

BUILDINGS AND TREES AT THE FORMER WATERGATE SCHOOL, SPEKE ROAD, LIVERPOOL

**UPDATED LICENSED BAT SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT
AND
INSPECTION FOR NESTING BIRDS**

April 2015

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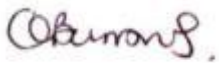

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A SUMMARY

Introduction and Scope

- i. Following an Ecological Survey and Assessment report prepared by Ribble Ecology in November 2014, ERAP Ltd (Consultant Ecologists) was commissioned to carry out supplementary ecological surveys at the former Watergate School, Speke Road, Liverpool in April 2015.
- ii. The scope of survey comprised: -
 - a. An updated external survey and assessment of buildings B1 to B16 for roosting bats;
 - b. An updated, licensed external and internal bat survey and assessment of buildings B17 and B18;
 - c. A nocturnal emergence survey of building B18;
 - d. An updated licensed survey and assessment of the four relevant trees for roosting bats;
 - e. A nesting bird survey of the site; and
 - f. A general walkover survey to validate the other findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Ribble Ecology report.
- iii. The survey was required in connection with a prior approval application (Liverpool City Council (LCC) reference 15PM/0355) seeking to demolish the derelict buildings at the site.
- iv. The scope of survey undertaken is appropriate to enable the identification of any potential ecological constraints and to advise the demolition operations.

Results of Survey and Assessment and Recommendations

Buildings B1 to B16 (Main School Building)

- v. No evidence of use of the main school building by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. There are no constraints on the commencement of demolition although it is recommended that the areas of damaged plastic fascia are removed by hand prior to full demolition, refer to **Section 4.0**.

Building B17

- vi. No evidence of use of building B17 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. There are no constraints on the commencement of demolition.

Building B18

- vii. No evidence of use of building B18 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. A stand of dense Ivy on the fence adjacent to the north elevation of building B18 contains a new Blackbird nest. Subject to the avoidance of the dense Ivy adjacent to the building which contains the Blackbird nest and the completion of an updated inspection for nesting birds in the Ivy over the remainder of the building (if the Ivy is not removed before 24th April 2015) there are no constraints on the commencement of demolition.

Trees T1, T2, T9 and the off-site Hornbeam

- viii. No evidence of use of trees T1, T2 and T9 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. Following comprehensive inspections of the trees no features suitable for use by roosting bats are present and all trees are reasonably downgraded to Category 3. The off-site Hornbeam will not be directly affected by the proposals.

Nesting Birds

- ix. Evidence of use of stands of dense Ivy on the site boundaries by nesting Blackbird was detected, refer to **Figure 1**. It is recommended that all boundary Ivy is retained and protected during the demolition operations. If required Ivy can then be cleared outside the bird nesting season (i.e. September to February inclusive).

Conclusion

- x. No evidence of roosting bats has been detected at the site.
- xi. No evidence of nesting birds has been detected at the buildings to be affected by the demolition works. Protection of the dense Ivy on the site boundaries which is currently used by nesting birds is entirely feasible in conjunction with the proposals.
- xii. No ecological constraints on the commencement of demolition works have been identified.
- xiii. In relation to the planning application to redevelop the site to housing (LCC reference 15F/0314), the recommendations in Section 4.2 of the Ribble Ecology report (November-December 2014) comprising tree and root protection, appropriate lighting design, habitat connectivity and fencing design and use of native species in the landscape planting schedule remain appropriate and applicable.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

- 1.1 Redrow Homes Limited has applied for prior approval to demolish the buildings at the former Watergate School, Speke Road, Liverpool (Liverpool City Council (LCC) reference 15PM/0355). A planning application has also been submitted to construct residential development comprising 22 dwellings (LCC reference 15F/0314).
- 1.2 The former Watergate School is located to the east of Speke Road, Woolton, Liverpool. The school is bordered by existing built development to the north and south and playing fields to the east, refer to **Figure 1**. The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SJ 4263 8663.
- 1.3 An Ecological Survey and Assessment report, including a daylight licensed bat survey, of the site was carried out by Ribble Ecology in November 2014. All building and tree numbers referred to in this report are consistent with the system used by Ribble Ecology.

Existing Licensed Bat Survey: 2014

- 1.4 No evidence of a bat roost was detected at the site in November 2014. Ribble Ecology concluded that buildings B1 to B17, refer to **Figure 1**, are unsuitable for use by roosting bats (Ribble Ecology, Nov-Dec 2014).
- 1.5 Building B18 was identified by Ribble Ecology to have '*low-moderate potential for opportunistic use by crevice roosting bats*'. Unfortunately access to examine the interior of building B18 was not possible therefore a pre-demolition survey of B18 was recommended.
- 1.6 In addition, because of the presence of potential roost features (PRFs) such as lifted bark, four trees comprising T1 (Cherry species), T2 (Cherry species), T9 (Silver Birch) and a single Hornbeam overhanging the northern boundary of the site were identified to have Category 2 status for use by roosting bats (in accordance with Table 8.4 in the *Bat Surveys - good practice guidelines* (Hundt, 2012) and further inspection was recommended, refer to **Figure 1**.

Nesting Birds

- 1.7 Ribble Ecology concluded that '*the trees and shrubs throughout the site, the Bramble on the eastern boundary, the dense Ivy on building B18 and the structures of buildings B17 and B18 are suitable for use by low numbers of breeding birds*'. It was advised that removal of features with suitability for use by nesting birds is scheduled for outside the bird nesting season. Alternatively, the features should be checked for evidence of nesting birds and active nests prior to removal.

Scope of Survey and Objectives

- 1.8 To address the recommendations of the Ribble Ecology report (dated Nov-Dec 2014) and pre-determination comments made by LCC in a consultation letter dated 14th April 2015, this report therefore provides: -
 - a. A updated external survey and assessment of buildings B1 to B16 for roosting bats;
 - b. An updated, licensed external and internal survey and assessment of buildings B17 and B18 for roosting bats;
 - c. A nocturnal emergence survey of building B18;
 - d. An updated licensed survey and assessment of the four relevant trees for roosting bats;
 - e. A nesting bird survey of the site; and
 - f. A general walkover survey to validate the other findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Ribble Ecology report.

- 1.9 It is the intention that this survey report provides all relevant information and guidance to facilitate the imminent progression of demolition of the buildings at the former Watergate School.

Wildlife Legislation

- 1.10 A synopsis of all relevant wildlife legislation is presented at **Appendix 2**.

2.0 SURVEY METHODS

2.1 Surveyors, Survey Date and Conditions

- 2.1.1 The general walkover survey, nesting bird survey and the updated licensed daylight bat survey of the buildings and trees was carried out on 21st April 2015 by Victoria Burrows B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. CEnv MCIEEM (Natural England licensed bat surveyor Level 2 (Class Licence Reference 2015-10390-CLS-CLS)) assisted by Chris Schofield B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. GradCIEEM.
- 2.1.2 The weather on this date was dry and sunny, calm (Beaufort scale 0) and a temperature of 19°C at 18:30; conditions were suitable for the survey.
- 2.1.3 The daylight inspection was followed by a nocturnal emergence survey for bat activity; details are provided in **Table 2.1**, below.
- 2.1.4 The surveyor's qualifications and experience meet the criteria as defined in the *Technical Guidance Series Competencies for Species Survey: Bat* prepared by the CIEEM (April 2013).

2.2 Survey Methods

Nesting Bird Survey

- 2.2.1 All birds encountered either by sight or by call and song were recorded during the walkover survey. Habitats were assessed for their value to support breeding birds.
- 2.2.2 Buildings and trees were searched for nests and opportunities for bird access. Dense Ivy on building B18 and on the site boundaries was parted and searched for nests.
- 2.2.3 Bird behaviour was also observed to determine the presence of an active nest.

Licensed Bat Survey: Building

- 2.2.4 The licensed bat survey methods applied are adapted from the guidance in the *Bat Surveys - good practice guidelines* (Hundt, 2012) and comprised the following: -

1. External Inspection

- 2.2.5 An examination was made of the external elevations, roof and the whole perimeter of buildings B1 to B18. Searches were carried out for droppings, urine stains, feeding signs and grease marks. Particular attention was paid to areas where bat droppings may accumulate such as the ground beneath the eaves, on window sills, the elevation walls and any other surfaces beneath the eaves around the perimeter of the buildings.
- 2.2.6 Searches were also made to find potential bat roosting habitat or accesses into internal areas and cavities where roosts may be present.
- 2.2.7 Where possible, gaps were illuminated with a high-powered torch (refer to equipment list below).
- 2.2.8 Ladders were used to gain better access to specific features above eye level. A video borescope was used to inspect features such as crevices around the buildings in more detail and to search for bats and droppings.

2. Internal inspection

- 2.2.9 No roof voids are present at buildings B1 to B16.
- 2.2.10 The internal survey of buildings B17 and B18 confirmed that the buildings are open to the ridge inside; no roof void is present. The internal areas of these buildings were entered and a thorough search for bats and evidence of use by bats was carried out.

3. Nocturnal Emergence Survey

- 2.2.8 As recommended by Ribble Ecology a nocturnal emergence survey of building B18 was carried out on the 21st April 2015 by two strategically positioned surveyors maximising coverage of the external elevations and roofs of the building at bat emergence time, refer to **Figure 1**.
- 2.2.9 Heterodyne bat detectors (Batbox Duet) were used to assist in determining the bat activity at the site. Two Anabat Express detectors were also used to record bat activity at the site.
- 2.2.10 All bat activity was recorded including species (where possible), activity and direction of flight.

Table 2.1: Conditions during the nocturnal emergence survey

Date	21st April 2015
Survey start time	20:10 BST
Survey end time	21:25 BST
Sunset	20:23 BST
Temperature	17°C at 20.10 falling to 13°C at 21.30
Wind speed	Beaufort Scale 1 (light air)
Cloud cover	0%
General conditions	Dry, fine.

Licensed Bat Survey: Trees

- 2.2.11 An updated assessment of Trees T1, T2 and T9 and the off-site Hornbeam as identified by Ribble Ecology was carried out.
- 2.2.12 The trees were assessed for their suitability for use by roosting bats (i.e. presence of crevices, cracks, woodpecker holes, dense ivy cover and splits in the trunks and branches that could be accessed by bats).
- 2.2.13 Binoculars were used to inspect the trees from the ground. Ladders, torches and a video borescope (Sentient) were used, where it was safe to do so, to examine features higher up the trees in more detail.
- 2.2.14 The criteria detailed at **Table 2.2** were referred to during the assessment of the trees suitability for use by roosting bats.

Table 0.2: Tree Category Definition

Tree Category² (in accordance with Table 8.4 (Hundt, 2012))	Description¹
Known or confirmed roost	Tree has a known roost or a roost is determined by further survey.
Category 1*	Trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting larger roosts, such as: <i>Woodpecker holes, knot holes, tear-outs, double leaders, wounds and cankers and butt rots, longitudinal splits and crevices, transverse cracks, hazard beams, lightning strikes, desiccation fissures in dead wood, and transverse snaps.</i>
Category 1	Trees with low numbers of features suitable for supporting larger roosts (see above list); or, with multiple features suitable for low numbers of bats, such as: <i>Narrow splits, flush cuts, frost cracks, impact shatters, and lifted bark.</i>

Tree Category ² (in accordance with Table 8.4 (Hundt, 2012))	Description ¹
Category 2	Trees with no obvious features suitable for roosting bats, although the tree is of a size and age that elevated surveys may result in cracks or crevices being found; or, Tree supports a low number of features suitable for low numbers of roosting bats. <i>Dense Ivy cover may be used as a night roost, and may also obscure the view of other, more favourable features such as those described above.</i>
Category 3	Trees with no features suitable for use by roosting bats
¹ Terms used to describe any features present follow (where possible) those outlined and described in <i>Bat Tree Habitat Key, 2nd Edition</i> (Andrews, 2013). ² It is accepted that the Table 8.4 in the <i>Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines</i> (Hundt, 2012) has been prepared in relation to arboricultural works (Section 8.2.5), rather than development surveys, however this assessment method has been applied as a starting point.	

2.3 Equipment

2.3.1 A list of equipment used is detailed in **Table 2.3** below: -

Table 2.3: Equipment used

Ladders
LED Lenser P7 torch
Clulite CB2 hand lamps
Canon Ixus digital camera
Sentient video borescope
8x20 binoculars
Batbox Duet bat detectors

2.4 Survey Limitations/Constraints

- 2.5.1 A comprehensive licensed bat survey and assessment and nesting bird survey was possible. All areas of the site were accessed.
- 2.5.2 It is accepted that April is outside the typical optimal time for the completion of a bat emergence survey (typically May to September). However, in the case of the building at this site it is concluded that the survey is valid for the following reasons: -
- Night-time temperatures and weather conditions for at least four consecutive nights prior to the site had been suitable for bat activity and bat activity had been recorded by the surveyors;
 - Building B18 is not suitable for use by a maternity roost and the building offers limited opportunity for use by single crevice roosting bats only (Ribble Ecology, Nov-Dec 2014). April is typically the time of year when bats leave hibernation roosts and may use transitory day roosts before they gather at maternity roosts or find summer roosts. It is therefore concluded that, in the presence of the suitable weather conditions, if bats were using the building as a transitory roost the survey date would be a suitable time to detect this;
 - The daylight survey and assessment found no evidence of use of the building by bats; and
 - Bat activity was detected during the survey to demonstrate that bats are active in the area.

3.0 RESULTS/REPORT OF SURVEY

3.1 Nesting Birds

3.1.1 Bird species detected within the site boundary during the survey are listed in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Bird species detected within the site boundary on 21st April 2015

Bird Species	Activity
Blackbird	Within site
Blue Tit	Calling in the Cherry trees (T1 and T2)
Carrion Crow	Flying over site
Collared Dove	In tree at site.
Great Tit	Calling in trees
Greenfinch	Calling in trees
House Sparrow	Just outside the eastern site boundary.
Magpie	Group of 4 to 5 in the trees to the north-east of the site
Robin	Foraging within site
Starling	Flying over site
Wood Pigeon	Pair mating on lamppost

3.1.2 No evidence of the use of buildings B1 to B16, B17 or B18 by nesting birds was detected.

3.1.3 Old and recently constructed, but currently unoccupied, Blackbird nests were detected within dense stands of Ivy on the northern site boundary (adjacent to building B18) and at the southern site boundary, refer to **Figure 1**.

3.1.4 No active nests were detected.

3.2 Licensed Bat Survey: Buildings

Buildings B1 to B16

3.2.1 Building B1 to B16 is in a similar condition to that reported by Ribble Ecology (Nov-Dec 2014). Local areas of fire damage have occurred and small sections of plastic fascia have been removed/damaged.

3.2.2 No bat droppings were detected around the external elevations of the building.

3.2.3 Narrow (1.5 cm high) gaps along the base of the plastic fascia are present in three locations around the building exterior, refer to **Figure 1**. All areas were examined from ladders with the borescope. No bats or droppings were detected. The gaps only extend approximately 10cm behind the fascia as timber battens prevent further or deeper access. As all areas were inspected thoroughly it is concluded that a comprehensive inspection was possible.

3.2.4 No evidence of a bat roost is present at buildings B1 to B16.

Building B17

3.2.5 Building B17 comprises a part brick built, part timber single storey store with a pitched corrugated material covered roof.

3.2.6 No opportunity for, or evidence of, use by roosting bats was detected.

Building B18

3.2.7 Building B18 is a brick and concrete block garage with a pitched tile covered roof.



3.2.8 Timber boarding is present on the western elevation and timber fascia boards are present to the southern elevation and east facing gable end. All fascia are tightly fitted against the elevation walls; no opportunities for bat access are present.




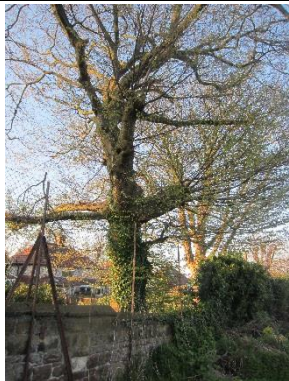
- 3.2.9 A single small (2cm by 2cm) gap is present at the roof verge of the west facing gable where the mortar has been damaged. Inspection with the borescope confirmed that this extended only 5cm. No bats or droppings were present.
- 3.2.10 Internally the building was easily searched for bats and droppings. The roof timbers are visible and the roof is underlined with felt. No insulation is present. A timber plank covers the wall plate at eaves height.
- 3.2.11 No bats, bat droppings or prey remains were found inside building B18.
- 3.2.12 Mouse droppings (30+) were found amongst a stack of classroom chairs.
- 3.2.13 No bat emergence activity was detected at building B18.
- 3.2.14 The only bat activity comprised a single Common Pipistrelle pass at 9:00. The bat entered the site from the west, flew along the southern elevation of building B18 and headed towards the playing fields to the east.

3.3 Licensed Bat Survey: Trees

- 3.3.1 Table 3.2 provides a summary of the updated assessment of the relevant trees.

Table 3.2: Results of Updated Assessment of Relevant Trees

Tree Reference (refer to Figure 1)	Notes	Photographs	Category
T1: Cherry	<p>Semi-mature Cherry.</p> <p>Local areas of lifted bark on the surface of the trunk and larger branches only.</p> <p>None provide opportunities for use by roosting bats.</p> <p>No droppings or staining.</p>		3
T2: Cherry	<p>Semi-mature Cherry.</p> <p>Local areas of lifted bark on the surface of the trunk and larger branches only.</p> <p>None provide opportunities for use by roosting bats.</p> <p>No droppings or staining.</p>		3

Tree Reference (refer to Figure 1)	Notes	Photographs	Category
T9: Silver Birch	<p>Mature Silver Birch.</p> <p>Upward facing holes on the trunk and main branches. All were inspected at height. All only extend less than 5cm and provide no opportunities for bat use.</p> <p>No bats, droppings or staining.</p>	  	3
Off-site Hornbeam	<p>Mature Hornbeam.</p> <p>Off-site tree. Will not be affected by the works.</p> <p>Branches overhanging the site support no opportunities for use by roosting bats.</p>		N/A

3.3.2 No evidence of use of trees T1, T2 and T9 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. Following comprehensive inspections of the trees no features suitable for use by roosting bats are present and all trees are reasonably downgraded to Category 3 in accordance with Table 2.2. The off-site Hornbeam will not be directly affected by the proposals.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Buildings B1 to B16 (Main School Building)

- 4.1.1 No evidence of use of the main school building by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected.
- 4.1.2 There are no constraints on the commencement of demolition although it is recommended that the areas of damaged plastic fascia in the three locations as annotated on **Figure 1** are removed by hand prior to full demolition.

4.2 Building B17

- 4.2.1 No evidence of use of building B17 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected. There are no constraints on the commencement of demolition.

4.3 Building B18

- 4.3.1 No evidence of use of building B18 by roosting bats or nesting birds was detected.
- 4.3.2 Owing to the suitability of the Ivy over the roof of building B18 for use by nesting birds it is recommended that the Ivy is removed before the 24th April 2015 (i.e. within 2 days of the survey). If this is not possible an updated inspection of the Ivy for nesting birds must be carried out prior to demolition if demolition is proposed between March and August inclusive. If active nests are detected the Ecologist will provide appropriate guidance but this is likely to involve leaving the building undisturbed until it is confirmed that the young birds have fledged.
- 4.3.3 During demolition it is recommended and entirely feasible to avoid the disturbance of the dense Ivy on the fence line adjacent to building B18.

4.4 Trees

- 4.4.1 There are no constraints, subject to the continued absence of nesting birds, on the removal of tree T9.
- 4.4.2 It is understood trees T1 and T2, the off-site Hornbeam and other trees will be retained. Tree protection measures in accordance with British Standard BS5837:2012 must be applied.

4.5 Unexpected Discovery of a Bat

- 4.5.1 If a bat is found or suspected during the demolition. All works in the area must stop and ERAP Ltd must be contacted immediately for further advice.

4.6 Nesting Birds

- 4.6.1 Evidence of use of stands of dense Ivy on the site boundaries by nesting Blackbird was detected, refer to Figure 1. It is recommended that all boundary Ivy is retained and protected during the demolition operations. If required Ivy can then be cleared outside the bird nesting season (i.e. September to February inclusive).

4.7 Conclusion

- 4.7.1 No ecological constraints on the commencement of demolition works have been identified.
- 4.7.2 With the exception of an updated inspection of the Ivy at building B18 for nesting birds, if needed, no further survey is required to inform the demolition.
- 4.7.3 In relation to the planning application to redevelop the site to housing (LCC reference 15F/0314), the recommendations in Section 4.2 of the Ribble Ecology report (November-December 2014) comprising tree and root protection, appropriate lighting design, habitat connectivity and fencing design and use of native species in the landscape planting schedule remain appropriate and applicable.

6.0 REFERENCES

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7.0 APPENDIX 1: FIGURE



Photo 1: General view of buildings B1 to B16



Photo 2: New but currently unoccupied Blackbird nest in dense Ivy adjacent to building B18



Photo 3: Exterior of building B18



Photo 4: Interior of building B18; no bat roost.



Photo 5: Building B17; no bat roost.



Photo 6: Gaps beneath damaged fascia



Photo 7: Inspection of gaps behind fascia with borescope.

KEY



Areas with damaged plastic fascia inspected for evidence of use by roosting bats, refer to **Photo 6**. Plastic fascia to be removed by hand.



Tree and number



Areas of dense Ivy and evidence of use by nesting Blackbird, refer to **Photo 2**. To remain undisturbed during demolition



Surveyor position during nocturnal emergence survey for bat activity

Project Name: Former Watergate School, Speke Road, Liverpool

Title: Plan to Show Results of Roosting Bat and Nesting Bird Survey

Scale: NTS **Drawing No.** Figure 1 **Date:** April 2015

Central Grid Ref: SD 814 223 **Reference No.** ERAP Ltd 2014/065

Version: v1 (VB) 22/04/15

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8.0 APPENDIX 2: SYNOPSIS OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Bat species

All British bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or capture bats, deliberately disturb bats and damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts. Since the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act in 2000 it is also an offence to recklessly harm or disturb bats in their roosting places.

Breeding Birds

All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), whilst they are actively nesting or roosting. Section 1 of this Act, makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, and to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. It is also an offence to take or destroy any wild bird eggs.

Barn Owl

Barn Owls are listed on Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) which gives them special protection.

It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or take (handle) any wild Barn Owl;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy any wild Barn Owl nest whilst in use or being 'built' (Barn Owls do not 'build' a nest but may make a nest scrape;
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild Barn Owl egg;
- Have in one's possession or control a wild Barn Owl (dead or alive), or egg, (unless one can show that it was obtained legally);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild Barn Owl whilst 'building' a nest or whilst in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependent young of wild Barn Owls.