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ENVIRONMENT

Vistry Yorkshire Ltd, Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd & Miller Homes Ltd

Blackmoorfoot Road
Huddersfield

Aerial Tree Bat Survey Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BWB Consulting was commissioned in August 2024 to undertake aerial tree surveys of 10 trees scheduled for removal at an area of land north of Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

Initial Ground Level Tree Assessments (GLTA) were undertaken by Ecus Ltd which highlighted a total of 10 trees to have suitability at up to PRF-M suitability for bats (*Land off Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield – Ground Level Tree Assessment*). PRF-M trees are trees that contain features which are considered to have the potential to support multiple bats, and therefore may be suitable for maternity colonies of bats (Collins, 2023). As per good practice guidance, a total of three aerial tree inspections have been undertaken to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats (Collins, 2023). No bats were found to be roosting within the trees during the aerial tree inspections, but a number of trees supporting PFR's retain their potential to support roosting bats.

Whilst no bats were found, it is recommended that Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) should perform a pre-works check of suitable PRF-M features on the day of removal to ensure that there are no bats present within the feature. Following the check, it is considered that Best Practice Measures (BPM) should be utilised when removing these trees. The trees should be felled, taking care not to cross-cut any PRFs which may be supporting roosting bats. The tree should be left in-situ overnight to allow any potentially present roosting bats opportunity to vacate the roosting features prior to removal/ chipping of the tree.

Having been inspected more closely during the aerial inspections, it was considered that T35 and T52 contained no features greater than PRF-I suitability for roosting bats. As such, no further survey is required for these trees. It is considered that BPM outlined above should be followed when removing these trees.

Bats are highly transient, and as such, may be roosting at any suitable PRF at any time. In the event that a bat is discovered roosting during works, all works should be halted and an ecologist should be contacted for advice.

As compensation for the loss of PRFs across the Site, it is recommended that a minimum of ten bat boxes should be installed onto retained trees. The model of boxes used should be suitable for crevice dwelling bat species, such as the Vincent Pro Bat Box or Schwegler 2FN Bat Box. The bat boxes should be placed at a minimum height of 4 m, facing southern aspects to maximise chances of occupation.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BWB Consulting was commissioned in August 2024 to undertake aerial tree survey of 10 trees scheduled for removal at an area of land north of Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 11361 14743), hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as displayed in Figure 1.

1.2 Initial Ground Level Tree Assessments (GLTA) were undertaken by Ecus Ltd which highlighted a total of 10 trees to have suitability at up to PRF-M suitability for bats (*Land off Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield – Ground Level Tree Assessment*). PRF-M trees are trees that contain features which are considered to have the potential to support multiple bats, and therefore may be suitable for maternity colonies of bats (Collins, 2023). As per good practice guidance, a total of three aerial tree inspections should be undertaken to confirm presence/likely absence of roosting bats (Collins, 2023).

1.3 This report details the findings of the aerial inspections. The methodologies employed during the surveys are described along with the survey findings, evaluation, assessment and recommendations for any further survey work and/or mitigation/enhancement as required.

1.4 Recommendations are made in terms of impacts of the proposed development through habitat losses/potential gains on the Site post-development and the retention and protection of key ecological features.

2. METHODOLOGY

Aerial Tree Inspection

2.1 Aerial tree surveys was undertaken on three separate visits by Senior Ecologist Joe Travis BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM (Bat Level 2 Survey Class Licence CL18 Ref: 2024-11983-CL18-BAT) and Greg Parrot in line with industry good practice guidance (Collins, 2023). These surveys were separated by a minimum of three weeks, where possible, and were undertaken on 12th August 2024, 28th August 2024 and 20th September 2024.

2.2 The trees were subject to an assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats during the survey.

2.3 An individual tree may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats associated with it and it is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats due to their transient nature. Consequently, it is customary when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of roosting potential as follows: negligible; PRF-I (PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either fur to size or lack of surrounding habitats); or PRF-M (PRF is suitable for multiple bats and therefore may be used by a maternity colony) (Collins, 2023).

2.4 Trees were subject to detailed survey, including endoscopic to identify the potential for the features to support roosting bats.

Assumptions and Limitations

2.5 In line with CIEEM guidance, this report is valid for a period of 12 months. In the event that works have not been commenced by November 2025, an update assessment should be undertaken.

2.6 T25 was not accessible throughout the survey period. As such, this tree will not be discussed further within this report.

3. FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

Site Description

3.1 The Site is located in the southwestern outskirts of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire and comprises the formal industrial units associated with the Black Cat Fireworks company. The Site has is currently disused and contains a number of natural habitats including woodland, grassland, scrubland and regenerating land on the former areas of hardstanding.

3.2 The Site is bounded mostly by greenspace, with areas of woodland, pastoral grasslands and a golf courses bordering the Site.

Aerial Tree Inspections

Roosting Bats

3.3 A total of 10 trees were considered to contain features up to PRF-M stability in the Ecus report (Ecus, 2024). These trees were all subject to further inspection, with the exception of T25 which was not accessible throughout the survey period. These are described below in Table 1, with an assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats and displayed within Figure 1. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded in any of the trees.

Table 1: Aerial Tree Inspection Results

Ecus Tree Ref.	Tree Species	Description of Feature	Feature Suitability Following Detailed Survey	Overall Suitability Following Detailed Survey
T5	Silver birch	*Basal cavity formed by rot, facing southwards. The cavity is approximately 15 cm in height and 10 cm in width and extends over 30 cm into the trunk of the tree.*	PRF-M	PRF-M
T6	Goat willow	*Northeastern facing trunk cavity at approximately 1 m in height. The feature is approximately 5 cm in diameter and extends 5 cm into the trunk. The feature was damp and contained slugs and woodlice on each survey.*	PRF-I	PRF-M
		Southern facing trunk cavity at approximately 2 m in height. The feature is approximately 15 cm in length and 5 cm in width. The feature extends 40 cm into the trunk and was damp and contained slugs and woodlice on each survey.	PRF-M	
		Southern facing trunk cavity at approximately 3 m in height. The feature is approximately 40 cm in length, 10 cm in width, however is only 3 cm in depth throughout.	PRF-I	

Ecus Tree Ref.	Tree Species	Description of Feature	Feature Suitability Following Detailed Survey	Overall Suitability Following Detailed Survey
		Southern facing hazard beam at approximately 2 m in height. The feature is approximately 30 cm in length, 10 cm in width and approximately 5 cm in depth in places, however the feature is fairly exposed, limiting sheltering locations throughout.	PRF-I	
		Southern facing hazard beam at approximately 3.5 m in height. The feature is approximately 50 cm in length and 10 cm in width. The feature is exposed to the elements but may offer opportunistic shelter for low numbers of bats.	PRF-I	
T14	Goat willow	Northern facing rot hole at approximately 50 cm in height. The hole is approximately 5 cm in diameter and extends approximately 5 cm in depth	PRF-I	PRF-M
		Northern facing rot hole at approximately 50 cm in height. The hole is 3 cm in diameter, extending approximately 20 cm in depth.	PRF-M	
		Eastern facing limb tear out showing signs of rot at approximately 50 cm in height. The feature is approximately 10 cm in length and 3 cm in width, extending approximately 5 cm into the trunk.	PRF-I	
		Eastern facing rot hole approximately 50 cm in height. The feature is 3 cm in diameter and extends into the trunk approximately 20 cm. *The feature was damp and contained slugs and woodlice on each survey.*	PRF-I	
		Southern facing limb tear out leading to a series of three rot holes. The rot holes are all approximately 1 m in height, and 5 cm in depth. The highest feature extends approximately 30 cm upwards into the trunk, the next extends approximately 20 cm downwards into the trunk, while the final extends approximately 40 cm upwards into the adjoining limb.	PRF-M	
T20	Goat willow	Western facing rot hole at approximately 50 cm in height. Feature is approximately 10 cm in length and 3 cm in width, extending approximately 5 cm into the trunk. *The feature was damp and contained slugs and woodlice on each survey.*	PRF-I	PRF-M
		Eastern facing rot hole approximately 50 cm in height. The feature has a diameter of approximately 3 cm in extends approximately 10 cm into the trunk. *The feature was damp and contained slugs and woodlice on each survey.*	PRF-I	

Ecus Tree Ref.	Tree Species	Description of Feature	Feature Suitability Following Detailed Survey	Overall Suitability Following Detailed Survey
		Western facing limb tear out with cavity rot at approximately 2.5 m in height. The feature is approximately 10 cm in height and width, and extends into the trunk approximately 20 cm.	PRF-M	
T21	Goat willow	*Eastern facing rot hole approximately 2 m in height. The feature is approximately 5 cm in diameter, however does not extend into the trunk.*	Negligible	PRF-M
		Southern facing rot hole approximately 1 m in height. The feature is approximately 10 cm in length and 5 cm in width, extending 10 cm into the trunk.	PRF-M	
		Southern facing wound on the main trunk approximately 3 m in height. The feature is approximately 15 cm in length and 3 cm in width, however does not extend into the trunk greater than 2cm.	Negligible	
		Southern facing rot hole approximately 2 m in height. The feature is approximately 5 cm in diameter, and extends into the tree approximately 4 cm.	PRF-I	
		Southern facing limb tear out that is showing signs of rot approximately 1 m in height. Feature is approximately 10 cm in length and 3 cm in width. Extends approximately 15 cm into the trunk.	PRF-M	
		Northwestern facing rot hole at 2 m in height. The rot hole is approximately 5 cm in diameter and extends into the tree approximately 4 cm.	PRF-I	
T22	Goat willow	Southern facing basal cavity extending approximately 50 cm into the trunk.	PRF-M	PRF-M
		Southern facing rot hole approximately 1 m in height. The rot hole is approximately 3 cm in diameter, extending approximately 30 cm into the trunk.	PRF-M	
T34	Goat willow	Southern facing cavity approximately 2 m in height. The cavity is approximately 1m in length, 30 cm in width and 30 cm in depth.	PRF-M	PRF-M
		Split at the base of two limbs on the northern aspect at approximately 2 m in height. The feature is approximately 50 cm in length and 20 cm in width. The feature is only approximately 5 cm in depth, and as such, is exposed to the	Negligible	

Ecus Tree Ref.	Tree Species	Description of Feature	Feature Suitability Following Detailed Survey	Overall Suitability Following Detailed Survey
		elements, limiting the suitability of the feature for roosting bats.		
		Western facing rot hole formed by a limb tear out at approximately 1.5 m in height. The feature is approximately 20 cm in length and 15 cm in width, extending into the trunk approximately 15 cm. The cavity was wet on each survey, containing slugs and woodlice.	PRF-I	
		Two northern facing rot holes at approximately 50 cm in height which are connecting by the cavity which is approximately 30 cm in depth.	PRF-M	
		Eastern facing rot hole at the base of the trunk. The hole is approximately 3 cm in diameter and extends approximately 10 cm into the trunk.	PRF-I	
T35	Goat willow	*Southern facing rot hole at approximately 3 m in height, with the feature itself approximately 2 cm in diameter and 5 cm in depth*	PRF-I	PRF-I
		Southern facing wound that has partially rotted at approximately 4 m in height, creating a crevice that is 15 cm in length and 10 cm in width. The feature is approximately 5 cm in depth.	PRF-I	
		North facing hazard beam at approximately 5 m in height. Feature is approximately 5 cm in depth.	PRF-I	
		Three rot holes facing northwards between 3 and 5 m in height. None of the rot holes extend further than 2 cm into the trunk.	Negligible	
T52	Sycamore	*Eastern facing callous roll at approximately 5 m in height. Feature is approximately 50 cm by 15 cm, however upon detailed inspection, there is no cavity present.*	Negligible	PRF-I
		North facing rot hole at approximately 4 m in height. The hole is approximately 10 cm in diameter and 5 cm in depth.	PRF-I	

Summary

3.4 Upon detailed inspection, it was considered that T35 and T52 did not contain any features of greater than PRF-I suitability for roosting bats. As such, these trees were not subject to survey on the remaining two visits in line with good practice guidance (Collins, 2023).

3.5 The remaining seven trees all contained at least one feature which was considered to be of suitability or PRF-M following detailed inspection. No evidence of roosting bats were recording during any of the surveys (e.g. live/dead bats, droppings, feeding remains etc)

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENTS

Proposals

4.1 Proposals for the Site comprise the removal of the trees subject to survey within this report to facilitate a residential development at the Site.

Legislation

4.2 All species of bat occurring within the UK are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Under regulation 41 bats are protected from deliberate capture, injury or killing, from deliberate disturbance and from deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost).

4.3 All UK bats are also included on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). However, their protection is limited to certain offences. Under the 1981 Act (as amended) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any such place.

4.4 Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats are included as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Legislation

4.5 Current proposals include removal of the trees that were subject to further survey within this report. Following detailed surveys, no evidence of roosting bats were recorded in any of the trees scheduled for removal.

4.6 Seven trees are considered to offer PRF-M suitability for roosting bats, and therefore are suitable for multiple bats and as such may support maternity roosts. It is recommended that Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) should perform a final pre-works check of suitable PRF-M features on the day of removal to ensure that there are no bats present within the feature. Following the check, It is considered that Best Practice Measures (BPM) should be utilised when removing these trees. The trees should be felled, taking care not to directly cross-cut through any PRFs which may be supporting roosting bats. The felled tree should be left in-situ overnight to allow any potentially present roosting bats opportunity to vacate the roosting features prior to removal/chipping of the tree.

4.7 It was considered that T35 and T52 contained no features greater than PRF-I suitability for roosting bats. As such, no further survey is required for these trees. It is considered that BPM outlined above should be followed when removing these trees.

4.8 Bats are highly transient, and as such, may be roosting at any suitable PRF at any time. In the event that a bat is discovered roosting during works, all works should be halted and an ecologist should be contacted for advice.

4.9 As compensation for the loss of PRFs across the Site, it is recommended that a minimum of ten bat boxes should be installed onto retained trees. The model of boxes used should be suitable for crevice dwelling bat species, such as the Vincent Pro Bat Box or Schwegler 2FN Bat Box. The bat boxes should be placed at a minimum height of 4 m, facing southern aspects to maximise chances of occupation.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Ecus Ltd (2024) '*Land off Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield – Ground Level Tree Assessment*'.

FIGURES

Legend

Site Boundary

Tree Bat Roost Suitability

- PRF-I
- PRF-M

0 50 100 150 200 m

Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield

Figure 1

Tree Bat Roost Suitability

Basemap: Copyright Google 2024

Scale - 1: 4000 @ A4

Drawing Reference: 241101/F1/JT

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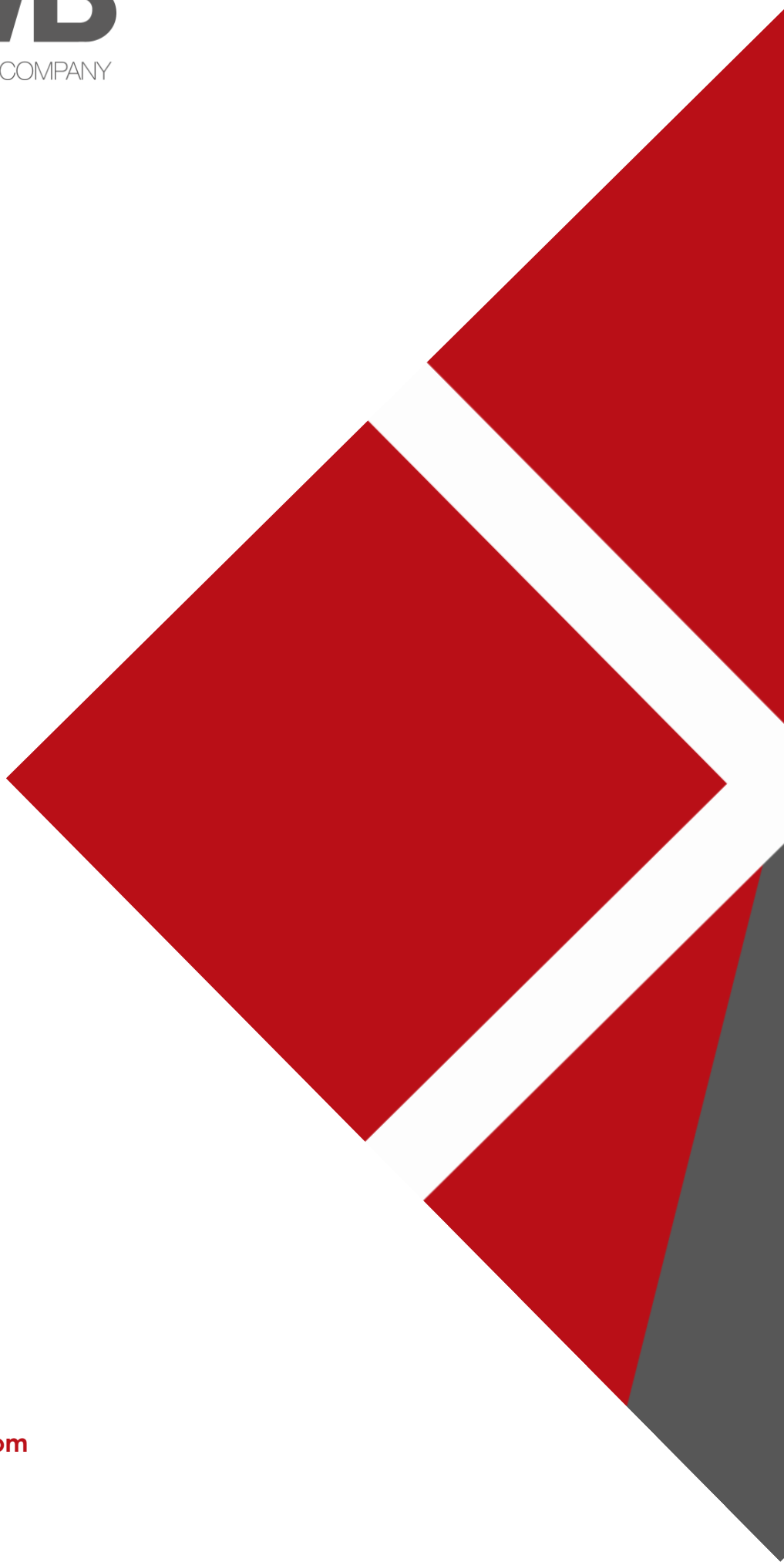

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