

WATERLOO COTTAGE, WOKINGHAM

Ground Level Tree Assessment Report

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Report Control Sheet

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

- 1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr. Will Hossack to undertake a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) at land adjacent to Waterloo Cottage, Knowl Hill, Wokingham. This report has been produced to inform proposed removal of the four relevant trees.
- 1.1.2. The author of this report is Emma Anderson MSc, Ecologist at Collington Winter and has been overseen by Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv Director Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Olivia is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.2. LOCATION

- 1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located in Knowl Hill, Wokingham.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1. The objectives of the GTLA are as follows:
- Identify any areas of bat roosting potential within the trees.
 - Assess the value of the trees for roosting bats.
 - Search for signs of bats
 - Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

- 2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information.
 - Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
 - Locations of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within 5 km of the site based on consultation with magic.gov.uk.

2.2. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.2. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of the site was undertaken by Emma Anderson MSc. This has been overseen by Olivia Collington who holds a Class 1 Bat Survey Licence from Natural England (Reference 2020–46960-CLS–CLS).
- 2.2.3. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2023). This includes undertaking a detailed inspection of the exterior of the trees from ground level to look for potential bat roosting features.
- 2.2.4. The Ground Level Tree Assessment methodology (GLTA) is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 4th edition (Collins 2023).
- 2.2.5. The GLTA and potential flight paths and foraging habitats were assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.2 and 6.2, demonstrated below (Collins 2023).

Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.3. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.3.1. There were no limitations during the assessment.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. DESK STUDY

3.1.1. The site is located in the Knowl Hill area of Wokingham, with the southern boundary running adjacent to the A4. The area immediately surrounding the site is dominated by large residential gardens and arable fields, with a pub and further residential houses to the northeast. Southwest of the site, across the A4, is a large golf course. In the wider landscape, arable fields dominate to the south of the site, with large parcels of woodland to the north. These habitats are anticipated to be of significant value for a range of local fauna. Hedgerows and treelines within the landscape provide some connectivity between these habitats and the residential areas immediately surrounding the site.

3.1.2. The following EPSLs were located within 2 km of the site based on consultation with Magic.gov.uk:

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	impact on a breeding site	Does the Licence			
					allow damage of breeding site	allow damage of a resting place	allow destruction of breeding site	allow destruction of a resting place
EPSM2009-1439	C-PIP;S-PIP;BLE;NATT	19/07/2010	28/02/2011	N			N	Y
2019-41331-EPS-MIT	C-PIP S-PIP	26/06/2019	30/09/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
2019-41331-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP S-PIP	10/12/2019	30/09/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
2020-45673-EPS-MIT-1	S-PIP	12/08/2020	10/08/2030	Y	N	N	Y	N
2018-34287-EPS-MIT	C-PIP S-PIP	01/05/2018	31/10/2018	N	N	N	N	Y
2018-34287-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP S-PIP	22/05/2018	31/10/2018	N	N	N	N	Y
2018-35667-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	01/09/2018	31/08/2019	N	N	N	N	Y
2018-35667-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP	01/01/2019	31/12/2019	N	N	N	N	Y
2014-2875-EPS-MIT	BLE	12/09/2014	30/09/2019	N	N	N	N	Y
					Species on the licence*	Species name	Latin	
					C-PIP	Common Pipistrelle	<i>(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)</i>	
					S-PIP	Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>(Pipistrellus pygmaeus)</i>	
					BLE	Brown Long-eared bat	<i>(Plecotus auritus)</i>	

3.2. GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT

3.2.3. The site consisted of two residential plots of land which are intended to undergo development. A total of four trees which are proposed for removal were subject of a GLTA. Please refer to Table 3.1 for the assessment and results.

Table 3.1 Ground Level Tree Assessment

Tree No/ Species	Feature	Photograph
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T001 – Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) Grid reference: SU 81884 78874	This tree is characterised as an over-mature coppice with extensive decay and die-back in the crown. The limbs were observed to have extensive areas of rot and decay, with small areas of lifted bark, small splits in larger limbs, and an area of ivy coverage. These could provide potential roosting features (PRFs) for individual, crevice dwelling bats. This tree was assessed as PRF-I	
T003 – Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) Grid reference: SU 81886 78887	This tree was found to be suffering the effects of ash-dieback disease, with upper limbs in the crown observed to have died. Resultant lifted bark in these areas may provide PRFs for individual bats. Recent ditch works has resulted in destruction of some of the large roots. This tree was assessed as PRF-I	
T004 – Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) Grid reference: SU 81874 78896	The twin-stemmed beech tree on site was observed to support sparse ivy coverage insufficient to provide a PRF. A couple of missing limbs were noted, with splits where limbs had fallen observed which could provide a PRF for an individual bat. Recent ditch works has resulted in destruction of some of the large roots, compromising stability. This tree was assessed as PRF-I	
T005 – Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) Grid reference: SU 81845 78899	This tree was found to be suffering the effects of ash-dieback disease, with a number of the smaller limbs in the crown observed to be dead. A small amount of sparse ivy was present on the trunk. No PRFs were noted. Recent ditch works has resulted in destruction of some of the large roots. This tree was assessed as providing 'None' bat roosting potential.	

3.3. SUMMARY

3.3.4. The following survey identified potential access points and cavities with the individual trees which were identified as PRF's. The following trees were assessed as providing PRF-I roosting potential and require removal/ works:

- T001 – Hazel tree
- T003 – Ash tree
- T004 – Beech tree

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES (RAMs)

- 4.1.1. A total of three trees were assessed as providing PRF-I bat roosting potential (T001, T003 and T004) which require removal. These trees should undergo reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs). This would involve being inspected by a licensed bat worker with an endoscope before felling or utilising a soft felling technique (which involves practises like removing limbs separately and lowering them to the ground and then leaving for 24 hours before clearing).
- 4.1.2. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified during works, all works should cease, and the ecologist contacted for advice.

4.2. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.2.1. Breeding birds are anticipated to utilise the mature trees on site for nesting purposes.
- 4.2.2. Any felling or other tree works should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.
- 4.2.3. Any loss of breeding habitat for birds should be compensated within the proposed development. It is recommended that replacement tree/hedgerow planting is undertaken to compensate for loss of any trees. It is recommended that the planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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