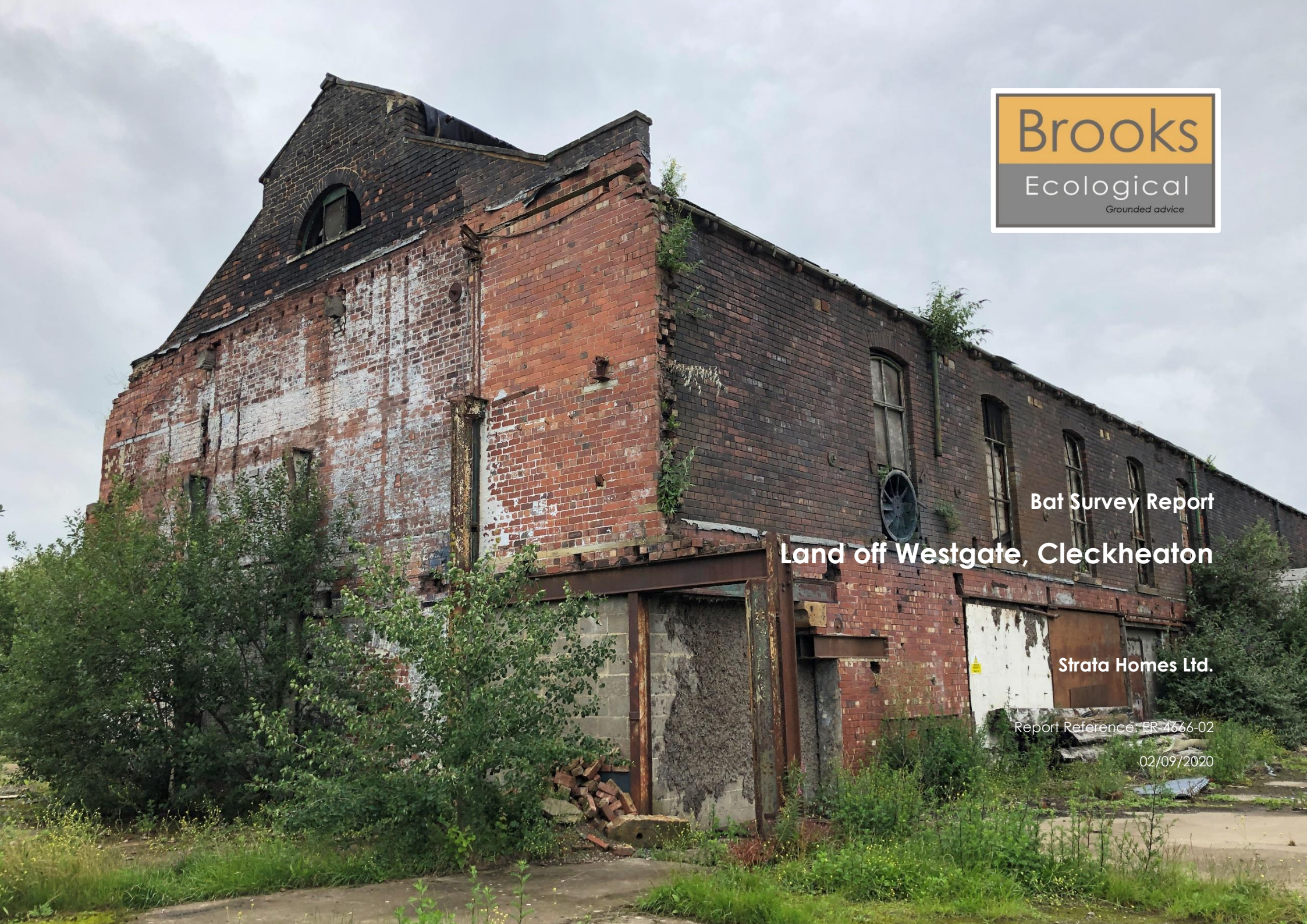

Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Bat Survey Report

Land off Westgate, Cleckheaton

Strata Homes Ltd.

Report Reference: ER-4666-02

02/09/2020

Report Title:	Bat Survey Report Land off Westgate, Cleckheaton
Report Reference:	ER-4666-02
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Date:	02/09/2020

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Grounded advice

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Summary Statement

Survey has demonstrated a likely absence of roosting bats from all on-site buildings and the proposed works therefore present little risk of impacting bats or their roosts.

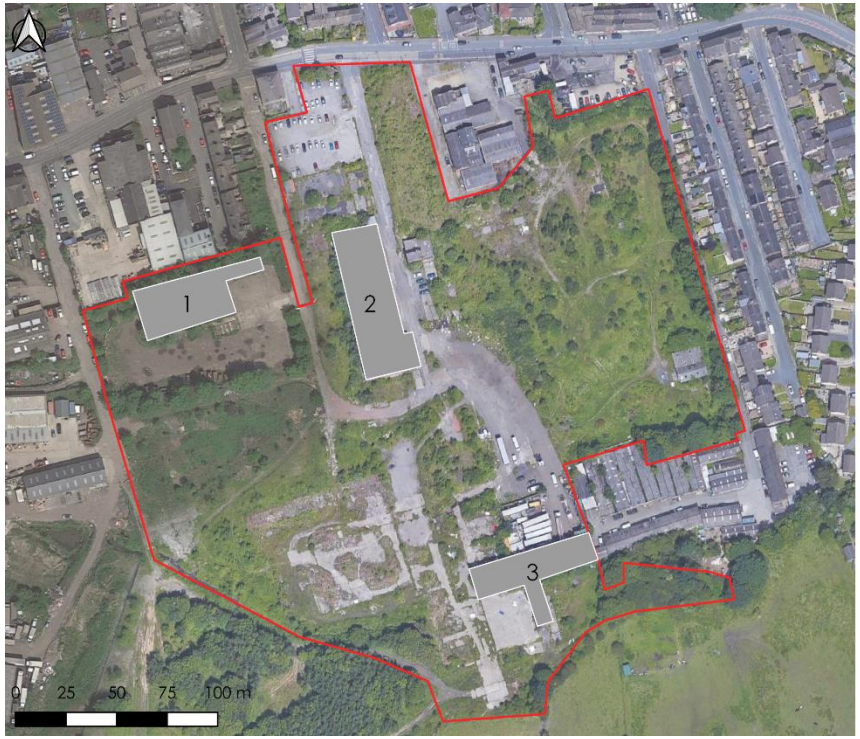
Introduction

1. Subsequent to recommendations set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (ER-4666-01), Brooks Ecological was commissioned to carry out detailed Bat Emergence Survey at the proposed development Site of Land off Westgate, Cleckheaton, BD19 5HT (SE184250).

2. Survey was required on three on-site buildings, which were assessed as providing features with low (Buildings 1 & 2) to moderate (Building 3) bat roost suitability; see Figure 1 (below).

3. In accordance with current best practice guidelines, buildings of low suitability need a single evening emergence or dawn re-entry survey in order to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats, whilst buildings of moderate suitability need two surveys.

Figure 1 The Site boundary – survey extent shown in grey hatch



Method

4. Brooks Ecological specialise in bat surveys ranging from individual buildings through to complex sites requiring numerous visits with large teams. In terms of the survey effort, number of personnel and number of visits required to be able to properly evaluate the building(s) use by bats, we refer to the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016). However, these guidelines are not prescriptive, and we approach each site individually as required using our professional judgement and significant experience base.

5. In this case, three visits with a team of up to eight surveyors was deemed necessary to fully evaluate the potential use of the Site for roosting.

6. Surveys were carried out with surveyors positioned around the buildings to cover all aspects where bats could potentially emerge or return, and to establish activity levels around the Site.

7. The surveyors, using heterodyne detectors, were in place at least 15 minutes before sunset and left once all species of bat would be expected to have left a roost and patterns of activity within the Site had been appraised. Conditions and dates are summarised in Table 1 below.

8. In addition to heterodyne detectors used during the surveys, survey of Building 1 used a FLIR Systems Ax5 Series Thermal Imaging Camera to assist in gathering as much information as possible.

Table 1 Survey conditions.

Date	Survey Type	Surveyed Building	Temp. Start/End	Weather
12.08.2020	Emergence	3	26°C/22°C	70% cloud, still (B0), Dry.
18.08.2020	Emergence	1 & 2	20°C/17°C	30% cloud. Still (B0). Dry.
26.08.2020	Emergence	3	17°C/15°C	80% cloud. Still (B0). Dry.

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Survey Results

Survey 1- Building 3

Emergence – 12th August 2020 (sunset 20:41)

9. This survey encompassed Building 3, with surveyors positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.
10. Overall, bat activity was considered to be moderate, with bat contacts being fairly consistent throughout the survey and recorded by all surveyors.
11. The first contact was logged at 20:57 when a common pipistrelle was observed entering the Site from the south before continuing west. Over the following 20 minutes, 3 more common pipistrelle's followed the same flight path, indicating the presence of a small roost somewhere off-site to the south.
12. Foraging common pipistrelle activity also occurred to the north-east of the building, where 2-3 bats were recorded at any one time and to the east where 1 common pipistrelle foraged for a large portion of the survey.
13. The only other species recorded was noctule, with one logged foraging to the west.
14. No roosts were identified, or suspected, within Building 3.

Survey 2- Buildings 1 & 2

Emergence – 18th August 2020 (Sunset 20:28)

15. This survey encompassed Buildings 1 and 2 with surveyors positioned around the two buildings.
16. Bat activity began at 20:50; 22 minutes after sunset when 4 common pipistrelles appeared in close succession from off-site to the north of Building 1. These continued south into the Site. The presence of a small common pipistrelle roost off-site to the north is suspected.
17. The surveyor to the south of Building 2 recorded near continuous foraging by 3 common pipistrelle bats from c.21:10 for the remainder of the survey- these bats had arrived from the east.
18. Elsewhere, a single noctule was recorded foraging to southwest and a single common pipistrelle to the east.
19. No roosts were identified, or suspected, within Buildings 1 & 2.

Survey 3- Building 3

Emergence – 26th August 2020 (Sunset 20:10)

20. This survey encompassed Building 3 with surveyors positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.
21. Activity was very similar to the first survey, although slightly reduced. The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle at 20:27, which arrived from the south to forage around the building.
22. As before, a noctule was heard foraging to the west of the Site. Elsewhere around the building, bat activity involved 1-2 bats intermittently foraging either to the west or east.
23. No roosts were identified, or suspected, within Building 3.

Figure 2 Summary of bat activity observed during surveys 1 & 3

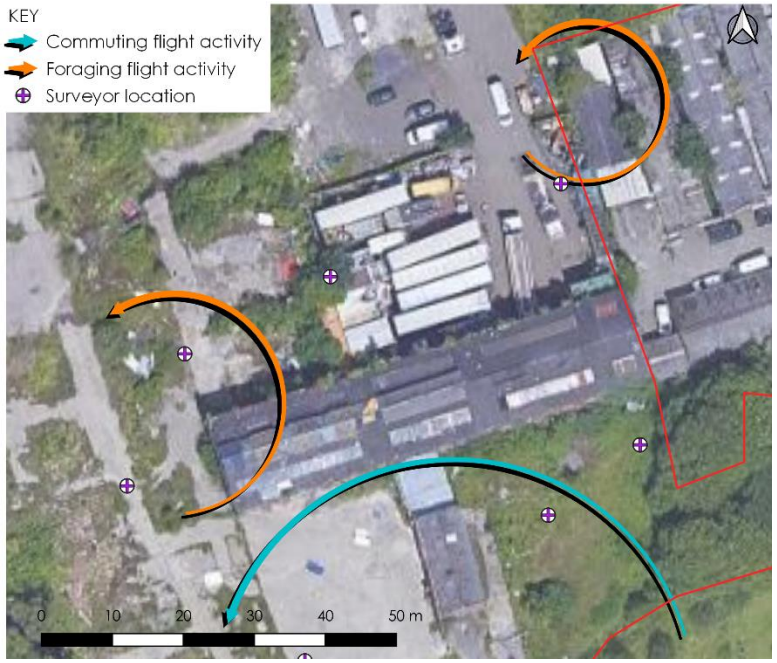
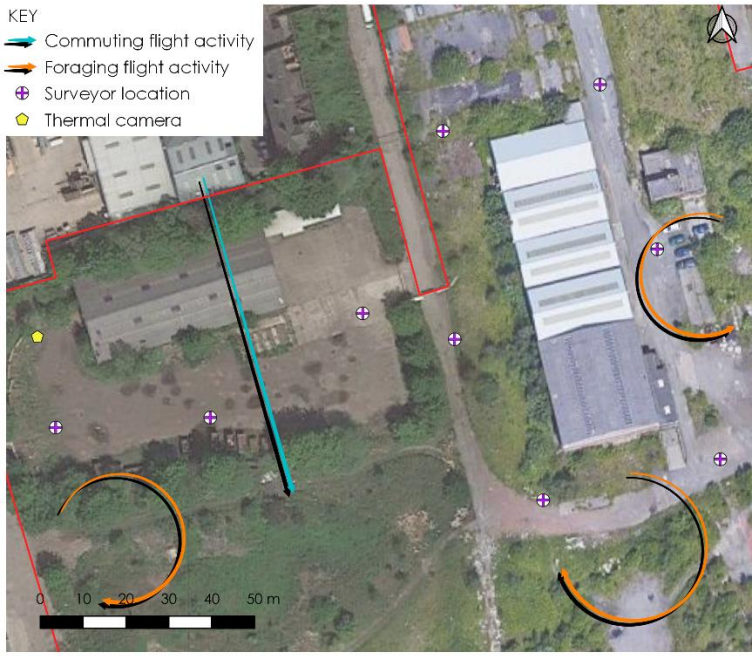


Figure 3 Summary of bat activity observed survey 2



Evaluation & Conclusion

24. No roosts were identified or suspected across the three on-Site buildings.

25. The levels of activity and lack of ambiguity of the emergence survey findings meant that we did not scope in the need for dawn surveys. The survey effort expended allows us to make a confident assessment of the likely absence of roosting within all on-Site buildings. As such, the proposed works present little risk of impacting upon bats or their roosts.

General advice

26. Even where surveys have been carried out which demonstrate absence of roosting, site workers should always be aware that bats can move into buildings previously found not to support them. On this basis work should proceed with care and if a bat is found during the proposed demolition, works should stop immediately and a professional ecologist be contacted to seek advice.

Enhancement

27. The NPPF puts emphasis on development delivering biodiversity enhancement, above and beyond mitigating or compensating for any impacts. To this end, new homes in this area should include integral bat roost features to offer suitable habitat in the long term.

References

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