

Oakley House, Huddersfield

Bat Survey Report

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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A preliminary ground level roost assessment of the trees at Oakley House, was commissioned by Nathan Pearce of Farrar Bamforth, on behalf of the client Paul Joyce of Ramsdens Solicitors LLP on 15th June 2023.
- 1.1.2 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a ground based visual inspection, undertaken on 21st July 2023. Tree numbering used during this bat survey was taken from the Arboricultural Report, produced by JCA Ltd and dated 10th August 2020 (JCA, 2020).
- 1.1.3 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded from the surveyed trees. One tree (T20 in JCA, 2020) was considered to display moderate bat roost suitability. In addition, two trees (T4 and T28) were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.
- 1.1.4 No evidence of current bird nesting was recorded at the time of survey, however disused birds' nests were noted from several trees.
- 1.1.5 It is understood that retention of all three trees which displayed greater than negligible bat roost suitability will be possible during the proposed scheme. If this is not possible, then it is recommended that trees are subject to a direct inspection by a licensed bat surveyor, in order to help determine bat roost presence/absence and to confirm their roost suitability. An additional further nocturnal survey may be required in relation to the tree displaying a moderate level of roost suitability (T20).
- 1.1.6 Assuming the potential roost features can be retained, then potential impacts would be largely limited to potential artificial light spill, as a result of any new external lighting. In order to avoid light spill across potential roost features, it is recommended that any new external lighting is designed with the input of an ecologist, with the focus on reducing the time of operation (i.e. through PIR sensors and/or timers). Any new lighting should be set at a height of 2 m or less and be downwards facing. Lights should be a warm white colour (<2700 Kelvin).
- 1.1.7 Assuming that identified potential tree roosting features can be retained, and that artificial light spill across such features can be avoided, then no further survey is considered necessary.
- 1.1.8 The findings of this bat survey are considered to be valid for a period of 24 months, after which, an update survey works may be required.
- 1.1.9 A bat enhancement recommendation has been provided for the proposed extension/development.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A preliminary ground level roost assessment of the trees at Oakley House, was commissioned by Nathan Pearce of Farrar Bamforth, on behalf of the client Paul Joyce of Ramsdens Solicitors LLP on 15th June 2023.
- 2.1.2 This survey comprises a complete update to two previous preliminary ground level roost assessments undertaken by Middleton Bell Ecology in 2020 (MBE, 2020) and Middleton Ecological Consultancy in 2017 (MEC, 2020). Since the 2017 inspection, several trees have been removed.
- 2.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a ground based visual inspection, undertaken on 21st July 2023. Tree numbering used during this bat survey was taken from the Arboricultural Report, produced by JCA Ltd and dated 10th August 2020 (JCA, 2020).
- 2.1.4 The site is adjacent to the A629 Halifax Road and comprises a large Victorian detached two-story building and associated garden, with many broadleaved trees at the boundaries. Within the red line boundary of the site is a somewhat large parking area where the development proposals include the construction of a new detached building known as the 'Coach House'.

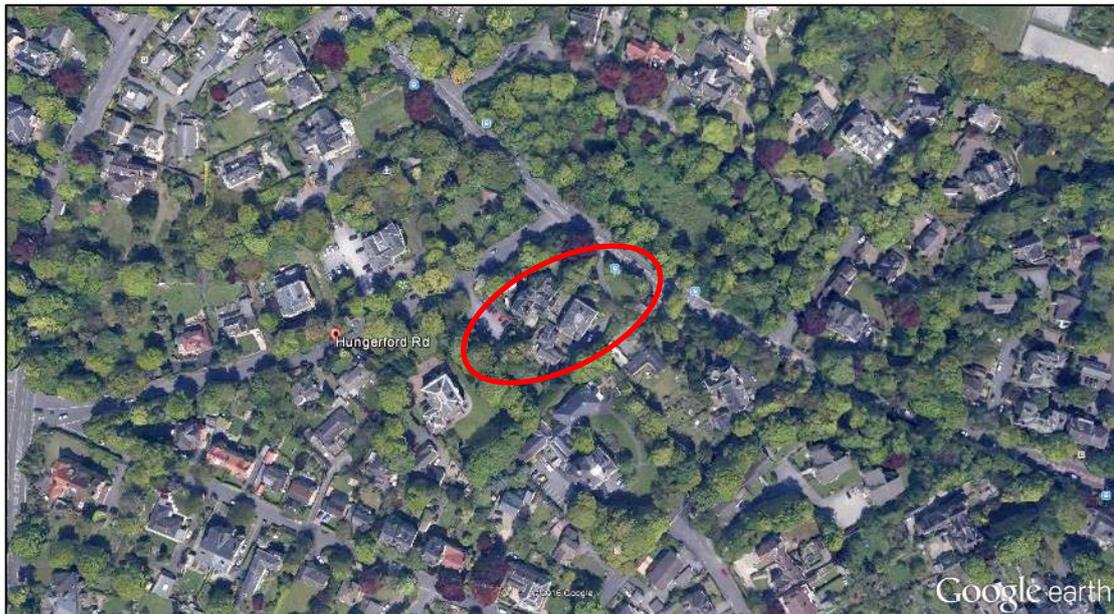
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The surrounding area comprises predominately suburban dwellings with associated large gardens and woodlands (see Figure 1). The surveyed trees are located around the periphery of the site in an area containing many mature trees. Despite its location relatively close to the centre of town, there is an abundance of good quality bat foraging habitat, and a moderately diverse range of bat species can be expected to use the area. Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed building.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: 1 Hungerford Road, Huddersfield HD3 3AL			
OS Grid Ref. SE 12854 17744		Altitude. 175m	
Local Planning Authority: Kirklees Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Large residential dwellings and commercial buildings
River bordered by trees			None within 1 km
Standing water			None within 1 km
Bridges tunnels and culverts			
Trees	✓	✓	Abundant in the area
Woodland		✓	Small woodland other side of A629 Halifax Road
Grassland		✓	Lawn areas of domestic gardens

Figure 1. Site location denoted by red circle



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- The presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Determine the number and type of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) associated with site trees.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 No bat records were requested from third party providers due to the lack of bat roost potential recorded from site trees, to be impacted by the scheme, and the low number of tree roost records typically held by recording organisations.

4.2 Field Survey

4.2.1 The survey was undertaken by Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS) on 21st July 2023.

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016):

- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.
- An extensive examination of all parts of the trees, where visible, to record Potential Roost Features (PRFs) that may be suitable for roosting bats. Such features include woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams, vertical or horizontal cracks, knot holes, flaking bark, partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50 mm.

4.2.3 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No significant limitations to an effective ground-based inspection of trees were identified.

5. Results

5.1 Field Survey

5.1.1 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded from the surveyed trees. One tree (T20 in JCA, 2020) was considered to display moderate bat roost suitability. In addition, two trees (T4 and T28) were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability. The trees and potential roost features are described below.

5.1.2 No evidence of current bird nesting was recorded at the time of survey, however disused birds' nests were noted from several trees.

Inspection of trees

5.1.3 There are many trees on all sides of Oakley House, and all are on, or close to, the site's boundaries. All site trees were inspected but Figure 2 and Table 1 include only those trees displaying greater than a negligible level of bat roost suitability.

Figure 2. Trees displaying greater than negligible level of bat roost suitability

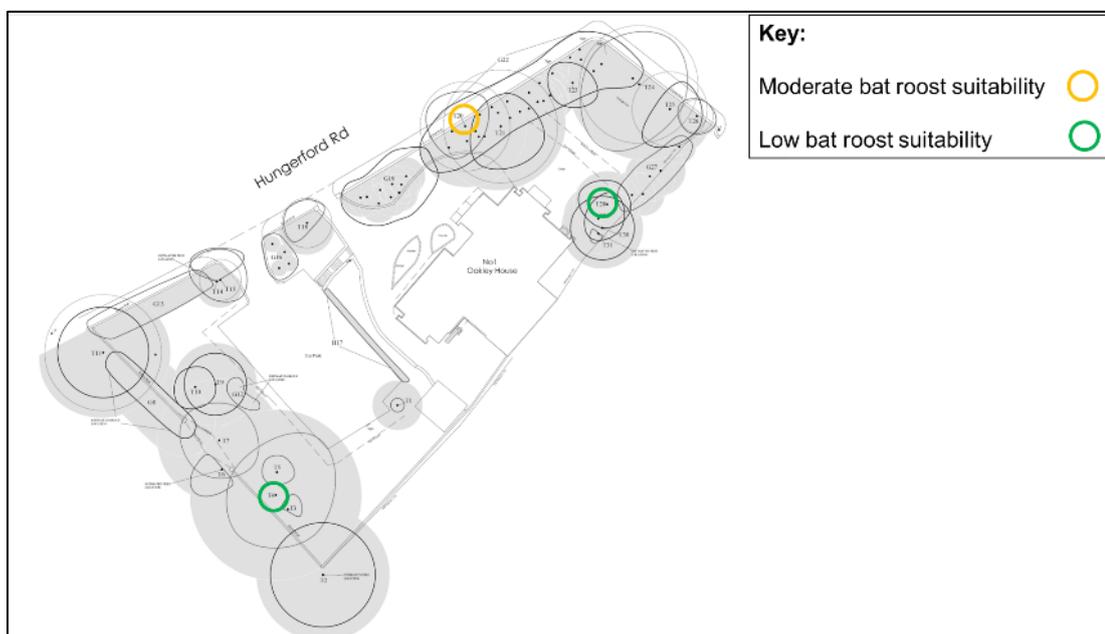


Table 2. Trees displaying greater than negligible level of bat roost suitability

Tree No.*	Species	PRF	Height	Direction	Roost Potential	Notes
T20	Sycamore	Knot hole (Plate 1)	6 m	Southeast	Moderate	Rotting back, can't see inside from ground
		Knot hole (Plate 2)	10 m	Northwest		
T4	Sycamore	Ivy (Plate 3)	0 – 10m	All sides	Low	Thick stems, some over 5 cm wide
T28	Whitebeam	Knot hole (Plate 4)	2.5 m	Northeast	Low	Downward facing

* Tree numbers taken from JCA (2020)

Plate 1. Knot hole on southeast side of T20

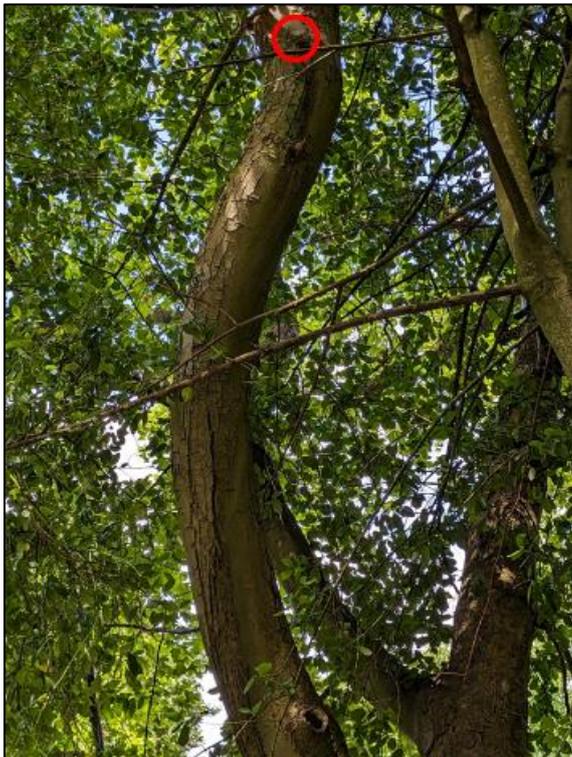


Plate 2. Knot hole on northwest side of T20

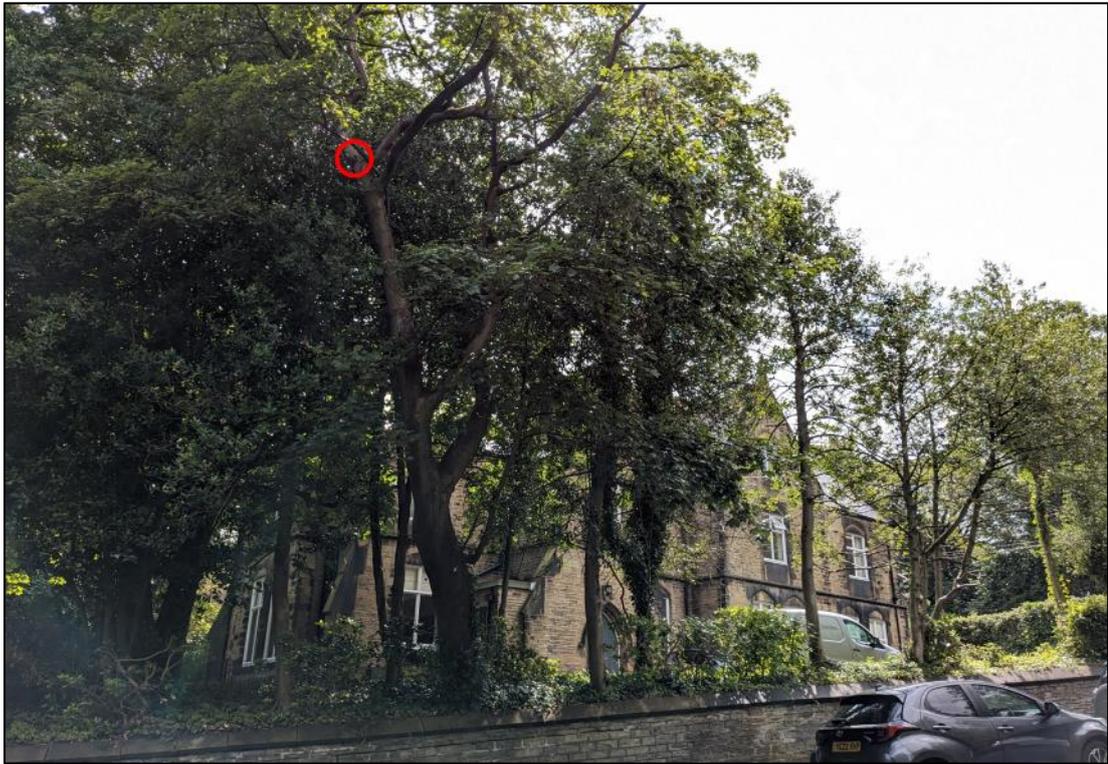


Plate 3. Thick ivy stems on T4



Plate 4. Knot hole on T28



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the trees during the ground-based inspection. Three trees were identified which displayed more than a negligible level of bat roost suitability. Of these trees, one (T20) was considered to display a moderate level of bat roost suitability, whilst the other two (T4 & T28) were considered to display low suitability.
- 6.1.2 It is understood that retention of all three trees will be possible during the proposed scheme. The sycamore tree which displayed moderate bat roost suitability (T20) is already likely to experience some level of artificial light spill as a result of street lighting on Hungerford Road.
- 6.1.3 No evidence of current bird nesting was recorded at the time of survey, however disused birds' nests were noted from several trees.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 6.2.2 It is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
 - Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
 - Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
 - Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.
- 6.2.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.
- 6.2.4 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

- 6.2.5 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats, the site must either be registered on the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or Earned Recognition (ER) licence, or a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.
- 6.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should ‘promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’.

Birds

- 6.2.7 All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

6.3 Recommendations/enhancements

Bats

- 6.3.1 It is expected that direct impacts to potential tree roosting features can be avoided during the proposed development. If this is not possible, then it is recommended that trees are subject to a direct inspection by a licensed bat worker, such as could be undertaken from a rope and harness. The purpose of the direct inspection would be to help determine bat roost presence/absence and to confirm the level of assessed roost suitability. An additional further nocturnal survey may be required in relation to the tree displaying a moderate level of roost suitability (T20).
- 6.3.2 Assuming the potential roost features can be retained then potential impacts would largely be limited to potential artificial light spill, as a result of any new external lighting. In order to avoid light spill across potential roost features, it is recommended that any new external lighting is designed with the input of an ecologist, with the focus on reducing the time of operation (i.e. through PIR sensors and/or timers). Lighting should be set at a height of 2 m or less and be downwards facing. Lights should be a warm white colour (<2700 Kelvin) in line with good practice guidance (ILP, 2018).
- 6.3.3 Assuming that identified potential tree roosting features can be retained, and that artificial light spill across such features can be avoided, then no further survey is considered necessary.
- 6.3.4 In order to enhance the ecological value of the site it is suggested that a bat roosting feature is added as part of any future development. It is advised that one integrated bat box (such as a Build-In Woodstone Bat Box) is installed in the proposed coach house, high on the southwest gable wall, away from artificial light spill. For further information on appropriate bat roost features contact Middleton Bell Ecology.

Birds

- 6.3.5 In order to avoid impacts on nesting birds it is recommended that either the site clearance works proceeds outside of the bird nesting season (March-August) or that a nesting bird check should be undertaken by an ecologist within 48 hours of tree felling/management works proceeding.

6.4 Conclusion

- 6.4.1 There were no visible signs of bat occupation recorded during the survey. One tree was considered to display a moderate level of bat roost suitability with two trees displaying a low level of suitability.
- 6.4.2 It is understood that the three trees which displayed greater than a negligible level of bat roost suitability will be retained. Providing that indirect lighting impacts can also be avoided then no further bat survey works is considered necessary.
- 6.4.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 6.4.4 The findings of this bat survey are considered to be valid for a period of 24 months, after which, update survey works may be required.
- 6.4.5 It is recommended that works either proceed outside the bird nesting period or a nesting bird check should be undertaken before works commence.
- 6.4.6 A bat enhancement recommendation has been provided for the proposed extension/development.

7. References

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.
- ILP (2018) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series. Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals.
- JCA (2020) Arboricultural Report to BS 5837:2012 at Oakley House. JCA Ltd.
- MBE (2020) 1 Hungerford Road, Huddersfield – Bat Survey Report. Middleton Bell Ecology.
- MEC (2017) Oakley House, 1 Hungerford Road, Huddersfield – Bat Survey Report. Middleton Ecological Consultancy.