by	Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ascerta has been instructed by Mr & Mrs Smailes to carry out a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (hereafter referred to as **PRA**) of Glebe House, Prescott, L34 1LA (hereafter referred to as **the site**).

Our client proposes to demolish an existing rear extension and construct a side/rear extension.

The PRA is comprised of a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey to assess the potential roosting and usage of the site for bat species. The assessment provides baseline data as to current site conditions and where appropriate, allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work needed to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives.

If the recommendations below are followed, these species will not be adversely affected by the proposals:

- If works have not commenced by September 2024 and updated daytime building inspection will be required;
- The works should be undertaken in the winter months (October – April) when bats are least active;
- The removal of roof tiles and the brick work present within the existing extension should be removed by hand tools only; and
- Compensatory tree planting for the loss of T2 (Ascerta drawing P. 1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) in line with the local council's recommendations.

1.0 Introduction

Ascerta has been instructed by Mr & Mrs Smailes to carry out a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (hereafter referred to as PRA) of the building at the site. The site OS grid reference is SJ 46411 92652 and the What3Words reference is fees.charge.shots.



Photograph 1.1; Site Location

Description of site

The site lies within Prescot and comprises a detached residential dwelling with an access driveway to the north from Vicarage Place and a mature garden to the south with a wooded area beyond. The site is bound to the east by St Marys Church with residential dwellings and retail premises in the surrounding area.

PRA Assessment

The assessment comprised a desk study and a site walkover survey to assess the potential roosting and usage of the site for bats and nesting birds. The assessment provides baseline data as to current site conditions and where appropriate allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work needed to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation (Appendix 4).

The site was visited by a suitably qualified ecologist and a PRA of buildings/trees/structures within the site will be undertaken following the guidelines set out by the *Bat Conservation Trust (Collins 4th Edition 2023)*. The report will be prepared following methods detailed in the *CIEEM 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (2018)* and *'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (2017)*. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives. Relevant legislation is detailed within Appendix 4.

Nesting Birds

During the preliminary roost assessment, evidence of and/or observations of nesting birds within the site may be identified. Any information regarding nesting birds on site will be mapped and discussed further within the report, including recommendations for further actions, where applicable, in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives.

2.0 Objectives

Our client's objectives are to assess the potential ecological constraints of the proposed site.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Identify and evaluate any features of ecological value and the potential of the site to support protected species based on the walkover survey;
- Identify designated sites within 2km of the site;
- Provide recommendations for further species-specific surveys and mitigation measures where current legislation requires;
- Provide recommendations that seek to enhance the ecological value of the site;
- Provide recommendations to assist our clients in achieving their objectives whilst satisfying current wildlife legislation.

3.0 Survey Methods

The Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment involves the collection and review of data from a desk study and field survey, along with assessment of the value of the habitats for bats and birds following CIEEM guidelines.

3.1 Desk Study

A review of the designated sites and habitats within 2km of the site was undertaken on the 15th September 2023 using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and the Natural England websites.

3.2 Field Survey

A walkover survey of the site will be conducted, and the habitat types and features of ecological interest will be identified and mapped in compliance with the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit (JNCC, 2010)*. This includes the identification of the main species present and examination of the potential for any protected species. Habitats will be mapped (Appendix 1), photographed (Appendix 2) and target notes will be made for any interesting features (Appendix 3).

The field survey will focus on bat species; nesting bird species (including species potentially associated with 'European Sites'); and plant communities and trees.

Weather conditions will be recorded during the undertaking of the survey. This will help to ensure data is collected during correct conditions as per guidelines and to determine (if any) limitations to the assessment.

3.3 Bat Survey Methods

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the *Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition (2023)*. Habitats, buildings and trees will be assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using table 4.1 page 44 within the *Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023)*.

Table 3.1: Survey information including survey dates and ecologist details undertaking survey.

Site Visit Date	Undertaken By	Qualifications
25 th September 2023	Liz Kenyon	BSc (Hons)

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Habitats on site will be 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 will be categorised from **low** to **high**. Any commuting and/or foraging habitat valued as **moderate** or above may need further survey effort if it is to be lost to the proposals.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Trees

All trees will be inspected for Potential Roost Features (**PRFs**). Features that will be searched for include natural or woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows/cavities, dense epicormic growth, bird and bat boxes.

Where such features are found they will be investigated for scratches or staining, bat droppings and smoothing of surfaces around entry points. Any trees assigned a suitability of **moderate** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the proposals.

External Inspection of the Building

A daytime external inspection of the building on site will be carried out during the survey by a suitably experienced ecologist (see Table 3.1).

The building present on site will also be searched externally; looking for signs of bats (including staining on barge boards, soffits and more commonly droppings on flat surfaces i.e., window ledges) that would indicate potential roosting sites. Possible bat access points such as loose tiles, cracks and crevices or crawl spaces beneath and/or behind roofing materials such as roofing felt, panelling, soffits and tiles, were identified and checked for signs of use by bats (droppings, scratch marks and staining.)

Any buildings onsite will be categorised as per Table 3.2 below. Buildings assigned a suitability of **Low** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the proposals.

Table 3.2: Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement. Guidelines taken from Table 4.1 page 44 of the *Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition (2023)*.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting Habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	<i>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).</i>	<i>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).</i>
Negligible^a	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>
Low	<i>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).</i>	<i>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.</i>
Moderate	<i>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 or hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).</i>	<i>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.</i>
High	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>

^a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

^b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

^c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

3.4 Evaluation

Habitats and species on the site were evaluated following the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2018. A geographical frame of reference is assigned to each habitat and species, with International Value being most important, then National, Regional, County, District, Local and lastly, within the immediate Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposals only.

Value judgements are based on characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations such as SSSIs. For undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource are considered. Ecological resource quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

3.5 Limitations

The absence of biological records does not necessarily mean the absence of species. This has been taken into account within the report conclusions.

The bat survey was conducted at a time of year when bats are less active. Bats may be found in transition and hibernation roosts either singly, or in small groups. Insect prey is scarce and as Autumn comes to an end and temperatures drop, bats start to use their fat reserves to survive the winter. They will stay in a torpid state and if the temperature drops sufficiently will go into hibernation and bat droppings are less likely to be present. Access to carry out an internal inspection of the building was not available. These access restrictions are considered within the report conclusions.

The site was visited on only one occasion. This produces a snapshot of habitats and species on the site and others may be present at different times of the day or year. This limitation has been taken into account within this report.

4.0 Survey Results

4.1 Desk Study

The site does lie Prescott Conservation Area - 12/00003/CONARA. The site does not lie within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Priority Habitat

Woodland

Numerous areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland were returned within 2km of the site, the closest being located directly adjacent to the south and east of the site.

One area of Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat was returned within 2km of the site, located 730m northwest.

Three European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) applications within 2km of the site since 2017 were identified using Magic Maps and are detailed below (distance and direction from site):

- 2017-28690-EPS-MIT-1 for the damage and destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat. Start date: 01/08/2017, end date: 30/11/2018 (1.4km west);
- 2018-38343-EPS-MIT for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle. Start date: 01/01/2019, end date: 31/01/2022 (1.8km west); and
- 2017-28128-EPS-MIT for the damage and destruction of a resting place for great crested newt. Start date: 01/04/2017, end date: 31/01/2018 (880m northeast).

4.2 Field Survey and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Survey Weather Conditions

Table 4.1. Weather conditions during field survey

Survey date	Temp (°c)	Cloud Cover (°/8)	Wind (Beaufort Scale)	Precipitation
25 th September 2023	15	1/8	F0	Dry

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats and Birds

Bats

The building on site offers **negligible** to **low** potential to support bat roosts as detailed below in section 4.3. Evidence of bats was not identified within the site during the survey. The trees within the site that will be affected by the proposals were assessed to provide **negligible** potential to support roosting bats.

Birds

The habitats within the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species. These habitats include the mature garden, scattered trees and building.

4.3 Preliminary bat roost assessment of the building

The site lies within Prescot and comprises a detached, occupied residential dwelling with an access driveway to the north from Vicarage Place and a mature garden to the south with a wooded area beyond. The site is bound to the east by St Marys Church with residential dwellings and retail premises in the surrounding area.

The building (B1) is of brickwork construction with varying roof structures, including pitched and sloped sections with a small extension to the rear, a flat roof dormer and a flat, felt roofed garage to the east.

The brickwork is in a good state of repair with only some very small areas of missing mortar, the roof tiles are also in a good condition with no slipped or missing tiles noted. A lift was noted within the western section of the roof ridgeline. Brickwork chimneys are present, with led flashing that has some small lifts noted, predominantly within the chimney stack to the east of the roof.

The windows are single glazed, intact and have wooden frames throughout the original area of the dwelling, with a uPVC window present within the rear extension.

Plastic guttering inserts throughout, along with wooden fascias and soffits that are intact and, in a good condition, with one section of the wood missing to the rear of the building where a bird's nest (TN1) was noted. No evidence of bats was identified during the external inspection.

Evidence of ivy cladding was noted to the east and west elevation, the has previously been cut at ground level and allowed to die back, exposing the brick work.

Two trees, a beech and a sycamore (T2 and T3, Ascerta drawing P.1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) lie adjacent to the western elevation of building. T3, will be lost to accommodate the proposals and T3 will require some pruning work.

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **negligible - low** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **negligible- low** bat roosting potential.

5.0 Evaluation and Recommendations

5.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

The site does lie within a conservation area, however it is considered that there will be no impact to the area as the proposals are for an extension to the existing dwelling only. The site does not lie within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

The habitats on site comprises a residential dwelling with associated access driveway and an established garden to the rear with a pocket of woodland beyond. These habitats are considered to have an ecological value of **within the zone of influence** of the site or lower. Overall, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the ecological value of the area.

5.2 Protected and Notable Species Recommendations

Bats

The habitats on site will be retained within the proposals and provide **moderate- high** suitability for commuting and foraging bats. The building on site were assessed to provide **negligible - low** potential for bats, however only as the works to the existing dwelling are minimal it is recommended that the works should be undertaken in the winter months (October – April) when bats are least active and the removal of roof tiles and the brick work present within the existing extension should be removed by hand tools only. If an opportunist bat is located during the development, all works must stop and Ascerta (0845 463 4404) or the Bat Conservation Trust (0345 1300 228) contacted.

Trees T2 and T3, (Ascerta drawing P.1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) lie adjacent to the western elevation of building. T3, will be lost to accommodate the proposals and T3 will require some pruning work. Group G1 (Ascerta drawing P.1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) will also require some pruning works to accommodate the proposals. The trees were assessed for their potential to support, and neither tree possessed suitable features, such as split branches or cracks. Trees T2, T3 and the section within G1 (Ascerta drawing P. 1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) were assessed to provide **negligible** bat root potential and will require no further surveys.

Birds

The building and T2, T3 and G1 (Ascerta drawing P.1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging bird species. It is recommended that vegetation clearance or building works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. If vegetation clearance or building works cannot be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing. If an active birds' nest is identified a suitable buffer zone should be implemented where no works are to occur within until the young have fledged the nest.

5.3 Enhancements

In order to meet requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement outlined within the NPPF, it is recommended that ecological enhancements are included. These could include:

1. Provision of one bird box (25mm and 32mm entrance hole box, house sparrow terrace, swift box), attached to a retained tree or integrated within the new extension area of the building on site; and
2. Provision of one bat feature (e.g. Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat box or similar) attached to a retained tree on site or provision of a bat box (e.g. Vivara bat bricks or '*bird brick houses*' bat boxes) integrated within the new extension area of the building.

6.0 Conclusions

The site was subject to a preliminary bat roost assessment of all buildings. During the survey and following review of historical species records, it is considered that impact on bats and birds are likely to occur in relation to the proposals for the site. In summary the following recommendations have been made to avoid impact on these species:

- If works have not commenced by September 2024, an updated daytime building inspection will be required;
- The works should be undertaken in the winter months (October – April) when bats are least active;
- The removal of roof tiles and the brick work present within the existing extension should be removed by hand tools only; and
- Compensatory tree planting for the loss of T2 (Ascerta drawing P.1845.23.01 Tree Survey, appendix 1) in line with the local council's recommendations.

It is considered that there would be very limited impact on the local ecology as a result of the proposals, provided the recommendations detailed within section 5.0 above are followed.

7.0 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2018) *Bats and lighting in the UK- bats and the built environment series 08/18* Bat Conservation Trust, London.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*. [online] Available at: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92526/nppf-2021.pdf)

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Rose, F. (2006). *Collins The Wild Flower Key, how to identify wild flowers trees and shrubs in Britain and Ireland*. Penguin Group: London.

Stace, C., (2010). *New Flora of the British Isles*. 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Appendix 1



Building (B1)

Target note

Target note

TN1 Location of birds nest

DO NOT SCALE.
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.
LOCATED TO NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL.
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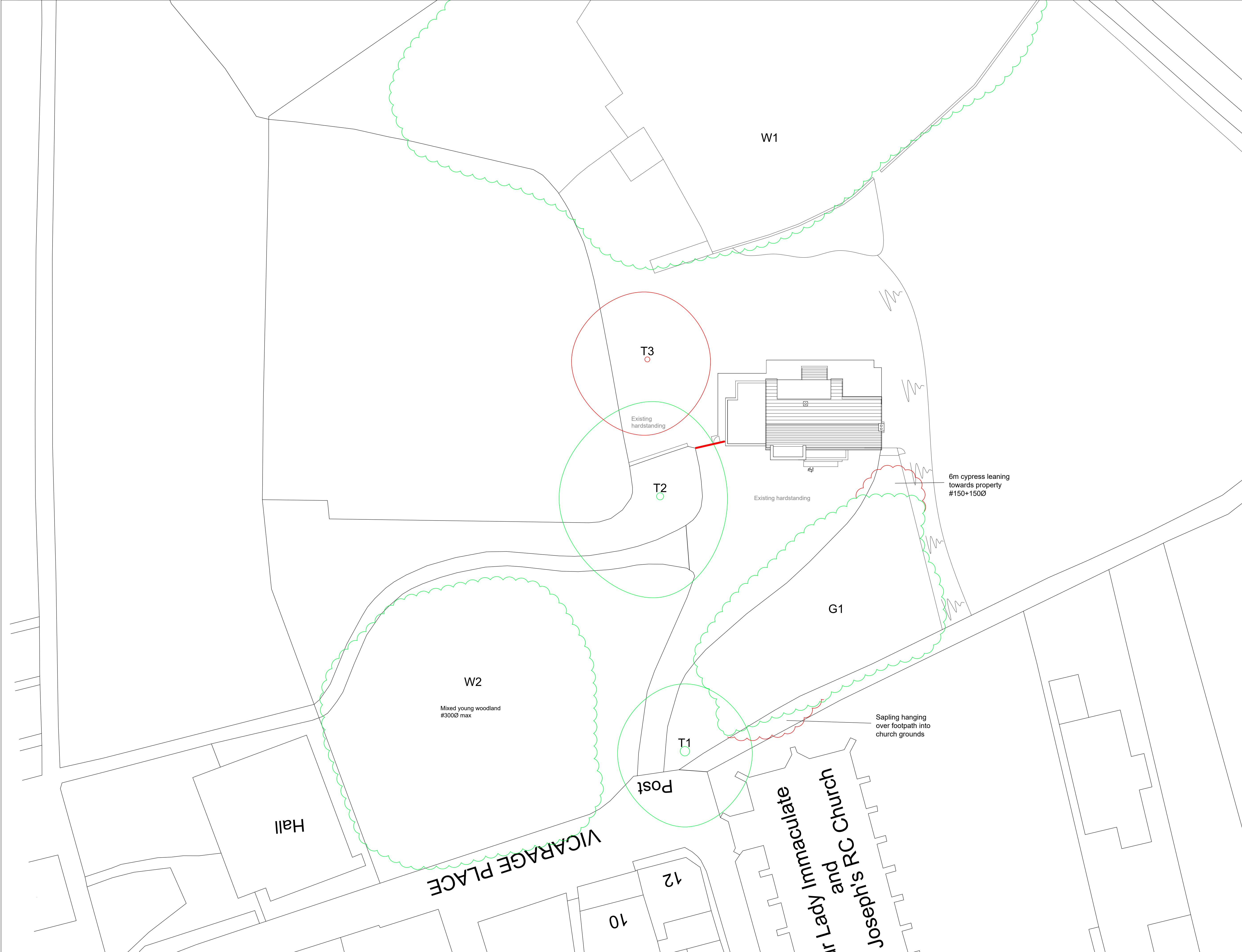
PROJECT:

Glebe House,

DRAWING TITLE:

Bat Roost Assessment

SCALE: NTS@A3	DRAWN BY: LK	DRAWING No: P.1845.23.E01
DATE: 28/09/2023	CHKD BY: LA	REV: -



DO NOT SCALE

ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID LOCATED TO OS NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL EXTRACTED FROM OS DIGITAL DATA

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KEY

Existing tree to be retained

Existing tree to be removed

N

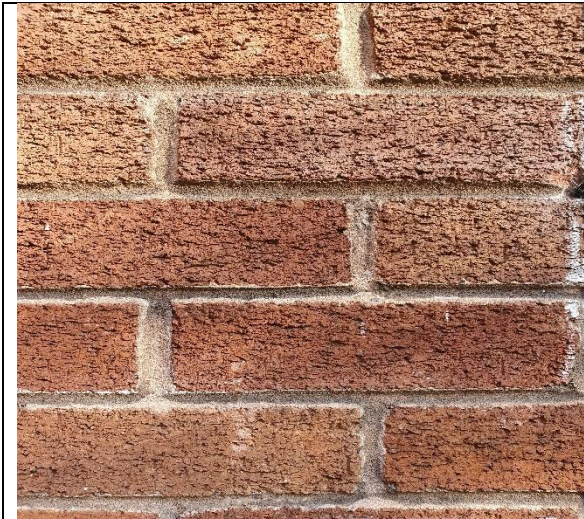
REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Ascerta Landscape Trees Ecology t: 0845 463 4404 e: info@landscapetreeseecology.com www.landscapetreeseecology.com		
CLIENT: Mr & Mrs Smailes		
PROJECT: Glebe House, Prescot, L34 1LA		
DRAWING TITLE: Tree Survey		
SCALE: 1:200 @A1	DRAWN BY: KP	DRAWING No: P.1845.23.01
DATE: 15/06/2023	CHKD BY: SR	REV: -

Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Photographs and Target Notes

Table 1: Photographs of the site

	
Photograph 1: Front elevation of the building	Photograph 2: Rear elevation of the building with the existing sloping roof extension
	
Photograph 3: Garage to the east of the building	Photograph 4: Dead ivy to the western elevation of the building.



Photograph 5: Brick work wall in good condition



Photograph 6: Birds nest (TN1)

Table 2: Target Notes

Target Note Number	Description
TN1	Location of bird nest

Appendix 3

Appendix 3: Relevant Legislation

European Legislation

The following Directives have been adopted by the European Union and provide protection for fauna and flora species of European importance and the habitats which support them:

- Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive);
- Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

UK Legislation

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (The Habitats Regulations). This provides for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites, including proposed or potential European Sites) and the protection of 'European Protected Species'.

The key UK legislation relating to nature conservation is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (W&C Act). This Act is supplemented, *inter alia*, by provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Additional species and habitat specific UK legislation includes the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

The Environment Act sets out how the UK will maintain environmental standards following leaving of the EU. The Bill builds on the vision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, with the ambition from the government to leave the environment in a better state than it was when inherited.

The Defra Biodiversity Metric is being implemented to work alongside the Environment Act. This tool calculates potential biodiversity impacts as a result of development and identifies mitigation and compensation requirements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, it identifies measures that can be implemented in order to meet Biodiversity gain as a result of development. Defra released a beta version of the biodiversity metric in July 2019 with the most recent update in March 2023. This metric is likely to be the default metric used by councils.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 15 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*'. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular 06/05: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance are listed under section 41 of the NERC Act and are a material consideration in planning decisions. Planners require relevant, up to date information from ecological surveys in order to assess the effects of a proposed development on biodiversity as Councils have a statutory obligation under section 40 of the NERC Act to consider biodiversity conservation in the determination of planning applications.

Background information about the lists of priority habitats and species (Species and Habitats of Principal Importance) can be found within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Although this has been succeeded by the '*UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework*', many of UK BAP tools are still relevant. BAPs identify habitats and species of nature conservation priority on a UK (UK BAP) and Local (LBAP) scale. Most BAP priority habitats and species have Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Species Action Plans (SAP) and there are also "grouped action plans" for groups of related species with similar conservation requirements. The LBAP relating to this site is the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

Natural England can issue licences to enable works to continue that may affect a protected species. In relation to disturbance of badgers, Natural England (2009) gives guidelines on disturbance which will require a licence. These includes: *“using very heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30 metres of any entrance to an active sett; using lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operation, within 20 metres; light work such as hand digging or scrub clearance within 10 metres. There are some activities which may cause disturbance at greater distances (such as using explosives or pile driving) and these should be given individual consideration.”*

Bats

In England, all bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Several species of bat are also highlighted as Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and within the Local BAP.

Under the current legislation as summarised on pages 8 and 9 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016) it is a criminal offence to:

“To kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat;

- To damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting. All offences of this nature are identified within the Habitats Regulations. This offence is unique in that it can be committed accidentally. No element of intentional, reckless or deliberate action needs to be evidenced;*
- To disturb bats anywhere (roosts, flight lines or foraging areas) if levels of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly local distribution or abundance;*
- To intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection;*
- To intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection; and*
- To be in possession or control of a bat alive or dead (or any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat, although bat droppings are generally considered to be acceptable), or to transport a bat, to sell or exchange a bat or to offer to sell or exchange a bat taken from the wild.”*

Breeding Birds

Breeding Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act which make it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;*
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;*
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird (including eggs), which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;*

- *intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.*

The site's suitability for supporting invertebrates was assessed during the site visit. This included making note of key plant species that could be used by notable invertebrates, together with incidental invertebrates recorded on the day.

It is a criminal offence to intentionally, wilfully kill, injure or take any of the aforementioned protected species or to destroy or disturb its habitat.

Local Policy

The site lies within Prescot and is covered by The Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 6th January 2016). Policies CS2 (Principal 4) and CS8 aim to ensure biodiversity is retained and enhanced during development and biodiversity protection is referenced in other policies including CS19, CS21, CS23 and CS24. These policies have been taken into account when preparing this report.