

Site Inspection Report

Meltham Greenway Phase 3A



Site Inspection reference SI-7872-01

Date of inspection 02.01.2025

Inspected by Ruth Highley MBiol (Hons)
Assistant Ecologist

Reviewed by Mary Fleming BSc MSc
Assistant Ecologist

Task description PRA of trees to be removed.

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.

Method

A thorough daytime inspection of the site was made in January 2025 to look for evidence of bats and assess suitability for roosting. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, stains on masonry or timber from the oils in bats' fur, and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.

Bat roosting potential of the trees was classified according to the following criteria set out in Table 1 taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Trees.

Suitability	Criteria
None	Either no PRFs in the tree, or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present within the tree.
PRF-I	Potential roost feature suitable to support individual or low numbers of bats
PRF-M	Potential roost feature suitable to support multiple bats and possibly be used by a maternity colony

Report

Many of the trees are not of a size or age where significant features suitable to support roosting bats would be expected. With the majority falling into the *no* roost suitability category owing to a complete lack of obvious features. Five of the trees scheduled for removal have features suitable for roosting bats. All these trees are goat willow of a larger size. Features are summarised in the table below:



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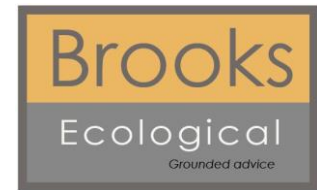
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Table 2 Summary of features

Tree Ref.	Features	Suitability
T11	Large goat willow. Multi-stemmed. The smallest stem is dead but has no features suitable for roosting bats. There is a split on the second largest stem from the root base to about 2m up. The split is not deep and would not provide roosting space for more than individual bats.	PRF-I
T12	None	None
T13	None	None
T23	None	None
T28	None	None
T30	None	None
T32	None	None
T38	None	None
W01-16	None	None
W01-17	Large goat willow. Decay at base creating small features for roosting bats underneath bark and in fissures within the wood of the trunk.	PRF-I
W01-18	None	None
W01-19	None	None
W01-20	None	None
W01-21	None	None
W01-22	None	None
W01-23	None	None
W01-24	None	None
W01-25	None	None
W01-26	None	None
W01-27	None	None
W01-28	Medium goat willow. Two knot holes. Split higher up the tree.	PRF-M
W01-33	None	None
W01-34	None	None
W01-44	Medium goat willow. Has a split from the base to about 1.5m up the trunk. At the base of the tree the split creates a large opening. There is another split at about 1.5 m showing hollowing of the trunk extending upwards.	PRF-M
W02-04	None	None
W02-06	None	None
W02-07	None	None
W02-08	None	None
W02-10	None	None
W02-11	None	None
W02-31	Dead standing stems of a medium goat willow. Some small sections of lifted bark and small superficial split in main trunk.	PRF-I
W02-34	None	None

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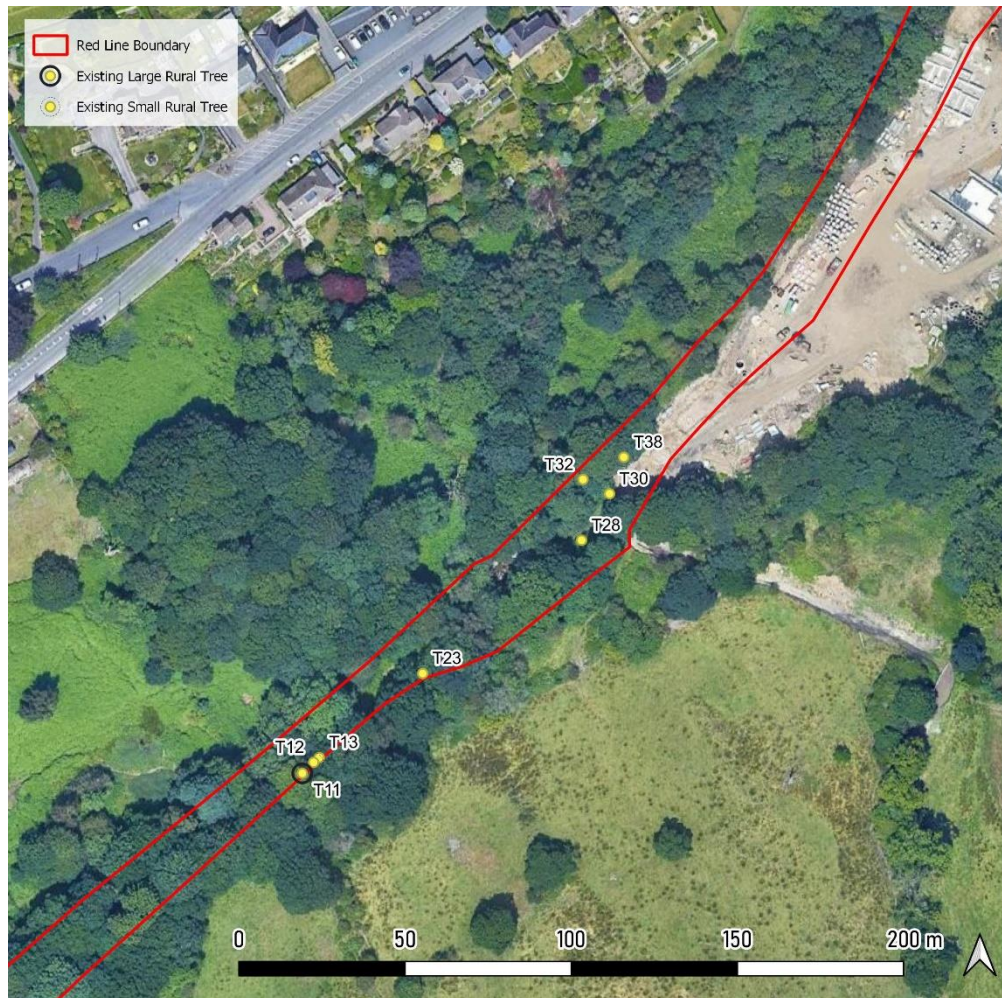


Further actions and recommendations

The two trees, W01-28 and W01-44, identified as of PRF-M suitability, as such further survey should be carried out prior to removal. Climbed inspection of the PRFs with an endoscope or three evening emergence surveys are recommended to determine the status of roosting bats. In line with guidance, no further surveys are required for the trees identified as PRF-I.

Should any trees outside of this list need to be removed, another PRA will need to be done to assess suitability for roosting bats.

Figure 1 Plan showing locations of trees to be removed - north



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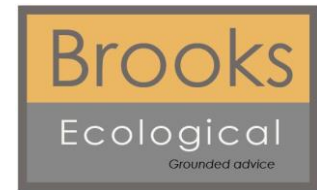
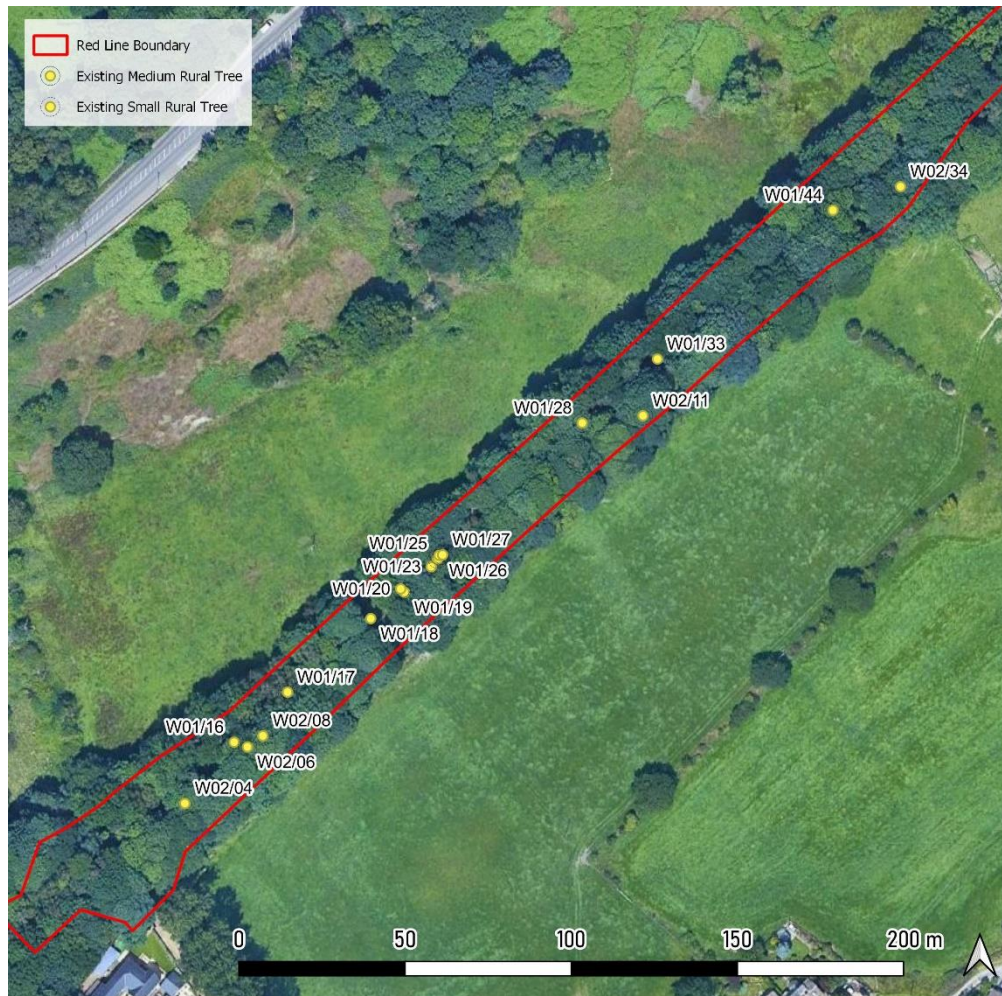


Figure 2 Plan showing locations of the trees to be removed - south



Photograph 1

Silver birch trees in the foreground are W01-18 - W01-25. All small with no potential roost features



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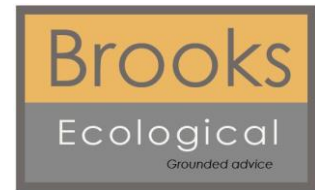
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Photograph 2 (left)

General view of T11. Split can be seen on the far left stem.



Photograph 3 (right)

Decay at base of W01-17



Photograph 3 (left)

Split on W01-28



Photograph 4 (right)

Split in W01-44 showing hollowing



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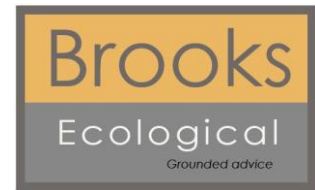
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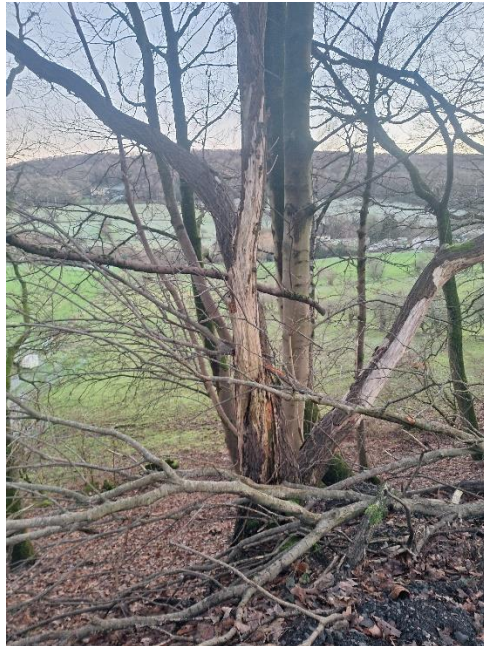
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Photograph 5
General view of
W02-31



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