Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment

Prepared on behalf of: The Estate Charity of Eleanor Palmer

For the site of: 36-52 Fortess Road, Fortess Garage & 20 Fortess Grove, Camden, London, NW5 2HB

26th October 2015

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Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment at '36-52 Fortess Road, Fortess Garage & 20 Fortess Grove, Camden, London, NW5 2HB' on the 26th October 2015. The aim of the assessment is to assess the value and suitability of the structures and or trees for roosting bats, or bat foraging/commuting habitat.

The development proposals briefly comprise the partial demolition of the existing car garage and workshops and renovation into a dwelling and business building. Preliminary development proposals are included in Appendix 2. A planning application has been submitted under reference number Camden 2015/4501/P.

Bat survey specification for the building(s) on site

Building reference	Value of building for roosting bats	Recommendations for further survey and assessment
B1a (workshops)	Negligible	No further surveys required.
B1b (house of number 20)	Negligible	No further surveys required.

The survey concluded that building B1 had a negligible habitat value for roosting bats. As such, no further surveys are required for bats, as this report already assumes a likely absence from the site.

It is also concluded that there is no habitat for any other ecological receptor on site (e.g. owls, newts, reptiles), and no other surveys are required.

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech were commissioned by The Estate Charity of Eleanor Palmer to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 36-52 Fortess Road, Fortess Garage & 20 Fortess Grove, Camden, London, NW5 2HB. The assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust publication *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines* (Hundt, 2012).

This is the first ecological survey to be undertaken on the site by Arbtech Consulting.

1.2 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all structural features suitable for roosting bats, and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on constraints to the proposals as a result of roosting bats, and summarises the requirements for any further surveys, to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve Planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

The aim of the assessment was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how they could use the building or structure. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external and internal inspection of all of the buildings
- An outline of likely impacts on any known roosts has been provided, based on current development proposals
- Recommendations for further survey and assessment have been made, along with advice on European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing if appropriate.

- A desk study has been carried out, , including a request for information from the London bat group (LBG).

A survey plan is presented in Appendix 1, the proposed Project Plan is included in Appendix 2 (if provided) photographs taken during the site survey are included in Appendix 3, and a summary of relevant legislation can be found in Appendix 4. Full desk study records (if provided) are in Appendix 5.

1.3 Project Description

It is currently understood that the current workshops on site will be partially demolished, and new dwellings and commercial buildings created from the outer wall. It is described below planning application reference number Camden 2015/4501/P, registered on 01-09-2015.

Change of use from vehicle repair workshop (Class B2) and erection of part 2 and part 3 storey building, to provide 1 x 2-bed dwelling on Railey Mews, 8 x 3-bed dwellings (Class C3) at the rear of 36-52 Fortess Road and 1,138 sqm of business floorspace (Class B1), including retention of existing walls, green roofs, metal cladding and associated landscaping, following partial demolition of existing buildings.

The Plan showing the proposed works is included in Appendix 2.

All works areas, storage and haul routes will be included within the site boundaries; access will be provided by existing roads and as such, no additional working footprints area anticipated.

There will be no impacts on brick built terraced neighbouring buildings

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Site context and basics

The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ29038541, and comprises an area of approximately 0.16ha. There are is 1 continuous structure within the site boundary which makes up the vast majority of the area. This is split into 2 buildings, B1a, the workshops and B1b, a small house. The site is situated in Kentish Town, north London.

2.2 Desk study scope

Existing records relating to the site and a surrounding 2km radius (the study area) were requested from the London bat group. The data search is confidential information that is not suitable for public release.

A review of the following information sources has also been undertaken to inform the assessment:

- Landscape structure using aerial images from Google Earth
- Designated sites, habitat and species data held on Magic.gov.uk.
- Designated sites information found on Natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk
- Information on the surrounding area using OS Opendata 2010

2.3 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results are provided below; full details are included in Appendix 5.

Designated sites

The site does not fall within any statutory or non-statutory designated nature conservation sites.

There is 1 statutory designated site and 1 non-statutory site within the study area.

Table 2 provides details of the designated sites within 2km including their reasons for notification.

Table 1: Designated sites within 2km of the site

Designated Site Name	Distance from Site (approx.)	Reasons for Notification and integral value
Statutory Sites		
Belsize Wood	1500	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
Non-statutory Sites		
Highgate Cemetery	1280	Registered Parks and Gardens

Site within landscape and local bat habitat

A review of the designated sites, aerial photographs, the magic database and OS maps shows that the site is situated in urban north London. The immediate local land use around the survey building consists of high density housing and roads, extending in all directions for over a kilometre aside from the north-west, where Hampstead heath starts ~800m away. A train track passes ~180m to the south, and could provide a possible commuting route. The closest source of open water is a narrow pond ~500m to the north-west More ponds are located in Hampstead heath.

Notable habitat within 1km

Priority Habitat Inventory

Deciduous Woodland is located ~330m to the north-west and ~500m to the west of the survey site.

Lowland Heathland and Good quality semi-improved grassland is located ~875, to the north-west.

Habitat conclusion:

In conclusion, the local area provides below average commuting habitat to bats, but also rich foraging areas on Hampstead heath such as the ponds, heath, grassland and woodland.

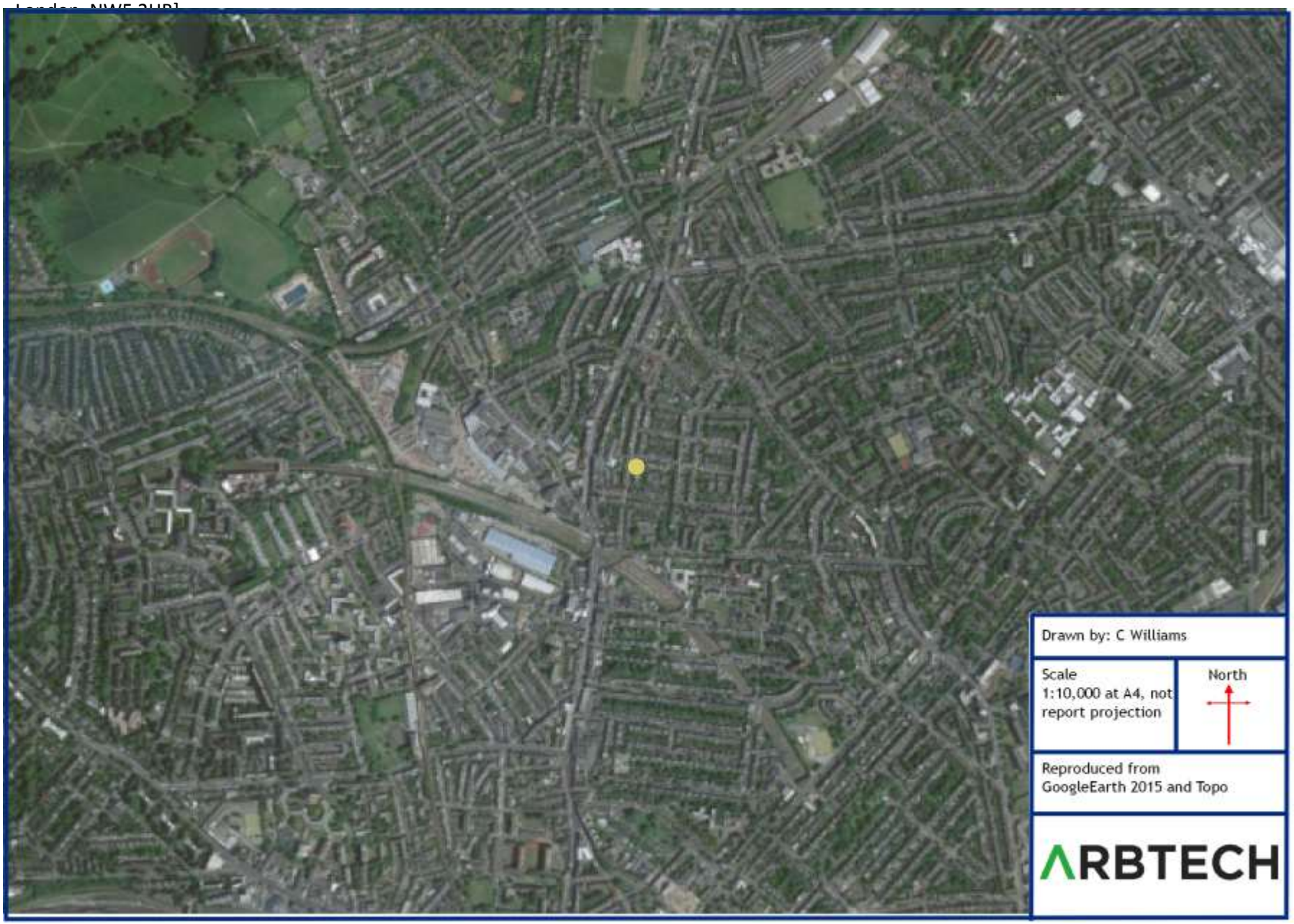


Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, showing landscape structure

Historical bat records

The local bat group has been contacted to provide bat records for the study area.

Table 2: Historical records of bats within 2km of the site

Species present within 2km		
Common name	Scientific binomial	Roost record within 2km?
Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	Yes
Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Yes
Myotis species	*Myotis spp.*	Yes
Brown Long Eared bat	*Plecotus auritus.*	Yes
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	No
Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	No
Noctule	*Nyctalus noctula*	No
Serotine	*Eptesicus serotinus*	No
Leisler's Bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	No

2.4 Site survey

The survey was undertaken by a licenced bat surveyor (Craig Williams [2015-11169-CLS-CLS]) on 26th October 2015.

All buildings that will be impacted by the project proposals (the survey area) were assessed for their habitat value in terms of supporting roosting bats. The surveyor systematically searched for features suitable for roosting bats and signs of bat activity, by conducting a non-intrusive visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the buildings for access/egress points, and for signs of bat use. An internal inspection of the building was also made where possible, including the living areas of derelict or abandoned buildings and the roof spaces of all buildings, using an endoscope, torch and ladders where safe to do so. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, any window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of features within the roof spaces where existing and possible.

2.5 Suitability Assessment

The building on site was categorised to the likelihood of bats being present, in line with best practice guidelines (Hundt, L., 2012); the features of the building that dictate the likelihood of roosting bats are summarised in Table 1. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 3: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats during the summer

Likelihood of bats being present	**Feature of building and its context**
Higher	Buildings/structures with features of particular significance for roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data).
Lower	A small number of possible roost sites/features, used sporadically by more widespread species. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

2.5 General Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site.

Where only four figure grid references are provided for bat records, it is not possible to determine their precise location as they could be present anywhere within the given 1km x 1km National Grid square.

This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study. .

Specific limitations:

Some of the exterior of the building could only be viewed from third party property, and was not visited during the survey. Similarly, some of the roof could not be viewed from the ground.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Survey Results

There is 1 permanent structure on site. There are 2 broad uses of this, designated as B1a, the garage and workshops and B1b, an attached 2 storey house. Both are illustrated in the map in Appendix 1.

Building description and features of bat use

B1a and B1b– Workshops and house building

B1a is a brick built garage, and workshops, B1b is a house building. The main sections are the workshops of B1a which are industrial buildings with roofs of corrugated asbestos and metal. There are numerous plastic skylights. Small parapet walls are found around the structure on all elevations. The external brickwork, although old is of a good condition without any cracks or fissures. Concrete lintels above the large garage doors are also intact. B1b is the attached two-storey house to the south-west of the workshops has a flat roof lined with a felt, and also two parapet walls at either end. There is also a single storey flat roofed extension. The flat roofs are intact and unpeeling. The house also has a small, gabled slate tiled porch with lead flashing. This is fully intact without gaps.

The interior of the workshops of B1a shows an internal steel frame and the large windows and skylights illuminate the spaces. The central ridge beam is a large steel girder. There are some offices and internal timber structures around the interior. Detritus if found on windowsills. B1b has no loftspaces, having a flat roof.

Bat evidence found on site

No bat evidence was found anywhere on site, either internally or externally.

3.2 Evaluation – Likelihood of bats being present

Taking the desk based assessment and site survey results into account, the following value for roosting bats has been placed on each building.

Table 4: Evaluation of buildings/structures on site

Reference	Value for / Likelihood of bats using the building for roosting	Brief summary of justification
B1	Negligible	No bat habitat features or evidence found on site. Therefore there is a likely absence of bats using the site in any capacity.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions and Impact Assessment

The PRA concludes that there is a likely absence of bats on the survey site, in building B1a and B1b.

Impacts

As it is assumed there are no bats on site at any time of year, the proposals do not impact bats in any way.

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation Regulations; see Appendix 4 for a summary of legislation protecting bats in the UK.

4.2 Recommendations

Survey and assessment

Best practice survey guidelines (Hundt, 2012) recommends additional surveys for all buildings assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats.

Confirmed bat roost:

If a building to be developed is confirmed to support roosting bats, and the development is likely to destroy, disturb or degrade a bat roost, then that building will require further survey effort to inform a EPSML application, to help identify the number of species and type of roost.

Suspected bat roost:

The survey effort recommended at this stage for a suspected bat roost is iterative and if bats are recorded emerging from the buildings, the survey effort should be adjusted to provide sufficient information to inform European Protected Species Mitigation licensing (EPSML), as in a confirmed bat roost.

Negligible habitat value:

Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. Appropriate justification for this assessment is provided in Section 3.0 and Table 4 of this report.

Since B1 is assessed to have a low habitat value for bats, further investigation is needed to confirm presence or absence.

Recommendations for further survey or assessment associated with the building(s) are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Survey recommendations

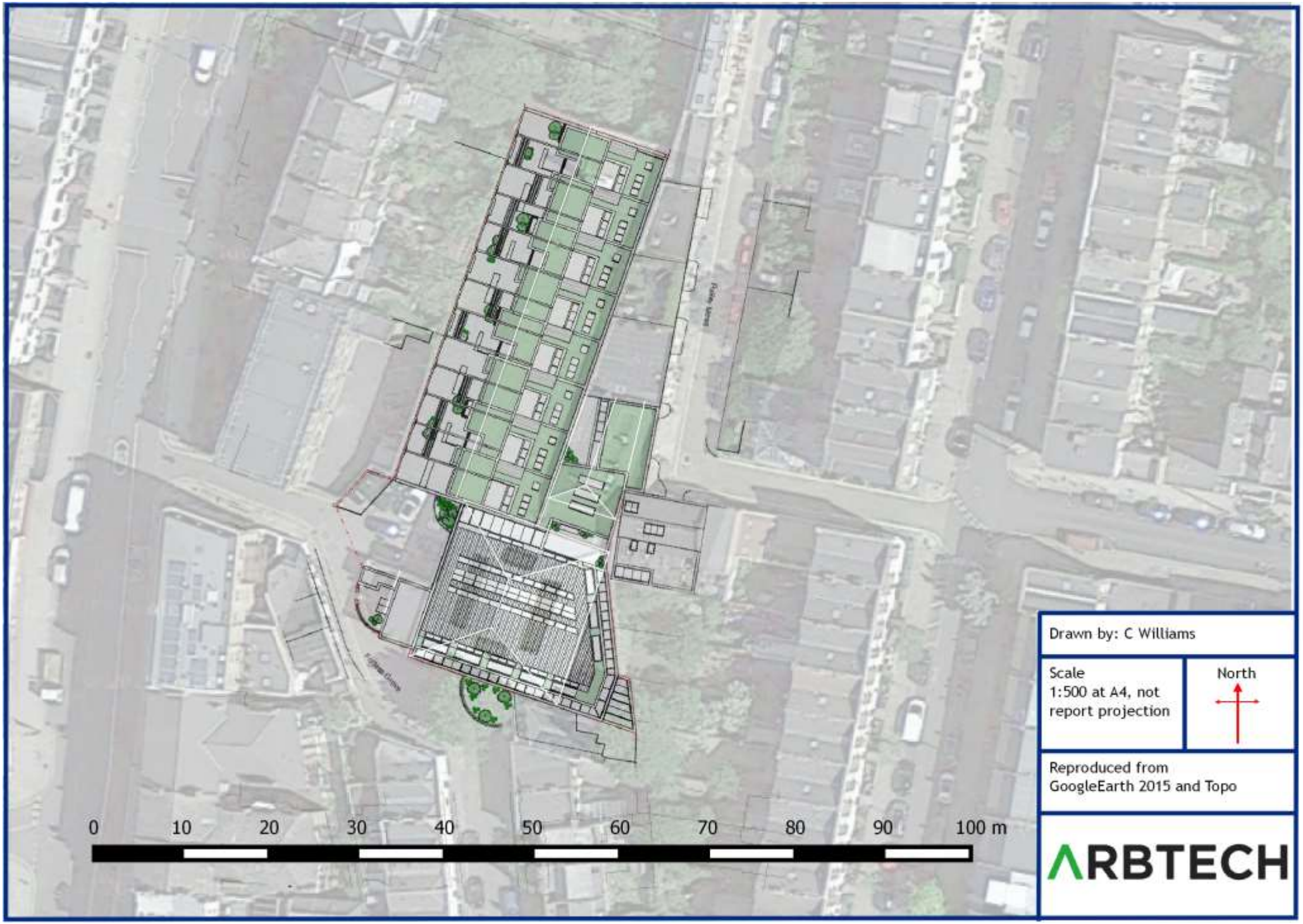
Building Ref	Value for / Likelihood of supporting roosting bats	Recommendations
B1	Negligible	No further surveys or mitigation required.

5.0 Bibliography

- Hundt, L. (2012). Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting

Appendix 1: Survey Plan

Appendix 2: Site plan/proposals



Appendix 3: Photographs

Figure 1: Looking east at B1 from the road.

Figure 2: Looking north-west at B1.

Figure 3: The southern elevation of B1.

Figure 4: The southern elevation of B1.

Figure 5: The western elevation of B1.

Figure 6: The eastern elevation of B1.

Figure 7: Interior of the western workshop of B1, looking north.

Figure 8: interior of the western workshop of B1, looking south.

Figure 9: Inside the eastern workshop.

Figure 10: Inside the eastern workshop.

Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy related to bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. all bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species as:
  a) to impair their ability:
    (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young
    (ii) to hibernate or migrate
  b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

How the legislation is likely to affect development works:

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant statutory authority (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored.

The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008)

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and The Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Appendix 5: Desk study data

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